

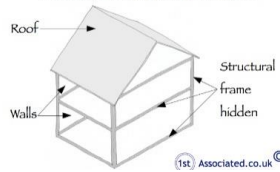
# Non Traditional Example

## Residential Building Survey

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NON TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTION  
STRUCTURAL FRAME HOUSE



**BISF FRAME**  
Roof: Profile steel sheets with fibreboard

Ceiling: Plasterboard  
First: boarding on battens

Protective coating metallic phosphate primer and bitumous paint. Steel sheets galvanised and coated. Front and rear caars rendered Frame 19 PSC Sanctions

Substructure Concrete strip footings with bricks under concrete slab around perimeter DPC

Gable wall Front wall  
Ground: Concrete

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## INTRODUCTION

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

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.

## THANK YOU

*We thank you for using our surveying services and taking the time to meet us during the building survey.*

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# REPORT FORMAT

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

## **GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

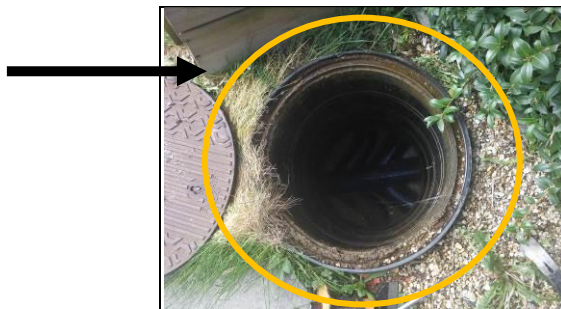
*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

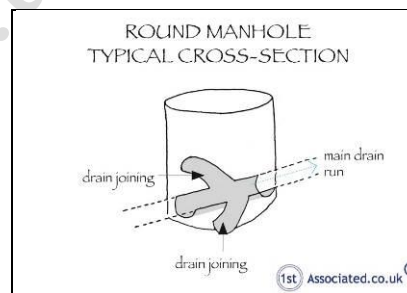
Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" typeface for clarity.

## **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS**

We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil, pen, circle or arrow has been used to highlight a specific area. We also use sketches to give guidance and clarity on various issues in the property and we use them to help you understand the issues, scenarios and situations better.



Round manhole



Sketch example

## **ORIENTATION**

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear, which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property. Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

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# SYNOPSIS

## SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a three storey semi-detached property left side. The upper rooms are formed partly within the roof both to the front and rear of the property. There is a small feature balcony area to the front and also a canopy roof over the entrance area.

The property is situated near the end of a cul-de-sac. There is parking to the front where there is also a garage on the right side. There is a shared access to the left of the building that gives access into the back garden.

To the rear there is a paved area adjacent to the property with a plastic canopy. The garden has artificial grass with timber fencing surrounding.

This is a modern timber frame property which were typically built in the 1980's till today (we have found sales going back to 2006 on Rightmove of nearby properties therefore we assume this is the approximate date of construction although they may have been built quite a bit earlier than this). If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

We believe this is a shared ownership/leasehold property. The advertising material from Thomas Connolly Estate Agents, we believe, says thirty percent; you need to check and confirm the details in relation to this.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor needs to check and confirm all of the above.

### Putting Life into Perspective!

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

1990's	The average house price was £59,939 in 1995
1991	Helen Sharman becomes the First Briton in Space
1994	The Channel Tunnel is opened, connecting two nations
2000	Average price of a new house was £89,597
2005	The average house price was £156,236 and average salary was around £23,900.
2007-2008	Global Financial Crash

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# LOCATION PLANS



Note; The photographs identify the building and are not necessarily where the boundaries, etc, are.

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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front view  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear view high level  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear view low level  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Left gable view  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear garden  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

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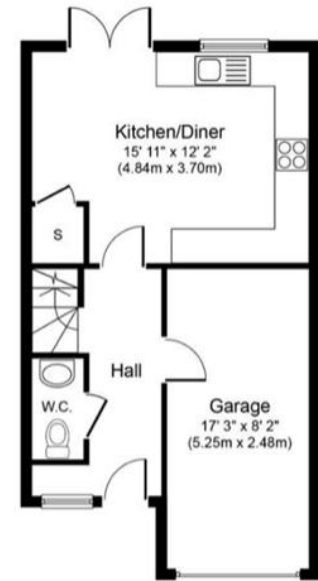
# ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

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

## Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Front entrance hall and stairs
- 2) WC left (not accessed)
- 3) Garage right (not accessed)
- 4) Kitchen/diner rear

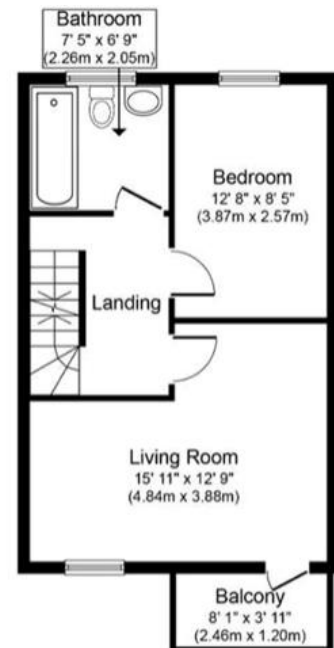


Ground Floor

## First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 5) Landing
- 6) Front living room with balcony
- 7) Bedroom rear right
- 8) Bathroom rear left



First Floor

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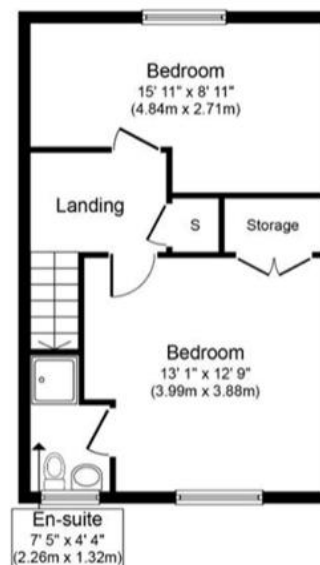




## Second Floor

The second floor accommodation consists of:

- 9) Landing
- 10) Bedroom front with en-suite
- 11) Bedroom rear



Second Floor

## Outside Areas

There is parking to the front where there is also a garage on the right side.

The rear garden is accessed via a shared path to the left of the building. Adjacent to the property there is a paved area covered with a canopy. The garden has artificial grass with timber fencing surrounding.

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

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# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience.

## Ground Floor



Kitchen/diner rear



Kitchen/diner rear



Entrance hall



Stairs



WC left full of stored items



Kitchen cupboard



Garage full of stored items

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**First Floor**



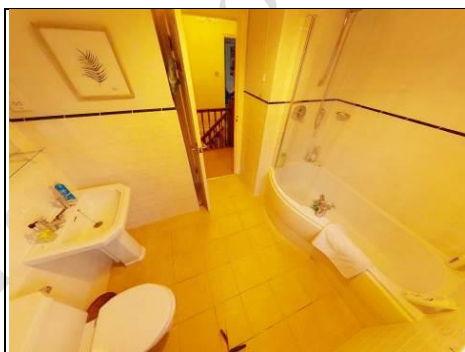
Front living room with balcony



Front balcony



Landing



Bathroom rear left



Bedroom rear right

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## Second Floor



Bedroom front with en-suite



Bedroom rear



Front bedroom en-suite



Airing cupboard



Stairs first to second floor

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# SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

## External

Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with concrete tiles
Roof Structure:	Prefabricated roof truss
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic, hopperhead detail to balcony
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Internal
Structural Frame:	Timber (assumed)
Walls:	Stretcher bond brickwork pattern (assumed timber frame)
Fascias and Soffits:	Stained timber
Windows and Doors:	Timber double glazed windows

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## Internal

Ceilings:	Modern plaster (assumed)
Internal Walls:	Studwork (assumed)
Perimeter Walls:	Dry lined
Floors: Ground Floor:	Suspended floor (assumed)
First and Second Floor:	Joist and floorboard sheets on joist hangers (all assumed)

## Services

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

Heating: Wall mounted Glow worm boiler located in the kitchen.

Electrics: The electric fuse board is 1990's-2000 or possibly more recent and is located in the garage. Unable to closely inspect due to the mass of stored items in the garage.

Gas: The consumer unit was located next to the front entrance door

Drainage: Circular manhole located near front entrance door.

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

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

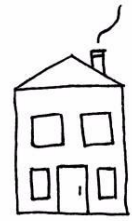
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 150 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) This property is what we would term as a town house style design on three floors which feels relatively spacious as long as you are happy going up and down the stairs.
- 2.0) The property benefits from a garage although we do find that most people tend to store things in a garage rather than use it for a car.
- 3.0) Off-road parking which will be particularly useful as there does seem to be a limited number of spaces in the area.

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

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## Introduction

This property, although brickwork externally, internally from what we can see is timber and it is known as a timber frame building. Modern timber frame buildings have had a chequered history since their original use post war when they were known as non-traditional buildings.

### Non-traditional building defined

This tends to be experimental building that uses off-site production techniques that focus on economy of construction and speed amongst other things.

Probably the worst period for modern timber frame was when BBC World in Action ran a programme advising about some of the practices that took place.

It is worth googling:

Building Magazine described it as causing a timber frame housing market crash. We would say that it left a great scepticism on timber frame housing although later on there were reports about the World in Action programme mis-reporting problems nevertheless it affected the timber frame industry. There have been various new innovations since that time and timber frame building has become popular again with developers and is often bought unknowingly by the public.

Please see our articles:

<https://1stassociated.co.uk/modern-timber-frame-era-problems.asp>

<https://1stassociated.co.uk/articles/modern-timber-frame-structures.asp>

We hope this gives you a flavour of where we are with modern timber frame buildings.

## 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.*

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## 1.0) Brickwork

We noted efflorescence to the brickwork in many areas which is a salt coating. This is a fairly common factor in timber frame buildings.

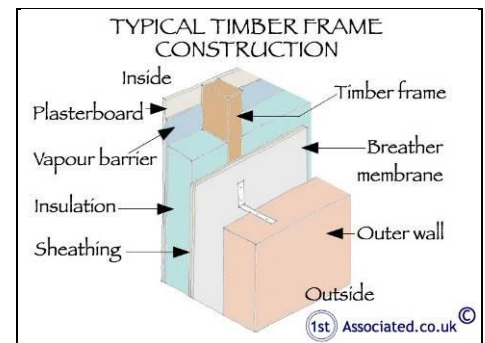


Efflorescence

### Efflorescence defined

Efflorescence is the white salt found on brickwork/stonework. It is a natural phenomenon which is where the minerals in water as they dry out come to the surface of stone or brick and leave a white crystallised powder, almost flour like. On a red brick it can stand out considerably, almost appearing bright white on a lighter white or yellow brick it can almost disappear.

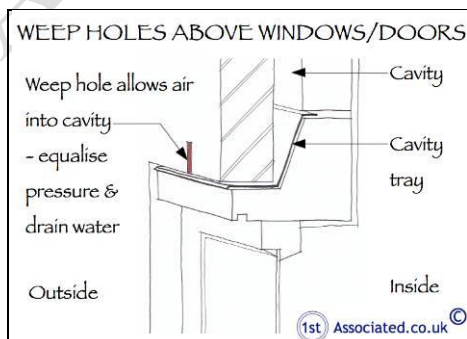
This is caused by the walls never drying out. This, we believe, is a combination of external weather factors and the internal environment of humidity created inside such as showers, baths, cooking, breathing, etc as to the appearance of salts. This is a personal opinion, we have never seen any technical information on it, we have seen efflorescence regularly on timber frame buildings brick walls.



Timber frame

### Weep holes

The weep holes are an example of how the designers tried to remove the moisture from within the structure.



