

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

**Camberwell,  
London,  
SE5**



**FOR**

**Miss X and Mr Y**

**Prepared by:**

**INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS**

**Marketing by:**

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**0800 298 5424**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a 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 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 three storey mid-terraced property with a lower ground floor. There is an enclosed and high level front garden and to the rear is a low level courtyard style garden.

Parking is limited on nearby roads on a first come first serve basis, with a parking permit system in place and a pay per meter system.

This substantial property was built in the Georgian 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:*

1760	George III becomes king
1783	Britain recognised American Independence
1787	First fleet transporting convicts to Australia sets sail
1819	Factory work outlawed in England for children under nine years old
1823	Macintosh invents waterproof fabric.
1825	Railway transportation was born in England when Stephenson's 'Locomotion' ran from Darlington to Stockton
1840	The first postage stamp
1857	Prince Albert dies aged 42
1859	Charles Darwin proposes the Theory of Evolution

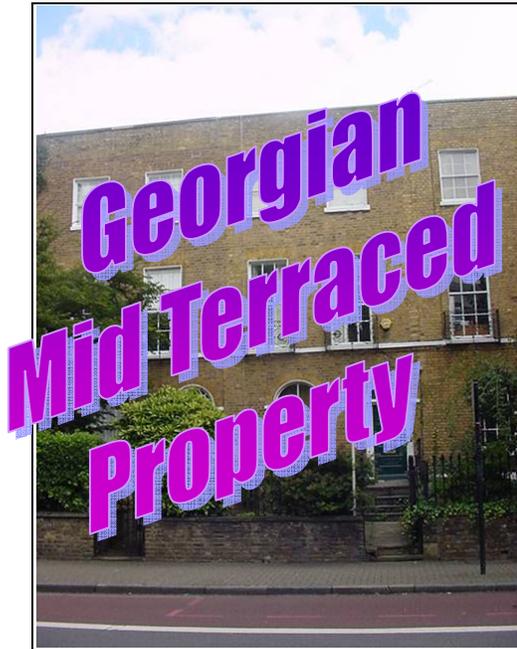
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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Front entrance



Rear View



Street View



Rear Garden

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## **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

### **Lower Ground Floor**

The lower ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Reception room to front
- 2) Kitchen to rear

### **Upper Ground Floor**

The upper ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Front reception room
- 2) Rear reception room, giving access to conservatory
- 3) Conservatory

### **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Front Bedroom
- 2) Rear bedroom
- 3) Central internal bathroom

### **Second Floor**

The second floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Open plan bedroom with central shower room

### **Outside Areas**

There is a small garden to the front, with an enclosed courtyard giving access to the lower ground floor, which has railings over it. To the rear is a courtyard style garden which is walled with mature Poplar trees behind it.

Parking is available on nearby roads. We parked behind the property, as we have when we have surveyed other properties on this road. Parking on a first come first service basis and we would say that parking is awkward and limited. It is on a permit basis and also a parking meter system.

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.

## Lower Ground Floor



Front reception room

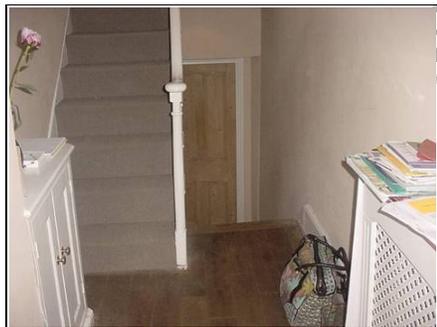


Kitchen



WC on half landing

## Upper Ground Floor and Half Landing



Entrance hallway



Front reception room



Rear reception room



Conservatory

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**First Floor**



Front bedroom / lounge



Internal bathroom



Rear bedroom

**Top Floor**



Entrance on top floor



Bedroom looking to the front



Circular shower room



Cathedral ceiling



WC in circular shower room



Shower in circular shower room

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# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **External**

Chimneys:	Two long chimneys
Main Roof:	Butterfly roof, clad with manmade slates with a stepped leaded valley gutter Three roof windows
Main Roof Structure:	Concealed
Flat Roof:	Asphalt covered
Conservatory Roof:	Pitched with glass
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic hopper head and downpipe to rear
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork (assumed)
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Georgian timber sliding sash windows Double glazed conservatory windows

## **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors:	Cross battened floor (assumed)
Lower Ground Floor:	
Upper Ground Floor, First Floor, And Second Floor:	All joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)

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## Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The Potterton profile old style wall mounted boiler is located in the rear of the kitchen. The electrics are in the front right hand corner of the lower ground floor area.

The property is Listed, as found in [BritishListedBuildings.co.uk](http://BritishListedBuildings.co.uk)

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report.

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

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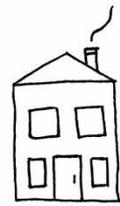
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# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**



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 400 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.

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 sheer size of the property.
- 2.0) The property has period style plus newer design features.
- 3.0) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.
- 4.0) The property has good natural light due to the large windows

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 Flat roof to rear**

The flat roof to the rear over the toilet is leaking. We can see/obtained damp meter readings within this area.



Moss on flat roof



Leaking flat roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that the roof is re-roofed.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,500 to £2,500; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Roofs Section of this Report.

### **2.0 Hairline cracking / dampness to the rear WC and stairway area from the upper ground floor to lower ground floor**

Water getting into the half landing WC is not surprising as we believe it is via the roof, however the dampness getting into the rear wall more generally we were surprised at and we would expect it to be due to the pointing externally.

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Hairline cracks in walls on staircase



Hairline cracks in WC area



Gann meter readings showing dampness in the WC on the half landing



The Gann meter readings showed no dampness on the ceiling

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ad hoc repointing to the exterior of the property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £1,000 to £2,000; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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### **3.0 Water leaks from circular shower room top floor into bathroom below**

This may well be historic, as when we ran the shower for ten minutes on the top floor there was no visible signs of dampness coming through. However, having said that often there needs someone to actually be in the shower to cause problems.



Circular shower room on top floor



Knife indicates water damage on bathroom ceiling below

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that you live in the property to check whether it is still leaking.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** If you do need to look at a worst case scenario in the case of buying the property then costs would be in the region of £1,000 to £2,000 for lifting the shower out, checking the lining and then re-positioning. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Bathroom Section of this Report.

### **4.0 Lower ground floor**

Within the ground floor vaults that are partly under the pavement we noted what looked to be a dead fruiting body of dry rot. Our concern is that there may have been problems in years gone by with regard to dry rot which can very methodically affect the timbers in the property.



Dead fruiting body of dry rot

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The front reception room on the lower ground floor is close by with an inside floor level that is almost the same as the outside level.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Whilst we believe the fruiting body to be dead it may well have left traces underneath the floor and it can quite easily travel that distance. We did once come across dry rot that had travelled to a number of adjoining houses so you do need to open up the floor to check its condition.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A best case scenario would be £100 to £200 to open up and check, a worst case scenario would be into the thousands of pounds. There are no obvious signs to show that there is dry rot within the property. Please obtain quotations.

Please see the Floors and Dampness Section of this Report.

### **5.0 Timber cladding to conservatory area**

We note the timber cladding was in a particularly poor condition and needs to be repaired / replaced.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend the cladding is repaired/replaced.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2,000 to £4,000, depending upon quality of work and exact quantity; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Fascias and Soffits Section of this Report.



Threshold bar between front area and front lower ground floor



Checking timber cladding

## 6.0 Woodworm

We can see signs of woodworm to the ground floor. This look to be old, although we have not opened up the floor so cannot be 100% certain and the floor did not deflect excessively.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Open up the floor to check.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of a few hundred pounds if there are no problems beneath it; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Timber Defects Section of this Report.



Signs of old woodworm on lower ground floor

## 7.0 Services

### Heating

The property has a relatively old Potterton profile wall mounted boiler. We would say it is running at full capacity when it is heating the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend replacement. You may also have to power flush clean and/or replace some of the radiators as the pressures tend to be different between old and new heating systems.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £6,000 to £7,000; please obtain quotations.



Dated Potterton profile boiler

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### Extract fan in first floor bathroom not working

The extract fan in the first floor bathroom had minimal suction. This will cause condensation throughout the property. Again in the top floor shower room the fan did not seem to have that much extraction, however there was of course the roof window to open.



Extract fan first floor bathroom does not work

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Install humidity controlled large extract fans in the bathrooms and in the kitchen.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £750 to £1,500; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

### 8.0 Poplar trees growing close by

Note, there are Poplar trees growing close by to the rear of the property (not within your land). Poplar trees are well known for having a large root system that can damage to properties.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to check the insurance with regard to the premiums you will have to pay in relation to this. They also need to specifically request whether there has been any problems with regard to structural issues on the property; we note that next door looks to have been re-built to the gable end area and the rear of the property.



