

JOB REF: J1059/RBS/MH

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
Barton Road



FOR
Mr A

www.1stassociated.co.uk

email: mail@1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

www.1stassociated.co.uk was setup to market a privately owned Independent Chartered Surveyors, who are part of the ISA and/or the RICS and who are happy to work to our standards. 1st Associated is not a Chartered Surveyors, but has been setup to promote and explain the benefits and beliefs we have.

www.1stAssociated.co.uk - The 1st choice for Independent advice.

www.1stAssociated.co.uk - The first choice for Independent Surveys 0800 298 5424

Below we have an example Building Survey carried out to by 1st Associated for more information go to www.1stAssociated.co.uk or phone 0800 298 5424

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

REPORT FORMAT
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

EXTERNAL

ROOF LIGHTS AND FLUES
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERFELTS
RAINWATER GOODS
WALLS
EXTERNAL JOINERY
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

INTERNAL

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

SERVICES

ELECTRICITY
GAS
PLUMBING AND HEATING
SANITARY FITTINGS
MAIN DRAINS

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

OUTSIDE AREAS

GARAGE
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

APPENDICES

LIMITATIONS
GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of 2 October; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on 6 October. 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 house is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well). Whilst we know you are au fait with the building industry, this is nevertheless a fairly high risk purchase, which we know from our discussions you understand.

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

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

A detached chalet bungalow that has been much extended and altered over recent years. There are gardens to the front and rear and also a garage.

From our discussions with yourself we understand that you are aware of the general condition of the property and would like only major items to be identified.

At the time of dictating this survey there are still outstanding Building Control issues from the alterations that have taken place. We are aware that Building Control have now written to the present owners. It is unlikely that a typical lender would lend on this property knowing that there are such issues.

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Three reception rooms of various sizes, one of which has a shower room off of it
- Kitchen/Diner
- Utilities Room

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Three single size bedrooms, although two of these are very small and as discussed are more large cupboard size than anything else
- Two double bedrooms, the master bedroom having a large bathroom suite off of it
- An average size family bathroom

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Please note that some of the photos may have been taken with a concave lens, to enable us to show you as much of the room as possible, which does make the photos slightly blurred.



Rear Lounge



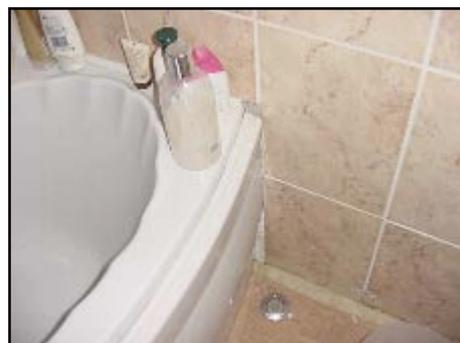
Lounge/Dining Area



Kitchen



A view of the bathroom



A closer look shows that the cuts have not been carried out.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

Main Roof:	A pitched roof, clad with concrete tiles
Rainwater Goods:	Plastic
Walls:	Predominantly painted render with some brickwork
External Joinery:	Replacement plastic fascias and soffits and replacement windows

INTERNAL

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mainly solid with some studwork and some dry lining and plaster boarding (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Predominantly a suspended timber floor with a concrete floor to the rear (assumed) First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

OUTSIDE

There are gardens to the front and rear. The front garden is brick paved for parking for several cars and there is also a garage to the rear of the property.

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report. We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are 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 home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full. Having said all of that, here are our comments:-

A very difficult one. Whilst we understand that you understand there is a risk involved, we are not sure you understand the extent of the risk. Without opening up the structure we cannot confirm that it has been built to current Building Regulations and indeed from our discussions with Building Control it does not look like it has. You are aware that there are cracks in the property, this does not necessarily mean that the property is going to fall over, however it does mean that it may become unmortgageable, or it may even be unmortgageable at present.