Weep hole



Weep hole above window

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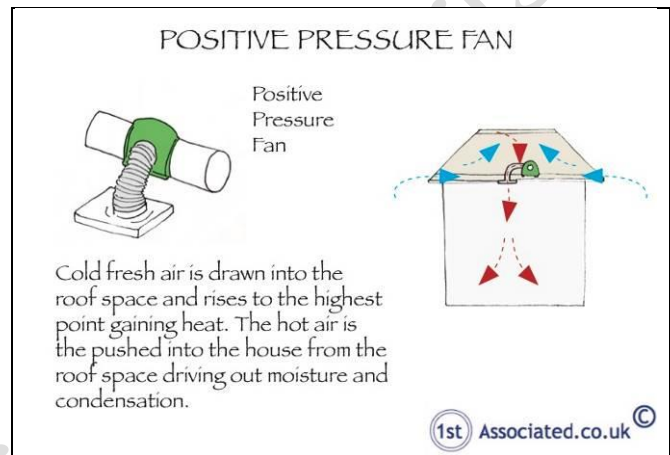
## 2.0) Roof space problems

### Positive pressure fan

Within the roof we have identified a positive pressure fan. These are used where there are condensation problems and black mould problems. The aim of them is to create an airflow within the property. It draws air from within the roof space, sometimes it warms it up or changes its temperature and then pushes the air with the positive air pressure around the building. Nevertheless, we think there have been problems with black mould in this property.



Positive pressure fan in roof space



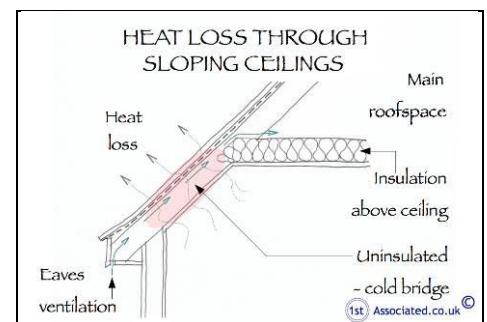
Positive pressure fan

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to speak to the Housing Association or whoever has the shared ownership with this building to ask them to provide a detailed record of problems in relation to condensation, black mould, etc. in the property.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

## 3.0) Rooms formed partly within roof

The bedroom ceilings are formed partly within the roof therefore during hotter weather you will get some heat gain unless they are very well insulated and equally in the colder weather you will get heat loss.



Heat loss through sloping ceiling

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Rear bedroom sloping ceiling



Front en-suite shower room sloping ceiling



Front bedroom sloping ceiling

We believe there are problems with ventilation and black mould particularly around the en-suite shower room and the bedroom.



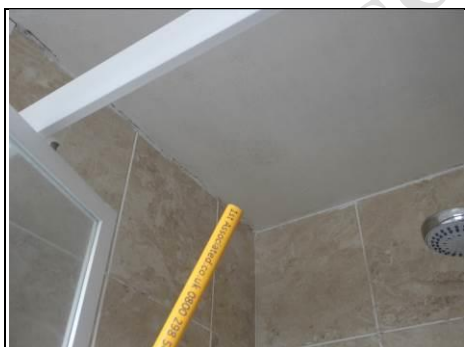
Radiator rusting due to dampness



Black mould painted over and deteriorating paintwork



En-suite roof window open at time of survey



Black mould in shower unit



Vent above en-suite door



Black mould and hairline crack in plaster of en-suite

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend adding a large humidity controlled extract fan in the shower room. By large extract fans we mean 150mm. Unfortunately, this is quite a difficult job and will need some sort of air vent externally.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £750 - £1,500 to add an extract fan; please obtain quotations before you legally commit to purchase the property.

To remove mastic and re-mastic the shower to make as watertight as possible a few hundred pounds and £500 - £1,500 for a new shower unit if required. Also, redecoration will be required once preventative issues have been put in place which will cost in the region of a few hundred pounds.

Please obtain quotations before you legally commit to purchase the property.

### Cold Bridging

We believe that black mould will be problematic in this area due to the design of the building which is very difficult to resolve. Externally we can see the dormer roof has what we would term a lightweight construction timber frame and cold bridging will occur in these areas which in turn leads to black mould.



Lightweight dormer  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Timber frame to side of dormer  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

### 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

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is also caused by the general climate which results in condensation on the element.

Unfortunately, this combination of issues makes it difficult, we believe, to get rid of the black mould completely.

There looks to be some work taking place in the shower room; you need to enquire as to what this is.

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.



Hole in en-suite wall

#### 4.0) Windows

The property has timber double glazed windows which are overdue redecoration. Some of the windows we didn't manage to open;

*For example, the top floor rear window has a very stiff lock that will simply no longer open.*



Weathered window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The windows need to be eased and adjusted, prepared, repaired and redecorated. There will be some high level work and it is likely that scaffolding will be needed for the upper floors.

As this is a shared ownership we do not know who is responsible for the windows, this may or may not be a shared cost. Your legal advisor needs to check and confirm.



Flaking paint and bare timber

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £2,500 - £5,000; please obtain quotations before you legally commit to purchase the property.

Please see the Windows Section of this Report.

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## 5.0) Balcony

We could see dampness on the balcony. There is an awkward detail where the balcony tries to drain into the hopperhead which does not appear to have a sufficient fall and has led to the balcony becoming covered in moss.

The balcony is directly over the garage which we did not have proper access to therefore we would not be surprised if dampness is coming into the garage.



Dampness to balcony



Balcony over garage



Hopperhead to balcony

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Investigate further when the garage has had stored items removed and is able to be viewed.

## 6.0) Rear metal frame plastic canopy

To the rear patio there is a metal frame with a plastic canopy. It needs to be checked whether this needs planning permission or not.



Rear canopy  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear covered paved area

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to check and confirm.

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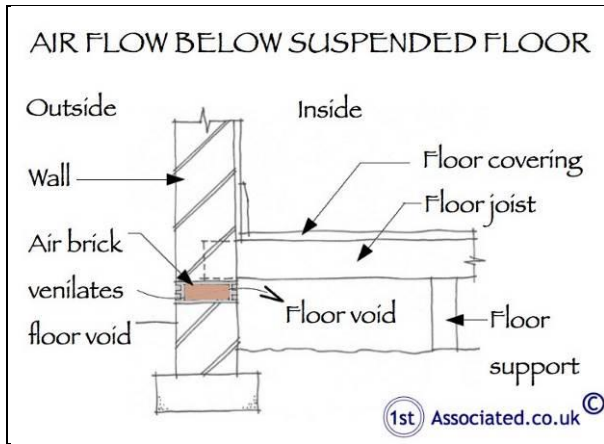
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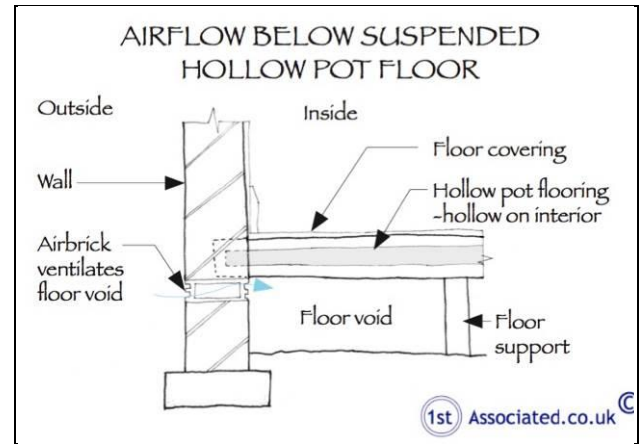


## 7.0) Suspended floor

The property has a suspended floor, we do not know whether this is concrete or timber. They are usually used where the ground conditions are not particularly good as this allows movement to occur in the ground without problems occurring.



Suspended timber floor

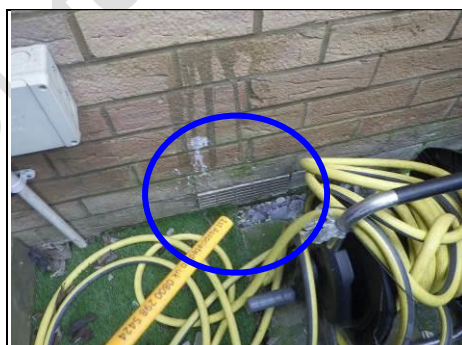


Suspended concrete floor

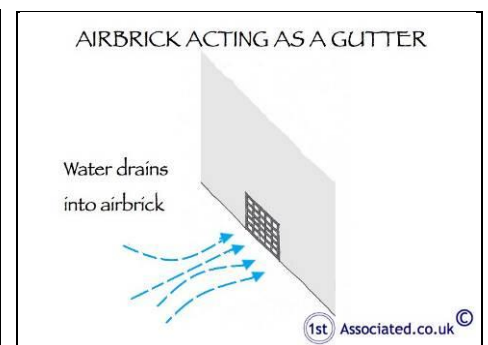
The floor needs an airflow underneath it and unfortunately the airbricks which should ventilate the floor unfortunately are too low and are acting as gutters. We can see moss around the rear airbrick.



Front air brick low



Rear airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick acts as gutter

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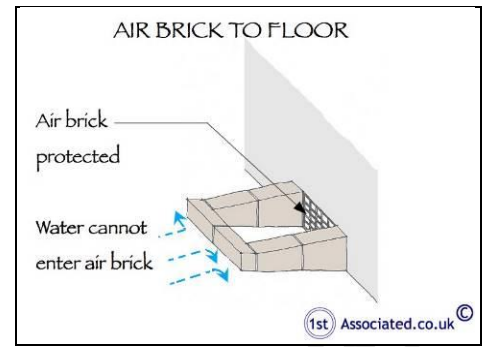
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Protect airbricks and ensure that no water gets into the property. Also, ideally we would recommend the floors are opened up. You need to speak to whoever has the shared ownership of the property and see if they will open up the floors or if there is a known about problem.



Protect airbrick

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

## 8.0) Fire doors

Throughout the property we noted various fire doors have had the central door closer removed (often known by its generic name of Perco).

### Central door closer defined

This is a door closer that pulls the door shut to stop the spread of fire. These are generally needed on all doors next to staircases and also on garage doors as these are considered high risk areas.



Door closer removed

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-install all of the fire doors. We would normally expect to see an intumescent strip around the doors to indicate that they have a fire rating and they seal when they are heated.

### Intumescent strip defined

This is an embedded strip in the door that when it gets hot it seals and stops smoke and some flames getting around the door and holds the fire at bay for some time to allow escape in a worst case scenario of a fire.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £1,000 - £2,000 depending upon whether the existing doors are fire doors and can be repaired or replaced; ask the owners/shared ownership. Please obtain quotations before you legally commit to purchase the property.

Please see the Doors Section of this Report.

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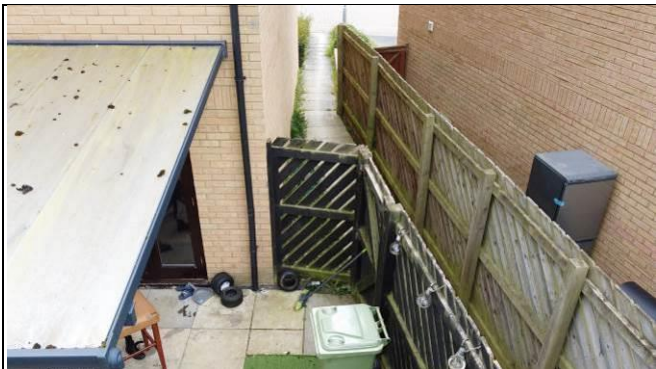


## 9.0) Shared access on left side

There is a shared access on the left side of the building which leads to the gardens but then continues where it is overgrown. We were wondering whether this is a right of way or not.



