

COMMERCIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
Three Storey Office Block in the City of Westminster, London



FOR

Mr Businessman

Prepared by:

GEM Associates Limited

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

Marketing by:

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some 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 business has many risks, the property being one of the biggest. Often when a business is purchased our clients can only see the opportunities that it offers, the aim of this report is to give a balanced view on the future risk.

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 business is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

REPORT FORMAT

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

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

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

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

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

PHOTOGRAPHS



We utilise photographs to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area (with this property we have taken approximately one hundred photographs in total and we have enclosed a sample of these within the report).

ORIENTATION

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

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

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

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SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This office block is three storeys (office space and toilets on ground floor, office space, toilets and kitchen on first floor and office space / ancillary space (depending upon the legal definition) on the third floor.

There are two entrances with one access to the rear (which unfortunately we did not gain access through). There are two internal staircases to the first floor and one to the top floor.

The front of the property sits directly on to the pavement. There is little/limited space to the rear, which unfortunately we did not have access to.

This property has been advertised as a 2,500 square feet net internal area. We have not checked these measurements.

We are advised that the property was originally a cheese factory attached to the dairy next door and that Planning Consent has been granted for four one bedroom flats and one two bedroom flat (we have not seen details of this or investigated it further).

We would advise that some of this information has been taken from the Estate Agents details, and as with all Estate Agents details there is no guarantee to their accuracy.

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Left hand gable end



Right hand gable end



Rear view,
looking from the dry cleaners to the rear,
the grassed area being part of another
property's garden.

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ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor consists of:

- Two entrance areas, both of which have WC areas adjacent to them (there is a step down to the left hand entrance area)
- Open plan office area

First Floor

The first floor consists of:

- Two access staircases
- Office space
- Kitchen area
- WC

Top Floor

The top floor consists of:

- Office / ancillary space (depending upon the legal definition)

Outside Areas

There are trees in close proximity to the rear of the property, which we believe to be on the adjacent neighbours land (we have not had access to the rear of the property).

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



Main Office



Left hand side WC



Right hand side WC

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First Floor



Office One



Office Two



Kitchen



WC

Top Floor



Stairway to top floor



Office

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SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

- Main Roof: A mansard roof, with a metal top and slate sides with dormer windows.
- Gutters and Downpipes: Metal box guttering to front and rear.
- Soil and Vent Pipe: Internal (assumed)
- Walls: Finished in newly cement painted render, construction of walls unknown.
- External Joinery: Painted timber single glazed sliding sash windows

INTERNAL

- Ceilings: Plasterboard (assumed)
- Walls: A mixture of solid / studwork (assumed)
- Floors: Ground Floor: A suspended timber floor (assumed)
First Floor: Joist and floorboard sheets (assumed)
Second Floor: Joist and floorboard sheets (assumed)

SERVICES

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



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future business 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 50 plus photographs (a CD copy of all of these can be provided by return if requested) during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in/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. Having said all of that, here are our comments:

Generally we found the property to be in average condition considering the property's age, type and style with a few exceptions. 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.

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!

- The property is newly refurbished, so superficially the decoration standard is good.

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

The Bad

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

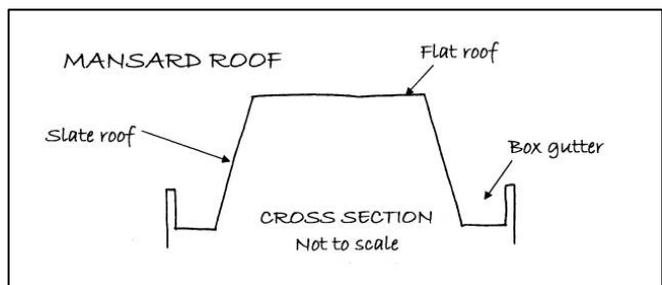
1) **Trees and Root Issues**

There is a mansard roof with box gutters to either side. Box gutters are renowned for problems, particularly where they back up and block with leaves. We can see this as being a problem to the rear of the property in this case and even with regular maintenance we still feel there is bound to be some blockages and issues.



ACTION REQUIRED:

Put a leaf guard over the box gutter and also regularly maintain it, probably monthly in the case of the rear box gutter.



The leaves and branches will also affect the roof of the property, which will also need clearing from time to time.

