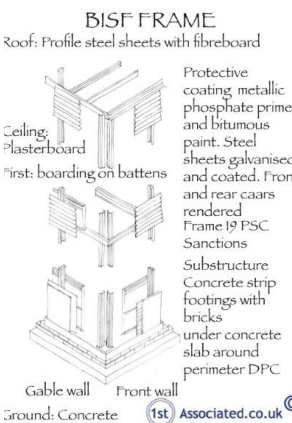
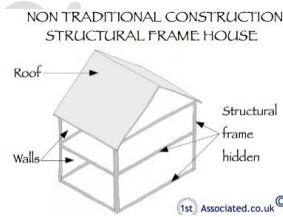


# Non Traditional Example Residential Building Survey

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## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION  
REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS  
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

CHIMNEY STACKS  
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS  
ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT SPACE  
GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES AND SOIL AND VENT PIPES  
EXTERNAL WALLS  
FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS  
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

### **INTERNAL**

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES  
CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES  
FLOORS  
DAMPNESS  
INTERNAL JOINERY  
TIMBER DEFECTS  
INTERNAL DECORATIONS  
THERMAL EFFICIENCY  
OTHER MATTERS

### **SERVICES**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
BATHROOMS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

PARKING  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

### **APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS  
ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS  
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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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 more 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.

This Building Survey is confidential and not to be shared with the vendor (seller) or estate agent or parties working on their behalf without written consent from the surveyor that has produced the Building Survey. During the course of discussions/negotiations with the vendor/estate agent/parties working on their behalf if they wish to see the Report we suggest you ask them which specific section and send them this section via a photograph or a scan. The Report remains our copyright and should not be reproduced without written consent from the surveyor.

## 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**

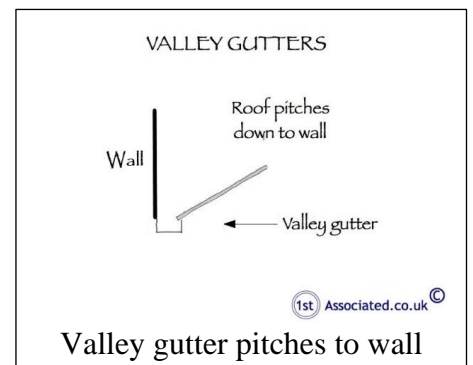
*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **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.



## **ORIENTATION**

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

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

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# **SYNOPSIS**

## **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a two storey semi-detached property situated in a residential area of similar era of properties.

We believe that the house is of a non traditional concrete built construction, commonly known as a Wimpey No Fines property. There is more about this within the report. Many mortgage lenders are not happy to lend on this type of property.

There is a paved garden to the front which has been given over to parking and a tree. To the rear there is a grassed sloping garden with a patio area.

We believe that the properties were originally local authority built in the 1950s. If the exact age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

### **Putting Life into Perspective!**

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

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 1951   | Truman signs Peace Treaty with Japan, officially ending WWII                 |
| 1952   | Princess Elizabeth becomes Queen at the age of twenty five.                  |
| 1950's | Average price of a new house was £1,891 and average salary was £520 per year |
| 1954   | Roger Bannister breaks the four minute mile barrier.                         |
| 1955   | The Queen opens first permanent terminal at London Airport                   |
| 1959   | UK postcodes introduced after a trial run in Norwich                         |

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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



Rear view



Street view



Front garden



Rear garden

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# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

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

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

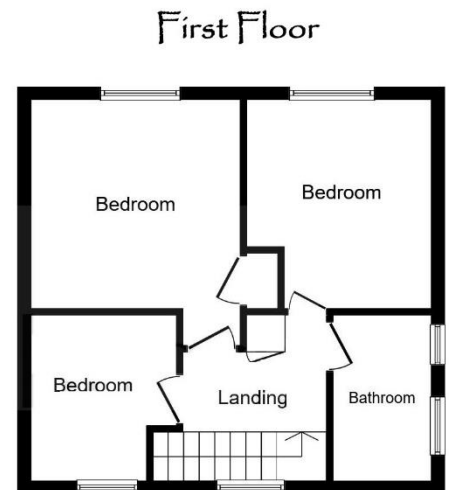
- 1) Entrance/staircase
- 2) Lounge front left
- 3) Kitchen/dining area rear



## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- 1) Bedroom front
- 2) Bedroom rear left
- 3) Bathroom rear right



## **Outside Areas**

There is a paved garden to the front which has been given over to parking. To the rear there is a grassed sloping garden with a patio area.

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

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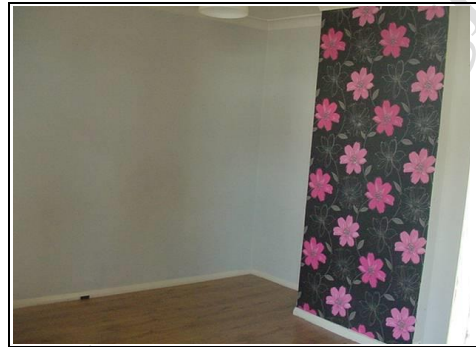
# INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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

## Ground Floor



Hallway and stairs



Lounge



Kitchen



Breakfast Room

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**First Floor**



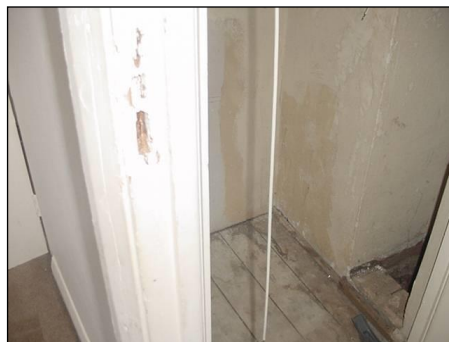
Bedroom front



Bedroom rear



Bathroom rear right



Airing cupboard

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# SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

## External

Chimneys:	Brick chimney
Main Roof:	Pitched, clad with concrete tiles
Main Roof Structure:	Cut timber roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Mixture of cast iron and plastic
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Cast iron
Walls:	Constructed of reinforced concrete, finished in render
Fascias and Soffits:	Painted timber or asbestos
Windows and Doors:	Old (front) and new (rear) plastic double glazed windows

## Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard or proprietary board
Walls:	Solid, assumed brickwork
Floors:    Ground Floor:	Concrete (assumed)
First Floor:	Joist and floorboards (assumed)

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## Services

We believe that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (all assumed). There is a double sealed manhole to the front of the property which we were unable to open.

Heating:	There is a Vaillant boiler located in the kitchen.
Electrics:	The electrics are 1980's/1990's and are located under the stairs.
Gas:	The consumer unit was located to the rear of the property.
Drainage:	The manhole is located to the front of the property however was double sealed and we were unable to open.

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.

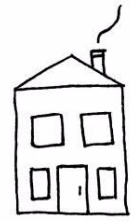
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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 200 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. Generally, non-traditional buildings can be purchased at a lower price than traditionally built houses, although this is also reflected in the number of people that are not keen/interested in buying non-traditional houses and also the lack of mortgages.
2. The size of the property and off road parking.
3. It has vacant possession.
4. The property has potential, for example a loft conversion.

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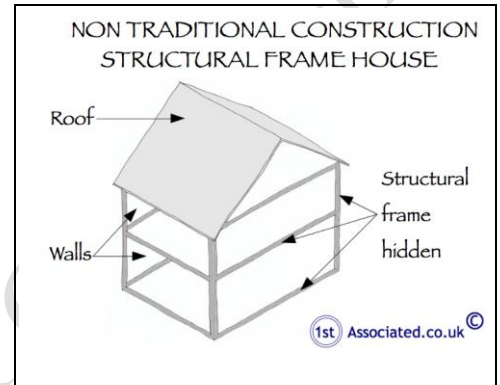


## **The Bad**

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

### **1.0) Non traditional building – the overview**

This house is of a non traditional construction of which there were many built after the second world war to meet the needs and demands of the population at the time. This immediate need for a large number of houses meant that we looked at how we constructed houses and moved towards more factory type processes. Indeed some of the factories that carried out the work, it is said, had been making aeroplanes and bombs for the war one week and then changed to building houses the next week. There are many different types of non traditional buildings.



Non traditional construction

### **2.0) Non-traditional buildings and mortgages**

Non –traditional buildings make up a small percentage of all houses and are generally difficult to obtain a mortgage for with only a limited number of companies that will give mortgages and we would say in our experience over the years this number is reducing. We would add further that their lending criteria changes from time to time which does mean they will lend on them some of the time and then not lend on them

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### **3.0) Type of non-traditional building**

There are four basic types of non-traditional buildings, these are:

1. Metal frame – a building based on a metal structure
2. Pre-cast concrete – concrete pre-cast in a factory then transported to site and built.
3. In-situ concrete – concrete work carried out at the site.
4. Timber frame – on a timber frame structure

We believe this to be an in-situ concrete building meaning that the building was built on site and formed in concrete. There are many manufacturers carrying this out and we believe this was carried out by George Wimpey and Co Ltd and that why it has the name of Wimpey No Fines. It also has various other names. It was build between 1040's and the 1970's and there is said to be 300,000 built. We are well aware from our own experience these can be a variety of types.

Most types of non-traditional housing have specific problems relating to them which we will explain in more detail within the report however the main problem we feel is people's perception that they are a problem and they tend not to want to buy them. They do generally have the benefits of being lower than the typical market value for the same size property.

We have found three major varieties one built 1945-1952, one built 1957 onwards and one built 1964 onwards (we have no information on what happened between 1952 and 1957!

Please see further information on Non-Traditional Houses within the Appendices.

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#### **4.0) Non-traditional houses, can they be made more appealing to mortgage companies?**

As the property is a non traditional construction this does limit companies who will give mortgages on them and as the vast majority of people buy properties with mortgages it limits the market you can sell into.

Some companies do specialise in carrying out work to non-traditional houses to make them mortgageable. We have however found that where the neighbouring property does not join in with this work there will still be an adverse affect on the property and the property value. In this case this is difficult.

#### **5.0) What is Wimpey No Fines cement?**

We have heard these described as jelly mould buildings. This is effectively where a mould was formed and then the No Fines concrete was poured into it; this being a dense concrete. This does have the benefit of during the summer months being cool (until it is warmed up) and equally in the winter months holding in heat. It does have the disadvantages of having known problems of rusting to the metal elements of it and also of course most mortgage companies not giving mortgages on it.

#### **6.0) Known problems with Wimpey and No Fines cement**

The Building Research Establishment publishes the following known problems:

1. Vertical cracking of No Fines concrete to the external walls
2. Horizontal cracking of render above window drips
3. Low to high rates of carbonation of dense aggregate
4. Concrete rings beams

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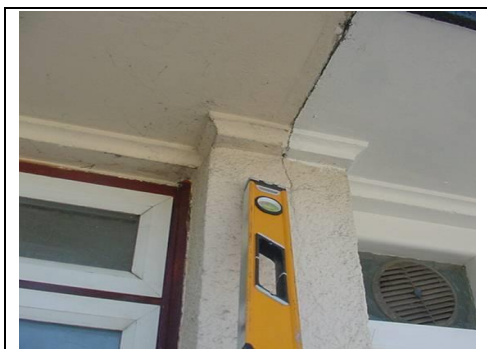
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## External cracking



Crack to the front door



Crack to the rear sliding door

Externally there are cracks to the concrete, although we don't consider this to be excessive.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** All external cracks should be sealed as soon as possible to make them watertight and avoid damage and deterioration of the surface and more importantly damage and corrosion to the reinforcement within.