Path



Shared left path  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Access path and trees  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

Your legal advisor to check and confirm:

- 1) Is this a shared access?
- 2) Where does it lead to? It may, for example be a public footpath. You need to understand the rights and responsibilities with regard to it.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** It is difficult to estimate until we have the situation explained by your legal advisor, we would be more than happy to then comment on it further.

Please see the External Areas Section of this Report.

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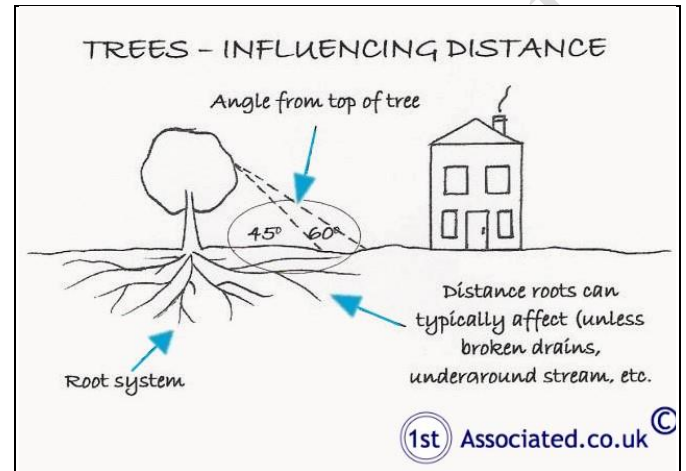


## 10.0) Tree

There is a tree cut down to the front of the drive on the left side which looks to have been quite a large tree. Cutting down trees can affect buildings particularly the foundations and equally leaving the tree without maintaining it can also affect the building.



Tree cut down



Influencing distance of trees to a property

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to specifically ask the present owners what type of tree was cut down and what specialist advice they obtained with regard to cutting it down and provide if available such things as a report from an arboriculturalist and/or invoices and receipts with regard to cutting the tree down. It may have been taken down by the Local Authority. Any evidence/information in relation to the tree would be useful; we would be happy to comment further providing the information is obtained before you legally commit to purchase the property.

Your solicitor needs to be extra diligent on checking to see when the tree was removed.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

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## Services

### 11.0) Electrics

The electrics tripped when we carried out our usual earth test. We also noted the need for extra socket points.



Extension lead



Earth test failed



Earth test passed second and third time

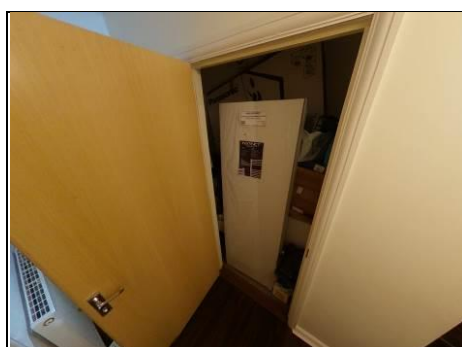


Fuse board in garage

There were a lot of stored items which restricted our view, for example we were unable to get in the garage properly or the WC. There looks to be an older/original fuse board and we noted some lightbulbs were missing meaning that we had to use torchlight to view some areas.



Stored items in garage



WC left full of stored items



Lightbulbs missing

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners to tidy up and go back and review the house once you have read our report.

The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report when properties change hands, to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would expect costs in the region of:

- 1) £250 - £500 for test and report
- 2) £250 - £500 for a new fuse board
- 3) In the region of £100 - £200 per additional socket point
- 4) Plus any further work recommended

Please obtain quotations before you legally commit to purchase the property.

## 12.0) Heating

The property has what looks to be the original/older boiler which is approximately halfway to three quarters way through its working life. You should start to budget for a new boiler.

### Microbore pipes

The heating system uses microbore pipes. From our experience these tend to get blocked more easily than a traditional heating system that uses a 12/13mm pipe. However, microbore pipes are cheaper than a traditional system and easier to install from a plumber's point of view, which is possibly why they are so popular with plumbers!



Rusting radiator



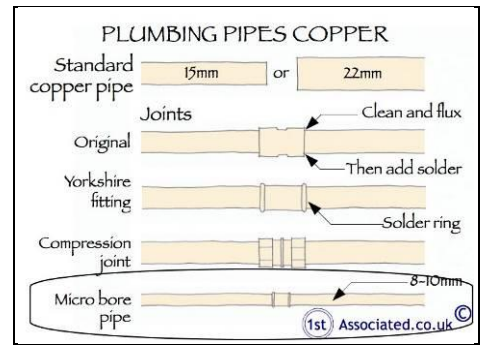
Microbore pipes

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a power flush from time to time to ensure they are working satisfactorily. You need to be aware that we generally do not feel they work as well as a traditional system.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Budget to replace boiler in the region of £2,000 - £3,000; please obtain quotations before you legally commit to purchase the property.



Microbore pipes

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.*

We believe the black mould and general humidity in the property may be a problem that is very difficult to solve. This does depend of course on how you live in the building to some extent and the number of people in the building. There does appear to be some fundamental problems.

We believe this is a high risk purchase and we would recommend not purchasing the property.

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## Services and your own specific testing

Whilst we have carried out a visual inspection only of the services within the property we would always recommend you have your own specific testing for each of the services.

### Electrics

The electric fuse board is original and is located in the garage, we have not had a close inspection due to the amount of stored items in the garage.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report when properties change hands, to be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

### Heating

The boiler is dated and coming to the end of its working life.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Obtain a copy of the service records and budget to replace the boiler.

### Drainage

Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes in the top floor en-suite without any build up or blockages the only way to be one hundred percent certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.

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



## Other Items

### Maintenance

There are some relatively poor details here such as drainage from the balcony area. 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.



Hopperhead to balcony

### 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 (but you do need to sort out the condensation issues/humidity/black mould first). We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

### Purchase Price

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

### Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

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## Estimates of Building Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £125 per day (the higher costs in cities/towns) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

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

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## SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

You need to be absolutely certain that you understand you are buying a timber frame building and the associated issues/inherent problems that can go with these which are often difficult to solve. Also, you need to be aware that many people would be put off purchasing this property as it is a timber frame building. We would add that we personally would not buy a timber frame building like this and consider it high risk. We would like to discuss this property further with you once you have had time to read this report and revisit the property.

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

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

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

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# AERIAL VIEW – 360 PHOTOS

Where permission has been obtained from the owners we have carried out aerial photographs using an aerial drone, stationary drone or a mono-pod pole (where the environment and weather is suitable).



Drone and mono-pod pole



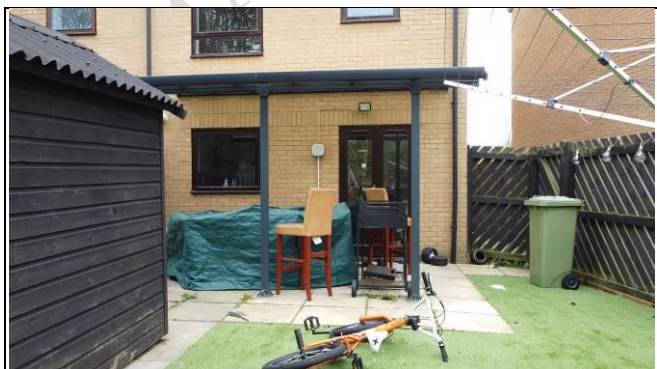
Front low level  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Front dormer  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear dormer  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear garden  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Balcony  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

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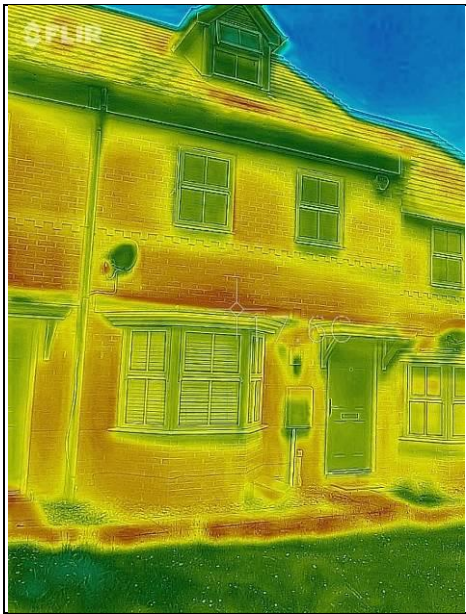
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# EXAMPLE THERMAL IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHS

Thermal imaging photography can establish warm and cold areas, it also helps us identify materials within the property. In this case we have not carried out any thermal imaging as it was too warm and therefore we would not have obtained any beneficial results. Below are example thermal image photographs (not your property).

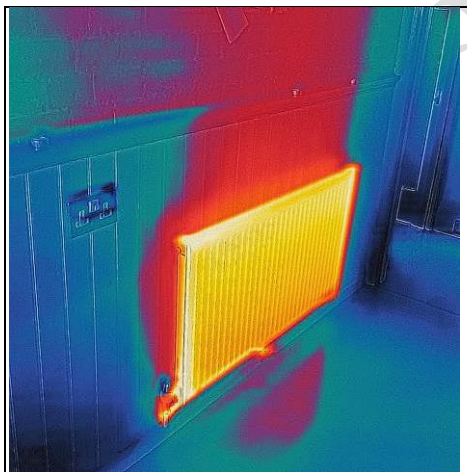
(Key to the colours; blue = cold, red = warm, green/yellow = cool)



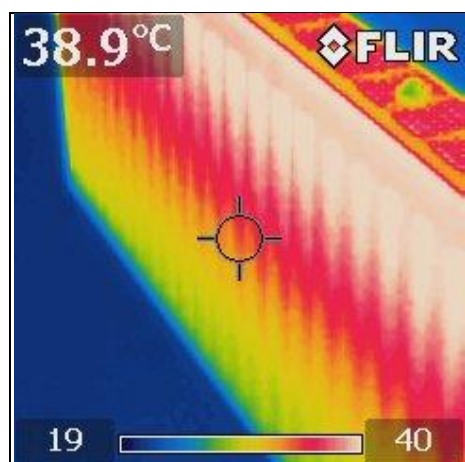
Front view  
Brick has absorbed heat  
(Not your property)



Rear view  
(Not your property)



Single panel radiator  
(Not your property)



Double panel radiator  
(Not your property)



Boiler  
(Not your property)

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# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

## **TENURE – LEASHOLD / SHARED OWNERSHIP**

We understand from the sales details this is a shared ownership building. We have noted on the sales details on the public domain/internet that the properties are described as leasehold. We have not seen a copy of the lease; your legal advisor needs to ensure that you understand the lease that you are buying into.

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

## **OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION**

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

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



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## EXTERNAL

### DORMER WINDOWS AND ROOF WINDOWS

#### Dormer Windows

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

The property has a dormer window to the front and rear. The dormer window roof is clad with concrete tiles, the cheeks of the dormer are timber frame and the windows are timber. Generally, we would comment for their age, type and style they are below average and due to the way they are constructed we believe they are problematic.

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

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



Front dormer timber frame  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear dormer  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

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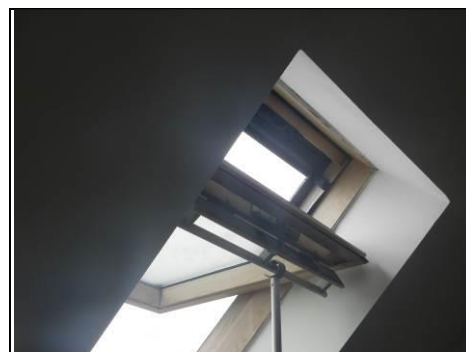


## **Roof Windows**

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

The property has a purpose made roof window. In this instance we would comment that it looked in reasonable condition.