ANTICIPATED COST: For regular monthly maintenance we estimate a few hundred pounds.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

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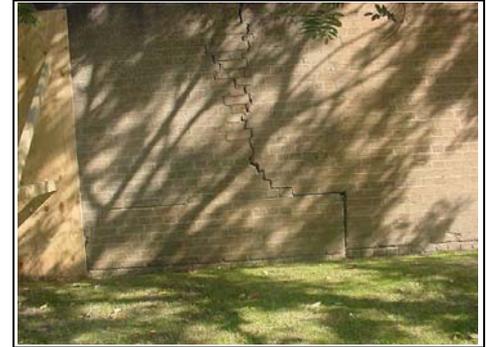
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2) Cracking

We can see from adjacent properties that there has been cracking and movement in the area. We feel this is likely to occur to this property and may have occurred in the past. The render is newly painted and unfortunately hides any such defects. We would expect there to be latent defects to this property.



Cracking to property



Cracking to adjacent property

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to ensure that your insurance company is happy to insure for such risk and specifically identify the trees and the distance they are from your property.

Your solicitor/legal adviser needs to specifically ask about whether there have been any problems to the property. We would recommend the existing owners make an insurance claim, as most insurance companies would wish to monitor the property for one year prior to advising on the problem. This of course is the difficulty with our one off inspection, as it is limited in the amount of information we can obtain compared with a year long supervision inspection.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

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3) Trees

There are trees located very close to the rear of the property. We believe this to be affecting it. The difficulty is that they are on neighbouring land. In our experience we have found trees on neighbouring land very difficult to maintain properly. However, our action required is as follows:



ACTION REQUIRED: You need to obtain expert comments specifically on these trees and we would also recommend that negotiations with the neighbours are started prior to purchasing the property.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

4) Lighting Level

We do not believe that the lights are to current office standard.

ACTION REQUIRED: Improve internal lighting to current standards.

ANTICIPATED COST: This depends upon the work and we would recommend quotes, but we would costs to be in the thousands of pounds as it is always difficult to re-wire.



Lights not to office standard level

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

5) Fire Safety Standards

Whilst we appreciate the refurbishment to the property is not complete, presently it does not meet Fire Regulation Standards. This ranges everything from the fire signs to the location of fire extinguishers, to the underlining of the right hand staircase.

ACTION REQUIRED: We do not believe that the property should be sold without a suitable Fire Certificate.

ANTICIPATED COST: This should be at the present developer's cost.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.



We believe this should be an illuminated emergency exit sign

6) Rising Damp

To the rear of the property there is rising damp. We have not seen this area, but we suspect the adding of a French gully will suffice. The property does sit on a slight slope and therefore allowance will have to be made for this. We would reiterate that we have not been able to see the rear of the property.



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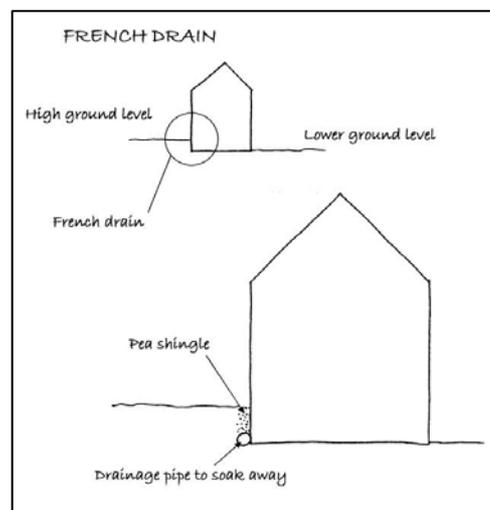
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ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend adding a French gully.

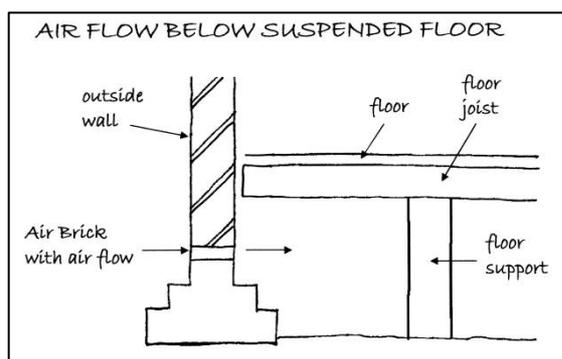
ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £5,000 to £10,000. The most expensive part of this is joining into an existing drainage system.



Suspended Timber Floor

It is a particular concern, as there is a suspended timber floor which could have started to rot due to the dampness.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.



7) Purchasing Leasehold or Freehold

We have assumed for the purposes of this report that the property is being purchased freehold. If you advise us we will be able to give you further specific information. You should be aware that some leases have onerous clauses.



The Ugly

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

There is nothing which we feel falls within this category, providing you are happy with the issues above, particularly the one with regard to movement.