## Internal cracking

There is cracking in the airing cupboard which is located centrally around the chimney area so the cracking may be related to this as the chimney has been removed in part at first floor level.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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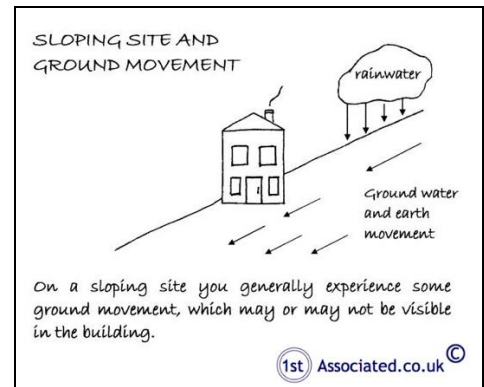
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## 7.0) Sloping garden

The rear garden slopes and therefore all water will travel towards your back door. We would recommend that you watch the rear of the property next time it rains heavily to see how much rain is getting through to the back end of the property. If there is a fair amount of rainwater then we would recommend a French drain is added (as sketch overleaf). We noted there is already a drain in this section but it does not seem to be running towards the patio. There are potential problems with the patio.



Sloping site



Rear garden



Drain



The boundary wall doesn't have any weep holes



General undulations in crazy paving to rear

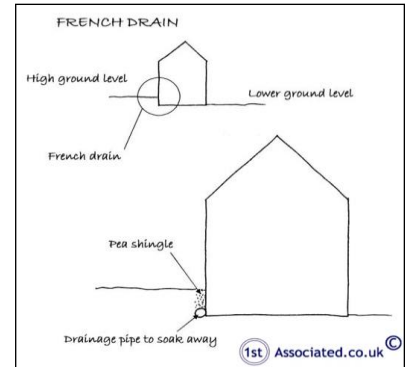
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**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add a French drain.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £2000 to £3000; obtain quotes.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.



French drain

## 8.0) Front windows

The front windows are plastic set within a timber frame. They are dated and they are also misting up.



Older style double glazed windows within timber frame



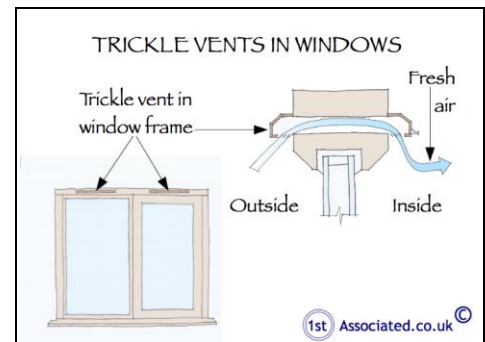
Misting over to front double glazed window

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace with a modern window with a trickle vent.

### Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop/reduce a build up of fumes or humidity.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £700 - £1,500 depending upon the quality of windows being used; please obtain quotations.



Trickle vents

Please see the Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

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## 9.0) Tree in front garden

The tree in the front garden is fairly close to the property and would benefit from some maintenance. We would not recommend cutting it down as this can also affect the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Carry out maintenance to the tree DIY type job.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** A few hundred pounds; please obtain quotes.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.



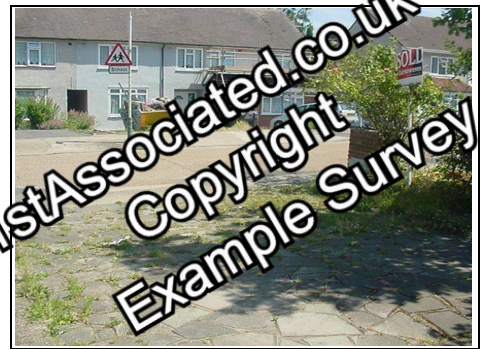
Tree to front garden

## 10.0) Driveway

We noted that there are undulations in the driveway and also a crack just to the front of the property and several cracks throughout it.



Vertical cracks indicating possible subsidence



Front driveway

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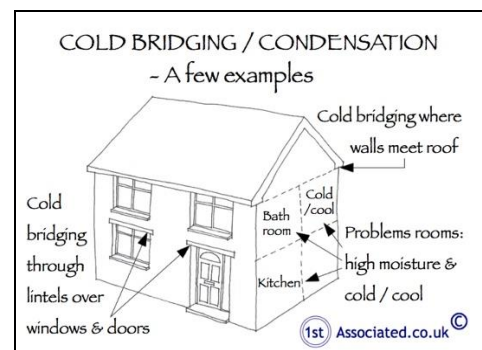
**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that your legal advisor asks the existing owners to place an insurance claim advising of the cracks within the property and that you legally take over this insurance claim. This should be at a zero cost to the present owners and it should limit any future possible cost to the premium with regard to subsidence in the property. Unfortunately from one off inspections such as this it is impossible to confirm whether this movement is progressive from the lines that we have seen.

We also noted a gap in the concrete in the front of the property and vertical cracks which we believe indicate subsidence. We note that no underpinning has been carried out on the property or similar. We spoke to both neighbours and they did not recall anything but we do not know how long they have been in their properties.

Please see the Foundations and Walls Sections of this Report.

### **11.0) Condensation/cold bridging and concrete houses**

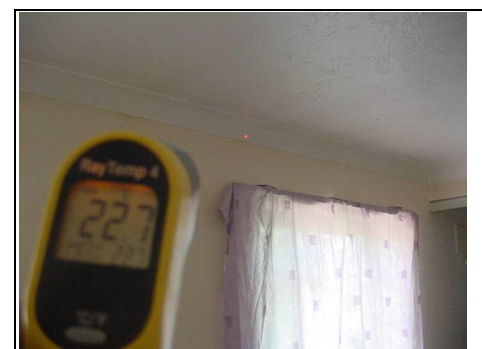
This property is far more likely to have thermal/cold bridging problems than a traditional property. There are various things you can do to help to reduce the change of condensation, however the characteristic of a concrete property means you are likely to get condensation.



Cold bridging

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend the addition of large humidity controlled extract fans in the bathroom and the kitchen and any rooms that you use for drying. However condensation is a characteristic of a concrete property.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100 to £150 per extract fan.



Checking for cold bridging

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

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## **12.0) Surface and Interstitial condensation**

We have already mentioned surface condensation but there may also be some interstitial condensation (this is condensation that the structure of the actual concrete wall can be prone to). In this instance we noted a loss of key to the plaster in the front bedroom.

If you recall we showed you the plaster in the front bedroom and tapped it to show that it was hollow. There are likely to be other areas of this; expect some possible re-plastering when redecorating.

You need to avoid condensation in this property in the form of surface condensation and interstitial condensation. Currently we see that in the bathroom and the kitchen that there are no mechanical extract fans.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend large humidity controlled extract fans are added and also extract fans in any other rooms that you intend to do things such as drying clothes, etc. Also set aside a sum for some possible re-plastering.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100/£150 per extract fan as you will need to have electrics to them and also the fan fitted; please obtain quotations.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

## **13.0) Asbestos**

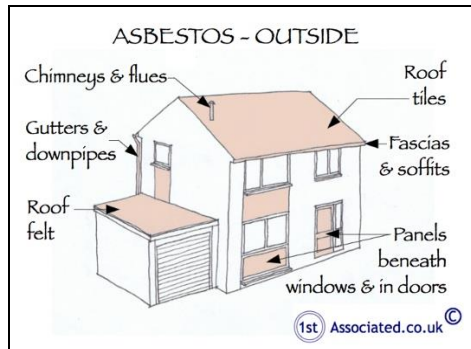
When this property was built asbestos was a common popular material which was used almost as commonly as wood. As mentioned it formed the roof material and it also generally formed such things as the fascias and soffits, the gutters and downpipes.

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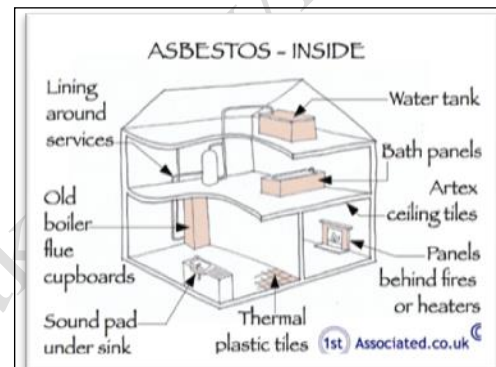
Asbestos - outside



Asbestos soffit

The generic sketches show typical areas where asbestos can be found in these properties

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



Asbestos inside

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to be certain all asbestos has been removed is to have an asbestos report carried out.

Please see the Other Matters Section of this Report.

#### **14.0) Textured paint everywhere (trade name of Artex)**

There is textured paint throughout the property which was very popular in the 1970's. It was also popular in the 1960's but tended to have an element of asbestos. Whilst the majority of the artex does not look like this type, the artex to the bottom of the stairs does look to have been moving towards the asbestos based type. It is not inconceivable that the original asbestos textured paint was painted over.



Artex/textured paint to ceiling

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a skim-coat of plaster to all the artex. Whatever you do, do not rub it down; have a coat applied over the top of it and then redecoration. This should limit even the slightest chance of any problems.

Our insurance company requires us to advise we are not asbestos surveyors and advises us to recommend asbestos surveyors are instructed.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £100 to £200 for an asbestos report; obtain quotes.

Please see the Ceilings and Walls Section of this Report.

## Services

### 15.0) Electrics

There looks to have possibly been some DIY electrics carried out where the conduits have come away from the wall. Although we would add that due to the hardness of the concrete walls it is difficult to fix and secure things on them.



Surface mounted electrics



Electrics off wall in front bedroom

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would have an electrician carry out an IEE (Institute of Electric Engineers) test and report and fix socket points that are off the wall.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** £250 to £300 plus any socket points added which are normally about £50 per socket point.

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Please see the Electrics Section of this Report.

## **16.0) Drainage**

We could not lift the manhole we always recommend a closed circuit TV camera report. Manholes are used where there is a change in direction of pipes or new pipes join the main run. It is therefore a good location for clearing any blockages.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a closed circuit TV camera report of the drains.



Drains repaired within passageway  
-looked to be on neighbours side



Manhole double sealed to front  
of property that we could not  
unscrew

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Normally £200 to £300; please obtain quotes.

Please see the Mains Drains 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 consider this property to be a high risk purchase as it may be difficult to mortgage depending upon how the mortgage market is looking at property at the time. If you do proceed you need to be happy with the characteristics and associated costs of the property issues. In some cases there is very little you can do to change the basic framework of this property

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## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

### **Potential for loft conversion**

We noted roof windows to surrounding properties indicating that loft conversions have been carried out which may or may not be of interest to you.



Roof windows to neighbouring properties



Rear dormer window to neighbouring loft conversion

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

### **Maintenance**

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

### **Drilling and hanging things on the walls**

If you recall we spoke briefly about drilling and hanging things on the wall. These walls are rock hard so you may wish to put a picture rail in a room so you can hang pictures of this using no nails or similar adhesive type product.

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## **Relocating washing machine from kitchen**

Alternative locations could be under the stairs or in the airing cupboard. We would recommend under the stairs although this does mean that you will have to put a false wall in on the right hand side (all directions as you face the front of the property) for the water supply and drainage and also the extract fan.

Another alternative that you may wish to consider is to partition off part of the end of the kitchen and have this as a utility room area.

## **Services**

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

## **Electrics**

1980's – 1990's; better fuseboards are now available. The electricity was turned off at the time of the inspection therefore we were unable to test but due to the fact the property was rented out there should be electric tests available. The Institute of Electrical Engineers standards (IEE) recommend a test and report whenever a property changes occupancy. This should be carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

As the property was rented there may well be an existing Electrical Installation Test Report. We suggest you ask your solicitor to request this in writing.

## **Heating**

Again as the property was rented there should be a Gas Maintenance Certificate carried out every year so we would ask to see a copy of this.

We would recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

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## Drainage

Whilst we ran the tap for 15 minutes without any build up or blockages the only way to be 100% certain of the condition of the drains is to have a closed circuit TV camera report.

## Water Supply

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

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

## DIY/Handyman Type Work

The items identified tend to be a characteristic of this type of non-traditional house. You need to ensure you are happy with these characteristics. There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as redecorating in your own style to turn the property into your home We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## Purchase Price

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

## Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

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## Estimates of Building Costs

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

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

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## SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are 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:

On a second view and a close inspection of the photographs, we believe this property does have several high risk elements.

