JOB REFERENCE: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

Stanmore,
HA7

FOR

XXXXXXXX

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:
www.1stAssociated.co.uk
0800 298 5424

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

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

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.

REPORT FORMAT

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

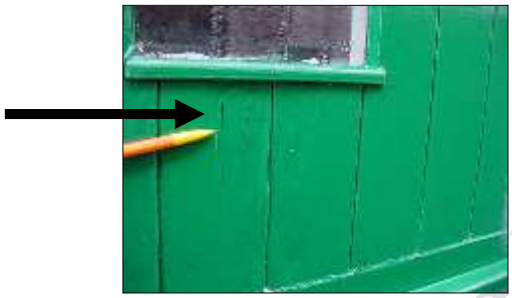
GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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.

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

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey semi-detached property located on a corner plot at the beginning of the road. The property has been extended to the rear, amended and altered over the years including a loft dormer conversion to the roof area.

Much of the garden at the front of the property has been given over to parking. To the rear of the property is a mature garden with large trees and a garage at the end with its own access (which is just past the bus stop).

We believe that the property was built in the 1950's/1960's If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1946	Winston Churchill gave his 'Iron Curtain' Speech
1948	Olympic Games held in London
1951	Truman signs Peace Treaty with Japan which ended WWII
1953	DNA discovered
1958	The first time ultrasound was available to examine unborn Babies
1959	UK postcodes introduced
1961	Berlin wall built
1964	The Queen gave birth to a son called Edward
1967	First heart transplant

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Front view

Rear View

Left hand view

Right hand view

Front garden (looking towards the house)

Rear garden

Street view

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

1) Entrance Hall/ Stairway
2) Through lounge with rear dining area (left)
3) Kitchen with breakfast area(rear right)

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

1) Bedroom (front left)
2) Bedroom (rear left)
3) Box Bedroom (front right)
4) Bathroom (rear right)

Top Floor

The top floor accommodation consists of:

1) Bedroom
2) En Suite shower room (rear right)

Outside Areas

The front garden has been mainly given over to parking and is surrounded by conifers. To the rear of the property there is a mature garden with a patio area, large trees and a pond. There is a garage to the end of the garden with its own small drive/access behind double wooden doors just past the bus stop.

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

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

Ground Floor

Hallway and stairs

Hallway

Through Lounge (front left)

Through lounge dining area (rear left)

Kitchen (rear right)

Kitchen breakfast area (rear right)

.

First Floor

Bedroom (front left)

Bedroom (front right)

Bedroom (rear left)

Bathroom (rear right)

Top Floor

Front of bedroom

Rear of bedroom

En-suite shower room
(rear right)

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

External

Chimneys:	One brick chimney. A rear chimney has been removed.
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with small concrete tiles (assumed)
Other Roofs:	Shallow pitched roof to the rear extension with roof windows
Main Roof Structure:	Hidden, assumed an original cut timber roof.
Gutters and Downpipes:	Cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron and plastic
Walls:	Pebbledash render with some brickwork (assumed).
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber
Windows and Doors:	Timber with double glazed units in timber frames and leaded lights

Internal

Ceilings:		Plasterboard possibly with some lath and plaster (assumed)
Walls:		Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor:	Suspended timber floor including the new extension (assumed)
	First Floor:	Joist and floorboards with embedded timbers (assumed)
	Top Floor:	Possibly back to back timbers to strengthen old ceiling joists or a steel frame has been added (assumed).Your legal Advisor to confirm this with the Local Authority/owners.

Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). The wall mounted Vaillant boiler is located in the kitchen and the 1970's /1980's electrics are under the stairs.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are 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 250 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) Older properties typically have more space than newer properties, both in the actual size of the rooms and the height of the rooms.

2.0) The property is presented very well.

3.0) The property has the advantage of being extended and enlarged.

4.0) There is off road parking and a garage albeit that most people never seem to keep a car in the garage.

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

The Bad

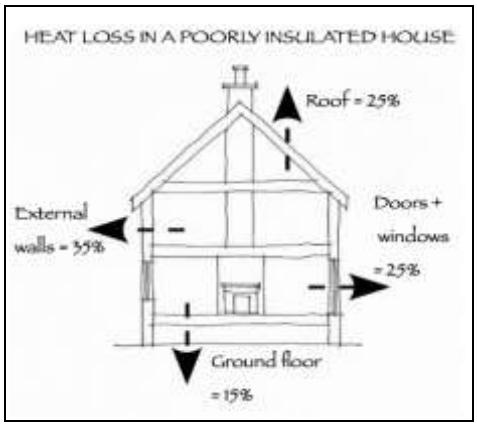
Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

1.0) Loft Conversion and hidden roof

With an older style loft conversion such as this it may not have been insulated and as such can suffer from solar heat gain during the summer months and heat loss during the winter months.

Rear of loft conversion

Thin walls in loft conversion
(en-suite shower room)



Heat Loss

ACTION REQUIRED: If this is going to be your main room we suggest at some point (perhaps just before re-decoration) that you drill or open up a small section of the roof to check the insulation levels.

Roof not viewed

We would also draw to your attention that we were not able to view the flat roof on the dormer. These are notorious for having problems.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would generally recommend that a roof access is formed into it so that you can actually access the roof to view it. We also recommend that at the same time insulation cut to falls is added to the roof and a high performance felt. This way you will deal with any roof problems in this area once and for all.

ANTICIPATED COST: £2,000 - £4,000 (two thousand to four thousand pounds).

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

2.0) Shallow pitch of rear extension roof

We are always slightly concerned when there is such a shallow pitch on a tiled roof as wind driven rain can get underneath it. From a visual inspection internally there are no visual signs of dampness coming in.

Shallow pitched roof to kitchen extension

ACTION REQUIRED: Keep all the gutters clear and remove moss and tree debris as the build-up can aid water getting into the roof.

Flashing where the extension meets the main building

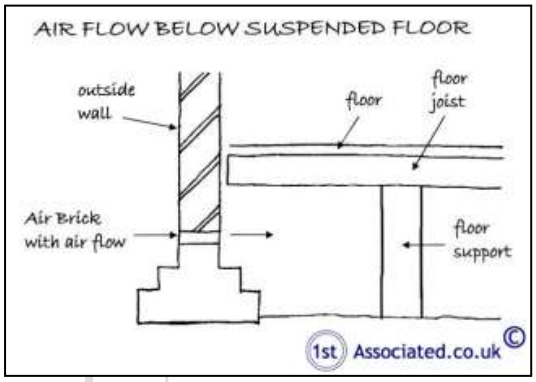
Shallow pitch of roof (remember to keep guttering around roof lights clear)

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

3.0) Suspended timber floor - does this floor have an acceptable air flow?

The property has a suspended timber floor. A suspended timber floor requires air movement underneath to minimise wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.