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 in en-suite

## **Party Wall**

The party wall relates to shared items, such as the timber frame. 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 Etc. Act 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.*

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the dormer windows and roof windows from the parts we would 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 and/or aerial photographs. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

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

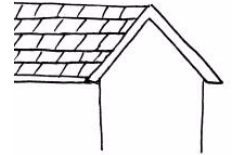
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# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



*The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration. The property may or not have an underlayer dependent upon the age of your property, please read on:*

We will consider the roofs in three areas:

- 1) Main roof
- 2) Front entrance canopy
- 3) Rear covered paved area canopy

## Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with a concrete tile. From ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roof's age, type and style.



Concrete tiles  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

There is some slight moss on the roof. The moss can hold water against the tiles and cause them to have accelerated deterioration.

We recommend removing moss with a soft brush, we do not recommend high pressure cleaning or chemicals are used on the roof tiles as they can damage the tiles.

With this age of roof there will usually be a few damaged or displaced tiles, this is nothing unusual, they do however need repairing to stop leaks.

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

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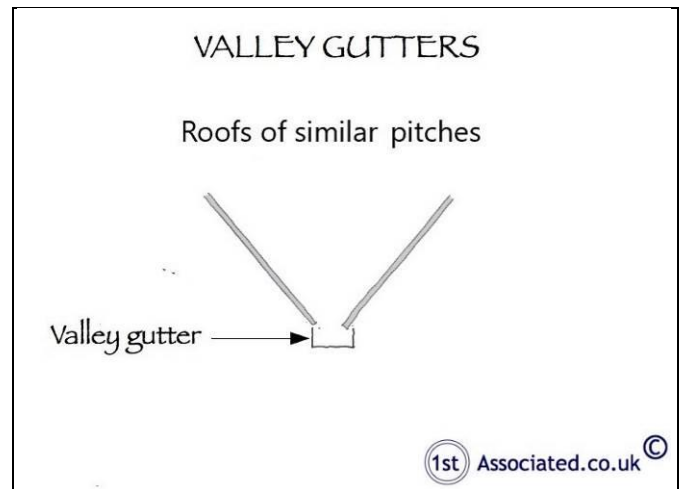


## Valley Gutters

This property has valley gutters which we could not see properly which are generally a problematic area.



Valley gutter



Valley gutter

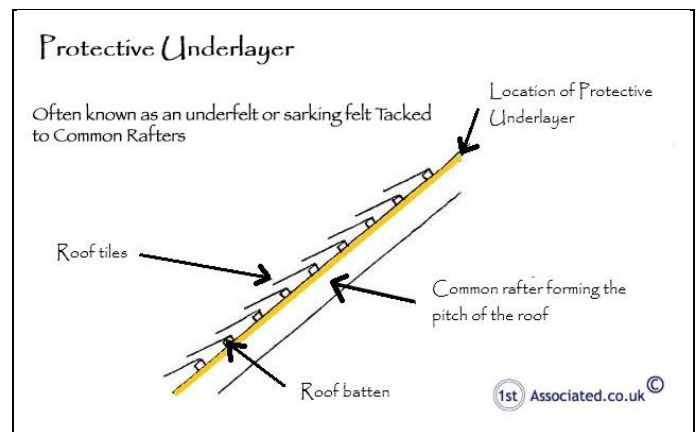
### Valley gutter defined

A valley gutter is where two main roofs meet or where there is a change in roof direction.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Periodic inspections.

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

*From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, these in more recent years have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as underfelts but now the name is not really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.*



Protective underlayer

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



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

### **Front entrance canopy**

The entrance canopy has a flat roof covered with GRP (glass-reinforced plastic) which looks in average condition. There is some water sitting on it where there is a central drain. Note; this discharges off the end, there is no downpipe.



Front entrance canopy

### **Rear covered paved area canopy**

To the rear patio there is a metal frame with a plastic canopy. Your legal advisor to check and confirm this has planning permission.



Rear canopy  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Rear covered paved area

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

All the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera and/or aerial photographs.

Finally, we were only able to see approximately fifty percent of the main roof properly from ground level. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see and our aerial photographs, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

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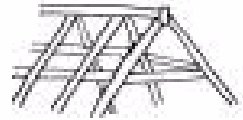
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# **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



## **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

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

### **Main Roof**

#### **Roof Access**

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the landing. A key is required to get into the roof. The owners advised they have lost their key – you need to ensure they get a replacement key.

There is no loft ladder, there was an electric light however this was not working as it had no bulb.

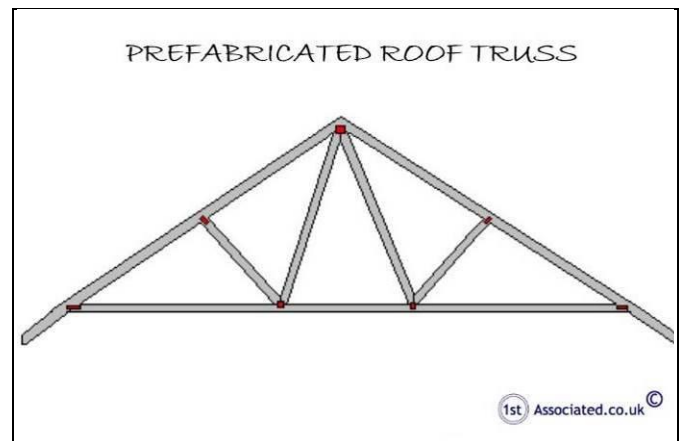
The roof was viewed from our ladder using our own torchlight which has limited our inspection.



Key for loft hatch

#### **Roof Structure**

The property has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter. These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturers calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof.



Pre-fabricated roof truss

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## Gable ends

The left gable end is plywood and the right gable which is also the party wall has a plastic sheet. This should be fire resistant however we cannot confirm.



Left gable plywood with positive pressure extract fan



Plastic sheet to right gable

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal advisor to check and confirm that it is a fire resistant party wall and that fire cannot be spread from one property to another.

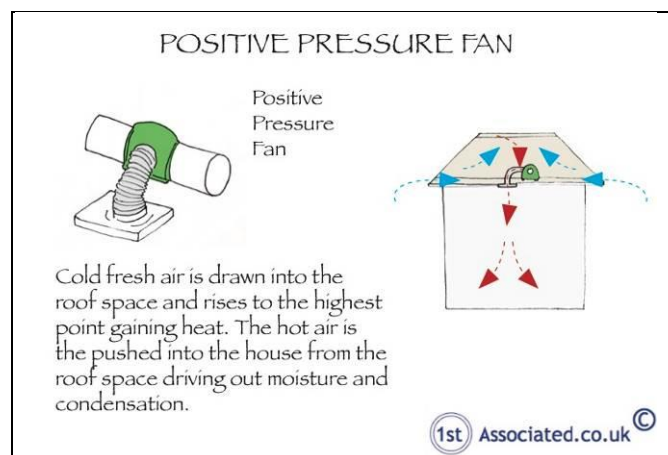
### Fire Walls Defined

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

## Positive pressure extract fan in the roof

Within the roof space we could see a positive pressure extract fan/air movement unit which are normally introduced where there is black mould.

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



Positive pressure fan

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## **Roof Timbers**

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



General view of inside of roof

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be one hundred percent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

## **Ventilation**

None noted.

## **Insulation**

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## **Electrical Cables**

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity of wiring to comment.

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

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

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# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

## Hopperheads, Gutters and Downpipes

The hopperheads, gutters and downpipes are plastic. They are in average condition for their age, type and style. By average condition we mean there are some minor leaks, however most people would be happy to live with these providing repairs are carried out within the next six to twelve months.

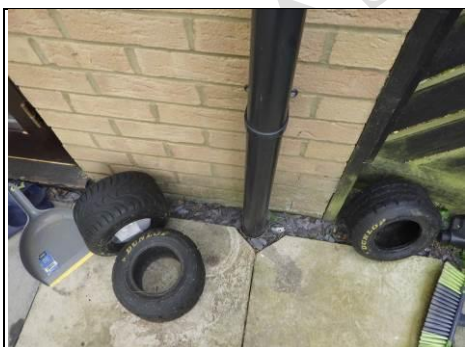


Balcony hopperhead

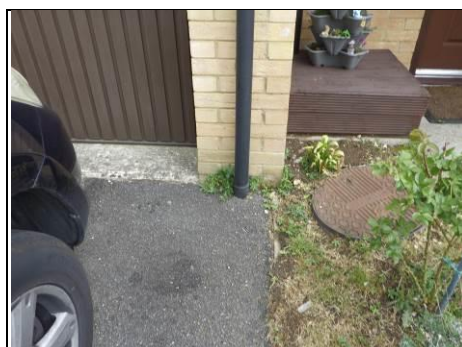
There is an awkward detail where the balcony tries to drain into the hopperhead which does not appear to have sufficient fall and has led to the balcony becoming covered in moss.

## Downpipes feed directly into the ground

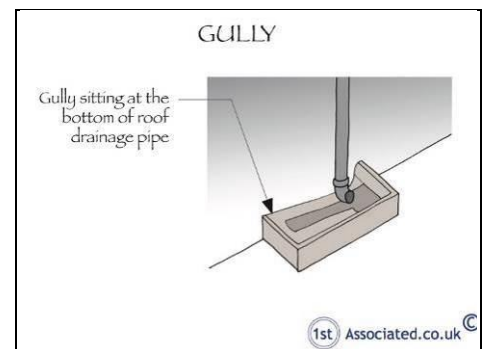
The downpipes feed directly into the ground. This is a practice we are not particularly keen on as we cannot be certain where they go, so if there is a blockage then the drain would have to be opened up. We would much prefer a gully.



Downpipes feed directly into ground rear left corner



Downpipe into ground right corner of garage



Gully

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**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 also recommend that the gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

### **Soil and Vent Pipe**

We assume the property has internal soil and vent pipes, we were unable to see this which was surprising. Internal soil and vent pipes can work well, apart from if they leak, as they are hidden from view so a leak is not normally discovered.

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm one hundred percent 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.

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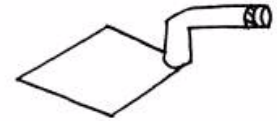
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# WALLS

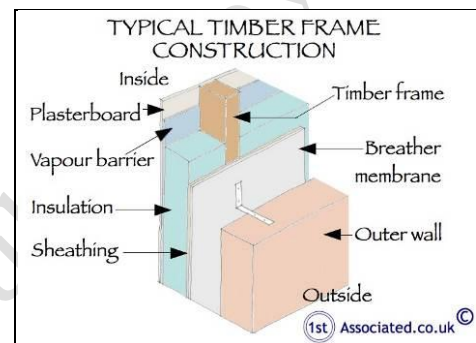


*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

The walls are brick finished in a stretcher bond brickwork. Internally, we could only see the finish within the roof which is plywood. We would expect something similar to our sketch.



Left gable plywood



Timber frame

## Opening up the structure

Normally with timber frame properties we like to open up the walls in three areas which we have not done in this instance.

## Brickwork

As mentioned, the property is built in a Stretcher bond brickwork externally in a cement based mortar.

We noted efflorescence which is often a sign that it is likely to be a timber frame construction.



Efflorescence

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### Efflorescence defined

Efflorescence is the white salt found on brickwork/stonework. It is a natural phenomenon which is where the minerals in water as they dry out come to the surface of stone or brick and leave a white crystallised powder, almost flour like. On a red brick it can stand out considerably, almost appearing bright white on a lighter white or yellow brick it can almost disappear.