Poplar trees to rear

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**ANTICIPATED COST:** No cost, but you do need to ensure that the Local Authority or whoever owns the trees does regularly maintain them.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

### **9.0 Overlooked by the flats to rear**

The property is overlooked by the flats to the rear and gives little privacy.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Very difficult one, as you are quite simply overlooked and you need to be happy with the situation.

Please see the Outside Areas Section of this Report.



Property overlooked by surrounding neighbours to rear

### **The Ugly**

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this section providing you are happy with the characteristics of the property which we have mentioned throughout the report.

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## Other Items

### Commentary on items sent to us

We thank you and confirm receipt of a letter from xxxxxx Solicitors.

The poignant issues that we pick up from this letter is the Planning Application dated xxxx, that your solicitor states shows the conservatory, that there have been no gas safety records since July xxxx, which obviously needs updating (Gas Safe was being run by CORGI at this time). There was maintenance on the boiler on xxxxx, also on July xxxx. It indicates that a landlord was present at the time meaning that the building was leased out.

They have a xxxxxx damp report from March xxxx and damp proof report from March xxxx. We often find with these where ownership transfers that there is a process that has to be followed for the guarantee to continue.

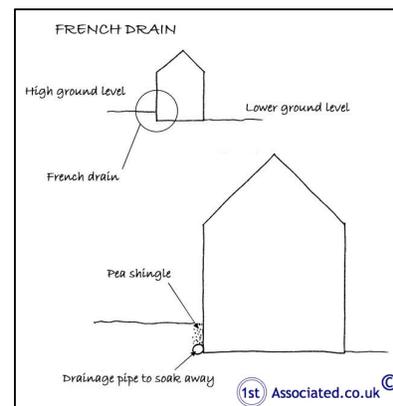
We do not believe that the chemical damp proof guard that Wood Guard suggested is the correct solution as we believe walls of this era should be allowed to breathe. Xxxxxx should be aware that in this era of property damp proof courses were never originally installed and the lime mortar construction of the walls allowed them to breathe.

It makes reference to a specialist retaining wall tanking.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that your solicitor writes to Xxxxxx advising them of the change in ownership of the property and confirm they are happy to continue their guarantee and indeed that they are still in business.

### XXXX woodworm report

The xxxxxx woodworm report refers to flight holes appear to be old and no longer active and not able to inspect sub-floors. We would comment on the sketch that identifies high ground levels, we would recommend that a French drain be added (see sketch) rather than a chemical damp proof course.



Example of a French drain

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The information we saw was a quotation and not, as far as we could see, confirmation that the work had been completed.

XXXX Damp Proofing Company Report – March – xxxx

Whilst the comments note there was no dampness found it again recommends the drilling and injecting of an approved chemical damp proof course. This quite simply is the wrong course of action for this age, type and style of building but it is all that a damp proof company will ever recommend.

They referred to the use of a specialist rising damp plaster, which in our experience can be a problem as this simply holds back any dampness.

In summary, we feel that the work that has been carried out has not dealt with the cause of the problem but has dealt with the effect; the cause being the ground levels.

We note that there is a 30 year guarantee, this refers to the client. From our inspection of the property today we could argue that the guarantee is no longer in place as the conditions have not been met. We would also say that you should note the clause about the company being prepared to sign the remainder of the guarantee period to the new owners, subject to a re-assignment fee and the 30 day clause.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Again, we would speak ask your solicitor to write to the company in question.

We would add finally that dampness in this property depends on several things:

1. The time of year you are taking the readings.
2. Such things as cooking, etc, that have gone on in recent times
3. The occupancy level of the property

as these in themselves could result in condensation (not rising damp) occurring.

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## Energy Performance Certificate

These were simply not designed for properties of this age. The comment in the recommendation to internal or externally wall insulate of some £4,000 to £14,000 with a typical saving per year of £250 which we think with external insulation would give the planning department a heart attack and internal major alterations.

The replacement in the boiler with a new condensing boiler would also possibly mean replacement of the radiators due to the pressure differences, which would be double the indicative costs.

The solar heating recommendation of £4,000 to £6,000, with a £35 return per year, is interesting. Bearing in mind your location and the planning requirements we think this would be quite difficult to do. Replacing the single glazed glass windows again with double glazing again would be a difficult one to do planning wise and solar panels again would be difficult.

We would add that we do have major concerns about the recommendations that are being given in these reports on older properties not being appropriate and we are a strong believer in SPAB.org; the Society of Protection of Ancient Buildings and the research they are doing with regard to energy efficiency in older properties.

## F & F Content

We have not looked through this; we assume that is to be agreed between yourselves.

## The Floor Plan

This has the details of the floor plan adjusted. We will phone to go through these amendments with you, however our initial comments would be that damp proofing of the vault would be very expensive.

## Removal and relocation of walls at the base of the stairs

The stairs are considered a high risk fire area and as such need to be completely enclosed to stop the chimney effect, where fire transfers from one floor to the next. You need to ensure that your proposals enclose the staircase.

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## Property Information

This again is something your solicitor should deal with.

## The Works

A repeat of receipts seen previously.

We have rung you to try to talk about these matters and have left messages and will continue to call.

Moving on to more general information.

## Maintenance

It should be appreciated that maintenance has not been a high priority on the present occupier's. owner's mind. In addition to this there are some items that we would normally highlight defects in a modern property that effectively form part of an older property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair, for example redecorating is a major task, and a budget for such work must be allowed for as without it the property falls into disrepair relatively quickly and good maintenance will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

## Getting to know more about older properties

We would recommend that you go on a Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (often known as 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](http://www.SPAB.org)

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## 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

For the electrics we would recommend an Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) test and report, carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent, which is recommended whenever a property changes occupancy.

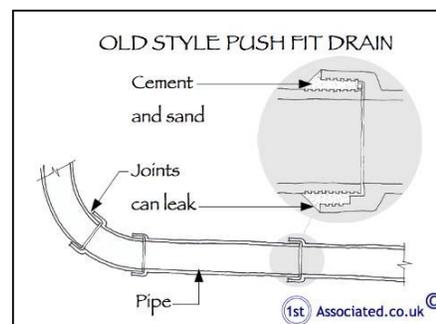
### Heating

We would 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. The boiler is relatively old but having said that it does depend on how regularly it has been serviced. We do find that modern boilers do not tend to last as long as new boilers and interestingly the recommendation within your energy efficiency report of changing to a condensing boiler we are finding that in our managed properties condensing boilers are the most expensive to maintain and are not the most energy efficient, but we would add that this is only in our practical experience of managing properties with them in and does not match the published data by the manufacturers.

Please remember that if you upgrade the boiler you may well have to upgrade the radiators as well due to the pressure changes and an old system not being able to cope with a new system.

### 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



Example of a push fit drain

camera report. Often these type of drains can leak and this leaking can then cause dampness into the walls; it is minor and what we would term a characteristic of this property, ensuring that these minor leaks do not become major leaks is the important thing.

### **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:** 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 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.

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## **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 doing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

We feel there has been a lack of understanding in the past of this older property which has led to well intentioned but incorrect repair work. In addition to this, in more recent times there has been a lack of repair work as far as we can see externally. There are some fundamental characteristics of the property that you need to be aware of and happy with, such as the Poplar tree to the rear and the garden being overlooked and the lower ground level likely to suffer from dampness/condensation to some extent.

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 as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for 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.



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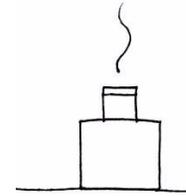
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# EXTERNAL

## CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLUES AND PARAPET WALLS AND ROOF WINDOWS



### Chimney Stacks

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

There are two rows of chimneys to this property, located one to the left and one to the right (all directions given as you face the property).

### Chimney One – located to the left hand side

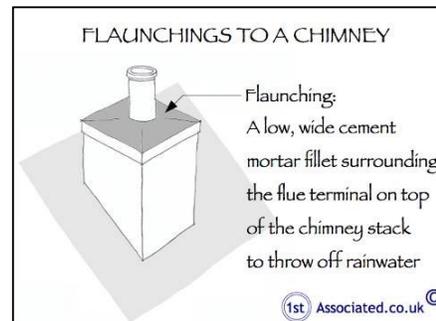
This chimney is large in length and is render finished with numerous chimney pots. From what we could see from roof level (we were perched on a ladder looking out of the roof window) some of the chimney pots are at angles, etc, and looked in slightly below average condition considering their age, type and style.



Left hand chimney

Unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunching, which holds the chimney pots in place, but we can see that some of the chimneys pots are at an angle.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** There is likely to be some work to the flaunchings and we would always check the flashings when work is being carried out.