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

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

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

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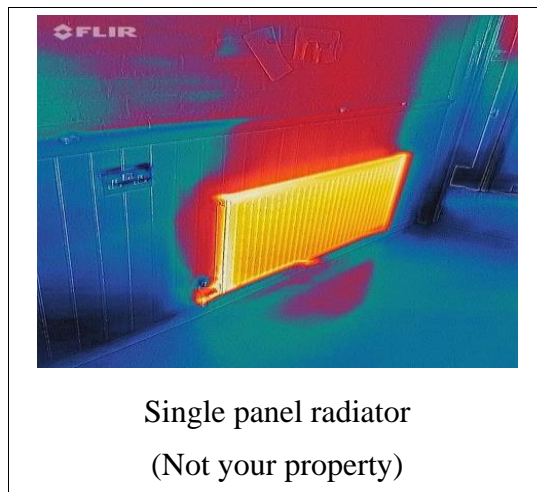
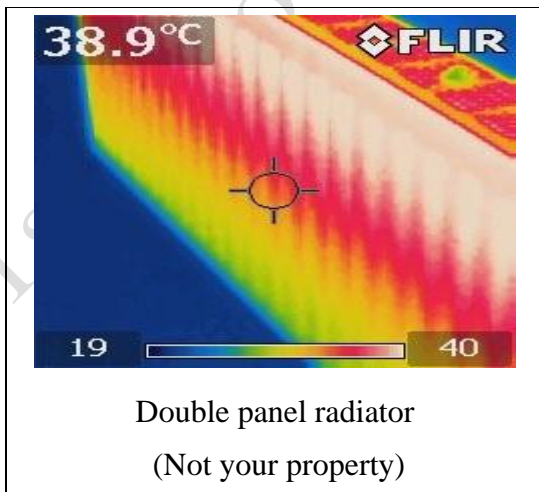
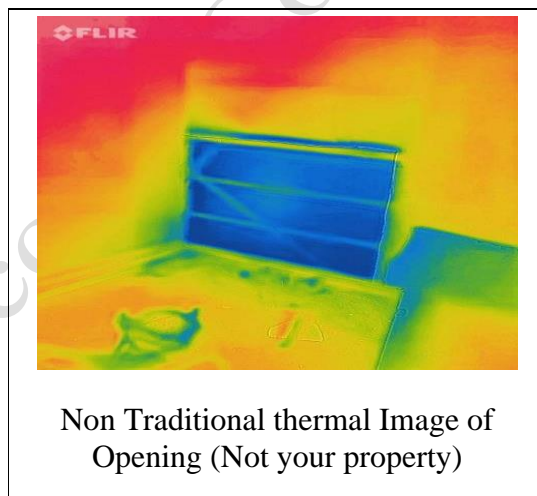
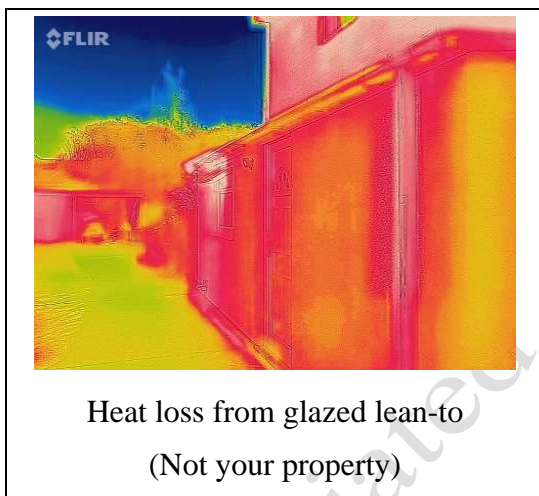


# EXAMPLE THERMAL IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHS

## – Not Your Property

Thermal imaging photography can establish warm and cold areas, it also helps us to identify materials within the property. In this case we have not carried out any thermal imaging as the weather was too warm on the day of the survey 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)



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# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

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

## **TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)**

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

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

## **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

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

## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

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

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

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

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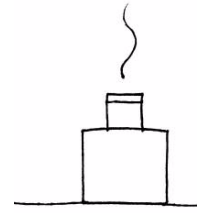
**THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT  
FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP  
OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS**



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## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS



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

There is one chimney to this property located to the centre of the property (all directions given as you face the property).

#### Chimney One – located to the centre of the property

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing. From what we could see from ground level the pointing looked to be weathered and in below average condition considering its age, type and style with repointing required in due course.

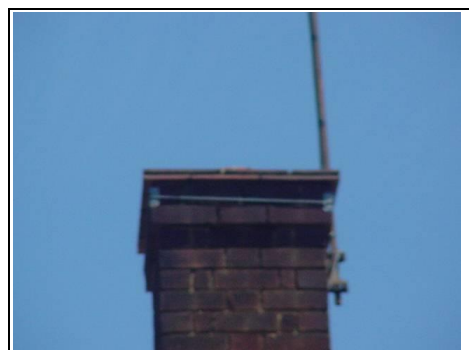
We noted that there are aerials on this chimney which can cause damage and cut into it like a cheese wire into cheese.



Chimney



Rear view of chimney



Repointing required to rear

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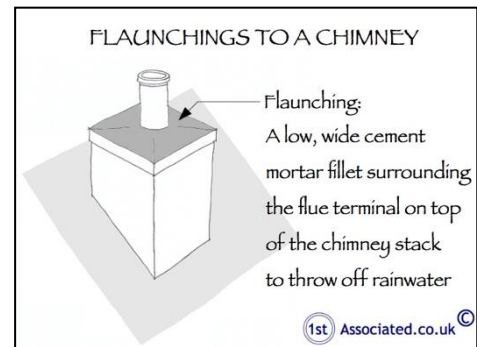
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Unfortunately, we were unable to see the top of the chimney properly known as the flaunching, we therefore cannot comment upon them.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repoint by the summer of 2016 unless damp gets in before then. Periodically inspect the chimney in between that time.



Flaunching

#### Flashings Defined

Flashings prevent dampness from entering the property, usually at junctions where materials change. Such a junction is the one between the chimney and the roof.

#### Flaunchings Defined

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

## **Party Walls**

The party wall relates to shared items, such as firewalls. If you do any work on these you will need to deal with the Party Wall Act. Here is a brief explanation of it.

#### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

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Specifically in this case the party walls were brick which we were surprised about given the concrete construction of the property.



Brick firewall, which is a party wall

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

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

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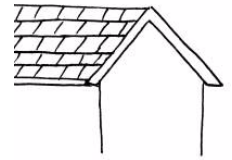
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# ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



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

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the main roof and the canopy roof.

## Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad in a concrete tile. From ground level, this looks in average condition considering the roofs age type and style. As with many concrete tiles there is a layer of moss. This can if it gets excessive block the gutters.



Main roof

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Clear gutters of any loose moss using a soft brush and carry out periodic inspections and maintenance of the roof, as required.

## Canopy Roof

To the front entrance there is a small concrete canopy roof without a gutter, as is usually the case on smaller roofs.



Front concrete canopy roof



Small roof to front

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

Finally, we were only able to see approximately 80 percent of the main roof from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

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

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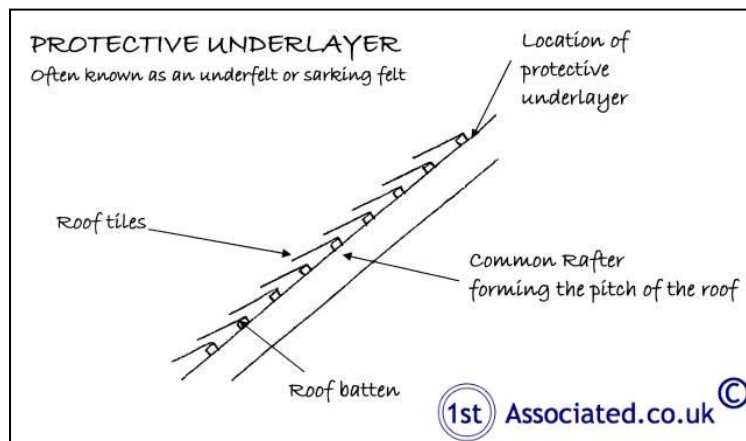
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## Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

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

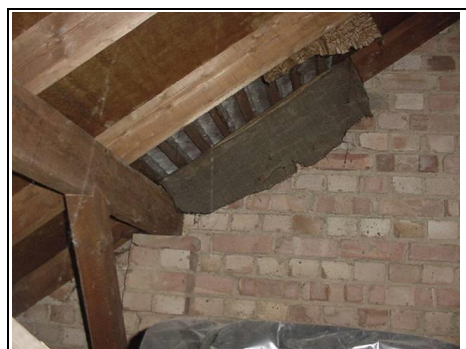


Protective Underlayer

When we inspected the loft space we found one of the older types of sarking felt that is made out of a bitumen-backed paper. This type of sarking felt was first used in the 1940s until the 1950s. We found it in poor condition even considering its age.



Older style building paper in roof



Building paper coming away exposing back of tiles

**ACTION REQUIRED:** It is very difficult to remove the defective sarking felt as you would have to re-roof the whole property, which, as you can no doubt understand, will be very expensive. We normally recommend a 'suck it and see' approach is taken where you carry out repairs and any dampness that gets into the property for as long as you possible, before you completely re-roof.

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In this instance we would recommend that a boarding is put down in the roof as it is easier to move in the roof and it also identifies any leaks coming through from to the roof space. The roof should in theory be watertight with tile and we did for many years not have a second protective underlay, however as you can see in this case the secondary underlay has deteriorated to such an extent that it is now not working in many areas.

We are very much in a catch 22 situation where the roof is defective but not defective enough to recommend at this point in time re-roofing. It will ultimately need re-roofing and a modern protective underlay added which is more akin to gortex than building paper.

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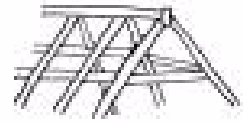
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# **ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT**



## **(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. There was an electric light but it was not working. There is no loft ladder, working light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to secured floorboards.



Light not working

The insulation is over the joists so you need to take extra care when in the roof.

The whole of the loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

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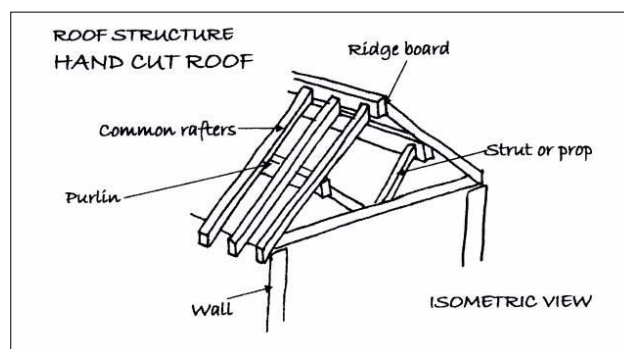
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## Roof Structure

This type of roof structure has what is known as a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and this was hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



Hand cut roof

## Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof structure for:

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



Purlin sits on brickwork

Our examination was limited by the general configuration of the roof. 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 100 per cent certain is to have the roof cleared and checked.

## Fire Walls

The property has two brick firewall which are located one to the left hand side and one to the right hand side (all directions given as you face the property). The firewalls are also Party Walls.



Brick firewall

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## Fire Walls Defined

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

## Water Tanks

Within the roof space there is a plastic water tank and an old cast iron water tank.



Plastic water tank



Old cast iron water tank still in roof

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

## Ventilation

The roof is probably getting enough ventilation with the deteriorated building paper. If this is replaced with a modern protective underlay this automatically has an element of ventilation as it is more like a gortex than the traditional or older felt building papers.

## Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

## Electrical Cables

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case we could not see it due to the mass of insulation.

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

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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.*

## Gutters and Downpipes

The property has a mixture of cast iron and plastic gutters and downpipes. We could see problems where the plastic meets the cast iron which in our experience never seems to work.