The term "Stretcher Bond" means that from the outside of the property, you can see a row of the sides of the bricks (known as "stretchers") followed by a course above of the same stretch of bricks set off so the joint is centrally above the "stretcher". This pattern would repeat throughout.

### Cavity Walls

Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of thermal insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable particularly in this instance where the inner wall is timber frame.

### Timber frame construction

This type of timber frame construction, given the relatively newness of it, we believe will be the timber that is the main structural element that is supporting the roof and the brickwork is effectively acting as a cladding.

### Wall Ties to timber frame

There is usually a wall tie that ties the brick walls to the timber frame in one way or another. We have come across instances where these are loose or not been carried out properly. It is very difficult to ascertain this without opening up the walls.

### Weep holes

An issue that has come to light in more recent years is how water drains from the outer brickwork cladding. The brickwork is a sacrificial layer that gets damp and then dries out however the dampness does travel through it and it can affect things such as lintels by deterioration and if, as in this case, it is a timber building then it can affect the timber frame. Please see our comments regarding opening up the structure.

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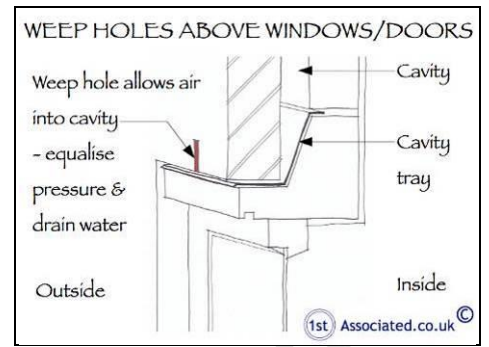




Weep hole above window



Weep holes



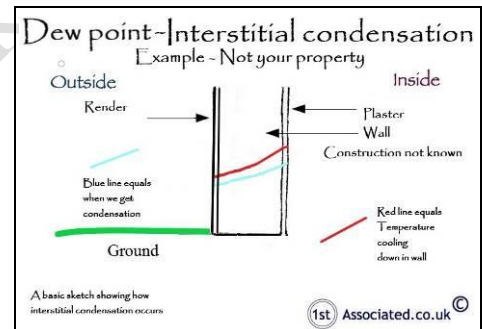
Weep holes above windows

## Lintels

As this is a timber frame building it is likely to have timber and metal lintels.

## Interstitial condensation

We have come across problems with interstitial condensation in this era of property. Again, without opening up the structure it is difficult to confirm. This problem needs to be raised with the existing owners.



Interstitial condensation

### Interstitial condensation defined

This is where condensation occurs within the structure as opposed to surface condensation that we are more used to that appears on mirrors, etc.

## Moss to base

Please see our earlier comments regarding airbricks acting as gutters and moss to the base of the property.



Moss to rear base

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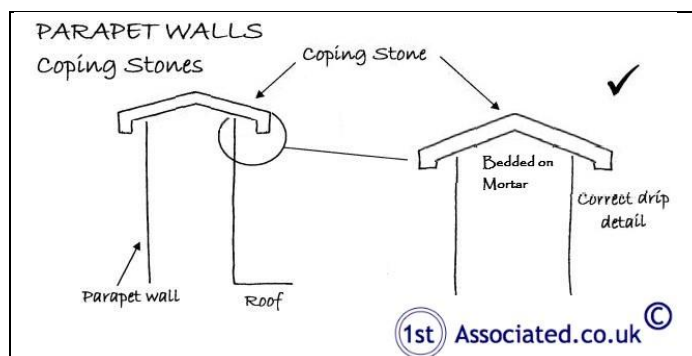


## Balcony Wall

The balcony wall looks to be damp. This may be due to the coping stone not having sufficient drip detail.



Balcony wall damp



Parapet wall coping stone



Front balcony  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~



Balcony  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

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

Our comments have been based upon how the brickwork / plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the 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 as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

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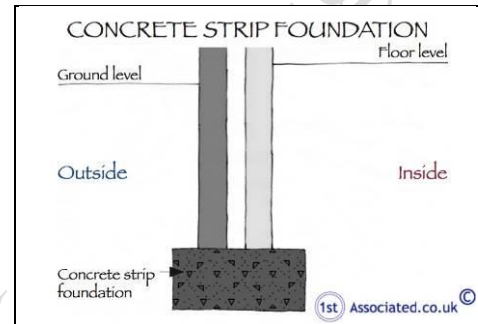
# FOUNDATIONS



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

## Foundations

We would expect to find a concrete foundation typically known as a 'strip concrete' foundation going down to a meter or slightly deeper dependent upon the age of the property.



Strip concrete foundation

## Clay and/or Sand?

This area is known towards Bedford as being a high clay area and was famous at one time for brick making in the area by London Brick and prior to that by local companies. Leighton Buzzard is not too far away which is famous for its sand. Without carrying out trial holes we cannot be certain of what the ground conditions are.

Clay has two properties; one of which is it retains water and the other is that it moves depending upon its water content. It is therefore more susceptible than most conditions should drains leak or trees be allowed to overgrow, or if it is within a water course, etc. It is not unusual to have some settlement in properties built in clay.

## 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.

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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.

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

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

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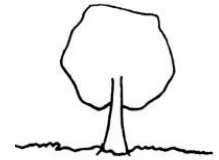
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# TREES



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

There are trees outside what we would term as influencing distance however they do need maintenance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to establish who owns the trees.



Trees to rear  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

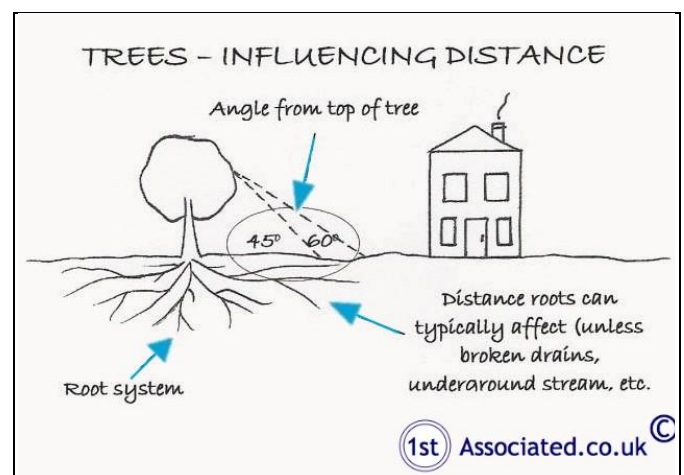
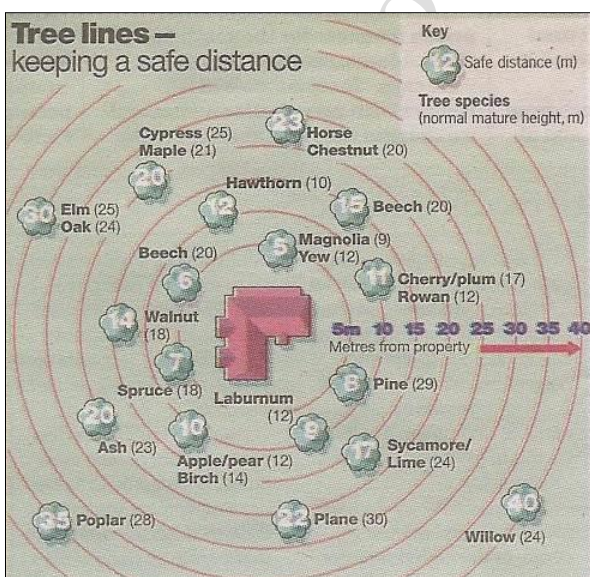
## Tree cut down to the front

There looks to have been a substantial tree cut down to the front.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to find out further information regarding this. We would be happy to comment further or you could instruct an arboriculturalist (not a tree surgeon).



Tree cut down



Influencing distance of trees to a property

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### 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.

Finally, insurance requirements with regard to trees have varied over the years and in our opinion have got ever more onerous. We have seen the notifiable distance of a tree away from a property to have been reduced over the years and we reiterate our comments elsewhere within this report that you need to make enquiries with regard to the insurability of your property in relation to trees and other features when you purchase the property.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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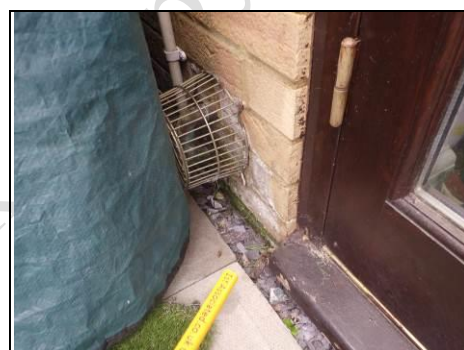
## DAMP PROOF COURSE

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

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, a DPC should have been built in as work proceeded.

There was no damp proof course visible however we noted a change of levels around the building which can result in the damp proof course being bridged. There was moss to the base of the property at the time of our survey.

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



Moss to rear base



Change in levels

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

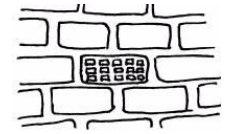
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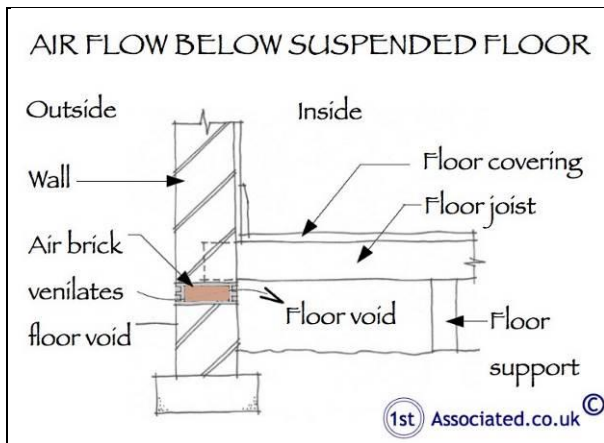
# AIRBRICKS



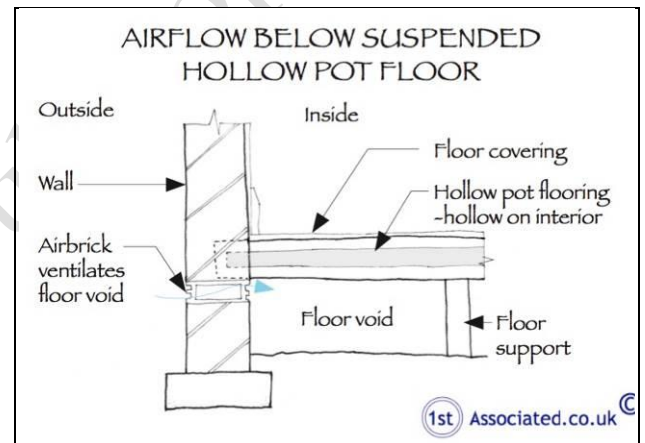
*In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

## Low Level Air Bricks

The property has a suspended floor, we do not know whether this is concrete or timber.