Air brick

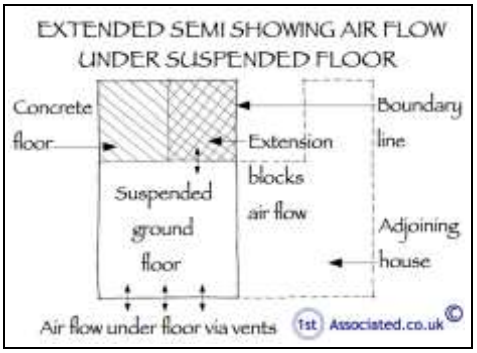


Suspended timber floor

Blocked air vents

Possibly due to the extension being added there do not seem to be sufficient air bricks to the property.

Patio doors with blocked air bricks



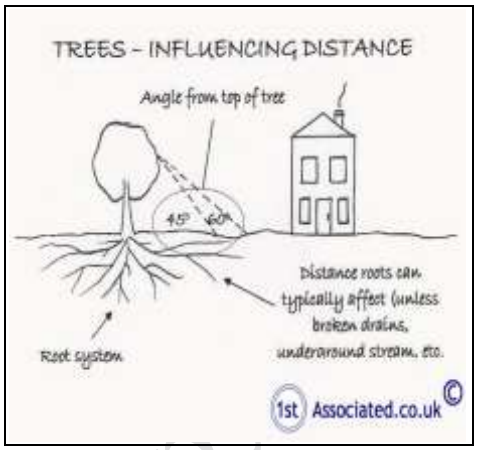
This sketch is not exactly the same as this property but it shows how the extension blocks the air flow

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that you double check that there are airbricks to both the front and the rear of the property to allow a through flow of air. Next time the carpets are replaced (or before 2014) we recommend you open up a section of the floor to check the condition of the timbers underneath.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

4.0) Trees

There are trees closer than most insurance companies would like and you may have to pay a premium because of this. We have personally found that where there is a mature tree and the house is relatively old, as in this case, then as long as the tree is well maintained then little damage occurs.



Influencing distance

However in this instance we can see roots are starting to get into the drainage system so these need to be cut back. This also indicates that the trees need to be lopped.


Trees to the front right hand side


Trees to the rear of the property

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor should specifically ask in writing if the owners have had problems with roots in the drains in the past. We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains to check if there are roots within them.

ANTICIPATED COST: £250 - £500; please obtain quotations.

Drain (front) with tree roots coming through
(not very clear in photo)

Drain (rear) with tree roots coming through

Tree roots coming through in the garden

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

5.0) Garage Roof

Within the garage we could see some mould occurring which indicates condensation is happening in this area.

Garage roof

ACTION REQUIRED: The roof is vented sufficiently from what we can see and it may simply be there is not enough general air movement in the garage. If this is the case you need to add some air bricks. We would also recommend that you cut back the bushes etc. that are starting to take over the rear of the roof and at the same time make good the parapet wall.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotations.

Mould coming through

Mould indicates condensation is occurring

Parapet wall needs re-pointing

Mastic coming away

Please see the Roofs and Outdoor Areas Sections of this Report.

6.0) Bus stop

There is a fairly active bus stop near to the access to the garage. The trees may or may not shelter the view of your property.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to check that you are happy with this.

Bus stop close to garage entrance

7.0) Services

Electrics

The electrics are slightly dated and better are available.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend replacement of the fuse board.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £250 - £500 (two hundred and fifty pounds to five hundred pounds); please obtain quotations.

Dated fuse board

We would also recommend increasing the number of socket points as there seemed to be a fair number of extension leads and adapters being used.

More socket points needed

Single panel radiators

This property has single panel radiators. These may not warm the property as you would wish.

ACTION REQUIRED: You may wish to add double panel convection radiators. It is best to live in the property for a while and establish if it is warm enough for you before you carry out any work.

Single panel radiator

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

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.

Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Maintenance

This type of property is relatively modern (i.e., less than one hundred years old) but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair. A budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in a good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

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.

Electrics

The fuse board is dated and better are available. 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

The heating is not to modern day standards. Combined with a possible lack of insulation in the property may mean it doesn't warm as quickly as you may wish. We would recommend that the heating system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer. Also check the insulation levels particularly in the dormer area.

Drainage

Please see our photographs earlier in the report showing some roots in the drains. These need to be cut back. For this reason we would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report to establish the condition of the drains to check if there are roots within them.

Water Supply

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

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

DIY/Handyman Type Work

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

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Building Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs.

For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £125 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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 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.

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.

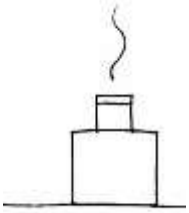
OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION

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.

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

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES, DORMER WINDOWS 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 is one chimney to this property and it is located to the left hand side but central of the two semi-detached properties and sits on the Party Wall as does the hog backed tile (all directions given as you face the property).

Chimney One - Left

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and no chimney pots. From what we could see, as we had a limited view, it looked in average condition considering its age, type and style.

Chimney (left)

There is a large aerial on the chimney supported by wires. In this case if the wire does get displaced it could cut into the brickwork, like cheese wire into cheese!

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

ACTION REQUIRED: Periodically inspect the chimney for weathered pointing.

Chimney removed

We spoke to the owners about this and they advised us that when the extension was carried out the rear chimney that used to vent the boiler was duly removed.

Chimney has been removed to the rear of the property

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.

Flues

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

The property has a metal flue leading from the boiler that is visible on the rear extension roof. Where it is through the roof there is a lead flashing (which we were pleased to see).

Flue from the boiler in the kitchen

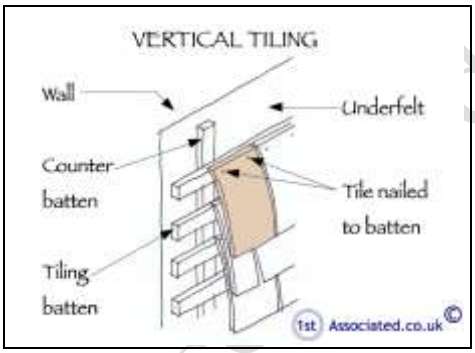
Dormer Windows

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

To the rear of the property a major dormer window has been added to allow for full height within the loft extension. The dormer window is made from a vertical tile with a felt roof (we could only see the edge of this). Our main concern about this is we cannot see the flat roof. What we could see seemed to be in average condition for its age, type and style.

Dormer window

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



Vertical tiling

Dormer window side

Roof Windows (known as roof lights or Velux windows which is the trade or generic name)

The property has four purpose made roof lights, two at the front of the main roof and two to the rear extension roof which all looked in average condition. The important factor with roof lights is the flashing around them.

Roof windows (front)

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!

Roof window to the rear extension

Roof window to rear extension roof

Roof window from within kitchen

Double check Local Authority approval has been gained

We would always recommend that your Legal Advisor double checks that full Local Authority approval has been obtained. In this particular case where there are roof lights to the front of the property they can sometimes be considered not acceptable by Local Authorities.