Your gutters and downpipes are in average condition for their age, type and style. The problem is where the plastic gutter meets the cast iron gutter next door, which in our experience never works.



Problem where plastic meets cast iron

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to have a chat with your neighbour to see if they would replace theirs but 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.

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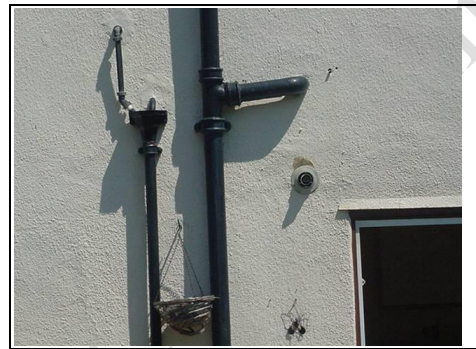


## Soil and Vent Pipe

The property has cast iron soil and vent pipes. Cast iron of this age will need regular maintenance if not it will rust like next door's gutters.



Soil and vent pipe



Cast iron soil and vent pipe

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

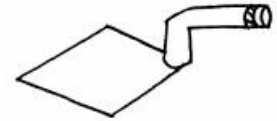
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## WALLS



*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.*

### In-situ Concrete

We believe this property to have been formed in in-situ concrete which means that a mould is formed into which metal reinforcement bars are placed then concrete is poured over it. It is usually vibrated to ensure there are no voids in it, which creates the outside walls of the property.

### Non traditional building

We would reiterate that this is a non-traditional building and as such although it looks like a traditional house it behaves slightly differently.

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

### Render

The external walls are finished in a painted roughcast render.

To the right hand side we noted a change in panels where horizontal lines are. This was probably once a door to give access to the coal man years ago and may still be a right of way.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your legal Advisor needs to check and confirm.

### Render Detailing

You can normally tell whether the render is good or not by the drip detail over the window and the bell mouth to the base of the property. As a roughcast render is doesn't strictly need to have a drip above the windows but it does in some areas.

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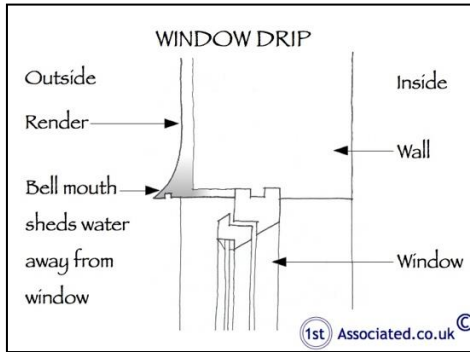
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## Window drip detail

In this case we found drip detail.



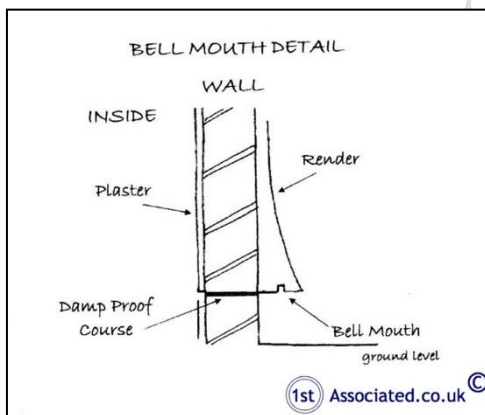
Window drip



Drip over the window to the rear sliding doors

## Bell mouth to base of property

To the base of the render there was a bell mouth detail albeit a relatively small one.



Bell mouth detail



Bell mouth to base of render

## Cracking

We would remind you that any hairline cracks that appear need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness and water getting in and causing blisters and hollow areas.

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

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## Painted render/painted walls

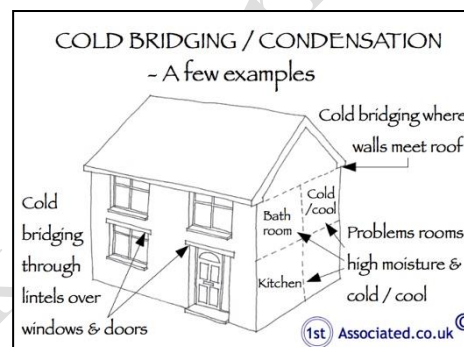
Do not underestimate the amount of time/cost it will take to repaint the property particularly as there is high level work which is likely to need scaffolding which can be expensive.

## Cold Bridging

Cold bridging is a feature of this era of property.

### Cold Bridging Defined

Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure allowing coldness to pass through the structure much quicker when warm moist air is present in the property, often caused by things like having a shower or a bath, cooking or washing, particularly if you are drying washing on the radiators. This is also caused by the general climate which results in condensation on the element.



Cold bridging / thermal bridging

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

Our comments have been based upon how the render /concrete/ plasterwork has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the render /concrete/ 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

Given the age of the property you may find different depths of foundations. We would expect to find a deep strip concrete foundation.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please note our comments with regard to the front and rear garden and the undulating crazy paving.

## Clay

This property stands on clay. 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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## Cracks

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

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

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

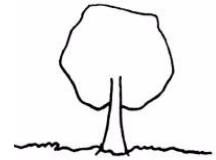
We would always recommend that you remain with the existing insurance company of the property.

As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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# TREES



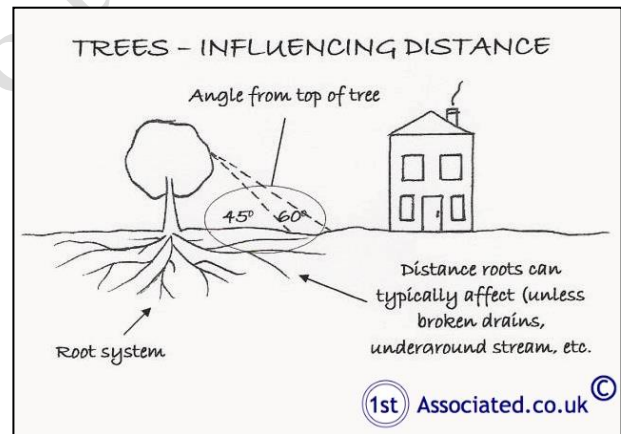
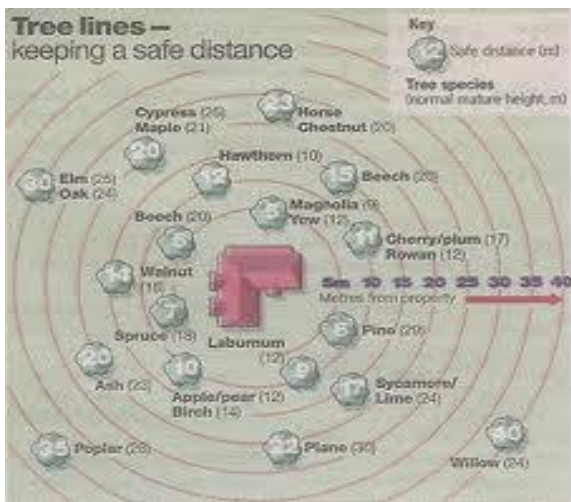
*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

There is a tree in the front garden that would benefit from maintenance. You may also have to advise your insurance company of it.



Tree in front garden

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The tree would benefit from maintenance and being cut back. We would not cut it down as this can also affect the property. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Influencing distance of trees to a property

## Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

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

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case we cannot see a DPC due to the render.

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

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

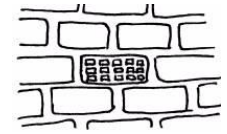
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# AIRBRICKS

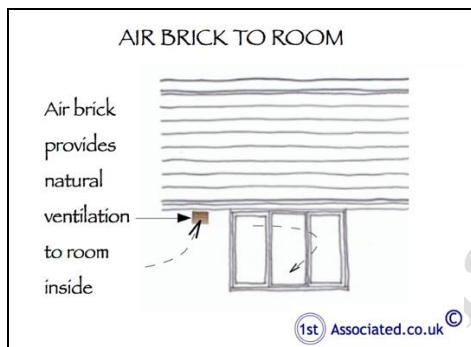


*In properties with suspended floors you need to have an airflow beneath to stop deterioration. The air is allowed to pass under the property by the use of airbricks. Generally the rule of thumb is that airbricks are spaced every metre and a half approximately, but this depends upon the specific circumstances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

## High Level Air Bricks

We noted the property has high level air bricks and these were relatively common due to the need to create air circulation to reduce condensation. We noted the vent to the front bedroom within the left hand cupboard had been blocked up and would recommend this is opened up and a hit and miss vent /sliding vent be added. Also replace the sliding vent in the bathroom with an extract fan.

High level air bricks are to help air circulation within the property.



High level airbrick



High level airbricks



Sliding vent sometimes known as a hit and miss vent

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ensure the airbricks are clear.

Add sliding vents to any blocked high level vents and add large extract fans to bathroom and kitchen.

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.

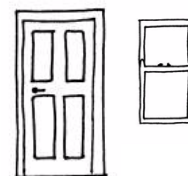
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# FASCIAS AND SOFFITS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS



*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 look to be timber. We can tell this from the flaking black paint to the fascia board. However the soffit, which is the underside horizontal part, is not flaking which could indicate it is an asbestos soffit.

We are not asbestos surveyors and insurance companies require us to recommend an asbestos survey.



Flaking paint

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

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## Windows and Doors

To the front of the property are older style plastic double glazed windows into a timber frame without trickle vents. To the rear are new plastic double glazed windows with trickle vents.

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



Front windows are older style plastic into timber with no trickle vents



Misting over to front double glazed window

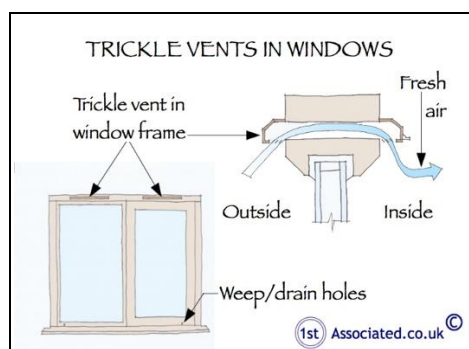
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Recommend replacing the front windows

## Transferable Guarantees

There may be some transferable guarantees for the rear windows. We suspect the front windows are too 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 vents

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

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## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**

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

You do need to remember the entirety of this property will need redecoration. It can be expensive or take up a number of weekends if you are carrying it out yourself.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

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## INTERNAL



# CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

### Ceilings

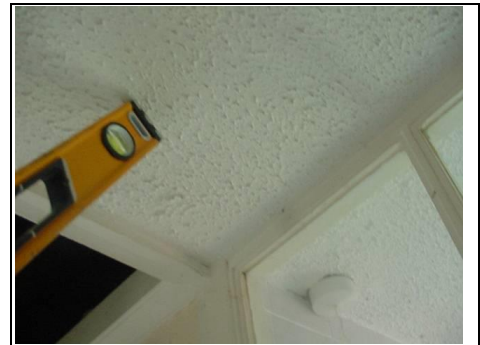
Where we could see the ceilings from the roof space we could see that there was a plasterboard finish, however we are aware that in non-traditional buildings often proprietary special ceilings were used which contained elements of asbestos.



Plasterboard/proprietary boarding underneath insulation

### Textured paint (commonly known as artex)

There is textured paint throughout the property which was very popular in the 1970's. It was also popular in the 1960's but tended to have an element of asbestos. Whilst the majority of artex within the property looks like a 1960's style, the artex at the bottom of the stairs does look to be painted over.



Artex/textured paint to ceiling

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Asbestos is generally considered safe as long as it is not deteriorating. In this case it has been painted over. We generally recommend that all the textured paint is skimmed over and made smooth which would also protect you against any asbestos.

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## **Internal Walls and Partitions**

These are, we believe solid construction. It is of course impossible to determine the construction without opening up the walls and we have therefore taken an educated guess as this is typical in this type of construction.

### **Perimeter Walls**

These are, we believe a solid concrete construction. The only place we could see the wall construction was underneath the stairs. We cannot be 100% certain of the wall construction without opening them up which goes beyond the scope of this report.