Suspended timber floor

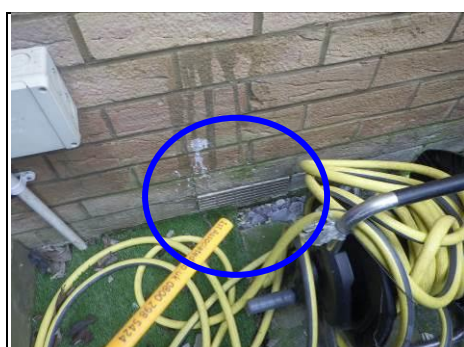


Suspended concrete floor

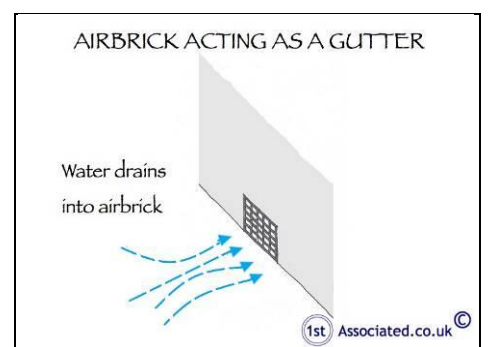
The floor needs an airflow underneath it and unfortunately the airbricks which should ventilate the floor are so low they are acting as gutters.



Front air brick low



Rear airbrick acting as gutter



Airbrick acts as gutter

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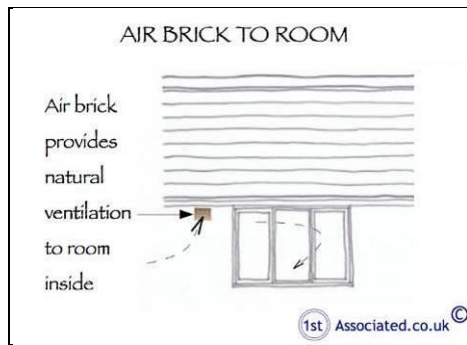
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## **High Level Air Bricks**

We could see an extract vent from the WC however we could not view this area due to the mass of stored items.



High level airbrick



Extract vent from WC

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.

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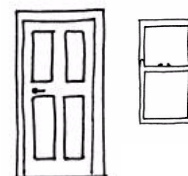
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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



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

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

## Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are timber. They are stained and we would comment they are in weathered condition for their age, type and style.



Fascias and soffits  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

### **ACTION REQUIRED:**

We recommend redecoration when the windows are redecorated which we would

recommend is as soon as possible in the warmer months. Make sure gutters and downpipes are watertight before carrying out any work on fascias and soffits. As this is a shared ownership we do not know who is responsible for the fascias and soffits and the windows.

## Windows and Doors

The property has timber double glazed windows with trickle vents, which generally look to be in below average condition and in need of redecoration.

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



Weathered window

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

### **Transferable Guarantees**

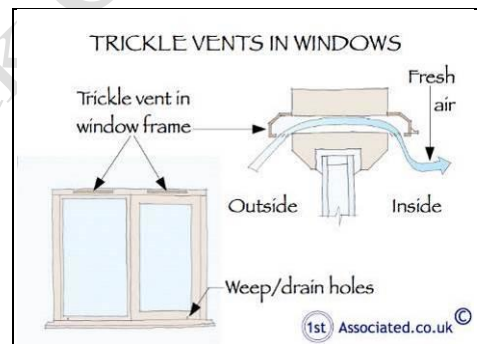
Although these windows are old enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees by your legal advisor. Generally, it is considered that double glazed units have a life of about ten years.

#### Trickle Vents Defined

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



Trickle vent



Trickle vents

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

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## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**

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

External decoration is required to the fascias and soffits and the windows.

Finally, ideally external redecoration/cleaning is recommended every three to five years dependent upon the original material, its exposure to the elements and the material's properties. Where this is not carried out repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration and/or cleaning should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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## INTERNAL



# CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

## 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 type of property.

### 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.

### Proprietary boarding Defined

Proprietary boarding are one off specially manufactured boards commonly used in years gone by which are now popular again.

## Plasterboard Cracks

We noted some plasterboard cracks for example in the en-suite shower room which we believe probably relates to humidity.

## Internal Walls and Partitions

These are, we believe studwork construction. This is based upon us tapping the walls. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess.

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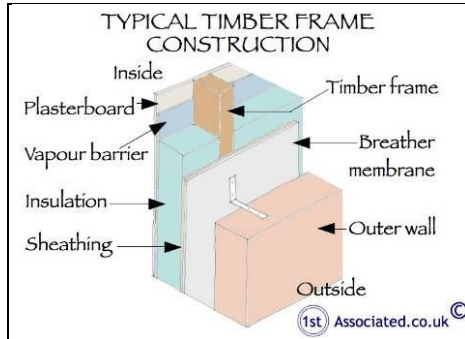
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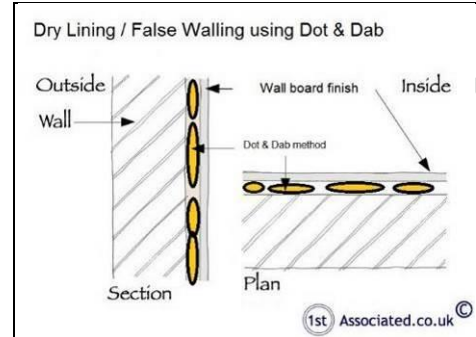


## Perimeter Walls

The perimeter walls are dry lined. Again, this is based upon us tapping the walls and based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.



Timber frame sketch



Dot and dab dry lining

Again, we cannot be one hundred percent 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.

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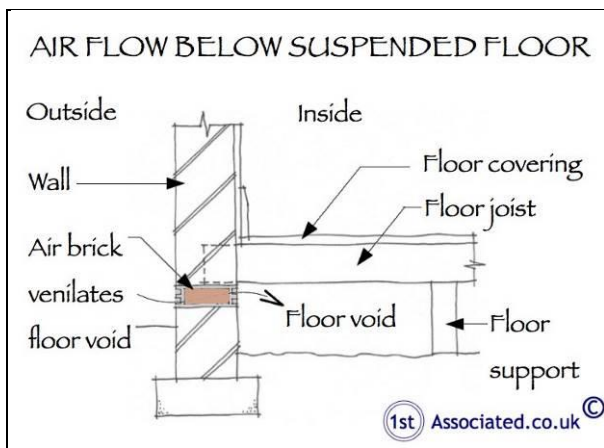
# FLOORS



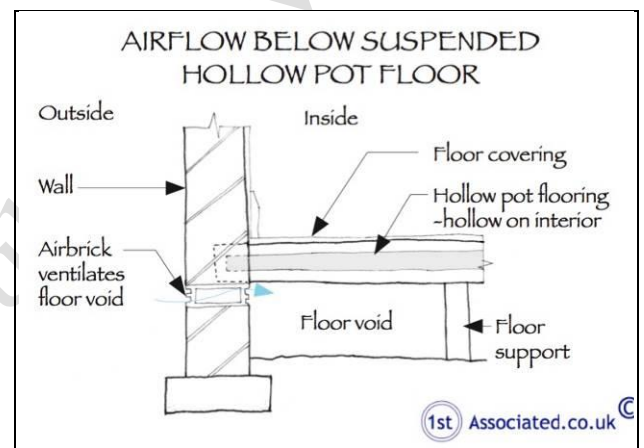
Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

## Ground Floor

The property has a suspended floor, we do not know whether this is concrete or timber as we have not opened it up. We can see airbricks at each end of the property that are acting as gutters.



Suspended timber floor

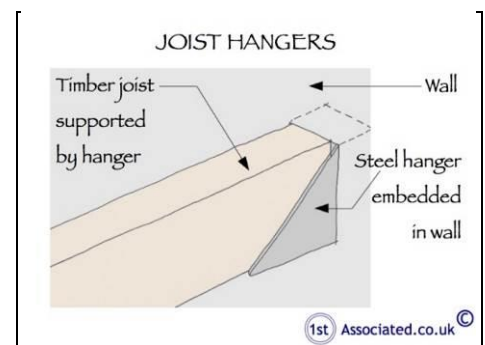


Suspended concrete floor

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

## First and Second Floor

We have assumed that the floor construction is joist and floorboard sheets on joist hangers, as this is typical in this age of property.



Joist hangers

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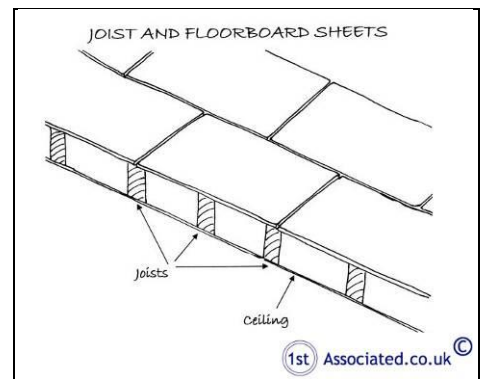
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### Joist and Floorboard Sheets Construction Defined

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 floorboard sheets fixed down upon it.



Joist and floorboard sheets

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

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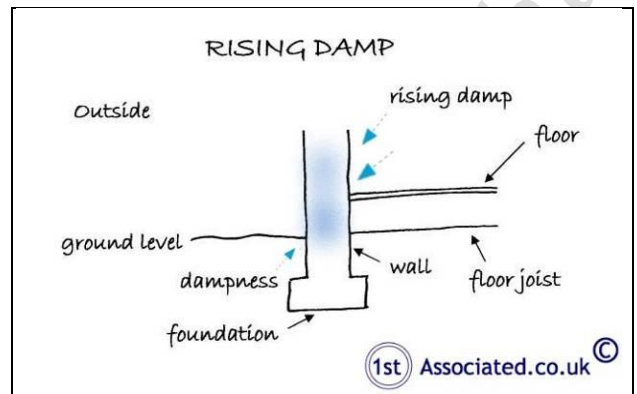
# DAMPNESS



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

## Rising Damp

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

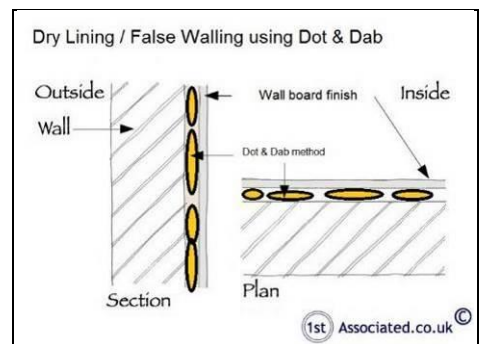


Rising damp

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we were unable to obtain accurate readings due to the dry lining.



Testing for rising damp



Dot and dab dry lining

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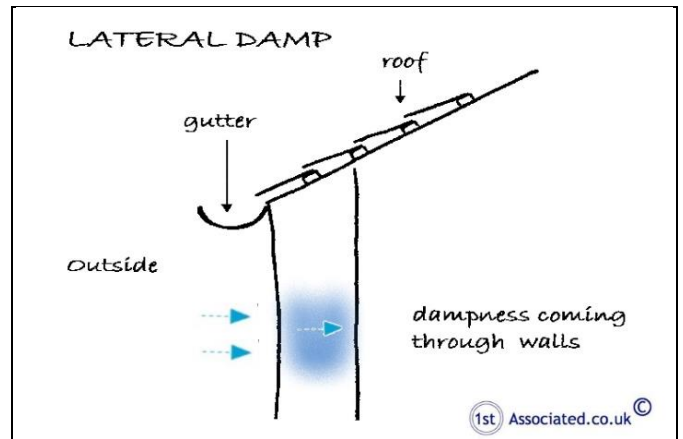
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## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

*This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall materials or inadequate gutters and downpipes, such as poorly jointed gutters.*



Lateral damp

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. Again, we were unable to obtain accurate damp meter readings due to the dry lining.



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 signs of condensation in the en-suite shower room on the top floor which looks to have been painted over. It may well be getting into the bedroom as well.



Black mould in en-suite shower



Black mould in en-suite

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There is also a possibility of condensation in the bathroom 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. You need to have a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

### **Extract fans in kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas**

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and any rooms where you intend to dry clothes.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would anticipate costs between £250 - £500 per large humidity controlled extract fan depending upon the wiring required; quotations required.