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Other Items

Moving on to more general information.

Electrics

We assume that a test and report will be provided by the developers to make the electrics to NICEIC standards and on the gas heating installation to CORGI standards, and both be fully commissioned before the property is handed over.

Maintenance

It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of the property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

DIY/Handyman Type Work

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as such as redecoration. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. 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 not seen trading accounts, internal records or a copy of the lease.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Cost

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. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 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 probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We would reiterate our concerns with regard to the movement in the property and insist that you ensure that an insurance claim is made by the existing owners and that you continue then with the same insurance company (provided of course that the insurance claim is accepted) and that you also take into consideration the other work that is required, such as the dampness work and the improvements internally to bring the office space up to current standards.

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

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

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

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.

COMMERCIAL AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

It is important to remember that the commercial agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and therefore are eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Commercial Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

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 business purchase. If you require any further information please telephone us.

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



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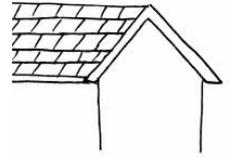
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EXTERNAL

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS

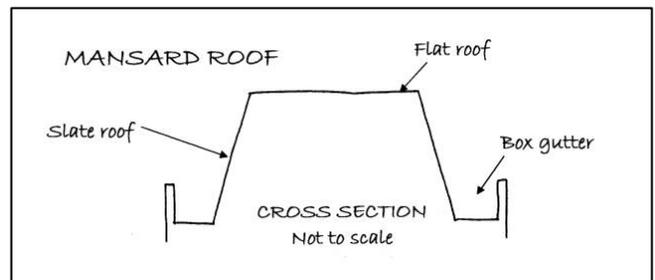


The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.

The underlayer's function is to minimise wind and water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:

Main Roof

The roof is a mansard roof. It is pitched and clad with slates to the main slopes, it looks to have a metal roof possible lead to the top although our view was very limited. We can see approximately 10% of the top of the roof.



Slate roof



Metal roof to top

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From what we could see of the top of the roof it all looks relatively clear of leaves, branches, etc, and in reasonable condition, but we would reiterate our limited view.

ACTION REQUIRED: The roof will need regular clearance and maintenance of leaves, branches and other debris to ensure it keeps watertight.

The slates form the pitch of the roof and are manmade. They look in reasonable condition and sit fairly true and level. The danger area with this type of roof is the box valley gutter, which we will look at in the Gutters and Downpipes Section.

Dormer Windows

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

There are dormer windows to the property, formed at head height for the office areas on the top floor. We can see six windows to the front of the property. It is difficult to comment on the rear as we have not seen this area, but we believe there to be at least three. The roof and the sides are clad in metal with a timber sliding sash window.



Close up of dormer



Rusting fixing bolt

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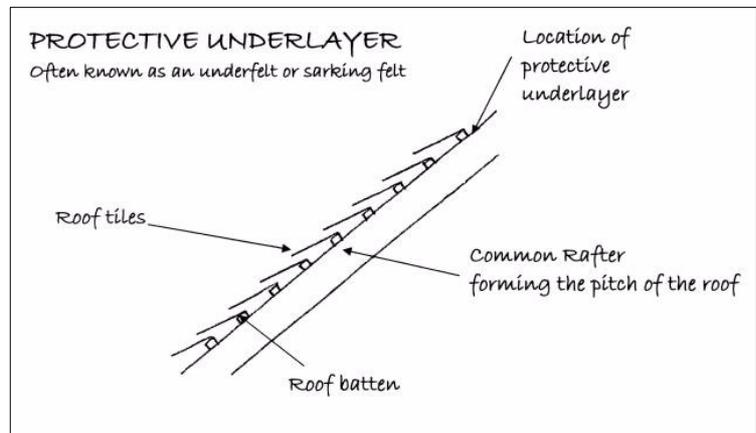
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Our view was limited, but what we could see of them they were in reasonable condition.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the dormer windows from the parts we could see. 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.

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.



Unfortunately it was not possible to access the loft space to confirm if a protective underlayer was present due to the offices being formed in the roof. However, in this age of property, assuming it was built to building regulations of the time, we believe a sarking felt will be present.

Side roof to the right hand side

We did note that there was a roof to the right hand side that we believe belongs to the neighbouring property. This is a flat roof and there can sometimes be problems at the junction with a flat roof and your building. We have been unable to access this roof to comment further. However, it does look like the flashing has been repaired with Flashband, which is a temporary repair product.



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

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately ten percent of the top 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.

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

As there was no access available to the roof structure/s we cannot comment on its / their construction or condition.