Flaunching on the top of a chimney

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## Chimney Two – right hand side

This chimney is render finished. The render is starting to discolour indicating that dampness is getting into it. The chimney pots however are sitting straight and true unlike the left hand side. We would advise that we believe these to be in average condition.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** Periodically inspect the chimney.

Right hand chimney

### 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.

### Render Defined

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

## Parapet Walls

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

There is a parapet wall to the front of the property which is render finished, where we can see it from ground level and also some parapet walls to the sides where we could view it by the roof windows.

There is staining in it indicating that dampness is coming into it but this is not that unusual for this age, type and style of property. Unfortunately, the problem with having a vaulted/cathedral ceiling internally is that any dampness that does get through can be seen. There were no obvious visual signs of dampness getting in at the time of our inspection but with an internal ceiling such as the one mentioned the risk is higher.

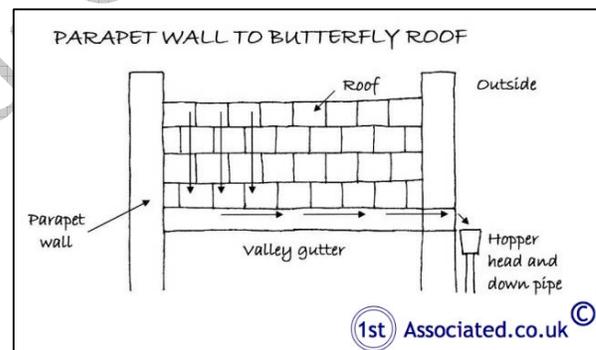


Parapet wall and stepped valley gutter

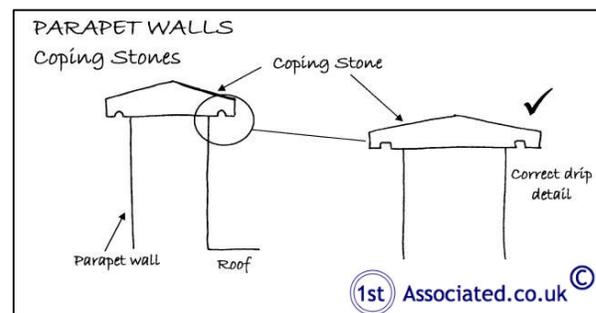
### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

Ideally, when carrying out work to the chimneys (by the summer of 2013) we would recommend that the parapet wall is looked at closely and possibly will need repairs/replacement to the coping stone.

Often we find on a close up inspection of the coping stones that the drip is not correctly positioned.



Parapet wall on a butterfly roof



Coping stones on a parapet wall

Finally, we were only able to see approximately 80% of the parapet wall, therefore we have made our best assumptions based upon what we could see. A closer inspection may reveal more.

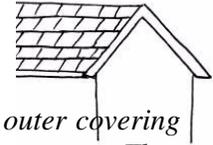
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# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



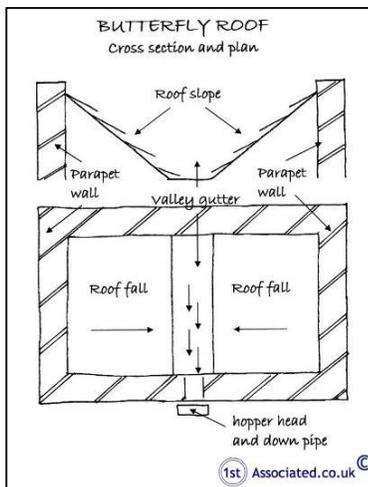
The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.

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

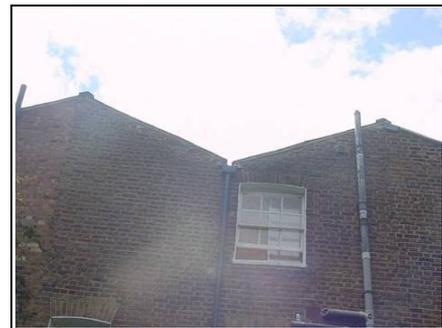
We will consider the roofs in two areas; the main roof and low level roofs.

## Main Roof

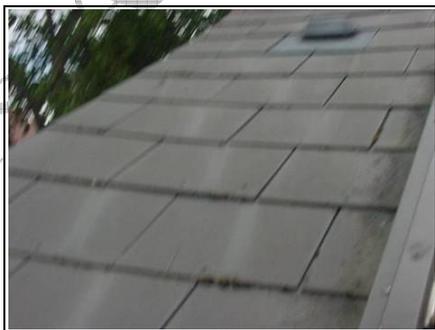
The main roof is a butterfly roof which is pitched and clad with manmade slates and, from the top floor bedroom via a ladder through the roof window, we could see inspect the roof visually and this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. The problem with a manmade slate such as this is the wind can catch it and displace the slates, however most damage tends to occur when someone goes onto the roof to inspect the parapet walls or to check the valley gutter, or something similar.



Butterfly roof



Butterfly roof viewed from rear



Manmade slates



Air vent on roof

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There is some minor moss starting to grow on the tiles which tends to always happen with a manmade slate. We were pleased to see the lead flashing where the roof meets the parapet wall on the chimneys.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

### Valley gutters

We were pleased to see there was a stepped lead flashing valley gutter. We see these rarely; perhaps one in twenty times, but this is how valley gutters should be detailed. There is sufficient fall to get the rainwater away, having said that you still do need to clean them occasionally, or flush them through by running water through them. The hopper head at the end of the valley gutter does tend to be a problem as these do tend to overflow, which is why we have recommended replacing it ultimately with a hopper head with an overflow section built into it.



Butterfly roof with stepped valley gutter



Valley gutter

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to regularly maintain the valley gutter as it is a common problem within butterfly roofs that these leak, particularly along what is known as the spine beam which is the central valley gutter area.

Please note we not have not had the benefit in this instance of being able to view the valley gutter from within the roof as the ceilings in the building follow the line of the roof.

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## **Roof Windows**

**(Known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)**

The property has three purpose made roof lights, which looked in average condition. They are set within the pitch of the roof, sometimes known as a cathedral ceiling. We could not see any major dampness staining around them. Whilst there is an extract fan in the shower room area the addition of the roof windows really allows good ventilation of this area.



Roof window



Roof window above shower

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

## **Party Walls**

The party wall relates to shared items, such as chimneys and fire walls (that are hidden). If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

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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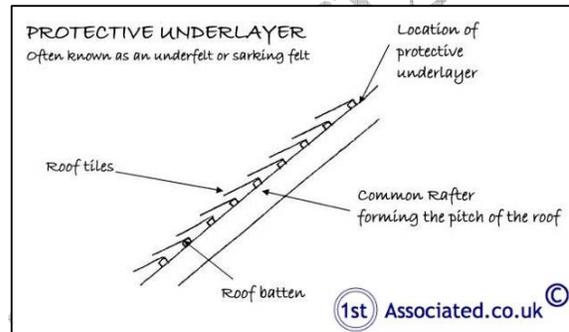
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Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks, parapet walls and roof windows from the parts we could see we could see above roof level. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of 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.

### **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.*



Sketch of protective underlayer

We were not able to access the roof space so we cannot comment on whether there is a protective underlayer, although given there is a modern manmade slate we would expect there to be a protective underlayer.

The information you have sent through does not mention anything in relation to the re-roofing of the property. Originally this would have had a natural quarried slate roof, probably not having a protective underlayer.

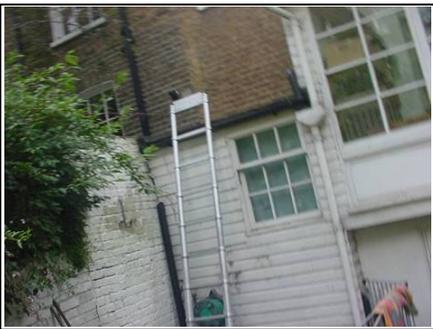
## Low Level Roofs – Single Storey Rear Roofs

### Flat roof over toilet area

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

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

The flat roof is covered with asphalt. It has moss growing on it, which may cause dampness to enter the property. We believe it is leaking from the damp readings we got internally.



Ladder access to view flat roof



Leaking flat roof covered with moss



Flat roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It can be a problem hunting around for a leak on a flat roof so we would suggest a new coat is applied to the entire roof.

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

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

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## Conservatory Roof

The conservatory roof is covered with glass. It has moss covering on it. We were pleased to see lead flashings around it, although the timber is deteriorating which cause leaks to occur.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As you will see in the conservatory section there are fairly major repairs to the conservatory required.

All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Flat roofs have been inspected from ground level or via the roof window on the top floor.



Conservatory roof

Finally, 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.

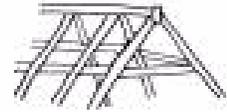
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## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



### **(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**

Due to the way the roof is built there is no roof access (which is common for all roofs built in this manner).