Party Wall

The party wall relates to shared items, such as chimneys, firewalls and hog backed tiles. 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.

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

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

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 three areas, the main roof, dormer roof and low level pitched roof.

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a small concrete tile (we are not one hundred per cent certain of this) and, from ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. With this age of roof there will usually be a few missing or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual.

Main roof

Hidden roof

Hog backed tiles between the two roofs that indicate they were put on at different times.

Main roof. Shallow pitch roof.

Looking down over the roofs from the dormer window

Moss

There is some moss gathering on the roof which if left to build up can block gutters etc. This often occurs where there are trees near or if partially shaded by trees.

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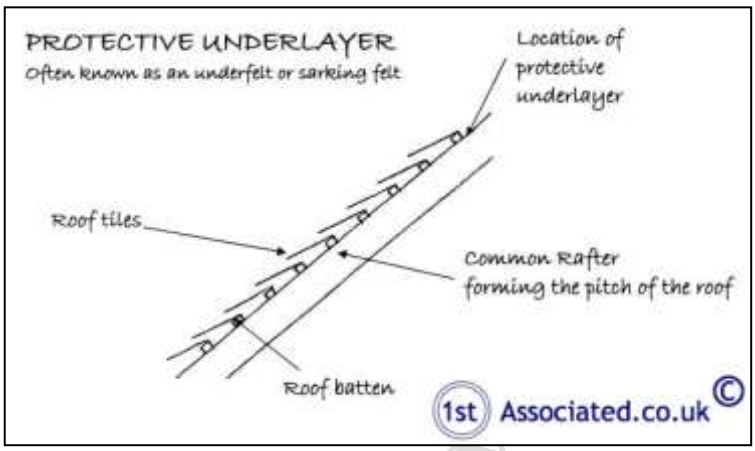
ACTION REQUIRED: Carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof and clear roof of moss occasionally or as required. We would not recommend the roof is pressure cleaned.

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.



Rooms in the Roof

We have had a limited view of the protective underlayer due to rooms being formed in the roofs. The photos that we have included in this section are taken from within the cupboards and show perhaps ten per cent of the roof. They do indicate to us that an older style protective underlayer has been added – we could not see any ventilation that would typically be present in a more modern conversion.

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

Dormer Flat Roof

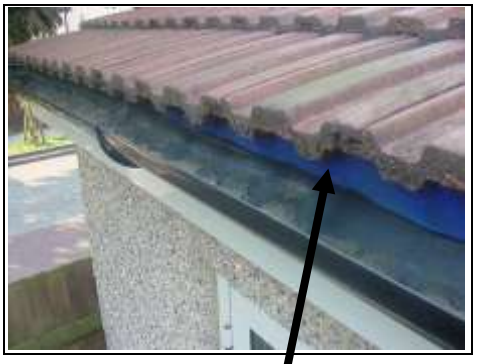
Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

Dormer flat Roof

Rear Shallow Pitched Extension Roof

There is a shallow pitched roof clad with a concrete tile. There is a protective underlayer visible into the gutter which is our preferred detail. Wind driven rain getting in is the weak area and also where the pitched roof meets the main building.

Shallow pitched roof to kitchen extension



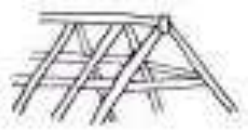
Underlayer visible on pitched roof

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary and carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as 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 and via a ladder.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately seventy percent of the main roof and none of the flat dormer roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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



ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

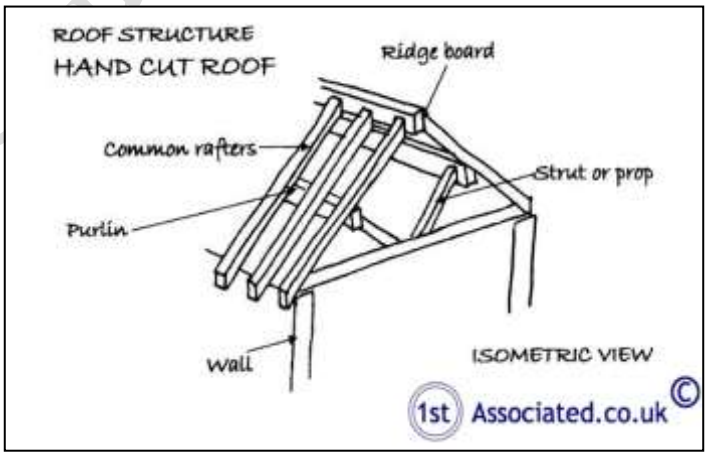
The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

Main Roof

Roof Access

Our view of the loft space was limited to about ten per cent due to the rooms formed within the roof.

Roof Structure



Due to the rooms formed within the roof we were unable to view the roof structure properly. We would take an educated guess that it was originally a cut timber roof as per the adjoining sketch with amendments for the dormer roof and the extension and also extra support (we hope) for the concrete tile roof and the removal of the struts or props (see the sketch), there would not be much room in the roof otherwise.

This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original conversion design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects.

Roof Timbers

We could only see a very small section of the roof. In this section we could not see any of the following.

Limited view of roof timbers

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

However this is not representative of the whole roof.

Insulation

In the small area of the roof that we could see we could not see any insulation so we are concerned there isn't any.

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

GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES, SOIL AND VENT PIPES

The function of the gutters and downpipes is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.

Defective gutters and downpipes are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.

Gutters and Downpipes and Soil and Vent pipes.

The property has a combination of cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes.

Plastic downpipes with wide joints, we assume that these leak

Cast iron of this age will need maintenance. If regularly maintained it can last longer than plastic, in our experience.

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

Awkward bend in downpipe

Gutters need clearing of leaves

Soil and vent pipe

Minor rusting on soil and vent pipe that is expected on cast iron

Combination of cast iron and plastic soil and vent pipe

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

ANTICIPATED COST: £250 – £1,000 (two hundred and fifty pounds to one thousand pounds) as we suspect some work may need doing to the gutters although we have not seen them when it is raining so cannot be certain.

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 finished in pebbledash render and brick work.

Render

The external walls are finished in a pebble-dash render. We are always wary when we see rendered properties as it usually means they have been rendered for a particular reason.

Pebbledash render

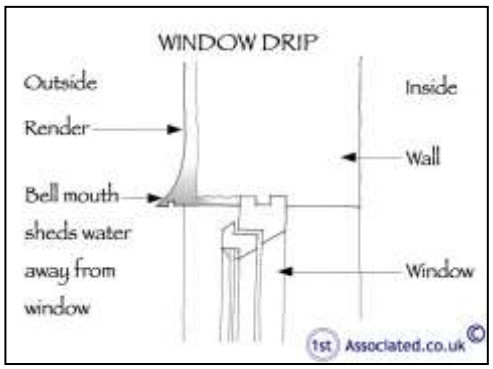
In this particular case we believe from looking at the surrounding buildings it is part of the original aesthetics. This can clearly be seen from where chimneys have been removed and alterations have been carried out to the rear for the extension as the pebble-dash does not match at all.