Roof Structure

We would normally inspect the roof structure for structurally significant defects to the timber and serious active woodworm, together with dry rot and wet rot. However, as the roof is lined it was not possible to inspect in this instance.

Ventilation

We did not see any vents to the roof to help prevent condensation. We would recommend that these are added.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add vents.

Insulation

Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

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

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GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Gutters and Downpipes

The property has box gutters. These can be a problem area, particularly to the rear of the property we would expect problems, as there are a lot of leaves and debris landing into the box gutter. This can very quickly build up and go over and above the flashings. We noted the flashing were relatively small, as can be seen in the adjoining photo.



Note relatively low flashing

ACTION REQUIRED: The only way forward is to regularly maintain these gutters. We would recommend a leaf guard; we would also recommend increasing the height of the flashing as we feel this will be a problem.

You really have to decide if this is part of the character of the building and that you are happy to maintain it.

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Soil and Vent Pipe

We believe the soil and vent pipe to be internal and/or air inlet valves (often known as Dergo valves).

Service Ducts Defined

These are passages running vertical and horizontally through the building for water supply and waste water pipes and sometime electrics (although not usually in the same service duct!)



Air inlet valve

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.

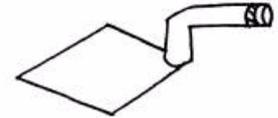
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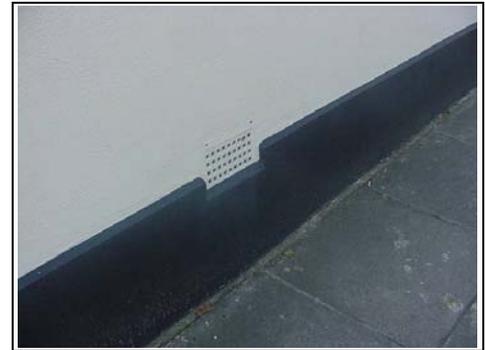
WALLS



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.

Render

The walls to this property are finished in a smooth faced painted render. We have carried out a tap test to the render at low level (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer) to try to establish if there are any hollow areas. We believe the walls to be in average condition. We have found some areas but this is typical for this age of property.



Smooth faced painted render

Cracking

We did note cracking. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

ACTION REQUIRED: All cracks need to be sealed as soon as possible to stop dampness getting into the property and/or making the cracks worse.



Cracking to render to the front of property

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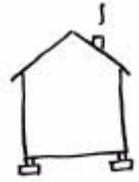
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Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by render / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this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

Our comments have been based upon how the render / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the render / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

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 original property, we would expect to find a shallow stepped brick foundation possibly with a bedding of lime mortar to this area.

London Clay

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

Building Insurance Policy

You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

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

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

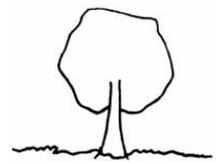
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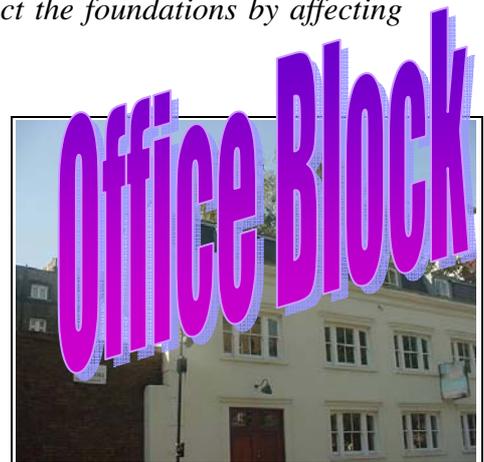
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TREES