#### **Roof Structure**

With this sort of roof structure we would expect a timber frame.

#### **Roof Timbers**

We would normally inspect the roof structure for:

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

In this instance we have not been able to inspect them.

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## **Fire Walls**

We would also normally be able to inspect the fire walls from within the roof space, but we have not been able to inspect them in this instance.

### Fire Walls Defined

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

## **Ventilation**

We can see plastic mushrooms which are a venting system from the 1970's/1980's which now tend to be superseded as we use a breathable felt, but it is good to see and does indicate that some thought has been given to the roofing. We would comment that depending upon the ventilation level you may have solar gain during the summer (it is amazing how hot a black manmade slate can get) and equally in the winter if the roofs are not well insulated you can get thermal heat loss.



Air vent on roof

## **Insulation**

Again, we were unable to access, but please see our comments in the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report with regard to heat gain during the summer and heat loss during the winter.

## **Electrical Cables**

These no doubt will be run in the roof but we simply could not see them.

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

Finally, we would reiterate we have not been able to view the roof.

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# HOPPER HEADS, GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



*The function of the hopper heads, 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.*

## Hopper Heads, Gutters and Downpipes

The main butterfly roof has a hopper head and downpipes, all located to the rear and is in plastic. We often find that plastic hopper heads are too small and do overflow and need regular cleaning, which is relatively difficult/dangerous as you have to literally get on the edge of the roof to clear them.



Plastic hopper head and downpipe from the main butterfly roof



Gutters and downpipes from the conservatory roof



Gutters full of leaves

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We much prefer a slightly larger hopper head with an overflow on it. As you can see from the photo on the right, the basics of maintenance need carrying out such as clearing the leaves from the gutters.

We are sure there are some minor leaks that most people will be happy to live with providing repairs are carried out in the next six to twelve months.

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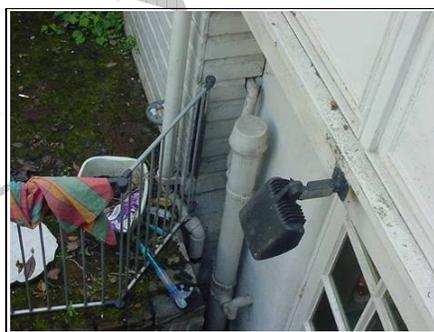
We would always recommend you stand outside the property next time it rains heavily and see how well the drains cope with the rainwater particularly looking at the guttering and the joints. We would also recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

### **Soil and Vent Pipe**

The property has plastic soil and vent pipes. There is one that goes up to roof level and a second one with what is known as a Dergo valve, which is the trade name for an air inlet valve which is a one way vent.



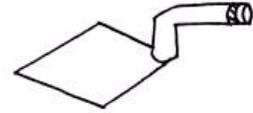
Gutters need clearing



Dergo valve or soil and vent pipe between lower ground and upper ground floors

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

# WALLS



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

The walls are constructed mainly of Flemish Bond brickwork.

## Brickwork

The property is built in a brick originally in a lime mortar in what is known as Flemish bond brickwork.

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

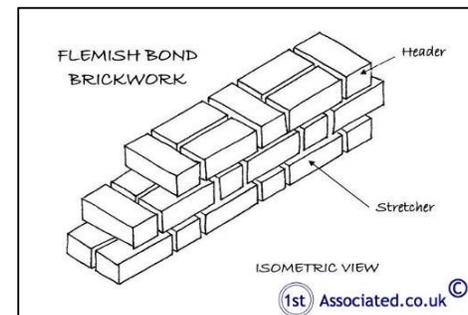
The solid external walls may be liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon their condition and their exposure to the weather. External faces should be kept in good condition.

Before the 19th Century, the practice of building timbers into external walls was almost universal. These were known as bonding timbers. They are of course prone to rot as solid walls allow dampness through. Unfortunately, without opening up the structure, we are unable to confirm if this is the case.

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



Flemish bond brickwork



Flemish Bond brickwork

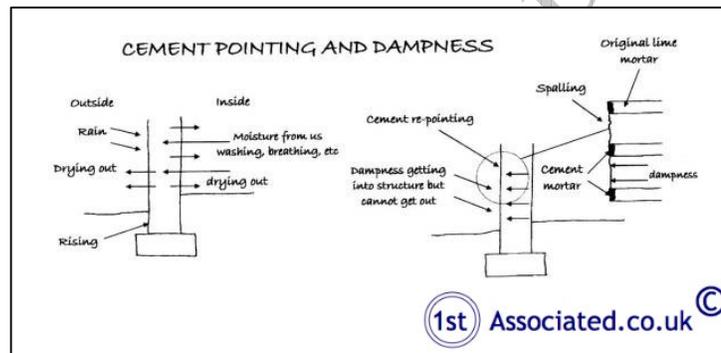
Next door looks to have been partly re-built and this can affect your property.



Next door partly re-built

## Re-pointing

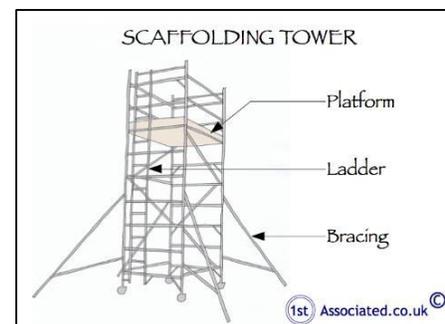
Re-pointing to some extent on this age of property is on going. We would comment that we are getting damp meter readings to the rear of the property which may be because it is not getting a good level of sunlight and the dampness simply is not dissipating.



Cement pointing and dampness sketch

It may be because some of the pointing needs re-pointing. Having stood and stared at the wall there are no obvious major areas of re-pointing, by major we mean a metre or so square. It should be a case of having a scaffold up against the wall and carrying out ad hoc repairs. The problem with this is that scaffolding is expensive.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that you purchase your own tower scaffold for this sort of property. On final reviewing of this report we would comment that it may be very awkward to get a scaffold tower up to the rear of this property due to the configurations of the rear low level roofs, particularly the conservatory roof which will need to be removed and the tower



Example of a tower scaffold  
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scaffold to fit within it. Therefore, if you are thinking of getting a tower scaffold you need to bear in mind these restrictions.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £500 to £1,000 for a good tower scaffold with appropriate safety legs, etc.

This will give your bricklayer a good basis to work from and it has to be given some thought as to how he does access the rear, for example you may have to take the conservatory roof off.

### **Timber Lintels**

It should be remembered that in this age of property timber lintels were a standard detail, but they do rot particularly when they are in walls that get damp, such as these solid walls, so do keep an eye out for defects in the windows.

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

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the brickwork / 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**

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar.

## **London Clay**

As with most properties in the London area, this property stands on London Clay. It is therefore more susceptible than most should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in London properties.

## **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. 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 always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property. We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property. As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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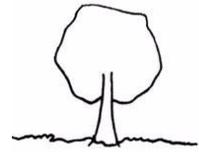
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# TREES

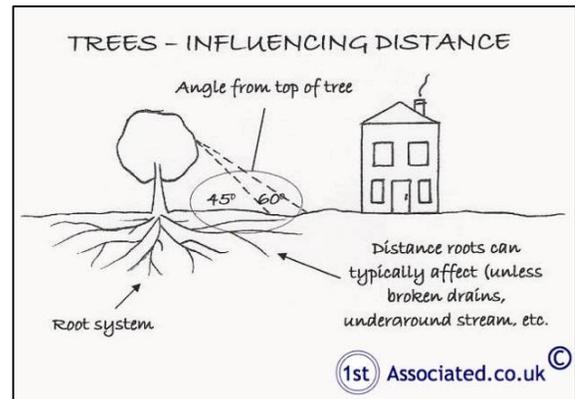
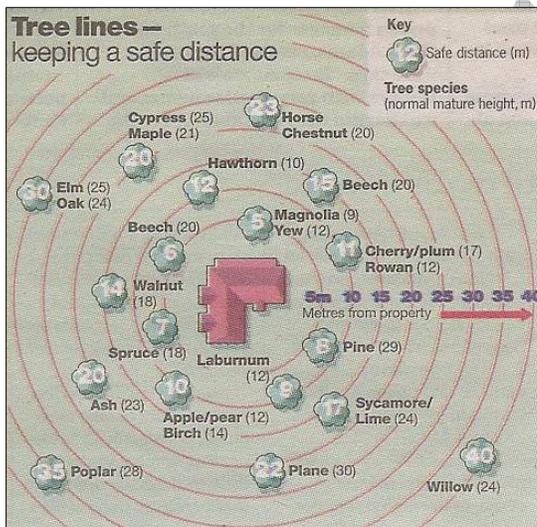


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are a line of Poplar trees to the rear within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the property. These are on other people's land on what looks to be Local Authority built housing.