As you are aware, we have contacted Building Control who will carry out further investigations. It may be that the alterations they requested have already been carried out. However, from the general standard in the property we feel this is unlikely. As you are aware from our discussions there are many items that are unfinished and a list of these would almost be endless. It is far easier to employ someone to carry this sort of work out and literally list all the work to be done. We would anticipate the finishing off issues and general poor maintenance issues would keep two men busy for the best part of a month. We have identified what we feel are the main issues below:

1) No Building Regulation Approval

Following our telephone calls to the local authority we identified that no Building Regulation approval has been finalised on the structure. We have now had the opportunity to visit Luton Borough Council who advised that they had on record some visits, but the property is still classified as being under construction. What is probably much more concerning is that they did have a note on file that the roof structure timbers are undersized and over spanned.

The difficulty is how this situation is resolved. Building Control have advised that they will be writing to the owners on this matter and the

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

completion of the Building Regulations certificates and approvals. For example over spanning is not particularly difficult to resolve as you can double up the size of the timbers by adding another timber to the back and bolting through. This does involve removing anything like floor coverings and roof boarding etc, but is relatively simple when compared with undersized timbers. In this case the timbers will have to be bonded into the roof structure, usually using what is known as wall plates.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor should pursue this matter as it will have a considerable effect on the value of the property and whether a mortgage can be obtained on it.

It is simply impossible to put a cost on this without knowing exactly what is required. A best case scenario could be that the work has already been carried out, although we doubt this; or the worse case scenario could be that new timbers have to be added in.

Please see the Roof Structure Section of this Report.

2) **Defective Render to the Property**

The new render to the property has not been correctly applied. To the rear left hand corner, for example, the render is allowing dampness to come through the structure. Bearing in mind how dry it has been recently, it rained the night before our visit for the first time in quite a while, we were surprised at the amount of dampness coming through – some of this could possibly be contributed to by the lack of render around the windows, which will be absorbing dampness, but not to the extent found.

ACTION REQUIRED: Scabble back the existing render to a firm sound base and re-apply a render to match existing render.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 - £7,500 for this work alone, depending on how difficult the render is to remove, to a great extent you will need to be flexible on this cost.

Please see the External Walls Section of this report.

3) **Internal Plaster has Lost its Key**

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

The internal plaster has lost its key. On the stairs, for example, the plaster has come away and in many other areas the plaster is hollow to tap. This situation could be being aggravated by the poor quality of render on the external of the property, but we feel there are also defects with the plaster.

We noted also where plasterboard has been used, there is a phenomenon known as 'popping' that is occurring; this is where the plaster above the fixing point is coming away. Visually this can look very poor.

ACTION REQUIRED: Remove all hollow plaster back to a sound base and apply a new skim coat.

With regard to the popping, it depends how much you are concerned about the visual effect of this. You could simply fill and apply a lining paper or you may want to replace the plasterboard or plasterboard over the top of the existing plasterboard.

ANTICIPATED COST: A few thousand pounds for the additional skim coat.

Popping to plasterboard: To skim and to add lining paper, we would say this could be a DIY job.

Please see the Internal Walls Section of this Report.

4) **Damp Proof Course**

In areas the damp proof course is lower than would be recommended and has possibly allowed dampness into the front right hand corner as we noted that the wall is dry lined i.e. another wall has been built in front of it.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally the damp proof course should be two courses above the ground level; so this will require a lowering of the ground level on the right hand side of the property. This may well cause a problem then because the road water may discharge off into this area. Some thought has to be given as to how this work should be carried out, but on our visit we would suggest a French drain is added to take the water away and to discharge into the soak-away.

ANTICIPATED COST: It is very difficult to say, we think there is half a week to a weeks work for two men, so, in the region of £500 - £1,500.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Please see the Damp Proof Section of this Report.

5) Cracking

There are hairline cracks to the rear right hand bedroom and to both the internal walls in the front rooms. Whilst it can be argued that there are possibly further cracks that have been hidden by the re-plastering, we have got no way of knowing this. Ideally the cracks should be monitored, obviously the time is not available (they are usually monitored for a year).

We feel that the rear crack runs vertically for approximately a meter or so and is at the position where the old and new buildings meet, and this could be because they have not been bonded in correctly and this may be initial differential settlement between the two structures.