Render Detailing

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

Window drip detail

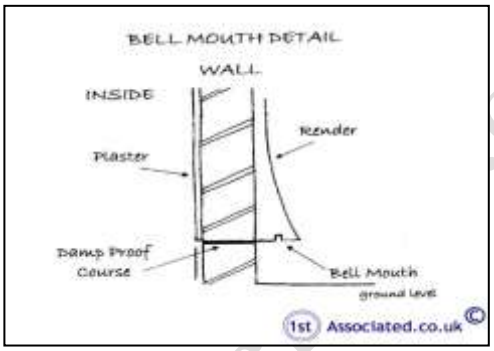
In this case we found no drip detail to the windows.



No drip detail over the window

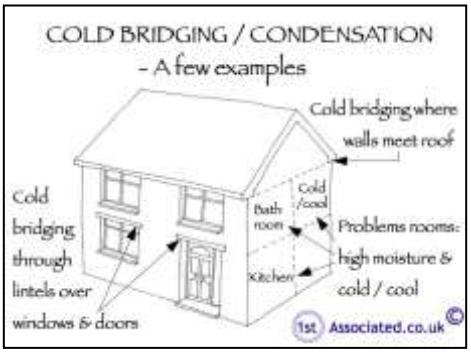
Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was a bell mouth detail. We would also comment that the crazy paving may be slightly high.



Bell mouth to the base of the property

Concrete Lintels



In this age, style and type of property you may well have concrete lintels which can cause cold bridging. Please see our article in the Appendices at the back of the report.

Cold Bridging Defined

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure allowing coldness to pass through the structure much quicker when warm moist air is present in the property, often caused by things like having

a shower or a bath, cooking or washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. This is also caused by the general climate which results in condensation on the element.

Brickwork

There is some decorative brickwork to the front around the bay window. The brick work coursing is a mixture of brick patterns and it would be normal in this age, type and style of property to have a solid wall construction which is what we would expect here.

Brick work detail to front bay

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 render / brickwork / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete 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 render / brickwork / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the render / brickwork / plasterwork would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always at it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

FOUNDATIONS

The foundations function is, if suitably designed and constructed, to transfer the weight of the property through the soil. As a general comment, many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we think of them today, and typically a two-storey property would have one metre deep foundations.

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 and possibly a concrete foundation for the more recent rear extension.

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.

TREES

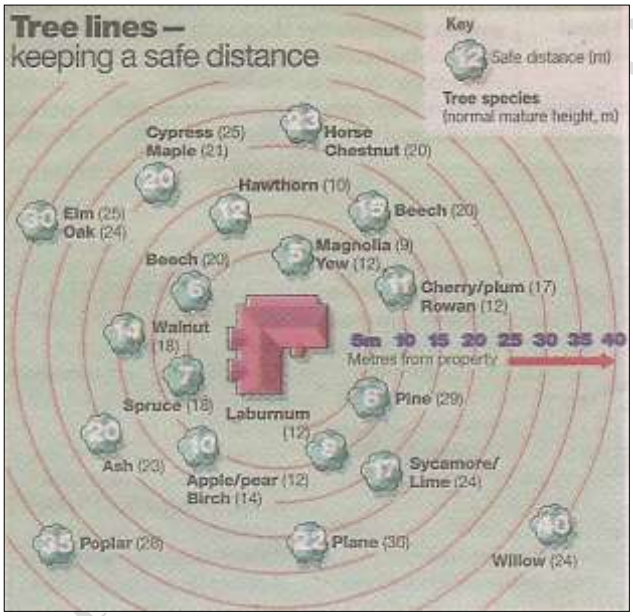
FOUNDATIONS

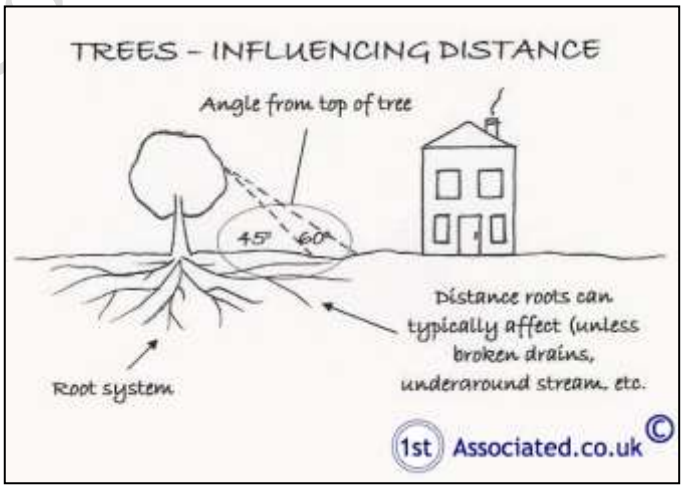
Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are a fairly large number of mature trees in this garden. Most insurance companies are not keen on trees and these trees are within what insurance companies would term as influencing distance of the property.

Trees to the right of the property (all directions given as you face the property)

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that you check your insurance and check who the present owners are insured with before you purchase the property to see if there are any premium excesses etc. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.





Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

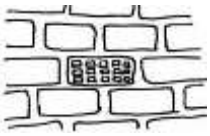
All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case we can see a DPC. This is slightly lower in some areas possibly due to the paving being added on top of the original surface.

DPC is slightly low in places

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

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

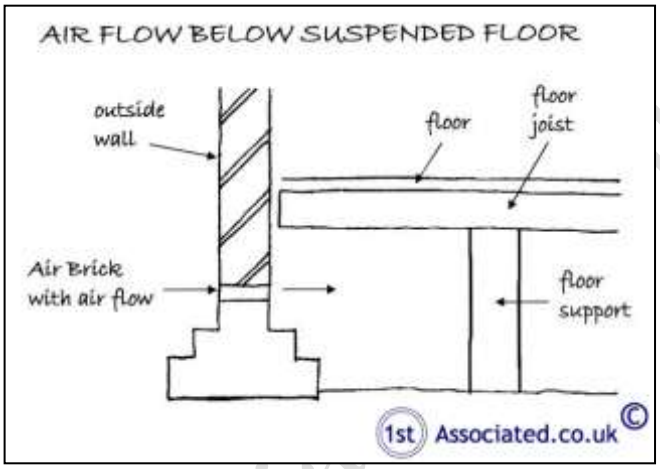
AIRBRICKS



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

Low Level Air Bricks

There are airbricks at low level. Air bricks are essential to have a through flow of air as this helps to reduce the chances of wet rot, dry rot and woodworm.



Air brick (front)

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary

High Level Air Bricks

There are vents at high level.

Air brick

Internal air vent wallpapered over

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 walls/floor, unless we have specifically stated so in this section.