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

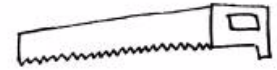
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# INTERNAL JOINERY



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

## Doors

The property has veneer doors.



Doors

## Fire doors

We noted various fire doors have had the central door closer (Perco is the generic name) removed. Fire doors generally are required on a staircase as this is a protected area to stop the staircase acting like a chimney and transferring the fire from one floor to the next.



Door closer removed

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

## Staircase

We were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined where we could see it, 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.

## Kitchen

We found the kitchen in average condition, subject to some wear and tear as one would expect. Please note our comments with regards to the electric earth test failing on our first test in the kitchen socket.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

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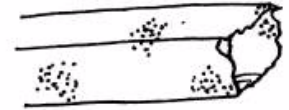
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# **TIMBER DEFECTS**



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

## **Dry Rot/White Rot**

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

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

## **Wet Rot/Brown Rot**

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

We have not visually seen any signs of significant wet rot during the course of our inspection. Wet rot could occur to the windows and fascias and soffits if it isn't redecorated. Also, if it is a suspended timber floor this could be deteriorating due to the airbricks acting as gutters.

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

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## Woodworm



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

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or indeed past signs of significant woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be one hundred percent 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.

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## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Internal decorations are as we would expect for a house that is occupied by a family. We would recommend redecorating.

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

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# THERMAL EFFICIENCY

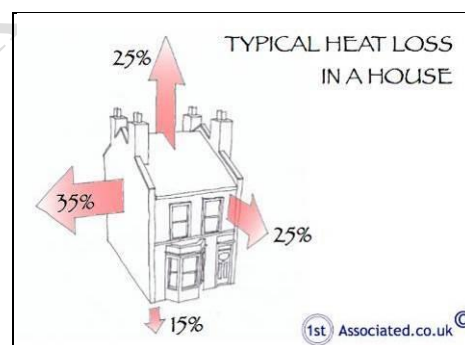


*Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation.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

*Zoopla (and others may do similar) show an energy assessment of how much typical energy bills will be on a property. We have not had feedback on how accurate this is as yet however we feel it is an interesting step forward in looking at energy efficiency of a property, although there are all sorts of arguments as to how the energy efficiency calculations are carried out.*

## Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 300mm. In this instance there is 200-300mm.



Typical heat loss

## Walls

The property has a stretcher bond construction. In this age of property there is usually insulation.

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

## Windows

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

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## Services

The boiler is dated. Service records should be obtained for the boiler and the electrics. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you ask the owners for energy bills and service records for the past few years.

## Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is average compared with what we typically see. Please note we have not seen the Energy Performance Certificate.

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

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

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

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

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

## HIPs

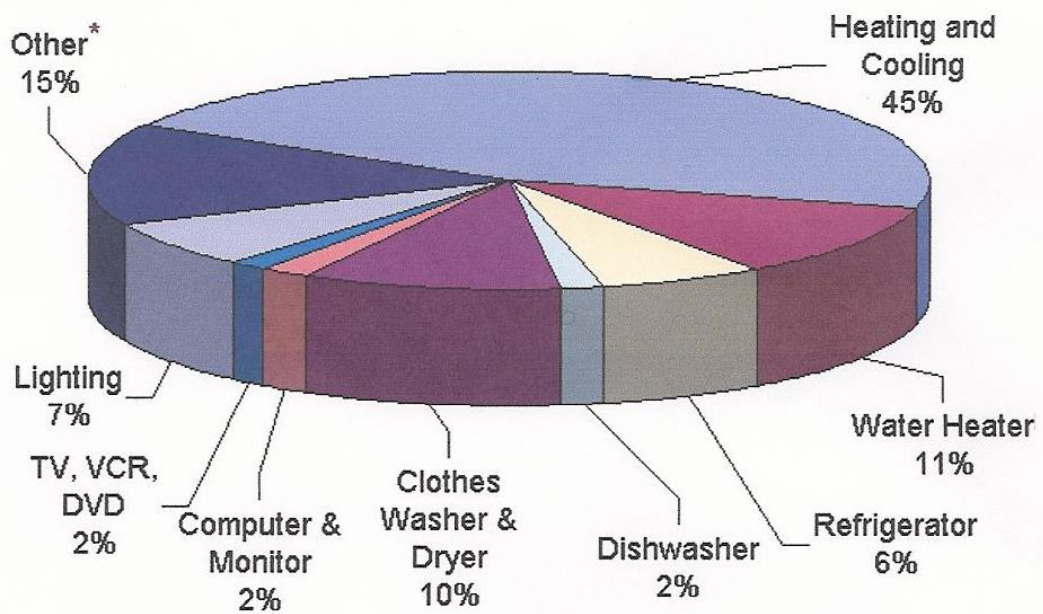
We understand that HIPs were suspended from 20th May 2010. Energy Performance Certificates are required before a sale completes.

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

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## What does my energy bill pay for?



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

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## OTHER MATTERS



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

### Security

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

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted we believe these to be battery operated, we prefer detectors to be hardwired into the main power supply.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety, that additional smoke detectors are installed.



Smoke alarm

Important - 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.

### 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.

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## Asbestos

Depending on exactly when the property was built there may well be some asbestos.

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



Asbestos externally

Our insurance company requires us to advise we are not asbestos surveyors and advises us to recommend asbestos surveyors are instructed and that you have your own asbestos survey carried out.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As this is a one-off inspection it is best to be on the safe side. If you wish to confirm you are one hundred percent free of asbestos you need to have an asbestos survey carried out.

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## **SERVICES**

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

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

## **BROADBAND CONNECTIVITY**



We are sometimes asked with regard to the Broadband Connectivity in the area. We have identified some websites which we believe are useful for this:

<https://www.broadband.co.uk/>

Advises whether there is phone line broadband or Superfast or Ultrafast broadband in an area.

<https://www.ofcom.org.uk/>

Allows you to check broadband availability, check mobile availability and run a speed test.

However, we would always recommend speaking to the occupiers of properties as to what they have used.

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# ELECTRICITY



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

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

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located in the garage, we were unable to have a close inspection due to the stored items in the garage particularly go-carts.



Fuse board in garage

## Earth Test

We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle. On our first test the electric tripped and passed on the second attempt.



Earth test failed



Earth test passed second and third time

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a new fuse board with a fire resistant metal case and would

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advise as the property is changing occupancy the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report. Any recommendations from the report should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

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

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

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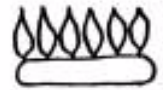
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## GAS



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

We are advised that the property has mains gas. The consumer unit is located next to the front entrance door.

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



Gas

**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.

### Carbon Monoxide

No carbon monoxide monitors were noted.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is recommended that an audible carbon monoxide detector is fitted (complying with British Standard EN50291) within the property. Carbon monoxide detectors are no substitute for regular servicing of gas installations and their flues.

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## PLUMBING AND HEATING



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

### Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask the owners or Estate Agent to show you where it is, although we would not expect most Estate Agents to know 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.

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## Hot Water Cylinder

There is a Megaflow cylinder located on the top floor, which is an unvented water heater system. This is a modern hot water cylinder which we personally have found to be very effective.



Unvented cylinder

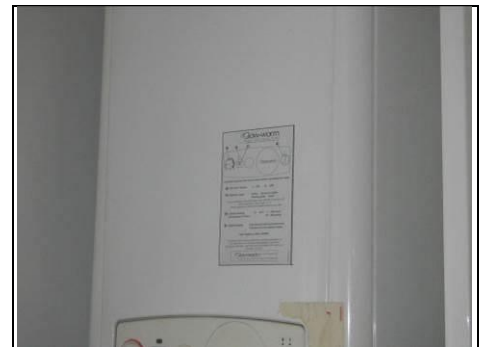
## Plumbing

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.

## Heating

There is a Glow worm boiler located in the kitchen. This looks to be an older boiler and you should budget to replace.

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.



Glow worm boiler

## Ten Minute Heating Test

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that you test the heating.

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

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

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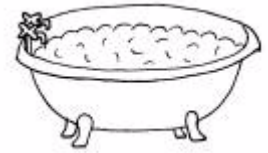
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# **BATHROOM**



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

## **Ground Floor Cloakroom**

We were unable to access the cloakroom due to the mass of stored items.



WC left full of stored items

## **First Floor Bathroom**

The bathroom has a three piece bathroom suite, consisting of a bath, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition.

## **Second Floor En-Suite Shower Room**

The en-suite has a three piece suite, consisting of a shower, wash hand basin and WC, which looks in average condition. There is black mould/condensation in the en-suite due to poor ventilation/extraction.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regards to adding a humidity controlled extract fan.

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

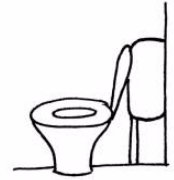
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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

The cold taps have been run for approximately quarter of an hour in the top floor en-suite shower room. No build up or back up was noted.



Running tap

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

#### Manholes Defined

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

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## Inspection Chamber / Manhole One - Front

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

From what we could see it is plastic built.

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.



Front manhole

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.

From 1st October 2011 the water authority took over responsibility for shared private sewers. These private sewers are now public sewers. However, general drainage searches will not show the location of all the public sewers within the boundary of a property and other such matters that may restrict development.

The water authority's prior consent is required to build within 3 metres of a public sewer. The owner is responsible for the cost of obtaining the water authority's consent which may include the re-routing of the public sewer. If you intend to carry out any such development at the property you should obtain a speciality drainage report to ascertain the route of the sewers and drains.

## 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.*

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We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. Normally in a property of this age the rainwater drains discharge into a soak away.

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.

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# OUTSIDE AREAS

## Sun Map

The Sun Map shows the sun's path as it travels around the property at a specific date; the date can be seen at the very bottom of the picture. The arrows show the sun's position using a 24 hour clock face around the property.



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## GARAGE/PARKING



### Garage

The property has a garage on the right side which was full of stored items at the time of our inspection particularly go-karts.



Garage door



Garage full of stored items

### Parking

There is off-road parking to the front of the property in front of the garage. We spoke briefly to a neighbour during our survey who said parking is bad in the area.

## EXTERNAL

### Front Garden

The front garden is mainly a parking area.



Front parking area

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## Rear Garden

The rear garden is accessed via a shared path to the left of the building. Adjacent to the property there is a paved area covered with a canopy. The garden has artificial grass with a timber fencing surrounding.



Rear covered paved area



Rear garden artificial grass  
~ Aerial View - 360 Photo ~

## Boundaries

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

There is normally a 'T' marking which boundary is yours on the deeds which you can obtain from Land Registry.

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

## Neighbours

We spoke briefly to a nearby neighbour who was carrying out some work on his car who advised that parking can be difficult.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that you visit the neighbours.

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## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
  - i) Roof and similar renewals.
  - ii) Wall insulation.
  - iii) Information with regards to overcladding
  - iv) Amendments/removal of any walls in part or whole.
  - v) Double glazing or replacement windows.
  - vi) Drainage location, maintenance and repairs
  - vii) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - viii) Rising damp treatments.
  - ix) Asbestos
  - x) Boiler and central heating installation and maintenance.
  - xi) Electrical test and report.
  - xii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - xiii) Have there been any structural problems referred to insurance companies, any insurance claims, monitoring or underpinning, etc.
  - xiv) 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.

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- 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 Environmental report 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 Environmental reports 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 Environmental reports or similar general reports on the environment please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

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

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

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

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

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

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed!

Please do not hesitate to contact us on 0800 298 5424 or send an email directly to whoever produced the report.