The cracks to the front of the property, we feel, are due to different loadings having been put on the structure in the form of a first floor.

ACTION REQUIRED: As already mentioned, normally you would monitor something like this for a year or so to see if the cracks are moving, however in this particular instance we do not have the time.

Based upon my general feel for the property and the lack of construction knowledge for the most basic of things, we cannot rule out the fact that this may be a major issue. It would not be irresolvable, as nearly all building issues are resolvable, it is just the cost that is associated with it.

We have not been asked to comment on the overall cost of the property, but you would expect a discount in the region of 10% - 20% to make this a reasonable risk worth taking on. With that sort of figure you should literally be able to rebuild any problems that occur. If you do decide to buy the property you will literally be living in it during this period. A worse case scenario would be tying in of the walls.

ANTICIPATED COST: We would expect a cost in the region of £5,000 - £10,000 depending upon the severity of the repairs that are needed.

6) Electric and Gas Check

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Neither looks to be finished. There are exposed wires visible in the property, wires that should be in conduit and fittings hanging off the wall.

ACTION REQUIRED: Given the overall standard throughout we really feel that the only safe way to proceed is to have both an electrical check with an NICEIC registered electrician and a CORGI registered plumber.

ANTICIPATED COST: £500 approximately.

Associated repair work: We suggest you budget for a few thousand pounds.

There are many other items that we would classify as DIY or handyman type work. Many of these items would normally be mentioned in our Executive Summary, but given the severity of the property issues here, some of them are fairly insignificant in comparison. There follows a list of some examples, this is not an exhaustive list by any means:

- a) When the en suite bathroom wash hand basin tap was turned on the water just simply discharged through the floor to the utilities room below – plumbing work is required!
- b) The plastic windows and doors have not been made good on the render surrounds and the rear door for example has a gap underneath it – we would also comment that we were fortunate enough to know a builder that was working next to this property approximately two years ago, who advises that the way the windows were put in he suspects means that they have not been anchored in properly. They really should be checked before they are rendered into place; this is a very difficult job. The builder also advised that they have looked exactly the same, i.e. unfinished, for two years or so, he was asked to get involved with the job but refused.
- c) We could mention things like there are no drip details in the render over the windows, which would be a better detail for this type of building.
- d) We could comment upon the fascia and soffit boards not being finished correctly, or indeed on the dormer roofs not being finished at all.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

- e) We can equally comment upon the light that is literally hanging in front of you as you walk into the hallway that needs fixing into position or indeed the wiring that is visible in many areas and also the socket points that are off the walls in various areas.

Having said all of that we feel from our discussions with you that you understand the severity of the issues that you are taking on board and feel that at the right price these issues will be worth taking on.

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.

In this instance it is imperative that you establish the correct market price for this property and get it suitably reduced.

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.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out with our thoughts a few days after the initial survey. We would add the following:-

Provided you understand the risks involved, we feel the property is still worth purchasing, and provided you are also prepared to accept a worse case scenario, for example if Building Control insist upon additional timbers and alterations to the roof.

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. If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

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

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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

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 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 Residential 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 house purchase - just phone us.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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



www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

EXTERNAL

ROOF LIGHTS AND FLUES

Roof Lights

There are three fairly modern roof lights to the front of the property and a small roof light giving light to the rear roof space. As viewed from ground level they all looked in reasonable condition, as they should as they are only a few years old.

Finally, it seems inevitable with roof lights that they will sooner or later leak, even with the more modern ones such as these. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

Flues

There are two flues to the roof. We noted that the rear flue was not connected to anything and that rain was getting in through this.

ACTION REQUIRED: Connect vent up to bathroom extraction system – we assume that is what is was for.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the roof lights and the flues 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.

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

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERFELTS

The roof coverings and underfelts 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 underfelts primary function is to prevent wind damage but it also offers a protective layer directly below the roof covering which helps to minimise water penetration. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:

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

Main Pitched Roof

This is a double pitched roof clad in a small concrete tile. To the front we noted that this was predominantly the original concrete tile with new tiles to the left hand side. To the rear we noted it was new tiling.