Poplar trees to rear



Influencing distance of trees to a house

## 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.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal adviser needs to check and confirm that the Local Authority carry out regular maintenance to the trees as they do have a well known root system that can damage properties. Having said that, if the tree and the house have been together for a long time they tend to accommodate each other, but for example in 2012 when we started off the year without much rain trees were hunting for water which, from what we understand it, meant that their root system spread (we are not an arboriculturalist).

If the Council do not give reassurance with regard to tree maintenance then it will be worth employing an arboriculturalist to advise further.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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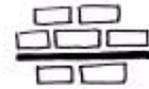
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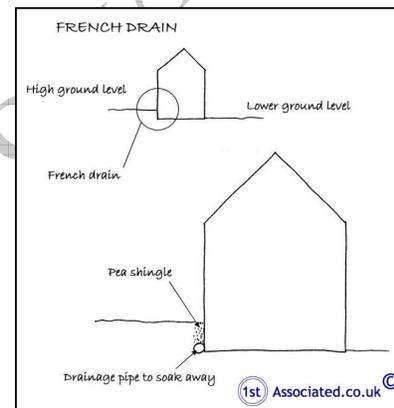
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## DAMP PROOF COURSE



*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 this age of property it is unlikely to have originally had a damp proof course (DPC). You have provided us with lots of information relating to DPC's inserted. We would never recommend chemical DPC's as this type of property needs to breathe, however we are where we are and it now makes it quite difficult as to what to do with regard with dampness. Our first thought with regards to dampness is still to get it away from the property, which is why we prefer a French drain type solution.



Example of a French drain

Presently, the areas that are likely to suffer are to the very front and very rear of the property. The report talks about tanking, this can take many different forms and until the structure is opened up we cannot really comment further. We are more than happy to comment on any photographs that you email to us or carry out a return visit when the property is opened up and exposed.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

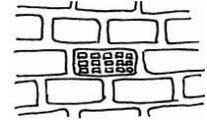
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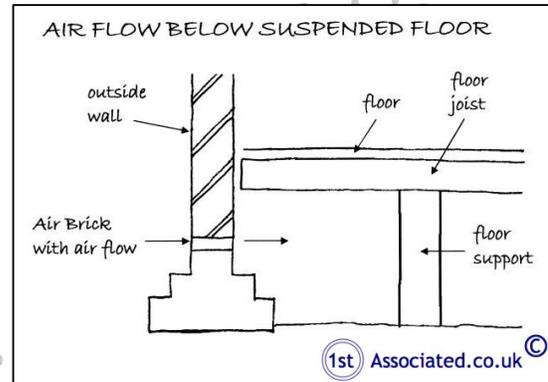
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## AIRBRICKS



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

To the lower ground floor you have a timber boarded floor which has probably been cross-battened as opposed to being a traditional suspended timber floor. What we would not understand from the information forwarded to us, was if the tanking was just to the walls or to the floor as well. If the tanking is not to the floor then it does to some extent make tanking to the walls pointless as the dampness will just get underneath and through the floors.



Air flow under a suspended floor

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This is why we are recommending a section of the floor is lifted up to confirm the construction and also check if there is any dampness there.

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

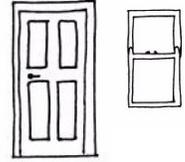
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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Fascias and Soffits

The main property does not have any fascias and soffits as it has parapet walls, however to the rear to the conservatory and to the flat roof there are some fascias and soffits. There are painted timber. The ones to the conservatory are rotten; you can see in the photo that the pen is pushing through them.

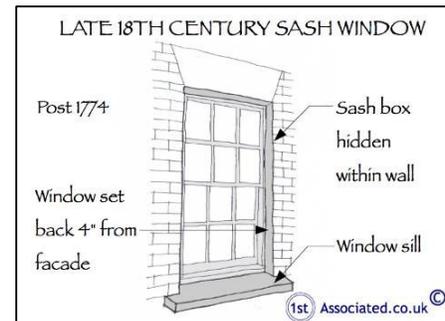


Pen pushing into deteriorating fascias and soffits

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace fascias and soffits. To do this you will need to remove the gutters and downpipes. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Windows and Doors

The property has single glazed timber sliding sash windows. To the top floor we can see good quality secondary glazing.



Sketch showing a late 18<sup>th</sup> Century sash window

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Four timber sliding sash windows



Cast iron in front of window  
rusting slightly



Close up of top floor sliding  
sash window



Good quality secondary glazing on  
the top floor

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Generally the windows are in average condition but would benefit from a redecoration in the summer of 2013.

#### General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

If you have not lived in a property with sliding sash windows previously, you should be aware that typically they are draughty and rattle. There is no easy way to eliminate this problem. In our experience, a general ease and adjustment of the windows and the addition of a plastic tube draught sealer (available from most DIY stores) and regular redecoration is the best option to minimise the draughtiness of the windows in this case. Horizontal Sliding Sash Windows (sometimes known as York Windows).

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## **Mullion and transom construction conservatory window**

The conservatory has a relatively thin double glazing in it. The thing with double glazing in this type of thin mullion and transom construction window is the weight so you do need to ensure it is kept in good condition.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to repair the conservatory as soon as possible.



Double glazed conservatory window

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. In this case

Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees with regard to the conservatory, although the information supplied does say the conservatory was built before they arrived. Generally it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

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.*

Painting is very important on a property of this age as it helps seal the property and keep it watertight. There is quite a bit of paintwork to the property at high level which can be expensive to access if the paintwork cannot be carried out from within.

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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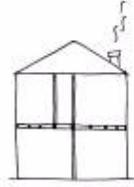
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# INTERNAL



## CEILING, 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.*

### Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are predominantly plasterboard although there may be some lath and plaster remaining. Please see the photos below.



Ceiling rose lower ground floor, possibly original lath and plaster



Ceiling in central bathroom on first floor – there are leaks in the ceiling, likely to be modern plasterboard



Vaulted ceiling on top floor, likely to be new plaster



Pen indicates hairline cracks in top floor ceiling, again likely to relate to plasterboard

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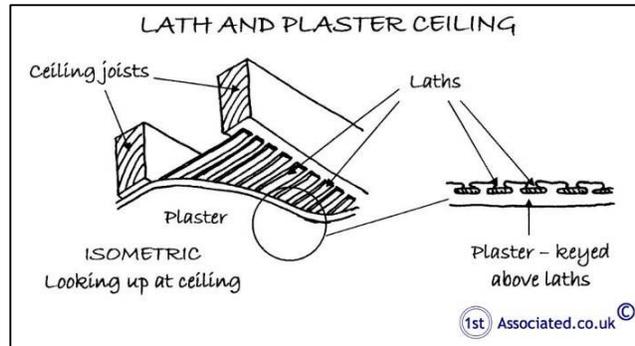
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### Lath and Plaster Defined

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.



Lath and plaster ceiling sketch

### 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.

### Dampness coming through

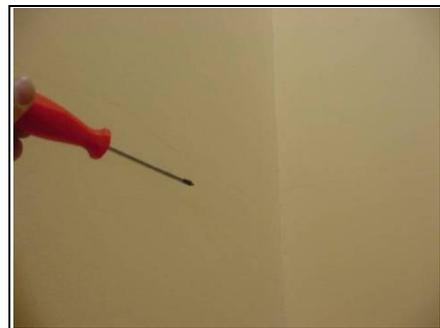
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

### Internal Walls and Partitions

These are, we believe a mixture of solid and studwork construction. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess. There are various cracks throughout, some relate to age and others relate to dampness getting in. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Cracking in first floor lounge



Hairline cracks top floor

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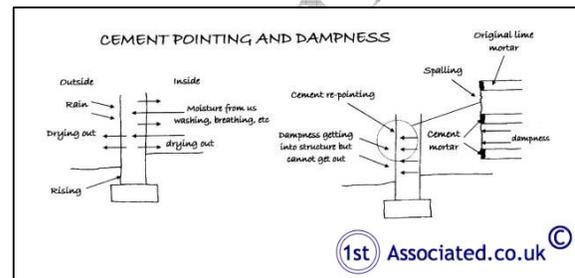
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## Perimeter Walls

Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. We now believe they have been skimmed over with a gypsum plaster and in the lower ground floor area for example there have been tanking and specialist damp proofing plasters/renders which are often very hard and do not allow the property to breathe as it should.

Just to remind you about how a property should breathing and how it has been sealed up with the use of tanking and these modern style plasters and renders.

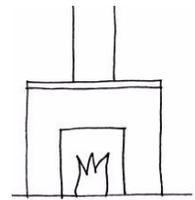


Cement pointing and dampness

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

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

# CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

The chimney breasts are located to the left hand side (all directions given as you face the front of the property).