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 fascias and soffits are timber. They are painted and we would comment they are in average condition for their age, type and style.

Fascia boards

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend re-decoration in the summer of 2013.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: This is likely to be quite expensive as it looks as if scaffolding may be needed to carry the work out. If this is the case then £1,500 - £3,000 (one thousand five hundred pounds to three thousand pounds.

Windows and Doors

The property has timber double glazed windows in a timber frame without trickle vents, which generally look to be of average quality.

Timber double glazed windows

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.

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

Testing the timber windows with a knife

Leaded light window

Trickle Vents Defined

Trickle vents allow a trickle of air through, therefore stopping/reducing the likelihood of condensation occurring within the property.

Knife Test Defined

This is where we push the knife into the window to check for rot. It is not rocket science!

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

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

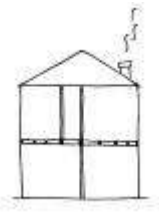
The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.

This is minimal and the timber around the windows looks to be in generally good decorative condition. The main area that will need painting relatively quickly is the fascias and soffits which we would carry out next year. Please see our earlier comments.

Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.

Ceilings

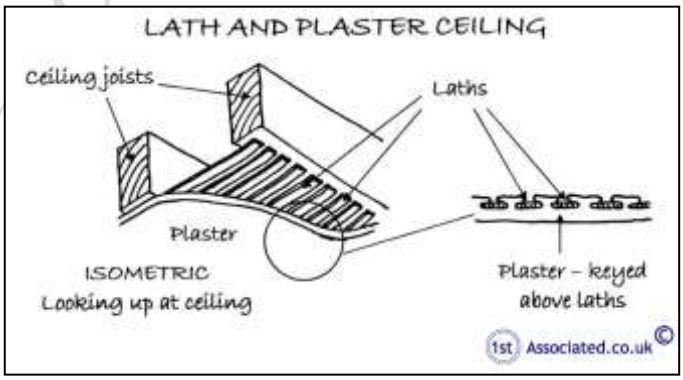
From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard or there may be some proprietary boarding as this was fairly common in this era of property. There may be some lath and plaster but we have not been able to confirm this.

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.

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.



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.

Perimeter Walls

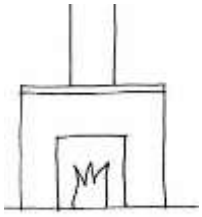
Originally these would have been constructed with a wet plaster, possibly a lime plaster. We now believe a skim coat of Gypsum plaster has been added.

Again, we cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.

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.

There is a feature fireplace in the lounge but we were advised it has not been used for many years and has only ever been used at Christmas.

Feature fireplace

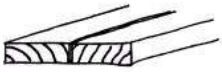
Finally, we will comment on the condition of the chimney breast where we can see the chimney breast. If we can see a chimney breast has been removed we will inspect for signs of movement and advise. However, often the chimney breasts are hidden so we cannot comment. Also additional support can be concealed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

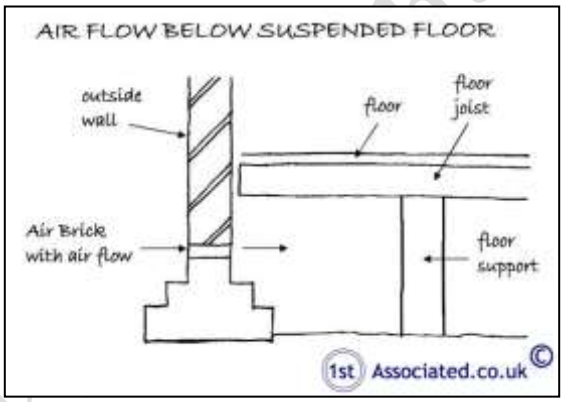
FLOORS



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

Ground Floor

The floors originally were a suspended timber floor and we believe the extension is also a suspended timber floor but we cannot be one hundred per cent certain unless it is opened up.

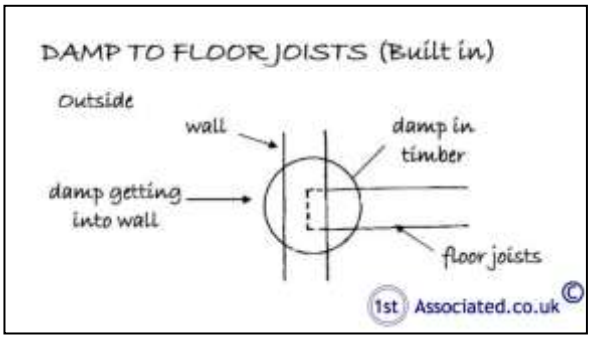


Our investigation has been restricted due to us not opening up the floor.

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

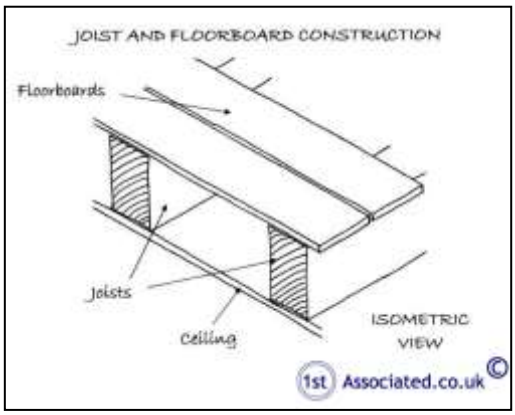
First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards with embedded timbers, as this is typical in this age of property.



Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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

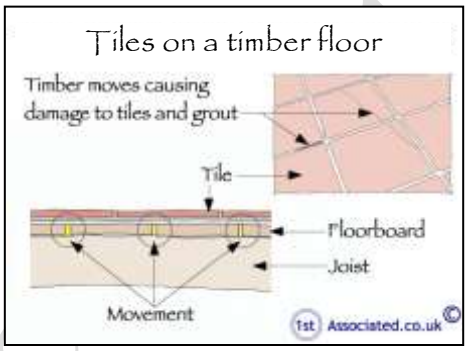


Tiled floor in the family bathroom

The Family Bathroom has a tiled floor laid on timber.

With a wooden floor you will always get some deflection, however minor. This deflection in the floor will ultimately mean that the tiles will need re-grouting.

Tiled floor on timber in bathroom



Top Floor

We cannot comment on the top floor as this could have been carried out in numerous ways where a vertical extension is added such as this.

Tiled floor on timber in en-suite shower room

Tiled floor in the En-suite shower room

The en-suite shower room also has tiles laid on a timber floor, please see our earlier sketch.