We noted that a few tiles had slipped, which is unusual in a roof of this age, which indicates that there may be more problems with this roof than meets the eye. Typically this sort of roof is meant to be nailed every other course, whoever put the roof covering on may have forgotten to do this.

Sarking Felt

Within the main roof we found a Hessian base sarking felt which looked in reasonable condition.

Sarking Felt/Underfelt Defined

This is the felt that sits between the roof covering and the timber battens and forms an additional protective layer to stop the wind lifting the roof and to stop the elements from penetrating the structure. This was first used in the late 1940's/early 1950's and is a requirement for current Building Regulations.

No Clips to the Perimeter

We would normally expect there to be some clips to the perimeter of the tiles to stop them being lifted by the wind, although this is more good practice than standard practice. We also noted that the cement to the perimeter underneath

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

the tiles, which beds them in place, was fairly yellow in colour and therefore indicates that it does not have much/enough cement in it and cracking is already starting to occur. We believe these tiles will come loose in the not too distant future.

ACTION REQUIRED: We suggest you have a roofer make a general examination of the roof close up from crawler boards and replace any missing tiles and cracked tiles and check how frequently it has been nailed. Also ideally they should clip on the edge tiles.



A fairly high number of tiles were missing considering the age of the roof.



The valley gutters looked to have been formed reasonably well. Note the leaves at the bottom, they need clearing. This is a minor item in the scheme of things.



Evidence of repairs to the roof were noted, which is very unusual in such a new roof. Note also the ridge tile does not look to be bedded on that well.

Dormer Roofs

There are five dormers in total. Two dormers to the front above the bay windows, which look to be original, and three dormers to the rear within the roof which look to be new. These form part of the two rear bedrooms and the central rear bathroom.

We noted to the front dormer that where the roof meets the main roof, which is a weak area and prone to leaking, a metal valley had been formed (we could not be certain whether this was lead, which would be the best material to use). The valley gutter, we are pleased to say, looked relatively clean and clear and in good order.

Rear Dormers

We noted that the rear dormers have already had some repairs to them, which is surprising for a roof that is so new. We also noted that the ridge tiles did not look to be bedded on that well. This should be picked up with your roofer when he makes his general crawl over the roof.

Cross Ventilation

We are slightly surprised that there is no cross ventilation to the roof as this has been a requirement of Building Regulations for a number of years. This leads us to believe that the work was probably carried out by what is known as a 'jobbing' builder who is not familiar with modern practices, although this does not necessarily mean what he has done is a poor job.

Cross ventilation is to stop condensation occurring within the roof, which can affect the timbers and also cause dampness. Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

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

ROOF STRUCTURE AND ROOF VOIDS **(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.

We will consider the roofs structure in one area, the main roof, which is the only accessible roof.

The Main Roof

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch on the landing. It did not have a ladder, but did have the benefit of a roof light, which gave good light to the area, and also secured floor boarding. We recommend that a loft ladder be added, as it will make the roof space safer and easier to use.

The boarding both to the slope of the roof and also to the ceiling restricted what we could see and we also had to use torchlight to view the extremities of the roof. We have however made our best assumptions based upon these findings.

Possible problems were highlighted to us by what we could see of the roof structure both in the roof space and also where we could access it from the ensuite bedroom and also from the corridor to the front of the property.

This lead us in turn to visit the Local Authority Building Control Department who confirmed our suspicions by advising that they had already advised the owner that the roof timbers are ‘undersized and over spanned’.

ACTION REQUIRED: Following our discussions the Building Control Department advised that they will be writing to the present occupants and asking to re-visit the property. The Building Control could ask for extensive works, for example the adding of additional timbers to make the property comply with Building Regulations. This will be a very costly exercise. We suggest that you telephone Building Control when you receive this report at Luton to see if there has been a response and also ask the Estate Agent if they know anything about this issue.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE



A general view of the front roof area.



Some fairly heavy notching into the timbers has been carried out.