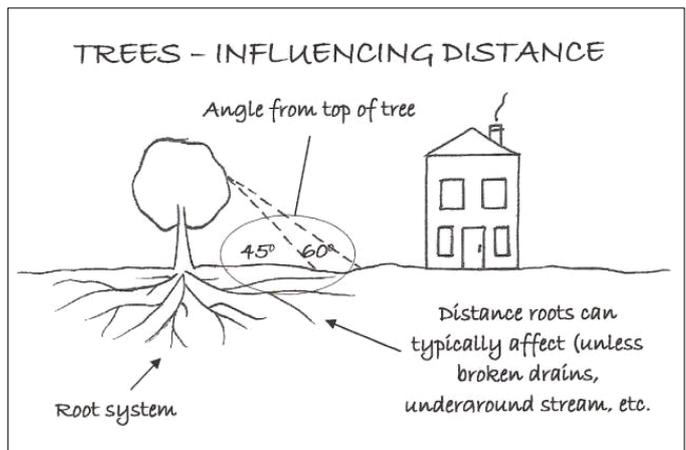
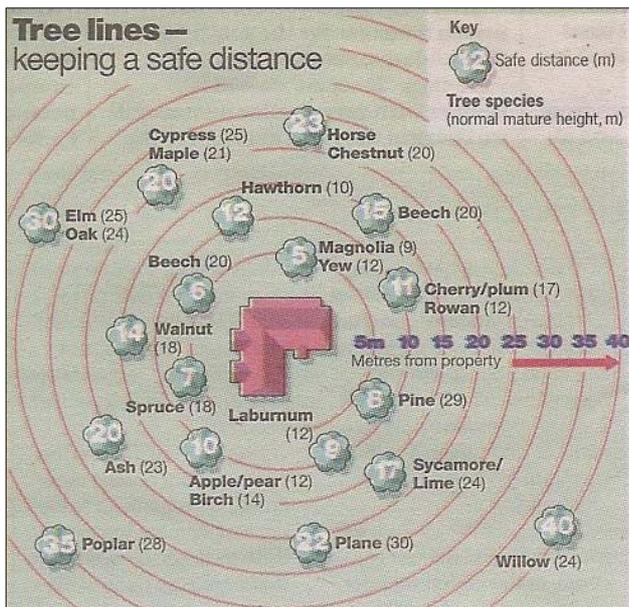


Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.

There are a number of trees very close to this property to the rear. They are difficult to see from the front of the property. However, as you can see in the adjoining photo, they are larger than the property itself, as well as bring in close proximity. This is why we believe there will be problems, as tree roots can cause damage to foundations and underground services. We would technically term these trees as being within what is called influencing distance. We believe that these trees may be affecting the property.



ACTION REQUIRED: You need to obtain advice from an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon). Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.



Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

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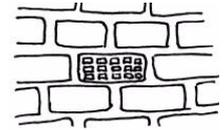
DAMP PROOF COURSE

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, unfortunately we cannot see a damp proof course because of the render plinth. In this particular property its possible it will have a slate DPC behind the render. We sometimes find that the render actually is by-passing the damp proof course or the ground level, as may be the case to the rear of this property, where we found dampness. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

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

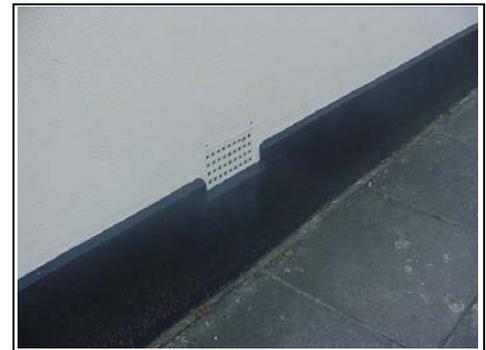
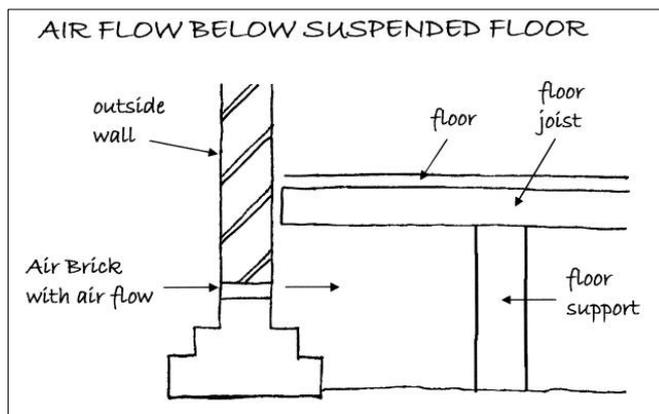
AIRBRICKS



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

Air bricks are visible to the original part of this property. In older properties this is usually seen when suspended timber floors have been used and that would be my thoughts in this case. Without opening up the structure we cannot be certain of its condition. We do know that there is dampness to the rear of the property that will be affecting it.

ACTION REQUIRED: Add a French gully to the rear of the property and all air bricks to be checked to ensure that there is a suitable air flow going underneath the timber floor.

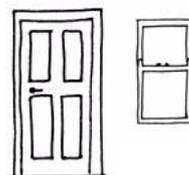


Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.

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

EXTERNAL JOINERY



The external joinery part of this section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards, 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.

Windows and Doors

This property predominantly has sliding sash windows, which are single glazed and have a painted timber finish and are in reasonable condition considering their age, type and style.