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



Fireplace to rear in lounge

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.

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 and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

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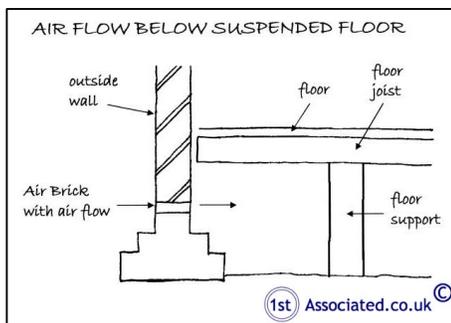
# FLOORS



*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.*

## Lower Ground Floor

The floors to the front of the property are suspended timber floor or a sprung floor. Our concern is that there may be some rot underneath. We feel it is more likely that the floor is cross-battened than a traditional suspended timber floor, but nevertheless we have added a sketch just to show you this example of suspended floor construction.



Air flow under a suspended floor



Flooring to lower ground floor

## Below Ground Level

Our biggest concern with the lower ground floor is that it is level to/below ground level.

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



Threshold bar between front area and front lower ground floor

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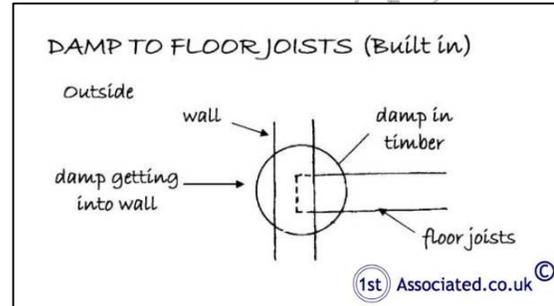
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## Upper Ground Floor, First Floor and Second Floor

We have assumed that the upper ground floor and first and second floors construction are joist and floorboards with embedded timbers as this is typical in this age of property.

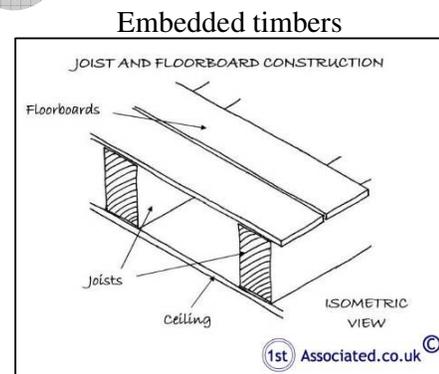
### Embedded Timbers

Embedded timbers offer lateral restraint and support within properties such as this but over the years they can rot. Please see the sketch. Without opening up the walls we cannot confirm this, however we have looked the main walls for bowing, etc and do not see any excessive bowing.



### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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



Joist and floorboard construction

### Top Floor Room

We would just comment that the top floor room have vaulted ceilings/cathedral ceilings, which follow the pitch of the roof. This means we have not been able to view the plaster from within the roof as we normally would.

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

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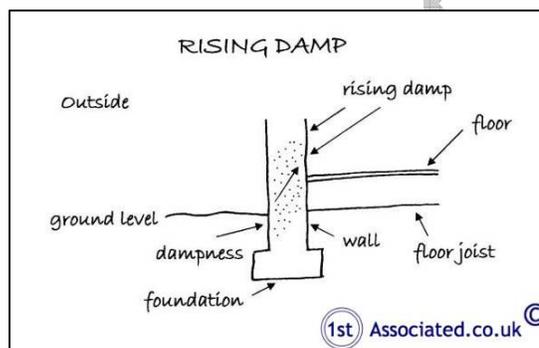


# DAMPNESS

*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. There is a strong argument that true rising damp very rarely is found.*



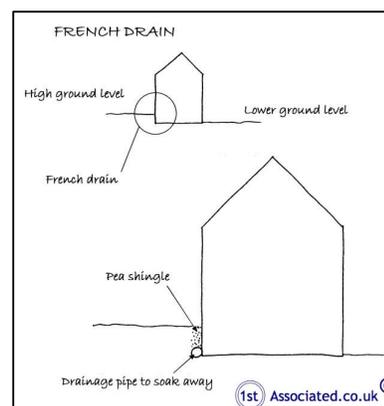
Rising damp sketch

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we were getting minor damp meetings at the base of the property. We believe this is a combination of condensation and the ground levels externally to internally being the same, or above them, particularly for example to the rear of the property. Our solution to this would be to add a French drain rather than any of the chemical treatments as we like buildings to breathe.



Testing for rising damp

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see the Executive Summary and Appendices



Example of a French drain

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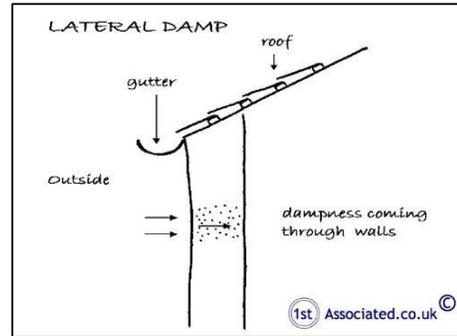
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## **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

*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 damp meter on the external walls. We have found minor dampness, with the exception of where it appears to be coming in via the rear flat roof and via the pointing to the rear of the property.



Sketch of lateral dampness

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



Testing for lateral dampness

## **Condensation**

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

With all properties with a lower ground floor there is to some extent condensation occurring unless there is good extraction. Within this property we would recommend adding good extraction to the lower ground floor and around the kitchen area, ideally with humidity controlled extract fans which we recommend are added as soon as possible.

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 and bathrooms

Just to reiterate, we would comment that a way of helping to reduce condensation is to have good large extract fans with humidity controlled thermostats within the kitchens and bathrooms which are moisture generating areas.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens and bathrooms.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.



Extract fan doesn't work and will cause condensation throughout the structure

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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 original doors have been replaced with stripped timber panel doors which are popular in this style of property. We can see that quite a few of them do not fit properly, we assume this is either from minor movement in the property or bad workmanship when the new doors were hung.



Stripped panel door



Rear bedroom where movement can be seen in the door frame



Fire door to entrance to top floor with intumescent strip



Perco fire door closer removed

### Perco Door Closer Defined

This is a central door closer that acts as a fire break closing the door and stopping the transfer of fire.

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## **External staircase into the property**

We found dampness underneath this, as we always do. The only way to stop it is to damp proof the steps using a good asphalt, but to some extent you need to accept that this sort of area is always going to have some dampness, including the vaulted areas.



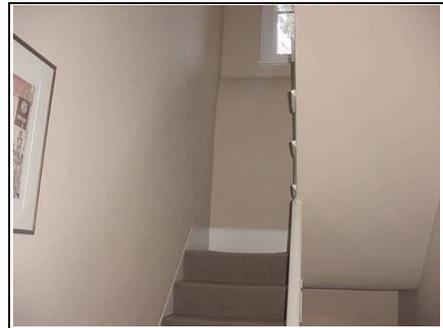
Cracking under stairs



Damp under stairs

## **Internal Staircase**

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



Staircase

## **Kitchen**

We found the kitchen in average to below average condition, subject of course to some wear and tear as one would expect. It was very cluttered when we inspected it and would certainly look different with the units removed.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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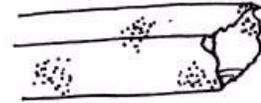
Old oven



Kitchen sink

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

## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

### **Dry Rot**

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

We would draw your attention to what looks like what once was a fruiting body of dry rot found in the vault.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary about fruiting body of dry rot in lower ground floor



Possible fruiting body of dry rot in lower ground floor

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## 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 seen wet rot to the conservatory, and it is likely to have wet rot in the floor joist ends and possibly the spine beam that forms one of the main beams to the butterfly roof.

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

## Woodworm



*Active woodworm can cause significant damage to timber. There are a variety of woodworm that cause different levels of damage with probably the worst of the most well known being the Death Watch Beetle. Many older properties have woodworm that is no longer active, this can often be considered as part of the overall character of the property.*

The roof / floor is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the floor we could see old signs of woodworm but we do believe it to be old woodworm. We could only truly confirm this when the floor is opened up but we are fairly certain.

We would also refer you to your old woodworm reports as well.



Old woodworm in lower ground floor

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

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

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

## **INTERNAL DECORATIONS**



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

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

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

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# **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**



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

## **HIPs**

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

## **Roofs**

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance we simply cannot see in the roof. Please see our comments with regard to the dangers of solar gain and thermal heat loss.

## **Walls**

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space – best left alone.

## **Windows**

The windows are single glazed and therefore will have poor thermal properties.

Whilst the conservatory is double glazed it can be closed off from the main house so we have not considered it here.

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## Services

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

## Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see. We have read the comments with regard to the energy reports and simply do not agree with them being appropriate for this age of property.