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## REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses  
*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

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

Surveying buildings  
*By Malcolm Hollis  
Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible  
*By Mark Brinkley  
Published by Burlington Press*

Putting Life Into Perspective House Price Information  
*Source: Sunlife.co.uk*

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# **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

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

## **ENGLISH LAW**

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

## **SOLE USE**

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

## **APPROVALS/GUARANTEES**

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

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **LAYOUT PLAN**

We have used the estate agents floor plan as a guide to the layout of the building. We have not checked it for scale and accuracy.

## **SKETCHES**

We have used sketches throughout the report, these are for illustration purposes only and we would not expect these to be used as technical details for work being carried out. We would be more than happy to advise further if you wish specific help on any elements.

## **WEATHER**

It was a cool spring day with showers 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. This may have adverse effects on many buildings in years to come or the not too distant future.

As you are probably aware there has been some record breaking weather recently:

2018 being the driest start to a summer on record

December 2015 was the wettest month on record

August 2004 the wettest August on record in many areas

2003 was the driest year on record

2000 was the wettest year on record

In 1914 the Meteorological Office began recording weather although there are informal diary records as is evidence of plant growth, etc. which also indicates weather patterns and is available for a much longer period.

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## **FLOODING**

We are often asked about floods and how likely is the property to flood. We no longer think it is possible to predict due to our changing weather patterns and rainfall often being more intense. We simply do not have a crystal ball good enough to be able to advise of the certainty on this matter, other than the obvious that if you are near rivers, springs and on a sloping site you are more likely to flood than most. We have, however, been involved in some cases where flooding has occurred when it has not occurred for many decades/in living memory and this we feel is due to new weather patterns; we do not believe there is a one hundred percent accurate way to establish if a property will flood or not.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to carry out your own research on this matter/due diligence before you legally commit to purchase the property.

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

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

## **JAPANESE KNOTWEED**

We have not inspected for Japanese Knotweed. We would advise that we are finding that some mortgage valuation surveyors are setting valuations at zero on any property with Japanese Knotweed and are reluctant to lend where it is present.

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A BBC news report dated April 2018 states that research has been carried out by Swansea University, where they carried out trials near Cardiff and Swansea and tested 19 main methods of controlling the plant and they found that none of these methods eradicated it. See our article:

<https://buildingsurveyquote.co.uk/japanese-knotweed-buildings-and-resveratrol/>

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to carry out your own research on this matter/due diligence before you legally commit to purchase the property and be aware that Japanese knotweed could be in neighbouring properties which you do not have direct control over.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately, in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have a full view of the roof due to the insulation covering the ceiling joists and general configuration of the roof.
- 2) We did not open up the walls as we could not see a way of doing this without causing damage.
- 3) We did not open up the floor as we could not see a way to do it without causing damage.
- 4) The garage was full of stored items.
- 5) We 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.

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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.

## **EXAMPLE SURVEY**

This example survey has been made up of a mixture of properties and gives the essence of the service that is being purchased.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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# APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Article – Timber frame construction
4. Article - Condensation and Cold Bridging

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

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

### **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

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

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## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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# DIFFERENT TYPES OF TIMBER FRAME CONSTRUCTION

There are five eras of timber frame construction:

## Tudor Era

Possibly the era we think of for timber frame construction was the Tudor era. These are the buildings that people often think are traditional black and white buildings.



Example of traditional timber frame

## Post war timber frame construction

More recently there is post war timber frame construction which we have seen several different versions of over the years, which in our search for quick/more economical ways to build we used forms of construction that had been used more traditionally on the continent (and as such were appropriate for the continent but adapted them in ways for our own use. Some of these adaptations were good, some were not so good and some of them were bad however it is very difficult to be certain which particular example you have (not just you, any particular case of this type of timber frame property).

## 1970's property boom and the wave of timber frame construction

In the 1970's architects, builders and developers looked for quick ways to build timber frames that fitted their criteria and does not need any drying time and is generally economical however we are still not aware of the long term impact of this type of construction.

The building of timber frame properties came to a drastic halt when the World in Action BBC television program 'exposed' the bad and poor practices that were taking place on building sites, which were used in this type of construction, such as leaving the timber frame out in the rain (wet wood is never good) and there are examples of timber covered in mud where it had been stored incorrectly or damage to the membrane that was meant to keep the timber frame dry when built and numerous other issues.

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The effect the World in Action programme had on timber framed properties in Britain was to almost stop the building of this type of property overnight, as no one wanted to purchase them. Many builders went under/into receivership/had bad times because of this.

### **1990's building**

Again, there was a resurgence of timber frame construction now in a more refined form and a much more insulated building was now required. We still do not understand how timber frame constructions will in the long run form in the UK. We have been involved with timber frame properties where interstitial condensation has been occurring (condensation within the structure) that has caused problems in houses that were very new. We simply do not feel that these houses have been tested sufficiently in use in the UK.

### **2000's timber frame building**

A newer version using engineered timber and more insulation. Again how these buildings will last long term is not known or indeed how our modern desire to have a highly insulated airtight buildings will last in the long term.

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# Condensation and Cold Bridging in modern properties

## Cold Bridging what does this mean?

### How does cold bridging work?

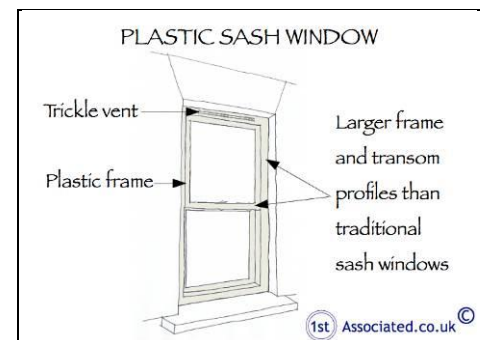
Cold bridging is a term and a problem we believe will become more common in years to come. We are finding more and more examples of Cold Bridging. This happens in certain types of property and to some extent it could be argued that it is a characteristic of that type of property and quite a complex issue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



Mock Georgian modern sliding sash windows

### 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.



Modern plastic sliding sash window

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## Cold bridging in larger modern buildings

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.

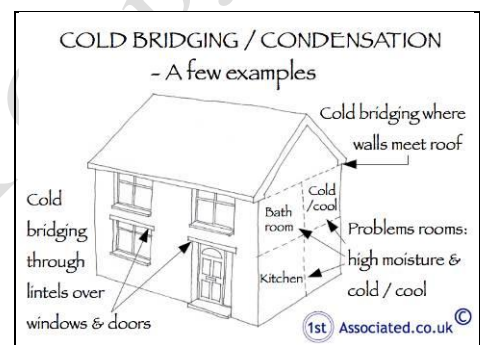


Modern houses

## Condensation and Cold Bridging in susceptible buildings

### 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/condensation

## 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.



Plastic/polymer based paint on hard cement render

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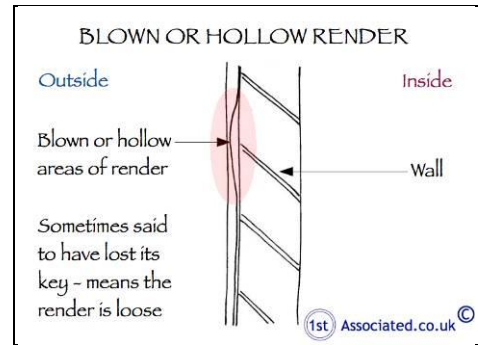
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## Buying a modern building

If you buy a modern 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.



Render with lost key

## When is Cold Bridging Likely?

In our experience we have seen cold bridging occurring in:

- 1) Eras of properties where there are warm elements and colder elements to the building.
- 2) Where you have a mixture of warm rooms and cold rooms.

For example: Lounges and main bedrooms tend to be warmer than guest or spare bedrooms most of the time. Also sometimes rooms can warm up due to large areas of glass and thermal heat gain, which is very true in some conservatories also.



Black mould

- 3) Humidity internally is high
- 4) Where it is colder but by no means very cold outside

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## Problems with modern era properties relating to Cold Bridging

Let us take a look at the modern 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

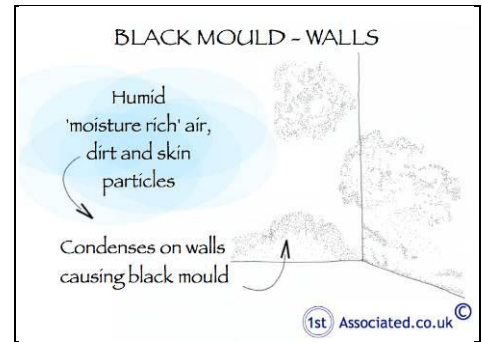
For example with:

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

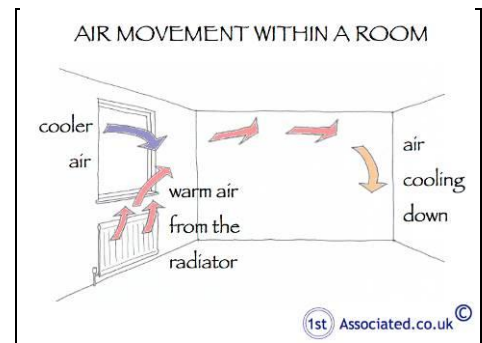
This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

### 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.



Condensation and black mould



Air movement within a room

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## Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

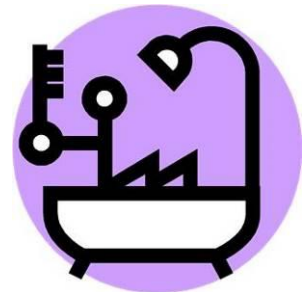
Our thoughts on this have very much changed as we used to say that cold bridging was typically found in properties from the 1960's/1970's. However we are increasingly finding it in a broader range of properties, particularly Victorian properties, where people are trying to live to modern standards of 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.



Heat loss via poorly insulated roof

## Can life style be 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.



## Lifestyle and cold bridging

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.



Drying clothes on a radiator can cause condensation

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.

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## Design problem or a lifestyle problem what causes cold bridging and condensation?

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.

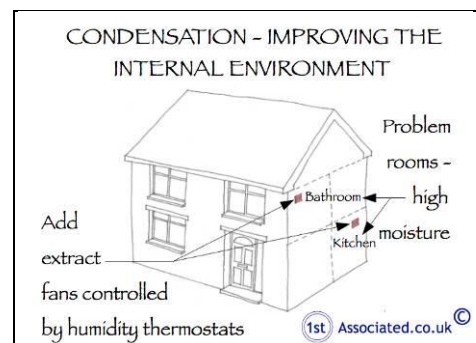
For example, drying lots of washing on a radiator inside may be causing excessive moisture in the atmosphere. Equally not opening the windows and closing or sealing up vents can be a problem.



Small extract fan needs to be improved

## Design of the Building

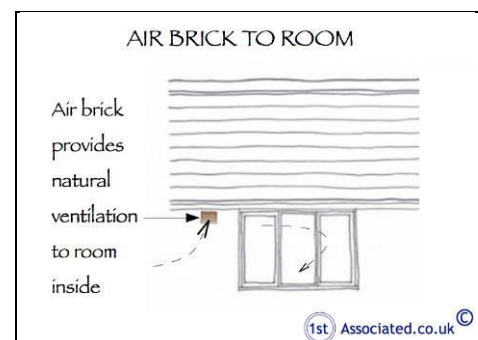
Sometimes it really is down to the design of the property. Where there are cold elements in it, such as a concrete structural frame or concrete lintels, when these are in contact with moist air condensation occurs. Sometimes this is impossible to stop but often it is possible to reduce it by having a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



Condensation

## 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

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## 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 in use for some time work before we would recommend them.



Roof insulation in modern property

## Seasons change and cold bridging occurs

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.

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.



Double glazed windows and loft insulation in modern property



Condensation on window

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