Underneath the stairs

This comment has been based on the visual look of the wall which is relatively “smooth” and normally means a modern finish.

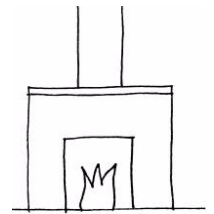
Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused.

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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# CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



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

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

We noted a chimney has been removed in part in the airing cupboard area.

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

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

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

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

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# FLOORS



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

## Ground Floor

The floors felt solid under foot so we have assumed that they are constructed in concrete.

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



Concrete visible under stairs

## First Floor

We have assumed that the first floor construction is joist and floorboards with the joists running from front to back.



Floorboards – joists run from front to rear of property

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

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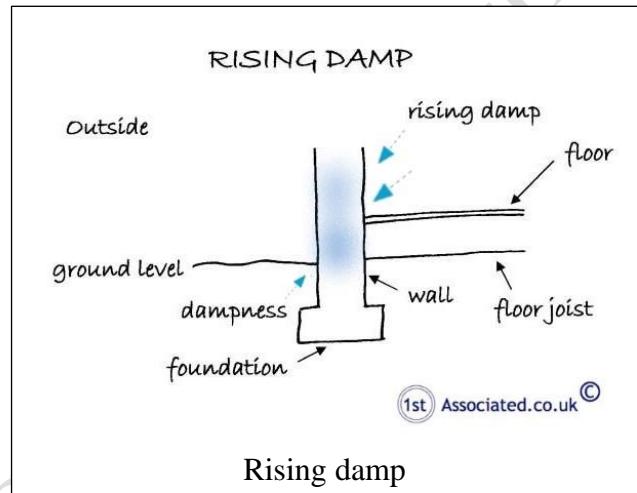
# DAMPNESS



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

## Rising Damp

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



A visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls. In this particular case we have found no significant rising damp. We did find some minor rising damp to the rear of the property.



Testing for rising damp

Please see our comments about the sloping site.

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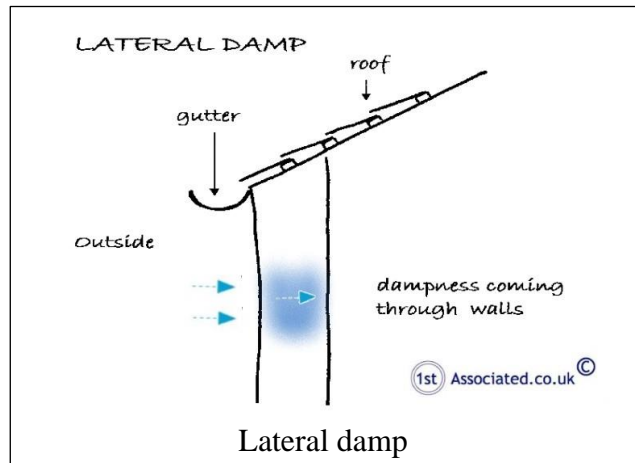
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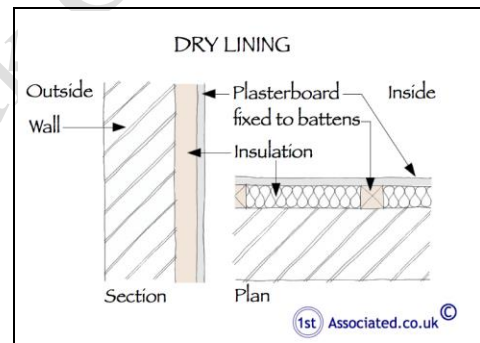
## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

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

We used a resistance meter on the external walls. We have not found significant dampness. We would advise that our readings were limited in some areas due to the dry lining for example in the kitchen.



Testing for lateral dampness onto a dry-lined wall



Dry lining

## Condensation

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to condensation.

At the time of the inspection there were signs of interstitial condensation that has occurred in the property over the years and this has helped to cause the deterioration of the plaster, for example the plaster in the front bedroom was hollow. There are likely to be other areas of this; expect some possible re-plastering when redecorating.

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Condensation does depends upon how you utilise the building however with a concrete structure building there is a greater chance than normal to create condensation. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating, cooling and ventilation of properties and opening windows to air the property regularly.

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

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

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend large humidity controlled extract fans be added to kitchens, bathrooms and drying areas. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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

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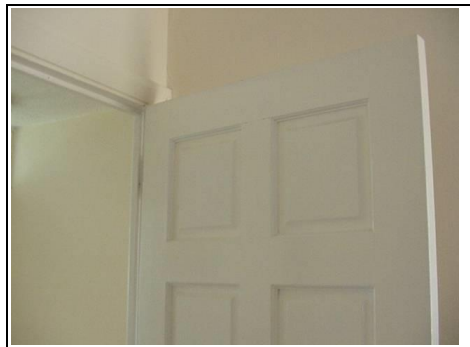
# INTERNAL JOINERY



*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 hollow core doors (sometimes referred to as egg box doors, as this is what the internal of them looks like when they are opened up), they have a paint finish and are slightly marked but nothing unusual.



Hollow core door



Borrowed light from stairway into bathroom

## Staircase

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

## Storage

We were pleased to see built in cupboards although slightly dated.

There is also an airing cupboard.



Built in cupboards

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## **Kitchen**

We found the kitchen in average to slightly below average condition.

We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

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

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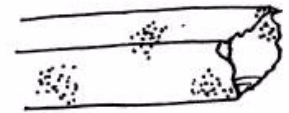
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## **TIMBER DEFECTS**



*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.

### **Wood destroying insects (such as woodworm and beetles, etc)**

*Active wood destroying insects (such as woodworm and Death Watch beetles, etc) can cause significant damage to timber. There are a variety of wood destroying insects that cause different levels of damage with probably the most well-known being the Death Watch Beetle. Many older properties have wood destroying insects that are no longer active, this can often be considered as part of the overall character of the property.*



The roof is usually the main area where we look for wood destroying insects. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of significant wood destroying insects activity or indeed past signs of significant wood destroying insects activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage.

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In many properties there is an element of wood destroying insects that are not active.

#### Wood Destroying Insects Defined

By this we mean wood boring insects. Historic England identify between 20 and 30 different types. For the avoidance of doubt, we would refer wood boring insects to include beetles and/or similar however we do not identify specific types.

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 are no wood destroying insects the only way would be to check the property when it 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 in below average condition. We were advised the property was rented out and bearing this in mind they are average.

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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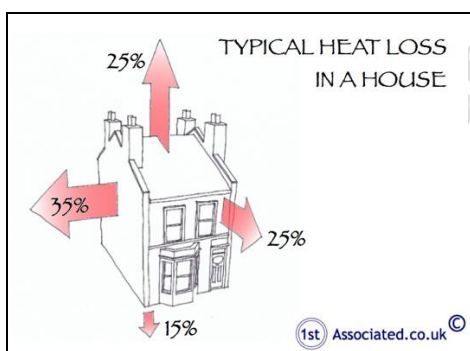
# THERMAL EFFICIENCY



*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.*

## Roofs

Generally there was 300mm of insulation within the roof which was to current Building Regulations. Our concern is condensation being caused by the mass of roof insulation.



Typical heat loss



Mass of insulation

## Walls

The walls to this property are in concrete so will have limited thermal properties.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Adviser to specifically request any information in relation to insulation.

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## Windows

The windows are double glazed and therefore have reasonable thermal properties however some of the seals have gone on the front windows which means a reduced performance.

## Services

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

## Summary

Assuming the above is correct, this property is below average compared with what we typically see.

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

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

*or alternatively [www.cat.org.uk](http://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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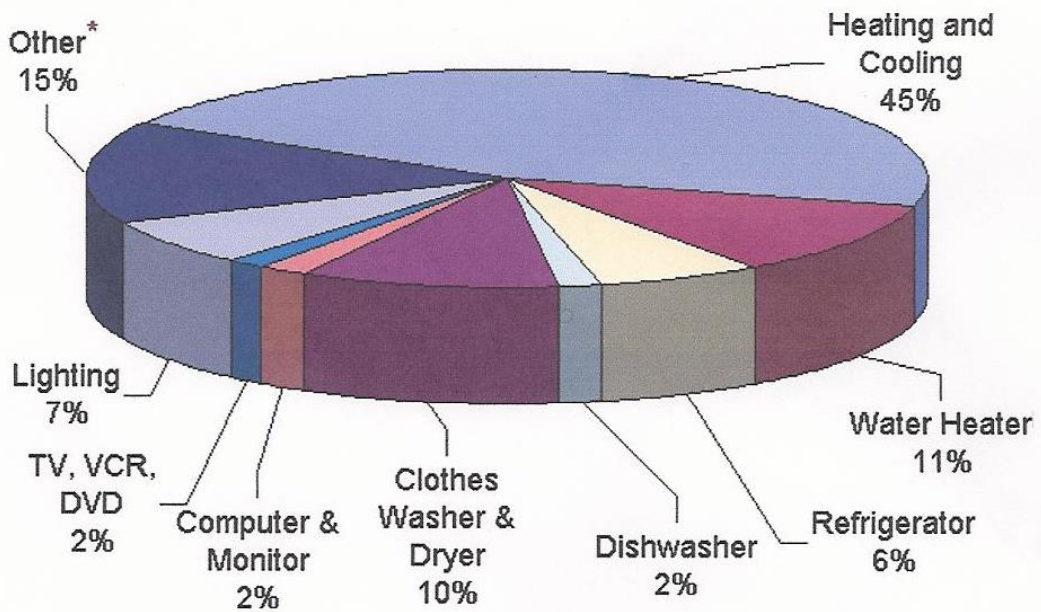
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## What does my energy bill pay for?



\*"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 NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted we believe these to be battery operated. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.

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



Smoke alarm

### Insurance

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

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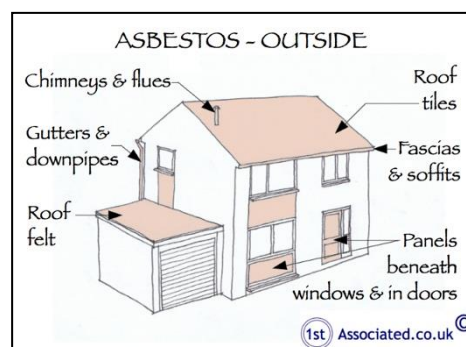
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We would refer you to our comments with regard to building insurance throughout this report.

## Asbestos

In a property of this type there was asbestos particularly to the roofs. There may also be other asbestos elements such as fascias and soffits, cladding, internal walls and ceilings and ductwork around services. In this case it is possible to the soffit boards and possibly within the artex.



Asbestos outside

Asbestos was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the UK in the last ten years or so. It is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time where products were imported from countries where it is not banned.

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

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

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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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.

We would also recommend speaking to the neighbours to see what they have used and of course it is always good to get to know your neighbours.

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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 Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommends that inspections and testing are undertaken at least every 10 years (we recommend every five years) and on change of occupancy. All electrical installation works undertaken after 1st January 2005 should be identified by an Electrical Installation Certificate. The IE Test Report may have been carried out as it was a rented property.

## Fuse Board

The electric fuses and consumer units were located under the stairs. The fuse board looked 1980's/1990's and better are now available.



Fuse Board

## Earth Test

We usually carry out an earth test in the kitchen area to the socket point that is normally used for the kettle. In this case we were unable to test as the electricity was turned off.



Electricity turned off

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend a test and report and as this is a dated fuse board and we also noted other dated areas of electrics. We would also advise that the Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) recommend a test and report as the property is changing hands. Any recommendations should be carried out by a NICEIC registered, or equivalent, approved electrical contractor or similarly approved.

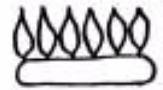
In addition to this your Legal Advisor is required to make full enquires with the owners to establish if any electrical installation work has been carried out and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally 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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# 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 to the rear of the property.