ACTION REQUIRED: We would add that we were unable to open several of the windows. As is common they will need some easing and adjusting from a carpenter who is use to dealing with this type of work. We believe this work should be carried out by the existing developer.

General Information on Sliding Sash Windows

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

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.

Generally overall the external decorations are in average condition and we would expect some redecoration to be required within the next three to five years.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL



CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.

Ceilings

From our visual inspection of the ceilings and our general knowledge of this age and type of construction we believe that the ceilings are likely to be plasterboard (assumed), although we have not managed to see any from the rear to confirm the construction.



There are a number of large beams running from the front to the rear of the property. This indicates to us a considerable change in the configuration of the property from its original building design and does also explain why there is deflection, albeit minor, to the first and second floor levels. We can gauge from this deflection that the property has not been built to, what would be term, institutional investment standards. Therefore, if you are purchasing the property freehold and do at some time intend to lease it; it will limit the market to whom you can lease to.

Plasterboard Defined

The usual name for Gypsum plasterboard, which is building board with a core of aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, used as a dry lining.

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Internal Walls and Partitions

We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls (this is not rocket science, it is literally tapping the walls and listening for the sound made) and found them to be a mixture of solid walls and hollow/studwork walls.

Generally internal walls, we believe, have a plasterboard finish with a skim coat and are newly decorated. Unfortunately this will be hiding any latent defects.

Perimeter Walls

Generally it is a reasonable assumption that the solid walls are likely to be made from modern gypsum plaster, with the exception of the studwork walls, which are plasterboard with a skim coat. All are newly painted, which does limit our inspection.

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.

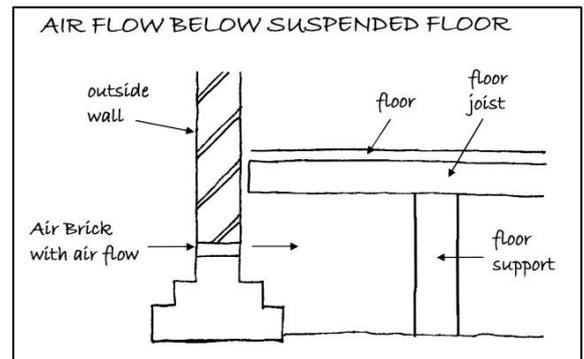
FLOORS



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

Based on our knowledge of this age of construction we believe that, predominately, the ground floor construction is a suspended timber floor. This type of floor needs air circulation under it to reduce deterioration from wet rot and dry rot; please see our comments in these sections.



We believe the left hand side floor is concrete (the area that steps down from the office area). Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and in the Air Bricks Section of the report.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.



Suspended timber floor



Wear to the floor

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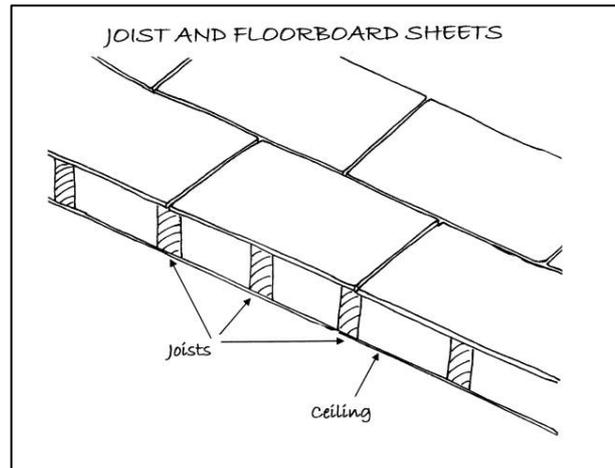
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First and Second Floors

In both cases we have assumed that the first and second floor construction are joist and floorboard sheets, as this is typical for a refurbished property of this age.



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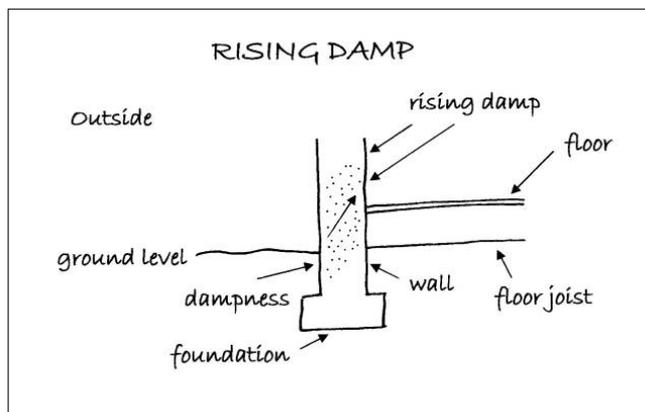
DAMPNESS



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.