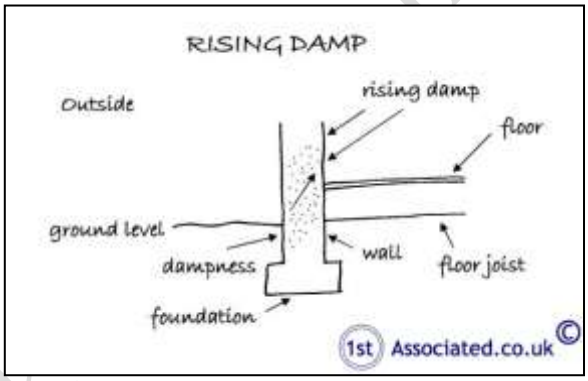
Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets, floor coverings, tiles etc. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in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

DAMPNESS

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

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above. There is a strong argument that true rising damp very rarely is found. Much evidence points towards there being true rising damp in only very rare cases.

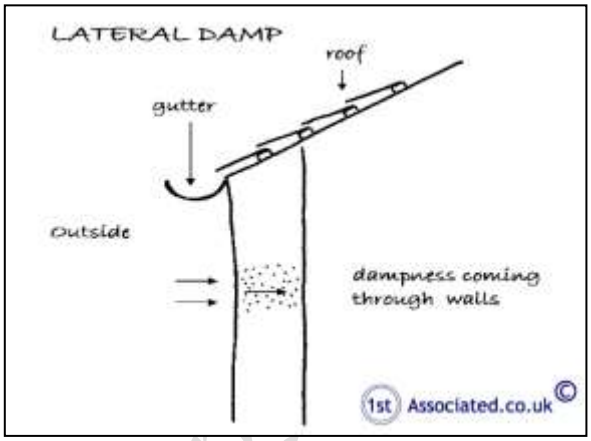


A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no rising damp. We would comment that some areas of ground level are high externally and ideally should be lowered but this would be fairly difficult.

Testing for rising damp

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 not found dampness.

Removed chimney area

Sometimes we find that dampness comes through where chimneys have been removed or have not been removed properly. Without opening up the structure there is no way we can confirm this.

Testing for lateral dampness

Condensation

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

At the time of the inspection there were no signs of condensation but please see our comments with regard to cold bridging.

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

Extract fans in kitchens and bathrooms

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.

Large humidity controlled extract fan required in bathrooms and kitchen

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling. We have not carried out tests to BRE Digest 245, but only carried out a visual inspection.

INTERNAL JOINERY

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

Doors

The doors are veneered doors. The perko door closers make these fire doors. At the time this conversion was carried out there was a requirement to have fire doors to a staircase. This was to stop the chimney effect of fire transferring from one floor to the next. You should keep these doors in place.

Perko door closers. These indicate loft conversion has been carried out legally

Veneered door

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.

Built in Cupboards

There are built in cupboards in the front left bedroom which many modern properties simply do not have.

Built in cupboards

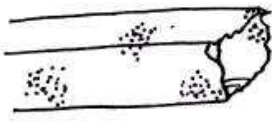
Kitchen

We found the kitchen to be presented very well and in average condition.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

We have not visually seen any dry rot during the course of our inspection. We would advise that we have not opened up the floors and we had a very limited view of the roof.

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.

Again, we have not visually seen any wet rot during the course of our inspection. There could in theory be some to the floor due to the slightly high ground level.

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

Woodworm

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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. In this case we only had access to about ten per cent of the roof because of the loft conversion.

Within the part of the roof we could see we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active.

> **ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings etc.

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

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

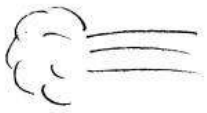
INTERNAL DECORATIONS

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

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

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

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

We could not see any insulation within the ten per cent of the roof that we could see. Heat gain in the summer and heat loss in the winter can deter people from using the rooms.

Walls

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

Windows

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

Services

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

Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is below average to average (due to us not knowing about the roof insulation which is an area where a lot of heat is lost) compared with what we typically see.

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

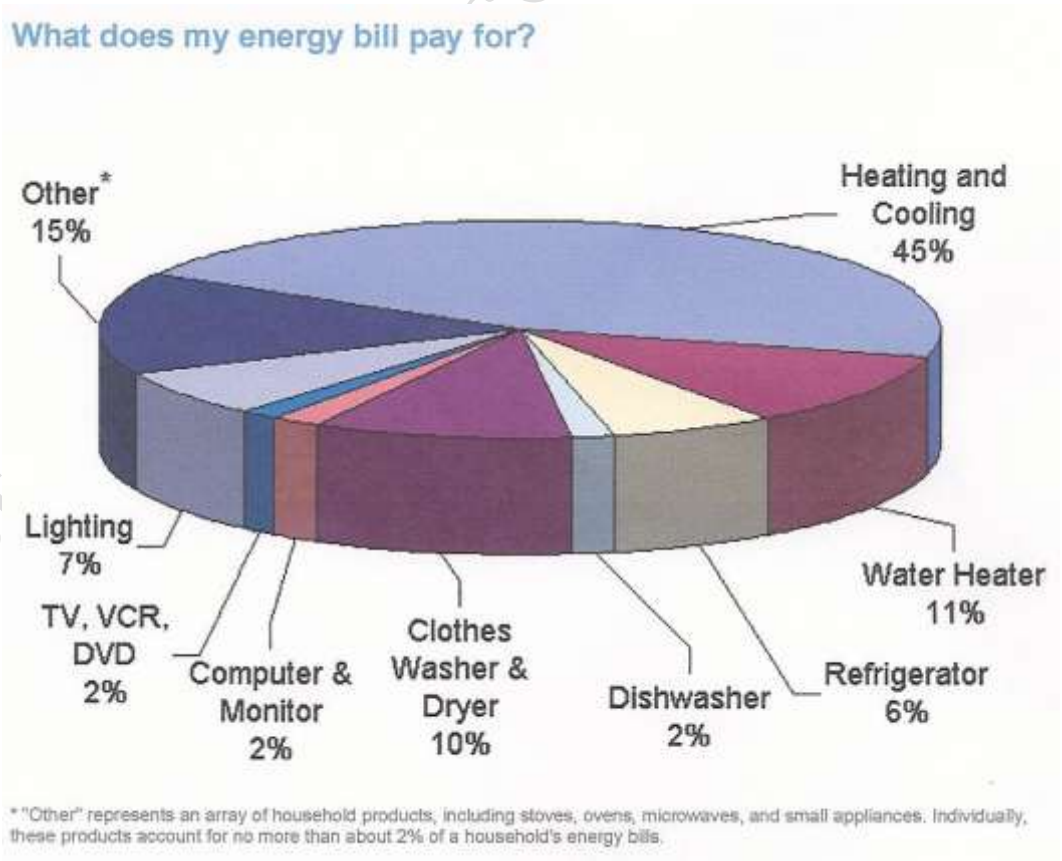
HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

or 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

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.



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.

ACTION REQUIRED: Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer.

Security alarm box

Alarm control panel

Fire / Smoke Alarms

A hard wired system was noted which we were pleased to see.

ACTION REQUIRED: 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.

Hard wired smoke alarm

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.

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 19th century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.

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

Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board looked slightly dated, circa 1970's /1980's.