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 cupboard to rear of property

**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.

A gas safety report should have been carried out yearly for the Gas Safety Certificate on a rented property.

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

**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

Please see our comments in the Roof Section.

### Hot Water Cylinder

There is no hot water cylinder.

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## **Plumbing**

The plumbing, where visible were surface mounted pipes which tends to be the case in this type of property due to the walls being concrete and so hard to drill.

The plumbing mainly comprises copper piping. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although some of the pipework is concealed in floors, walls and ducts.



Surface mounted pipes

## **Heating**

There should be a landlord's Gas Safety Certificate. The boiler was located in the kitchen, it is manufactured by Vaillant. It is an older style Vaillant boiler.

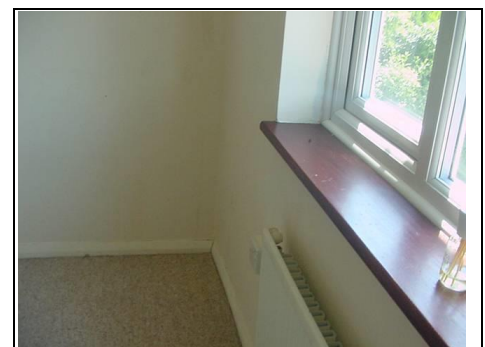
Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.



Vaillant boiler

## **Single panel radiators**

We noted that there are a fair number of single panel radiators. These may not warm the property to the heat that you desire. In most modern installations double panel radiators are used and often double panel convection radiators, which are more efficient, are utilised.



Single panel radiator

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## **Ten Minute Heating Test**

There was no owner / occupier at the property and therefore we do not turn the heating on in case there is a problem with it. We recommend that you return and see the heating working

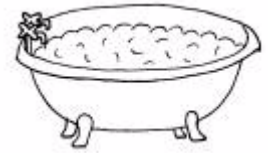
Finally, it should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

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

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# **BATHROOM**



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

## **Bathroom**

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



Bathroom

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

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## MAIN DRAINS



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

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

The cold taps have been run for 15 minutes plus in the kitchen. No build up or back up was noted.

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

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

We have identified one inspection chamber / manhole.

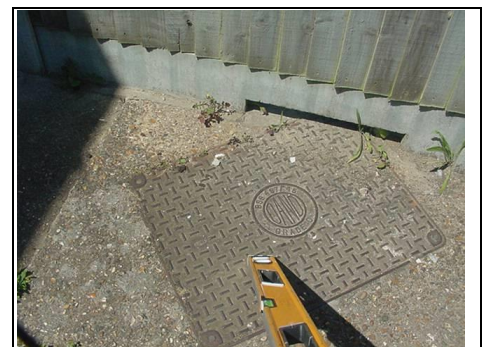
#### Manholes Defined

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

### Inspection Chamber / Manhole One located to the front

We were unable to lift the manhole as it was double sealed and we were unable to unscrew it. We were pleased to see that the fence had been amended to allow it to be lifted once unscrewed.

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



Manhole double sealed to front of property that we could not unscrew

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

### **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

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

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

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. It is likely to be a combined and shared drain.

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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## PARKING



Off road parking is available to the front of the property. It does have a dropped kerb.

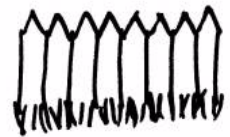
### Drop Kerb Defined

A drop kerb is where a kerb is lowered between the road and the pathway/entrance to the property which means there is official access and official parking approved by the Local Authority / Council. The reasons the Local Authority/Council would not approve a dropped kerb is where it is close to a junction or traffic is considered to be fast moving or it is not appropriate to access the road.



Off road parking

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Front Garden

The front garden is paved and given over to parking



Front garden

### Rear Garden

The rear garden is sloping and requires maintenance; please see comments in our Executive Summary.

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Rear garden



Patio area and access via side passageway



Fence needs staining

### **Passageway**

There is a passageway to the side of the property.



Passageway

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

Finally, whilst we note the boundaries, these may not be the legal boundaries. Your Legal Advisor should make further enquiries on this point and advise you of your potential liability with regard to any shared structures, boundary walls and fences. It looks like next door has had work to their drainage.

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## Neighbours

### Left Hand Neighbours

We spoke to these neighbours and they seemed pleasant.

### Right Hand Neighbours

We spoke to them and they had no concerns. The right hand neighbours have a trampoline which can be a source of neighbourhood disputes as they can mean there is a lack of privacy depending upon how they are used.



Trampoline next door

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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) Wall construction. Confirmation by the local authority as to the construction – is there any known defects – advise us immediately upon receiving this information.
  - ii) Asbestos test.
  - iii) Double glazing or replacement windows.
  - iv) Roof and similar renewals.
  - v) Central heating installation.
  - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vii) Removal of any walls in part or whole.
  - viii) Removal of any chimneys in part or whole.
  - ix) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.

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- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](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**.

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## REFERENCES

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

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

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

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

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# **LIMITATIONS**

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

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement dated 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.

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## **ONLY HUMAN!**

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

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

## **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.

## **WEATHER**

It was dry and very warm at the time of the inspection.

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

## **NOT LOCAL**

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

## **EMPTY PROPERTY**

The property was empty at the time of our survey, we were therefore not able to carry out our usual question and answer session or have our questionnaire filled out.

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## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been limited as:

- 1) We did not have full access to the roof.
- 2) The property was empty we did not have the benefit of talking to the owners or them answering our usual question and answers.

We thank you for meeting us at the property during the survey.

## **BUILDING INSURANCE**

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

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

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

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

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

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# APPENDICES

1. The electrical regulations – Part P of the Building Regulations
2. Information on the Property Market
3. Non Traditional Housing
4. French Drain Article
5. Condensation and Cold Bridging Article
6. Wimpey No Fines – Visual Search
7. Non-Traditional Search

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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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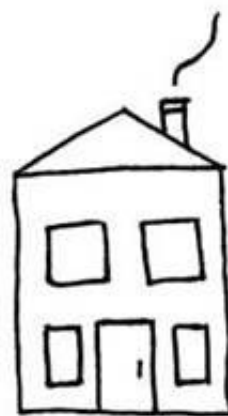


# Non-Traditional Housing

If you need help and advice with regard to independent valuations, property surveys, building surveys, structural reports, engineers reports, defects surveys and structural surveys matters please free phone 0800 298 5424 for a friendly chat with one of our chartered surveyors.

## Non-traditional housing, what is it?

We have recently had a phone call asking what non-traditional housing is, as it had been referred to in a valuation that they had had carried out on their property and the lender had decided not to lend on the property because of this. Yet, from what they could see the property was in good order and they knew the person who had lived in it for the past thirty years, with no problems whatsoever. They went and had a look at the property again and it still looked to them like a traditional house and to be in good order. What was more they liked it and it had a big garden too and they were mystified why they couldn't get a mortgage on it.



## What do Valuers, chartered surveyors and chartered building surveyors mean when they say non-traditional construction?

It would probably be a better term if the term non-typical construction was used. If you think of a house or a flat and think how they are traditionally built, from the Victorian era it is of brick and tile, or brick and slate, or stone and slate, or possibly render and tile, or render and slate depending upon which part of the country you are from this will be the traditional construction in the area of England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland that you live in. Often traditional construction is as local as the county or Town you live in. Nevertheless it is known as traditional construction.



What is traditional construction? Because equally we could argue that timber frame construction is the traditional type of construction in most areas of the country, but we will leave that argument up for another day.

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## Where did the term non-traditional construction and traditional construction come from?

We believe it came originally from the mortgage companies as a chartered building surveyor would certainly be more specific with regard to what the construction type is. We believe it was generated by the mortgage companies because they wanted to establish how the vast majority of properties were built and so appeared the terms traditional construction and non-traditional construction.

### Non-Traditional construction

Non-traditional construction can really be classed as construction techniques that utilise systems of building, focused on speed and economy of construction. It is the sort of construction that is used where a great deal of housing is required quickly, so it is often used by local authorities to mass build (although today it is also used by commercial construction companies and developers). We have carried out surveys on many different types of non-traditional construction.

This resulted in some one-off designs but the majority of them fall into the category of:

1. Metal frame
2. Concrete frame
3. Timber frame
4. Concrete panel construction
5. Structural insulation panels
6. In situ concrete
7. One-offs

We know we are cheating really with the last category but it is the best way we can think of explaining it.

The absolute bible for this, although it is getting slightly dated is:

Non Traditional Houses – Identifying Non-Traditional Houses in the UK 1918 to 1975 BR469

Compiled and Edited by

Harry Harrison, Stephen Mullin, Barry Reeves and Alan Stevens.

Published by BRE Press (Building Research Establishment).

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Many years ago the Building Research Establishment (known as BRE) were part of a Government organisation with the Property Services Agency (PSA) which we would say were the undisputed experts on construction and building problems along with a few Universities such as Reading and Salford Universities who looked on the more academic side. However we would also say that things have changed with commercialism.

We cannot recommend this book highly enough although it will set you back several hundreds of pounds, possibly worth using a search engine to see if you can pick up a second hand copy somewhere.

## **After the Great Wars we needed houses and homes**

In the UK after World War I and World War II our housing stock had been bombed and made safe by being demolished so there were fewer houses. There had also been a lack of maintenance over the war years, as the workforce had been at war, and then the armed forces men were returning and they needed houses quickly. Various methods of non-traditional construction were proposed and built in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's.

Also, this type of construction has been used during boom years, such as the early 1970's and the late 1980's, where it was hard to build quickly enough for supply and demand. Our comments relate to the UK, there are even variations in the UK.

## **Non-traditional construction by another name**

After the war years we had to build fast and we used many new forms of construction techniques. We will name a few here; these names may have been given to you when you looked at buying a house. We will carry out a brief description of them or you could telephone us on 0800 298 5424:

### **Airey Houses**

These have a concrete plank externally supported on a pre-cast concrete frame with steel tube reinforcements.

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## **Boot**



Airey houses were made up of concrete planks and are now generally being knocked down and rebuilt as they are not habitable



Street view.

They were named Airey houses after the Member of Parliament that was involved with them rather than the fact that the wind blew through them and they suffered badly from condensation.

Believed to be named after the contractor of that name. Built on a concrete frame with more traditional brickwork or render typically found externally.

## **Cornish Unit**

Although they are called Cornish Units, we have found them all over the country. They come in various makes and models as do the other houses that we mention. They were traditionally constructed with a concrete frame. The unusual thing was the mansard roofs that ran all the way down to the first floor level.

## **Dorran**

These were pre-cast concrete panel buildings with a concrete ring beam at first floor level with a timber frame internally.

## **Dye Construction**

This was concrete panels which were a storey height secured by metal angle brackets (believed to be steel) with concrete beams forming the first floor.

## **Gregory**

This is pre-cast concrete, storey height columns with ring beams. These have mansard roofs to first floor level.

## **Myton**

These are concrete panels.

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### **Newland**

Steel frame.

### **Orlit**

A feature of these is that they may have a flat roof with an asphalt finish.

### **Parkinson**

These are concrete column construction with a render or pebbledash finish externally.

### **Reema**

Hollow panel. These are structural concrete columns and beams cast in situ.

### **Stonecret**

This is pre-cast reinforced concrete frame with concrete panels, two storeys in height.

### **Tarran**

Pre-cast concrete panels with first floor ring beam. The panels are very wide.

### **Unity and Butterly**

Pre-cast concrete column, metal plated beams. An unusual external finish of a small looking concrete panel.

### **Wates**

Believed to be named after the contractor of that name. Pre-cast reinforced concrete panels with ring beams at first floor level.

### **Wessex**

Pre-cast reinforced panels.

### **Wimpey No Fines**

In situ mould type no fines concrete with a variety of different thickness of walls depending upon the age and type.

### **Laing Easyform**

Comes in both solid and cavity wall forms built from a no fines concrete.

### **Arrowhead**

Steel structural frame albeit that it is lightweight. They tend to have cladding to the front of them.