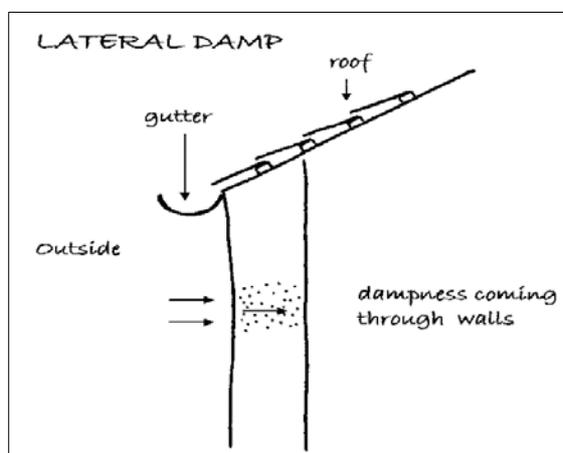


Random tests were taken with a moisture meter and dampness was found. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

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.

Tests were taken with a moisture meter to external walls. Our readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property, i.e. minor dampness. No evidence of any significant penetrating/lateral dampness was detected.



Our concern would be that there would be some dampness coming in beneath the box valley gutters. Please see our earlier comments.

Condensation

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

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

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

INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Doors

The refurbishment had not been completed at the time of our inspection. All doors around staircase areas need to be fire doors (this means a half hour to hour fire resistance, depending upon location), door closers and any glazed areas should have Georgian wire polished plated glass, to name but a few requirements.



Staircase

The property has two staircases. We noted that the underside of the right hand staircase was exposed. It is more normal today to have a half hour fire barrier to stop fire spreading from the ground floor to the first floor if this situation should occur. You may wish to take a view on whether you add this.

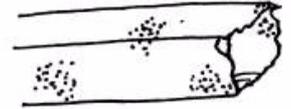


Kitchen

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable 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.

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Dry Rot

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

In the areas visually inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot
Please note we have not had access to the roof.

Wet Rot

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

Again, in the areas inspected no evidence was found of any wet rot, however there is a chance that there is wet rot in the property as we have found dampness to the rear and the property has a suspended timber floor.

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Woodworm



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

Our view was limited because we had no access to the roof space, which is the main area we would usually find woodworm. In the areas inspected (very limited) we found no obvious visual signs of significant woodworm activity or, indeed, signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. However we could only see approximately 10% of the timber, in such areas as underneath the staircases. We would take an educated guess that both the roof structure and the floor to the property have formed part of the refurbishment and therefore may be much newer than the property as a whole.

In many properties of this age, there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection was very limited.

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

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS

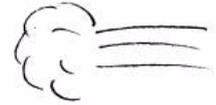


With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.

The decoration is as new; our concern here is what defects are being hidden by the paint work.

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

In future years it is anticipated that there will be a thermal efficiency requirement for properties. We have given you our general thoughts on it. We are not, however, specialists in this area, or following any prescribed format. We are basing our comments upon our experience.

Roof Insulation

Unfortunately we cannot access the roof space. It very much depends upon when the roof was added or amended as to the insulation level within it. We did not note vents in this section, which does mean there could be the possibility of condensation, depending, of course, on how you use the property.

Walls

The walls to this property are solid and will have a relatively poor thermal efficiency. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations, such as dry lining the walls, which will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

Windows

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

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Services

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

Summary

Overall, provided our assumptions correct and considering the properties age, type and style, it has average thermal properties.

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

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

or alternatively www.cat.org.uk

or www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.

Finally, we would advise that an energy rating is likely to be required for future house sales.

OTHER MATTERS



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

FIRE REGULATIONS

Normally it is a requirement of any Lease or Tenancy agreement that current fire regulations are adhered to and that a service contract is in place. This is how the property should be left.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should have a suitable Fire Certificate for the property.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

You should be aware that it is now a requirement to give reasonable access to the disabled and make reasonable amendments to the property as is necessary to accommodate them. It is a condition of all the leases that we have seen to meet this requirement.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should ask to see if a report has been carried out in line with the Disabilities Act highlighting areas that can be improved or have been improved.

ASBESTOS REGISTER

In a property of this age there may well be some asbestos. This was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time.

It is now a requirement for any public building to have an asbestos register, indicating whether there is or is not asbestos and if so where it is.

ACTION REQUIRED: A Type Two Survey should be carried out under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002.

You should note that work involving products containing asbestos is covered by Health and Safety legislation and you are recommended to seek the advice of the Local Authority Environmental Health Officer before proceeding with any such work.