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

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

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

*or 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  
HTTP//www.youtube.com/watch?v=UR8wRSp21Xs*

*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*

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.

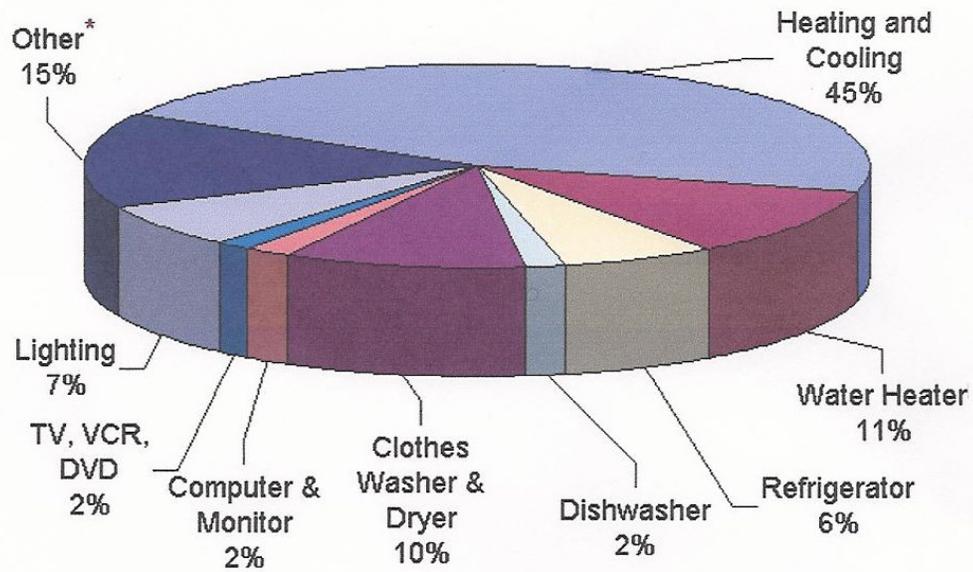
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## What does my energy bill pay for?



\* "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

A security system has been installed. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further.



Alarm in entrance hallway



Alarm system

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age this is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.



Smoke detector

**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 worst case scenario obviously devastating.

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## 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.

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 not noted asbestos.

This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time.

Our insurance company requires us to advise that we are not asbestos surveyors.

**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.

## ELECTRICITY



*It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.*

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

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## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the front right hand corner of the lower ground floor. The fuse board looked dated 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 test and report (IEE) should be carried out by a 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 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

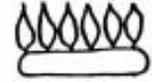
For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

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*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 has mains gas. The consumer unit is located in the vaulted area, partly under the stairs and under the road.

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



Gas meter under stairs

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

# PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

## Water Supply

We were advised by the owner that the controlling stopcock is located under the kitchen sink, although we did not actually see it.

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners to show you where it is.

## 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 pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

## Cold Water Cistern

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

## Hot Water Cylinder

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



Modern hot water cylinder  
in the rear bedroom 77

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## **Plumbing**

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

## **Heating**

The wall mounted boiler was located in the kitchen and is a Potterton profile boiler.



Potterton profile wall mounted boiler

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

## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

The owner / occupier turned at our request turned on the heating at low level for approximately ten minutes. We checked the radiators on the and these were warm.

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.

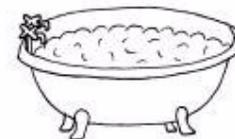
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# **BATHROOM**



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

## **Internal bathroom at first floor level**

The property has a three piece bathroom suite on the first floor, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC. There looks to have been a leak from the bathroom above.

## **Central circular shower room at top floor level**

There is a circular shower room on the top floor, consisting of WC, shower and wash hand basin, which look in average condition, subject to some day-to-day wear and tear, as one would expect. However, there look to be leaks from this shower room going to the bathroom below.

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

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

## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

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

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

*For your information, inspection chambers / 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 one inspection chamber / manhole.

#### 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, located to the rear

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.



Rear manhole

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We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting covers 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 age of property it is likely to be into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush to work.

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

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

## OUTSIDE AREAS

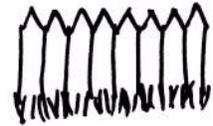
The main focus of this report has been on the main building. We have taken a cursory inspection of the outbuilding and would be happy to return and carry out a survey of so required.

### PARKING



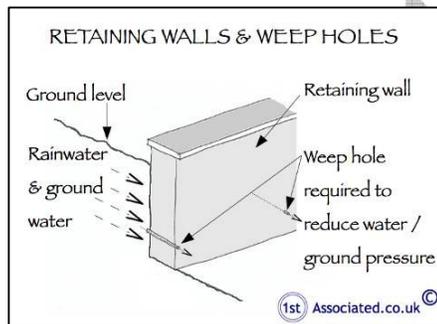
Parking is available on roadside in nearby roads on a first come first serve permit basis. There are also parking meters.

### EXTERNAL AREAS



#### Front Area

There is a small patio area to the front.



Sketch of weep holes in a retaining wall



Front patio area

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ideally we would recommended weep holes are added to the wall to take away the pressure of any water.

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There are vaults to the front of the property that you have asked about dry lining.



Rotten entrance door



Outside storage which limited our view

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would not recommend this as they are underground and very hard to keep watertight. It depends how watertight you need to keep them and we would suggest we have a discussion on this as we have not met you at the property.

## Rear Garden

There is a reasonable sized rear garden. We did note some moss which indicates it does not get much sunlight and it is overlooked.



Rear garden



Moss in rear garden



Property overlooked to rear

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

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

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

## **Neighbours**

### **Left Hand Neighbours**

No-one was in when we knocked during the course of our inspection

### **Right Hand Neighbours**

No-one was in when we knocked during the course of our inspection

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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) Roof and similar renewals.
  - iv) Central heating installation.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
  - vii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
  - viii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall 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](http://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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It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

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

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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 and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

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## **WEATHER**

It was a mild summer's day 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 that we are not local surveyors to this area and are carrying out the work without the benefits of local knowledge on such things as soil conditions, aeroplane flight paths, and common defects in materials used in the area etc

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited:

as we did not open up the floors generally

and we didn't have the benefit of meeting you at the property to talk about your specific requirements.

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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. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. French Drain Article
4. Rising damp, is it a problem?

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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 - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.
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](http://www.landreg.org.uk)

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

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

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

[www.halifax.co.uk](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://www.nationwide.co.uk)

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

[www.hometrack.co.uk](http://www.hometrack.co.uk)

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

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[www.motleyfool.co.uk](http://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](http://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](http://www.zoopla.co.uk)

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

[www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk](http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk)

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

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# French Drain

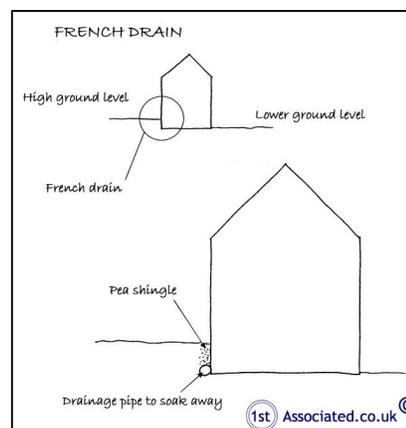
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

We are finding where we are asked to look at damp walls and damp floors or damp problems in general that commonly it is because the external ground level is higher than the internal ground level, or airbricks have been blocked, or simply paving slabs, decking or briquettes have been used to form a patio area. This then discharges any rainwater against the building. Quite often the solution is to add a French drain.

Whilst French drains are quite simple and are basically nothing more than trenches filled with gravel, although there is a bit more to them, as we will explain, they are almost a D.I.Y. job for most people and they are relatively easy to install and are low cost. However, you do need some care and attention, otherwise you can install what we have heard referred to, as the French pond.

## What use is a French drain?

A French drain is a trench, the width of approximately six inches or 300 millimetres wide, or the width of your spade, and is approximately twice the depth, i.e. 12 inches or 300 millimetres. In most cases this will suffice, however, where there is a great deal of ground water you may wish to make the trench wider and deeper.



The French drain acts as an area where water soaks away quickly. We often recommend them close to building, but not next to the building, as this helps reduce the ground level and/or take any water that is directed at that area away. For example, where a patio has been put in place which aims any rainwater at part of the wall. As mentioned, whilst a French drain is a D.I.Y. job, it does need some understanding of how it works.

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### **French drains must be on a slope**

The piping that goes at the base of a French drain should be perforated or, as we did years ago for land drains, there should be gaps between each pipe. It should be set onto a bed of firm ground and the pipes should be on a fall to the drain. Whilst you should be able to ensure there is enough fall by sight, we also like the idea of rolling a marble from one end to the other.