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## **British Iron and Steel Federation House known as a BISF**

These are relatively common although they are now very well disguised with brickwork being built around them. They are a lightweight structural steel frame.



British Iron and Steel Federation House (BISF)



Asbestos roof on BISF house

### **Dorlonco**

They have a very well hidden structural metal frame.

### **Hawthorn Leslie**

This is a mixture of both a metal frame and a timber frame.

### **Howard**

We have come across quite a number of these in our surveys. This uses a lattice work of metal beams.

### **Lowton Cubit**

Possibly named after the contractor. Again this is a steel framed building.

### **Thorncliffe**

Cast iron panels bolted together.

### **Swedish timber dwelling**

Built with a timber frame.

### **Reema conclud**

This is a good example of a large panel concrete house.

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This is but a brief run-through of some of the non-traditional houses. There are many, many different types. We have surveyed ones where there are only a few thousand ever produced and we have also surveyed other types of non-traditional houses where there are many thousands produced. In our experience as chartered surveyors they all need their own individual survey as they have their own unique problems.

## **It may look traditional construction even though it is non-traditional**

With the purchasing of these houses over the years and the need to get a mortgage there have been many ingenious ways of making these houses mortgageable as per the following photographs of houses where we have carried out surveys; these are the ones that have been spotted by mortgage company valuers:



Modified non-traditional house



Brick clad modified non traditional house



Brick cladding and other alterations make a non traditional house mortgageable

## **A mortgage company surveyor may miss a non-traditional house construction**

We have now been called in several times to do a Building Surveyor where the owners have not known that the type of construction is non-traditional construction even though they have had a mortgage company valuation. Unfortunately this is due to a lack of knowledge and experience with mortgage Valuers. After all, valuation experts are not building construction experts. We have come across the issue, if it looks traditional construction even though it is constructed in a non-traditional way it may be counted as traditional construction! This tends to be the case where a Valuer has failed to notice the construction type and when we come to carry out a building survey

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we then identify it. Unfortunately this then means that whoever is purchasing has a very limited mortgage market available to them.

## **Who lends on a non-traditional construction building?**

The answer is the companies interested in lending in this market vary depending on many factors. What is also true is that lenders do vary their lending policies and they may be lending on it one minute and then not lending on it the next.

## **Modern timber frame houses – are they non-traditional construction?**

It could be argued that the houses being built, in what is known as modern timber frame, are as far away from traditional construction as houses that have been classed as non-traditional construction! They have, for example, been built out of concrete.

## **And this is where non-traditional construction gets really confusing**

However, this is where non-traditional construction really is confusing as some non-traditional construction techniques look very similar to traditional construction techniques and can only be identified by the trained experienced eye (we are more than happy to chat about this, please free phone us on 0800 298 5424). As mentioned, even more confusing is there are some non-traditional constructions that are accepted by the banks, building societies and mortgage lenders and others that are not, assuming that the bank valuation surveyor spots them. It is so important to know whether banks, building societies and mortgage lenders will lend on this type of construction if you are considering purchasing.

## **Is it the way the structure works that makes a building traditional or non-traditional construction**

To expand on this, a traditional old style timber frame property is built of oak to a one-off design. It certainly could be classed as the original traditional construction, as most houses were built in this form. However, in more recent times traditional construction has been thought of as brick and tile, or brick and slate, or stone and tile, stone and slate, etc, as we mentioned earlier.



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When the original non-traditional housing was built there wasn't too much thought given to making it look externally like a traditional building. Therefore, some complained that they seem to have concrete finishes, be it painted concrete, which looks similar to render, or concrete planks, as in the Airey buildings. We would argue as these were easily identifiable and stood out they were more a target for mortgage lenders not lending on non-traditional construction that looks like traditional construction.

## **Modern timber frame construction that is non-traditional but will be lent on**

Let us first of all explain what modern timber frame construction is. They are very much an engineered timber frame that is an absolute minimum of timber and maximum strength characteristics. The majority are factory made and factory assembled and are built in mass, rather than being a one-off design and they have an external cladding for protection, often brickwork, although in more recent years we have noticed in our surveys that render has been used, or cladding panels of timber and also plastic lookalike timber. Modern timber frame properties are also finished with a membrane to stop any dampness from the external walls getting through (we have seen in our surveys where it does happen it can distort or rot), as it can be in a traditional timber frame property.

The whole idea behind a modern timber frame construction is completely different; we would term a water construction. This is completely different to the traditional timber frame property that was built to breathe. However, the modern timber frame property is then clad with brickwork or stone or cladding, such as vertical tiling, and looks very much like a traditional property.

The whole construction is based around the economics of cheap construction and fast construction, and this type of construction is very much assembled, rather than built by tradesmen, the de-skilling being another element in the economics of the construction. However when all is said and done the mortgage companies, such as the banks and building societies do lend against it.

We have seen during our surveys other more recent innovations within the modern timber frame market, such as using composite wood products for floor joists and also for the flooring, together with an increased use of external cladding, as it is more economical and faster to put up than brickwork.

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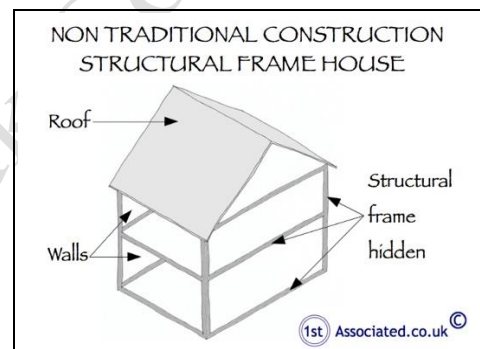
# Not lending against non-traditional construction

Interestingly, the techniques utilised for non-traditional construction after the war years tended to use more robust materials and more innovation. They fall into three categories:-

- Structural frame
- Large panel construction
- Innovatory construction

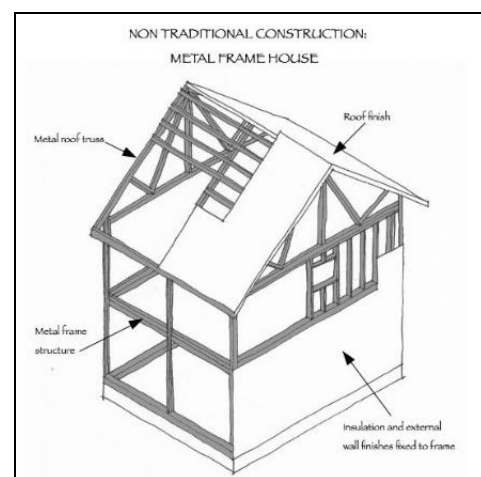
## Structural frame

This was very much where a structural frame was erected. The walls were then hung off it. The structural frames can be metal, concrete or wood. The danger factor for a mortgage company lending on this is if there is deterioration within the structural frame that is hidden, we would pick this up during a survey therefore it is critical that a Building Survey is carried out prior to purchasing a non-traditional property. A lot of Local Authority housing was built in this manner, and other National companies requiring housing, such as the Coal Board, and utilising mass production techniques lowered the cost of the housing. These types of houses also tended to use techniques that we hadn't used before in the housing market, although often we would use them in the commercial market.



## Metal Frame Structure

Below are photographs of a metal frame house that we have recently surveyed.



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Original condition of non-traditional house with roof replacement



Close up of cladding on non-traditional house



Non-traditional metal frame house



Painted cladding to non-traditional property



Close up of old metal windows in a non-traditional house

## Features to look out for in non-traditional houses

We thought we would give you some tips on the sort of things to look out for:

### Chimneys



Asbestos original chimney non traditional house



New chimney on a non-traditional house

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## Soil and vent pipe



Original asbestos soil and vent pipe on a non-traditional house



New plastic soil and vent pipe on a non-traditional house

## Roof Construction

It is important to get in the roof and have a close look or for you to employ a chartered building surveyor that will get in the roof and have a close look (Valuers no longer need to view roofs when carrying out valuations – did you know that?). The below photos are what our surveyor saw on a recent survey:



Rusting to a lightweight metal frame or damage or deterioration to the metal frame of a non-traditional house



Some fixings replacements/repairs to a non-traditional house

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## The adding of modern things can affect the building

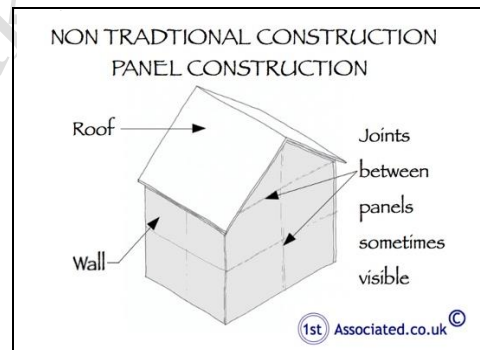
It is very common these days to have a shower/bathroom with an extract system. Does that extract system discharge into the roof or does it discharge out of the building? If it discharges into the roof then there can be problems with rusting and corroding of metal and dampness to timber.



Extract vent to outside often discharges into roof which is essential that they do not in this type of roof

## Large panel construction

This, as the name suggests, is where rather than building small brick after small brick we used large panels, usually of concrete, which in themselves were a storey height and similar width, about two and a half metres square, and they literally interlocked. There have been problems with the reinforcement used in these and the connections of them, but we haven't come across these problems in the many years that we have been surveying.



Large panel concrete non-traditional house



Jointing to a non-traditional house



General view of a development of non-traditional houses

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## **Innovatory construction**

We couldn't think of a better title for this section, but we basically mean constructions that used innovation to look at building houses in a completely new way. An example is the Wimpey no fines concrete system, which is popular and, as far as we know, mortgage companies will lend upon it. It utilises almost a moulding system using form work. There is also pod construction, which is drilling pre-fabricated units, craned and positioned into place and then an outer protective shell put around them. Lots of this type of construction was originally carried out by local authorities, as they had the pressure on them to build a large number of houses, and more recently by commercial companies, which had the pressure on them to make profits or returns for their investors.

## **Non-traditional houses becoming traditional houses?**

We have seen during our surveys over the years there has been a need to convert non-traditional housing into traditional housing. It could be argued that the right to buy Council Housing stock made this an important factor, as it is those people who required a mortgage that required the amendments, as in many cases there was nothing physically wrong with the properties.

Also, large companies holding a large amount of housing stock, such as Council Housing and Housing Associations requiring the housing to be brought up to more modern standards for thermal efficiency, etc, have utilised innovative ways of upgrading (although we are not sure whether that's the right term). Their housing techniques normally involve a cladding system to improve thermal efficiency, along with the check on the structural elements. We have surveyed some of them where they practically re-build the original buildings, which ironically can be very difficult. Whilst we don't know the exact figures we imagine it would be almost as costly as building the property from scratch.

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## Whistle-stop tour of the non-traditional housing market

There are whole books dedicated to this area, so an article such as this can hardly present the subject of non-traditional housing in detail, but we hope this has given you a flavour and an interest for the subject.

If you truly do want an independent expert opinion from a chartered surveyor, or a chartered building surveyor and are particularly interested in carrying out work on modern timber frame properties and if you are buying such a property please look at our survey examples. We feel our surveys are quite unique, as they are written to your level of knowledge. The surveys include photos and sketches and definitions. The survey will also include an action required section and an estimate of costs in the executive summary. We are more than happy to meet you at the property whilst carrying out the survey to discuss any specific issues you may have or have a general chat about what we have found at the end of the survey. Please contact 0800 298 5424 for a chartered surveyor to give you a call back.

We hope you found the article on Non-Traditional Housing of use and if you have any experiences that you feel should be added to this article that would benefit others, or you feel that some of the information that we have put is wrong then please do not hesitate to contact us (we are only human).