We are not asbestos surveyors.

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SECURITY

We noticed a security box to the outside of the property and we noticed a security panel inside. However, the alarm was not working at the time we inspected, i.e. it was not switched on.

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.

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.

ACTION REQUIRED: The Landlord or Managing Agent should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

ELECTRICITY



We would always recommend an independent electrical report on a property of this nature. 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. We have made basic comments below based upon our visual inspection.

We do not carry out electrical tests. We can arrange for them to be carried out if you so require.

As this is a newly refurbished property we assume that it will be fully commissioned and have a Guarantee.

Fuse Board

There are two electric fuse boards and consumer units located on the ground floor on the right hand side and on the first floor in the central office. We would date the fuse boards as being from the 1980s and, whilst not the best now available, are reasonable.



Fuseboard on first floor



Electrics and security on right hand side

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Earth Test

We carried out an earth test in the kitchen area to one of the socket points and this proved satisfactory.

ACTION REQUIRED: If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.



Also note that Building Regulations require certain electrical work to be certified by an approved contractor. Please see the appendices at the end of this survey for further details.

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

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

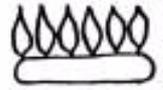
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GAS



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

The gas meter cupboard is located in the middle office on the ground floor.

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



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

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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 be 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.

Water Pressure

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage tests we checked the pressure, literally by putting a finger over a tap, and the pressure seemed typical of what we find. Some taps were not working at the time of the inspection.

We have not used a listening stick to check for water leaks.

Cold Water Cistern

These are located to the side of the staircase leading up to the top floor.

Hot Water Cylinder

The hot water cylinder is located on the first floor near the kitchen area, and in the same storage space as the boiler. It is factory lagged, therefore indicating it is relatively new (in this case we mean in the past 30 years) and will have relatively good thermal efficiency.



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Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper pipework. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors. As this is a newly refurbished property we assume that it will be fully commissioned and have a Guarantee.

Heating

The heating system predominately are double panel radiators.

The boiler was located on the first floor near the kitchen area. It is manufactured by Keston and the model type is C40, we do not come across this type of boiler very often and it therefore may be difficult to obtain parts.

We assume, as the property is being redeveloped, that the heating will be commissioned and some form of Guarantee will be offered.

Ten Minute Heating Test

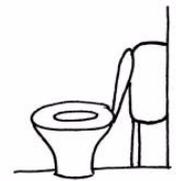
We would normally ask the owner to turn the heating on for approximately ten minutes, but nobody was present. Therefore the heating has not been tested.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask the owner to confirm the heating is working satisfactorily and provide any guarantees or/ and annual inspections.

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.

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.

We have run the cold water taps in the kitchen for 15 minutes, without any build up or back up.

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 not identified any manholes/inspection chambers (however, please note that we have not seen the rear of the property).

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

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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.

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

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

OUTSIDE AREAS

PARKING

As far as we are aware there is no parking with this office.

EXTERNAL AREAS

Boundaries

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.

The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

Neighbours

We have not been able to speak to any of the neighbours.

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POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:-
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations
 - ii) Rising damp treatments
 - iii) Roof and similar renewals
 - iv) Central heating installation
 - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals
 - vi) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

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

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

When you booked this survey we asked you if you required us to carry out a verbal check on the status of the property with the Local Authority regarding whether it is a Listed Building, in a Conservation area and any history that is available over the phone with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. In this instance you have not requested that we carry out this work.

Finally, your Solicitor should carry out Local Authority enquiries and any additional enquiries he/she feels necessary, advising us if they feel that we can have further input.

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

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

REFERENCES

Life expectancies of building components

*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings

*By Malcolm Hollis 4th edition published by Royal Institution of
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible

By mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

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APPENDICES

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

ENGLISH LAW

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

SOLE USE

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

ONLY HUMAN!

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

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

WEATHER

It was a pleasant end of summer/start of autumn day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you may be aware 2006 was the warmest year in Britain since records began, we believe, in the 1700s; with July 2006 being the hottest July on record in Britain. 2005 was the third driest year on record in Britain with 2003 being the driest. The year 2000 was the wettest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in Britain. This may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

NOT LOCAL

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

INSPECTION LIMITED

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited as we have not been able to inspect under the floors or in the roof space and we have not had access to the rear of the property.

THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

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

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

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

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

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

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

Work You Cannot do Yourself

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

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INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors offer commentary on the commercial market. Although this has been criticised as being subjective and also limited.

However it is important to realise the vested interest that the parties that run the websites may have and the limits to this information.

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