You will then need to put the pipes down, fill the trench with half an inch, to an inch, of good sized gravel. You can leave it at that, or in addition you can cover with sand and then turf over. This is how a basic French drain is carried out.

### **The French drain system that we would recommend**

This would be as described, although we would add to the base an inch or two of gravel on to which the perforated drainage pipe will rest. It will then wrap around that drainage pipe filter fabric. This is to stop the holes in the perforated pipe from blocking up. By the way, the drainage pipe should be four to six inches/100 millimetres to 250 millimetres. We would then fill with gravel. In addition to this, we would add a silt trap and this is added in the run of the pipe and is very similar to a road gully (not that's of much use if you don't understand how a road gully works). The silt trap is a rectangular box with a pipe opening at each end. The drained water passes onto this and any particles sink to the bottom of the box and then the water travels on to the other side of the box, enabling you to feed into a drain.

These are usually made of glass reinforced polyester and have been available in this form since the mid-1980's. They are normally reinforced with a steel frame for additional strength and re-bedded in concrete.

### **The French pond!**

French drains will, over time, clog up, which is why we recommend using a filter fabric. However, even with this they will eventually clog up. Unfortunately, there is no dyno-rod equivalent, as it is normally fine sand, organic matter or clay that has clogged up the French drain. So, it is a case of digging it up and cleaning the pipework (or it may be quicker to just replace it), adding a filter fabric and re-filling the gravel.

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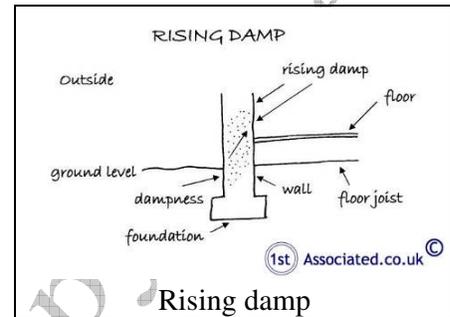
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# Rising Damp Is it a problem?

## Rising damp debate

Just Google search on the internet or many of the other well known search engines such as Firefox and Internet Explorer using the term No Such Thing as Rising Damp or the Rising Damp Myth and you will open your eyes to an amazing debate on rising damp. We thought we would do a round up of the views that we have come across and comment with our experience as a chartered building surveyor who carries out structural surveys and building surveys regularly.



## Reward of £50 for anyone finding genuine Rising Damp

We came across an article entitled Property and Rising Damp – No Such Thing which refers to independent research, as far as we are aware, carried out by Michael Parrot, Manager of Lewisham’s Housing Disrepair team who offered a £50 reward to anyone finding genuine rising damp. We have also seen consideration raising the reward for finding rising damp to £500. We are not sure whether it is still available but it certainly showed commitment!



A photo of a survey carried out with the house backing onto Grand Union Canal. Surely this should have rising damp?

The article on Rising Damp was written many, many years ago, in November 1997. As part of the article it is commented that they would like to remove the term rising damp from the building vocabulary. We would say if anything rising damp is better known today and what’s more it is used time and time again to either be the reason why a mortgage is not given or the reason why a sum of money is retained by the mortgage company. It is also used as a way to negotiate down the price.

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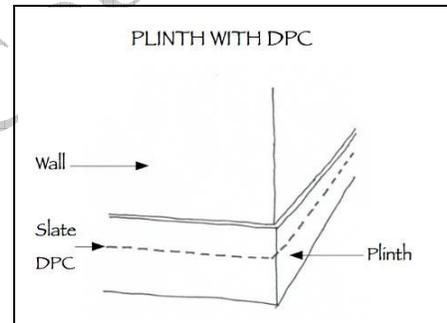
Another house backing onto a canal – will it have rising damp?



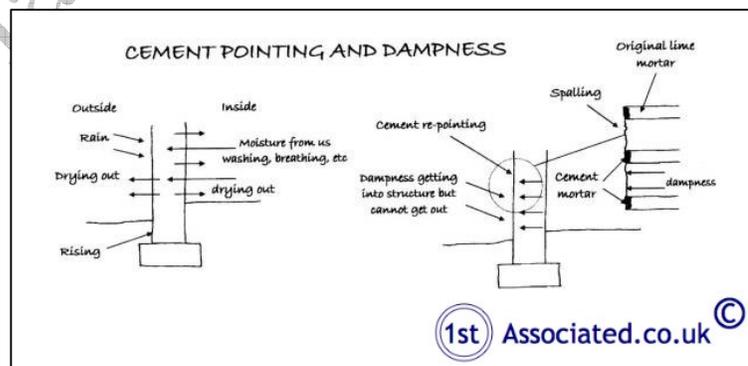
Walls of the house are literally in the canal

### What is a damp proof course?

With all this fuss about dampness, you may be wondering how the dampness is stopped. Normally in modern properties, this is post war properties, it is stopped by use of a damp proof course. Originally these were slate and then they were bitumen and more recently they have been plastic (of course!)



However prior to the war years we used a very different system and this is where we allowed properties to breathe. This is because they were often built with a lime mortar that allowed dampness to get into the wall but then also to breathe and evaporate or dissipate.



Nearly every good chartered building surveyor has a view on whether a damp proof course is necessary or not however we find that nearly everyone in the damp proof industry has the view that a damp proof course is necessary!

## **Let's talk to the Experts**

### **Building Research Establishment**

The Building Research Establishment or the BRE were once a Government research resource that looked at the building industry. Generally their information is considered to be very good and unbiased. We used to say that they were considered the research specialists in the building industry but we have had comments on previous articles that they are now purely a commercial concern and there are many others available. That aside, the Building Research Establishment does say there isn't any such thing as rising damp in articles, yet equally sell a lot of books on the subject of rising damp and also have carried out research for rising damp companies. All very confusing.

### **What is the BRE Digest 245?**

The BRE Digest is a document written by the British Research Establishment explaining about damp. We have a copy if you are interested in reading it.

## **Let's talk to the Users**

### **Moneysavingexpert.com**

Whilst we appreciate this isn't a specialist website and has lots of opinions and there are often conflicting comments, we do think this is a great website so if you haven't visited MoneySavingExpert.com we would recommend that you do.

There is a forum section which discusses the rising damp myth at length and Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors sometimes known as RICS and also how damp meters are not used correctly.

There are various comments which we believe are good common sense comments such as waiting for six months before doing anything, which we would say is generally a good thing with a house as nothing happens that fast.

There are people on the moneysavingexpert.com website who obviously work in the trade, who advise that they have installed damp proof courses and seen it working. There are also arguments that chemical damp proof courses are useless and others saying that they hold BBA Certificates and there are British Standards that recommend their installation.

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## The use or misuse of damp meters, often known by the trade name of Protimeters

If you search the web, there are many many views on the use of damp meters and Protimeters, Protimeter being the trade name used. Damp meters play such an important part in analysing dampness, (rightly or wrongly) that they are mentioned in the BRE Digest 245.



Damp meters



Checking for dampness with a Protimeter



Checking for damp with a Gann meter. Is it rising damp or is it condensation?



Dampness found using a Gann meter. Is this rising damp or a water leak?

## BBA Certificates

BBA Certificates are often quoted by the damp proof companies when advertising damp proof course. For those not in the industry you are probably asking what on earth are BBA Certificates. These are the British Board of Agreement Certificates and they rate various products including, we are advised by many damp proofing companies, that BBA Certificates are available for chemical damp proof courses. As we understand it, the BBA does test and report on all products and can be sponsored by a company, very much in the same way that the BRE can now have sponsored research carried out.

## Mortgage companies and dampness

Often you will find with a mortgage company who has carried out a valuation via its mortgage valuation chartered surveyors that they can ask that various sums of money are retained due to dampness. We have seen on most of these that they recommend you consult a damp proof specialist such as a member of the BWPDA (The British Wood Preserving & Damp-proofing Association) which are part of the Property Care Association.

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## **Qualifications and rising damp**

There is a number of qualifications and companies that you will come across, the BWPDA is probably the one most frequently mentioned within chartered surveyors reports but we also come across such qualifications as the CSSW (Certificated Surveyor in Structural Waterproofing) and the CSRT (Certificated Surveyor in Remedial Treatment).

There is also the role of trade institutes within the rising damp environment such as the Property Care Association. We are not certain whether they are a 'professional company' or if they are a promotional company for the damp proofing industry.

The RICS (Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors) is a professional body that represents the public's interests first as it is chartered and upholds standards for the chartered surveyors within it.

## **Rising damp Myth – the book by Jeff Howell**

What a great read this book is. Jeff Howell is an author of many books and a chartered building surveyor, chartered builder and ex-bricklayer who carried our research whilst lecturing at South Bank University in relation to rising damp and simply couldn't get the damp to rise.

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