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# French Drain

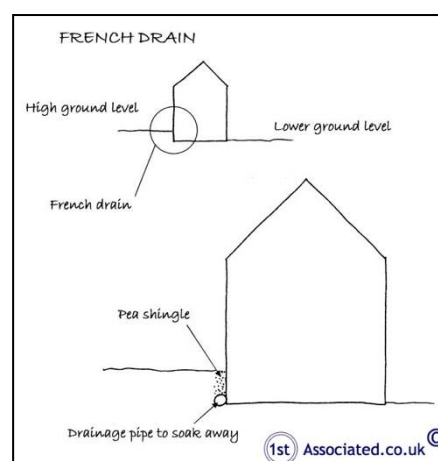
## Using a French drain to resolve a dampness problem

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

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

## What use is a French drain?

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **The French pond!**

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

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# Condensation and Cold Bridging in Non Traditional houses

## What is cold bridging, how does it 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.



Non traditional house mainly asbestos

## Cold Bridging

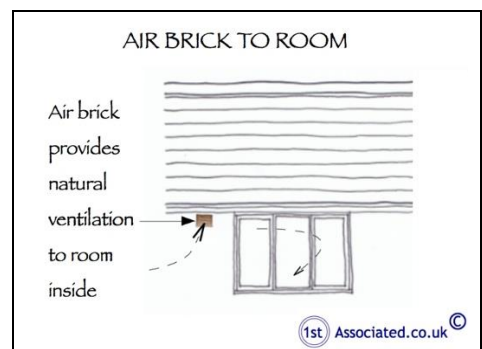
Cold bridging is caused by a colder element in the structure or fabric of the building allowing coldness to pass through. When warm moist air is present in the property and it passes through the colder elements of the structure we have what is known as Cold Bridging. This is often caused by a combination 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.



British Steel frame house (BISF)

## Ventilation is important

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.



Airbrick provides ventilation

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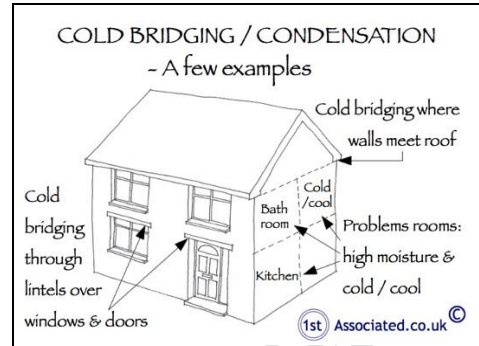
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# Condensation and Cold Bridging in certain susceptible constructed properties

## Survey 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.



Rusting within the roof between the insulation and plastic protective underlayer

## Buying a modern building

If you buy a 1980's property for example, with concrete lintels that cause cold bridging, this is a characteristic of the property and it is very difficult to change. However not only could it be a characteristic of the building it could also be caused by alterations that you make to the building.



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## 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 and high damp meter readings

3) Humidity internally is high

4) Where it is colder but by no means very cold outside

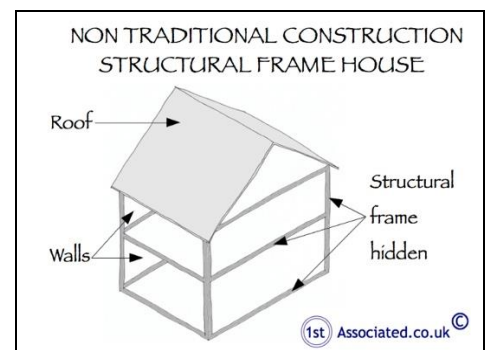
## Problems with 1970/1980 era properties relating to Cold Bridging

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

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

For example with:

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



Non traditional structural frame house

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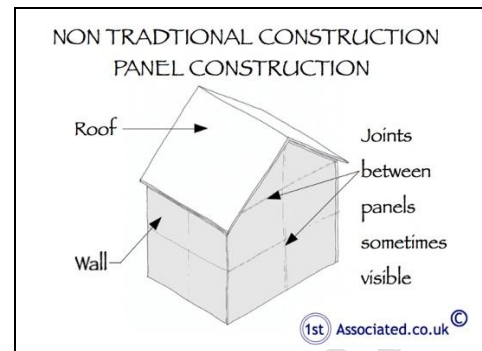
This meant they were warmer which has meant the significance of a lintel, over a door or window, being colder and allowing the transfer of coldness becomes much more important. This results in condensation that we commonly see above windows in this age and era of property.

## How to solve Cold Bridging

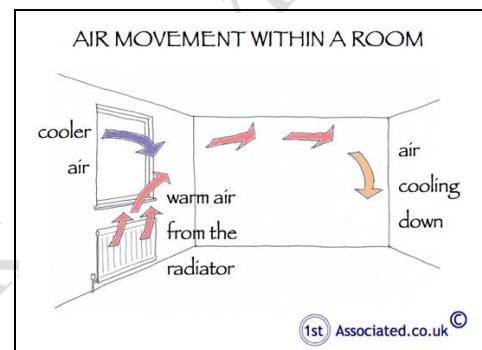
The difficulty is resolving cold bridging. Normally, where condensation is involved, if you get the balance of warm and coolness of the air, ventilation and movement you can reduce considerably the chances of condensation. Airing the room by opening the windows, which seems to have gone out of fashion,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

## Where do we most commonly find Cold Bridging?

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



Non traditional panel construction



Air movement within a room



Metal cladding roofs

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## Can lifestyle 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. 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.



Cooking produces steam and requires ventilation

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.

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

This really is a difficult question to answer. We have been involved in a number of cases as expert witnesses or advocates and the answer can vary. We would comment that there are factors that can be changed and factors that can't be changed. For example, the occupiers' lifestyle can in most cases can 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.



Non traditional BISF property

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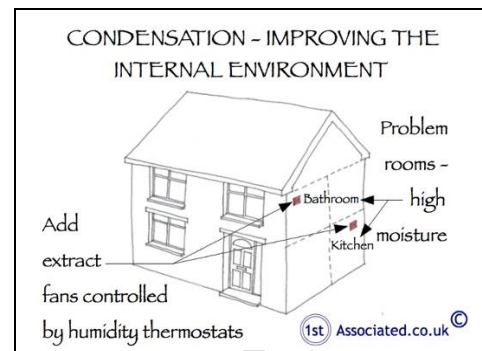
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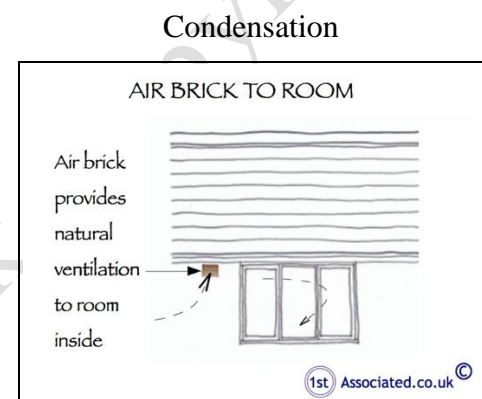
## Design of the Building

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



## Things to remember about an air brick

If you are thinking about adding an air brick then you need to be aware that airbricks don't actually allow that much air through. Although externally a nine by three inch 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

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

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

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).



Removing electric points to view construction

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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.

### **Cold bridging what can we do?**

There are limited things you can do with regards to cold bridging as it is about the original design of the property and needs to be considered as a characteristic. However, we do always recommend large humidity controlled extract fans are added into the bathrooms, kitchens and any areas that you intend to carry out drying of clothes to ensure moisture is removed as quickly as possible.

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# Wimpey No-Fines

**Manufacturer:** George Wimpey & Co. Ltd

**Designer:**

**Period built:** 1940s-1970s

**Number built:** 300,000

**Alternative names:** Buterfly

Buterfly No-Fines

Formwall

Gateshead Buterfly

Gateshead No-Fines

Wimpey

Wimpey W6M



## IDENTIFICATION CHARACTERISTICS

Bungalows and 2-storey semi-detached and terraced houses  
Medium pitch hipped or gable roof covered with tiles, or flat or shallow valley roof covered with bituminous felt or asphalt  
External walls of render throughout, or to front and rear walls and flank wall of brick.  
Precast concrete corbel to gable end eaves.  
Some dwellings have front bay windows.

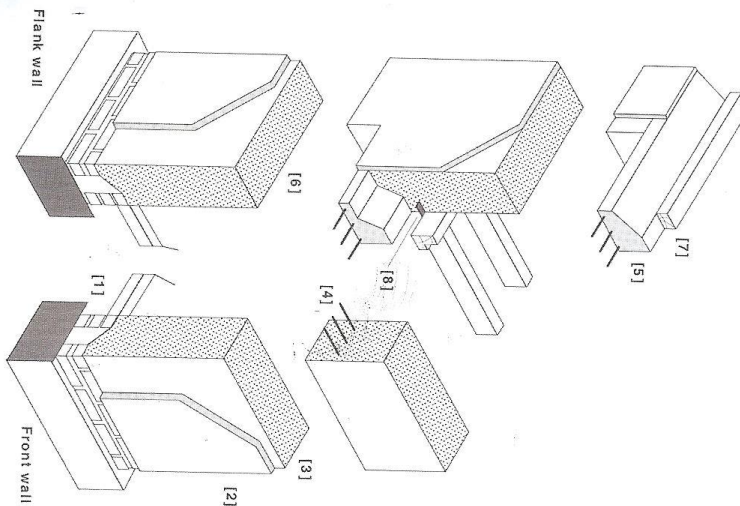
## NOTES FOR SURVEYORS

Vertical cracking of no-fines concrete external walls.  
Horizontal cracking of render above window drips.  
Scarcity and corrosion of wall ties to brick cladding.  
Low to high rates of carbonation of dense aggregate concrete ring beams.  
The system was also used for flats.

## REFERENCES

BRE Report BR 153  
BRE Report BR 191  
BRE Film Archive  
NDA Certificate February 1966, May 1967  
Scottish NDA Certificate March 1966

S062



## CONSTRUCTION

**Substructure:** Concrete strip footings. Brick under-building [1]. Concrete slab, DPC.  
**External walls:** Rendered [2]. 10" no-fines RC [3] with horizontal tie reinforcement [4]. Dense RC eaves beams [5]. PRC lintels [6] with projecting reinforcement above openings. Timber wall plate [7].  
**Separating wall:** 10" no-fines RC with the reinforcement.  
**Partitions:** Timber stud lined with plasterboard.  
**Ground floor:** concrete.  
**First floor:** timber boarding on timber joists on metal corbels [9].  
**Ceilings:** Plasterboard.  
**Roof:** Timber rafters, purlins and tiles.

## VARIANTS

**1945-1952**  
External walls of 12" no-fines concrete.  
RC eaves beams. PRC lintels above openings: 2" deep at external face and 3" deep at internal face.  
**1957 onward**  
Gable or flank external wall with two 5/8" reinforcing bars or 16" band of mesh reinforcement at ground floor level.  
**1964 onward**  
External walls of 8" no-fines concrete with 21" band of mesh reinforcement at first floor level.  
PRC rectangular or hood lintel above openings.  
Bituminous DPM above lintel.  
9" no-fines concrete separating wall, possibly rendered, on timber joists.  
Ground floor of suspended concrete or timber boarding on timber joists.  
First floor of timber joists in pockets cast into external walls.  
Flat or bowstring roofs of timber covered with bituminous felt or asphalt.

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Search at: 12:38 08-Jul-14

by local authority

matches so far: 21

AS016	Multilite
M017	BISF Type A1
M060	Lowton-Cubitt
M096	Trusteel 3M
M097	Trusteel Mk II
P003	Airey
P018	Belfry
P039	Cornish Unit Type I
P040	Cornish Unit Type II
P091	Orlit Type I
P092	Orlit Type II
P110	Stent
P127	Unity Type I
P128	Unity Type II
P130	Wates
S045	Parkwall
S062	Wimpey No-Fines
T101	Quikbild
T112	Scottwood
T134	USA Temporary Bungalow
T135	Wates

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# The Non-Trad Search Engine

Search at: 11:58 08-Jul-14

by identification characteristics  
by local authority  
by construction class

matches so far: 2

S045	Parkwall
S062	Wimpey No-Fines

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