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

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

Lighting track

A lighting track was used in the kitchen which is slightly unusual and which we rarely see but it seemed to work quite well.

Lighting track

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is changing occupancy an Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) test and report 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 1st January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

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

GAS

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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located under the stairs.

Gas consumer unit

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.

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 in the kitchen.

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

We have not found a hot water cylinder.

Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper piping. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts. It was slightly unusual that we could see the back of it within the rear left hand room.

Plumbing visible in cupboard in rear right bedroom. The photo shows valves which can be turned on and off.

Heating

The boiler was located in the kitchen it is manufactured by Vaillant.

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.

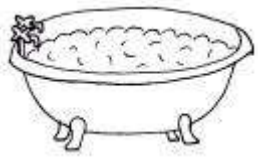
Ten Minute Heating Test

Due to it being hot we only did the ten minute heating test for about two minutes.

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

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

BATHROOMS



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

Family Bathroom

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

En-Suite Shower Room – Top Floor

There is an en-suite shower room on the top floor. We would comment that the main problem with this is it is causing condensation and is not being properly vented.

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 four inspection chambers / manholes, two to the front, one to the side and one to the rear.

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 - front right

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. We could see tree roots in this manhole.

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

Manhole (front left)

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Two – front right

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

From what we could see it is brick built.

Manhole (front right)

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Three - Middle right

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 and has some deterioration.

Manhole (middle right)

Inspection Chamber / Manhole Four – Rear right

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

There are tree roots in this manhole.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regards to a closed circuit TV camera report.

Manhole (middle right)

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.

Drains are normally shared in a property of this age as this was common practice in this era of property.

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 era of property they are likely to be combined drains which is where the foul water and the surface water combines. 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. If you wish us to do a specific report on the other buildings then you need to instruct us for this separately. We are offering here a brief overview.

GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS

There is a garage to the rear of the property accessed by double gates located near the bus stop.

Garage with greenhouse in front of it

Inside the garage

Electrics in the garage

Flat roof on the garage

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.

Flat roof

The garage roof is in average condition and probably has another ten years of life providing that the repairs are carried out to the parapet wall and the trees are cut back.

There is no insulation within this roof but how important is this in a garage roof?

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

EXTERNAL AREAS

Front garden/parking

The front garden has been giving over to parking and is crazy paved.

Crazy paving in front garden

Posts in front of garden fence

Corner plot with large trees in garden (right hand side)

Rear Garden

The mature garden at the rear of the property has large established trees, a patio area, pond, greenhouse and a garage.

Rear Garden

Patio area

Large trees in garden

Pond

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

We had a brief chat with the left hand neighbour as they were on their way to work.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

a) Responsibility for boundaries.

b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.

c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:

i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
ii) Rising damp treatments.
iii) Double glazing or replacement windows.
iv) Roof and similar renewals.
v) Central heating installation.
vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
ix) Any other matters pertinent to the property.

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 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.

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.**

This Report is dated: xxxxxxxxxxx

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

LIMITATIONS

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

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a hot 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 have full access to the roof because of the loft conversion and as we were not able to open up the ground floor, first floor or top floor.

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

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.

APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Condensation and Cold bridging article

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.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.hometrack.co.uk

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

www.motleyfool.co.uk

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

www.rightmove.co.uk

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

www.zoopla.co.uk

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

Condensation and Cold Bridging
What is Cold Bridging?

What is cold bridging and how does it work?

Cold bridging is a term and a problem we feel will become much more common in years to come. We are finding more and more examples of Cold Bridging. This happens in certain types of property and to some extent it could be argued that it is a characteristic of that type of property and quite a complex issue to resolve. Unfortunately it means condensation is more likely.

Post war / 1950's property that cold bridging can be a problem in.

Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination of issues. It can occur from things such as having a shower or a bath, cooking or clothes washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. It could, in commercial properties, be a large gathering of people breathing (this can cause a lot of humidity)in a building that has stood cold and empty for some time such as a church, village hall, sports centre or a crèche. These human atmospheres create a climate which can result in condensation on the cold elements of the structure and fabric if the room is not ventilated properly.

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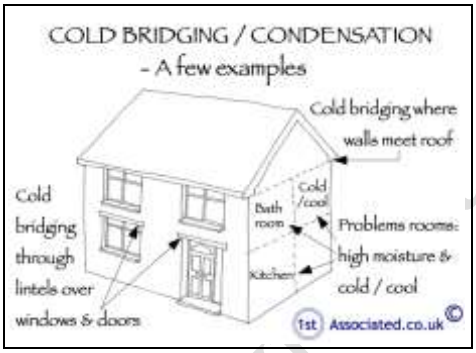
Certain types of buildings are more susceptible to Condensation and Cold Bridging

Here is our sketch on Cold Bridging



This is a good indication of the typical things that cause Cold Bridging in a house and how extraction from humidity generating areas such as the kitchen and the bathroom can reduce problems. You do need to look at how you live in the house.

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors

Cold Bridging isn't just about condensation on mirrors. Not only can it be an original characteristic of the building it can be encouraged by all types of extension and alterations.

Cold bridging is far worse than condensation as it is caused by an element in the structure which you can do very little to change without great expense. If you buy a 1960's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.

1960's properties built with concrete lintels that can cause Cold Bridging

To give you some examples of Cold Bridging

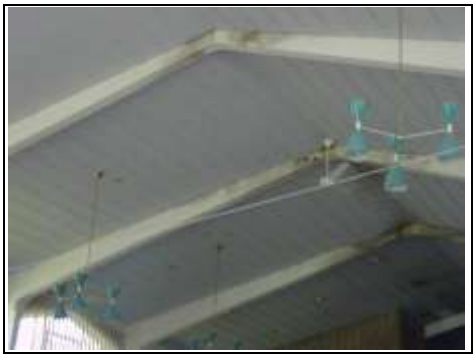
As mentioned above typically Cold Bridging can be caused by lintels and also by beams (which effectively are big lintels). These were very commonly used in 1960's and 1970's buildings and can lead to condensation over doors and windows. We mentioned a 1960's building but here are some examples of concrete lintels that were commonly used in the 1970's and which today have caused cold bridging over the door and which in turn has led to condensation and deterioration of the paintwork.

A rear door to a 1970's building. Can you tell where the cold bridging would be in this photo?

A close up view showing there is a concrete lintel over the door and window. This is where the cold bridging occurs causing condensation inside.

Cold Bridging can also occur on metal lintels. We note that some modern metal lintels now have insulation in them which we assume is to reduce cold bridging.

Commercial properties suffer from Cold Bridging too



Cold Bridging in a commercial property with a concrete frame.

Commercial buildings are often built using structural frames. These frames are usually constructed of concrete or metal or sometimes both. The structural frame forms the skeleton of the building as you can see in the adjoining photo. Sometimes the structural frames, particularly, the concrete ones can suffer from Cold Bridging which causes blackening of the concrete frame. This can look like the roof has leaked and can lead to wrongly diagnosing a problem as being a roof leak This can result in great time and expense being wasted repairing a roof that was not leaking and indeed in some cases has led to a new roof being fitted which has costs tens of

thousands of pounds. This happened because it wasn't understood what the problem was.

When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in

1. Georgian and Regency properties
2. Victorian and Edwardian properties
3. Pre-war properties
4. War years construction properties
5. Post war construction properties up to the 1980's.
6. Commercial properties that use structural frames particularly concrete frames.

Georgian style properties can suffer from cold bridging and condensation. However in our experience it is more likely to be the new extensions or alterations that are added to them

We find that cold bridging and condensation occur most commonly where a property has a relatively high heating level, a good level of insulation and where it has many occupants.

Post war 1960's properties with plastic double glazing without trickle vents that have been added can cause condensation.

Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

1970's property with cold bridging to the roof beams and the lintels

Let us take a look at the 1970's/1980's era of property to give an example of the problems we have come across with this era.

The 1970's is an era where we had just begun to think about insulating due to the oil crisis and where we added insulation into our structures For example with;

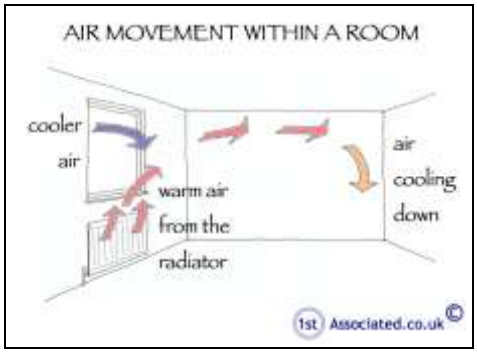
1. cavity wall insulation or
2. double glazed windows.

1980's property, cold bridging was found in the lintels

This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

How to solve Cold Bridging

The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion, can help considerably.

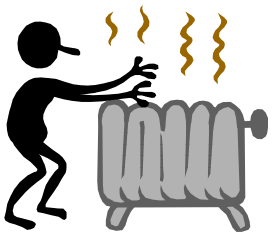


Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of heating and insulation without understanding that the properties need to breathe as well. We have also found cold bridging in properties where extensions have been carried out and where the extension has been built to a different standard to the original property.

Victorian properties that have been extended and altered over the years with new thermal properties that can cause Cold Bridging because of the mix of old and new standards

Is your life style a factor in Cold Bridging?



This is often a contentious and difficult question, particularly where the occupier is a tenant and there is a disagreement between the landlord and the occupier as to why there is mould in the property. In our experience the major factor is the size of the family living in a property. This is especially the case with large families with young children and where in turn there is a lot of washing of clothes being done. This is particularly the case in the winter months, with the wet washed clothes being dried on radiators. Also general hygiene washing and not to mention cooking to feed everyone all lead toward a more humid atmosphere.

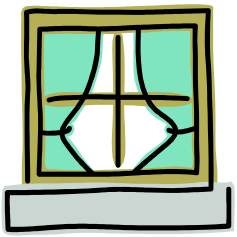
This is generally known as the lifestyle of occupants and can be a major factor particularly where there are legal cases as to the problems within a property.

Expert witness case, what is an expert witness?

This is where you employ someone who is a specialist within a field, such as us as Chartered Building Surveyors, who comment on problems of condensation within the property. We have been involved in several court cases as expert witnesses where landlords are being taken to court over the condensation that is occurring in their property. The expert witness case looks at how this condensation is occurring and if it relates, for example, to the occupiers' lifestyle or whether it relates to the way the building was constructed and where there are, for example, cold bridging elements. When discussions of this nature take place in court they can be very expensive.

Older style London converted flats with property problems such as Condensation and Cold Bridging

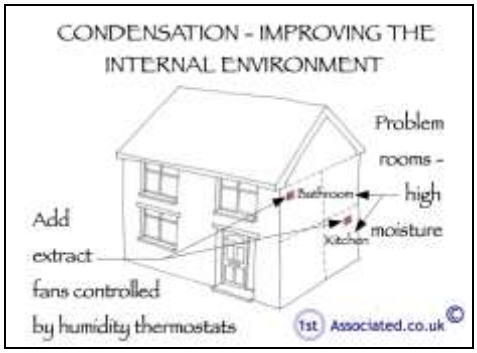
Is Cold Bridging and Condensation a design problem or a lifestyle problem?



This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers lifestyle can in most cases be amended. This may involve the occupier having an understanding of the problems they are causing. For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.

Design of the Building

Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a better circulation of air with a better heat and coolness balance and the removal of any moist air.



Things to remember about an air brick

If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three air brick has a lot of gaps, as these gaps taper, it is generally considered that only about one inch square of air regularly passes through the grills.

Air brick may not ventilate room enough

What's happening in brand new housing?

It could be argued that we still do not know what is happening in brand new houses that are highly insulated. We have been involved in one legal case where a modern heat exchange system was being used where it was simply not possible to have a shower in the property without causing condensation, even with the windows open and taking other measures. Our concern is what is happening to this condensation? It was not visible on the surface so is it visible as interstitial condensation? We still think there will be problems to be found in modern properties.

As Chartered Surveyors we like to see things that have been is use for some time work before we would recommend them.

In the winter we have condensation problems but in the summer we don't

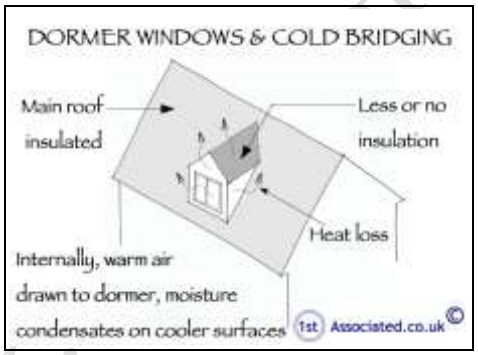
The different seasons mean that the building reacts differently. Anyone who has lived in an old property will know that windows and doors particularly sliding sash windows will swell during the winter months.

Sliding sash windows can swell in the winter months

There can be similar issues with a property where, regardless of your lifestyle, during some of the different seasons, for example the winter or a wet spring, taking a shower can relate in condensation even with extract fans running (although this is far less likely).

It also depends on what the humidity level is outside as this can be greater than inside. The moisture/humidity will then seek out colder rooms such as spare bedrooms and the corners of cupboards. When you open these at a later date you will be surprised to find black mould.

Extensions and Cold Bridging



Increasingly we are coming across problems where properties have been extended and it has not been planned or thought through properly. We have come across dormer roofs that simply have no insulation so any heat in the property is going straight out of the dormer roof. We have also come across property problems where an extension has resulted in colder areas within the property and which although not problem areas, as such, our clients have found them not nice areas to be in. It is not a great outcome if you have just spent tens of thousands of pounds on a new extension that you are not happy with.