Water Tanks and Header Tank

There is an empty unplumbed in black water tank within the roof space. We can only surmise that everything therefore is directly fed, which is most unusual, or there may be a tank hidden from view within the front portion of the roof, which is more likely; although with this property we really would not be surprised about anything.

Finally, it should be noted that a general inspection of the roof timbers has been made but we have not examined all surfaces of every length of timber because of the style of construction and restricted access.

RAINWATER GOODS

Rainwater goods is the term given to the rainwater gutters and the rainwater downpipes. Their function is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.

Defective rainwater goods 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.

The rainwater goods are profile plastic and the standard of workmanship leaves something to be desired. Although it was not raining at the time of the inspection, to test the rainwater goods properly, we are sure that they will leak. We list below a selection of what we found.

1. Front right hand corner: The down pipe misses the drainage point completely. This can fairly easily be amended but it will mean that the pipe is no longer vertical.
2. Rear right hand side: The 'S' bend from the gutter to the downpipe is horizontal, i.e. the water cannot flow down it. Again a fairly easy modification.
3. We also noted in other areas that the guttering seemed to fall away from the downpipes, rather than towards it.
4. The gutter does not appear to have been clipped into the joints properly and just seemed to be lying there in some instances.

ACTION REQUIRED: A tradesman to spend a day or so sorting out the rainwater goods.



The downpipe misses the drain, but not too difficult to amend, it is just surprising it has been left like this.



This is, we think, fairly typical of what you will find if you look closely at the rainwater pipe on the left hand side it has not been correctly clipped into the joint and therefore will leak.

Finally, gutters and downpipes have

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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. We certainly do not know whether it discharges into a soak away, the main drains or does not go anywhere. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

WALLS

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

The walls are finished predominately with a painted (white) pebbledash render, and brickwork for the first dozen or so brick courses – it is fairly evident where the property has been extended over the years as neither the render or the brickwork match very well.

Render

Render is often used externally on solid walls to prevent moisture penetrating through. It is also popular as a decorative finish.

As a surveyor we are always concerned about render-finished properties, particularly when they have been painted recently, as this one, has the render can hide all sort of latent defects. In this case what starts out on the original property as pebbledash becomes almost stone dash to the rear. The larger size stones that have been used unfortunately are allowing water into the structure. Our electronic damp meter found dampness to the rear left hand corner and back of the property, all of which is part of the new extension.

ACTION REQUIRED: You need to scabble back and take off all the render back to a firm sound base, which will probably be brickwork or block work; in fact more likely to be a block work on the new part of the structure.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: This really depends upon how difficult it is to get the render off, but we would expect work to be in the thousands of pounds, possibly ranging up to £2,500 - £7,500, as unfortunately it is far more difficult to put a problem like this right than it is to do the job correctly to start with.

Detailing - drip details

We would also comment that there are no drip details above the windows. This we use as a general indication as to the quality of the rendering. Whilst it may not have been strictly necessary originally with the old windows when they were set further back, but the plastic windows have been set fairly far

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

forward and unfortunately the render around the window has not been made good, which may be causing additional dampness to get into the structure.



If you look closely at this you can see how uneven the surface is to the render, which is partly why it is allowing water in.

Tile Detail

It also occurred to me whilst looking at the render that the tile detail that divides the render and the wall should be at a slight angle, although this is an original incorrect design feature, it may well be worth you knocking off the edge of the tiles when you do the render work, as this can only help the water discharge better. Ideally you should form a bell-mouth at this point.

Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.



Your property: This is the lip between the render and the

Example: This is an example of another rendered property with correct bell-mouth detailing to the base.

DON'T PANIC!

This is not your property, just an example of what can happen with rendered properties.



To the right hand side of the bush you can see the render deteriorating. This can start to occur where **Time** cracks are found within the

Brickwork

The brick to the base of the property is in a variety of red stock bricks, some of which looked semi-engineering, all bedded in a cement mortar in a cavity wall bond.

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

The reason we have termed this "cavity wall pattern" is because we are only able to see the outside view and we have no way of knowing without opening up the structure that this is a properly built cavity wall. Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

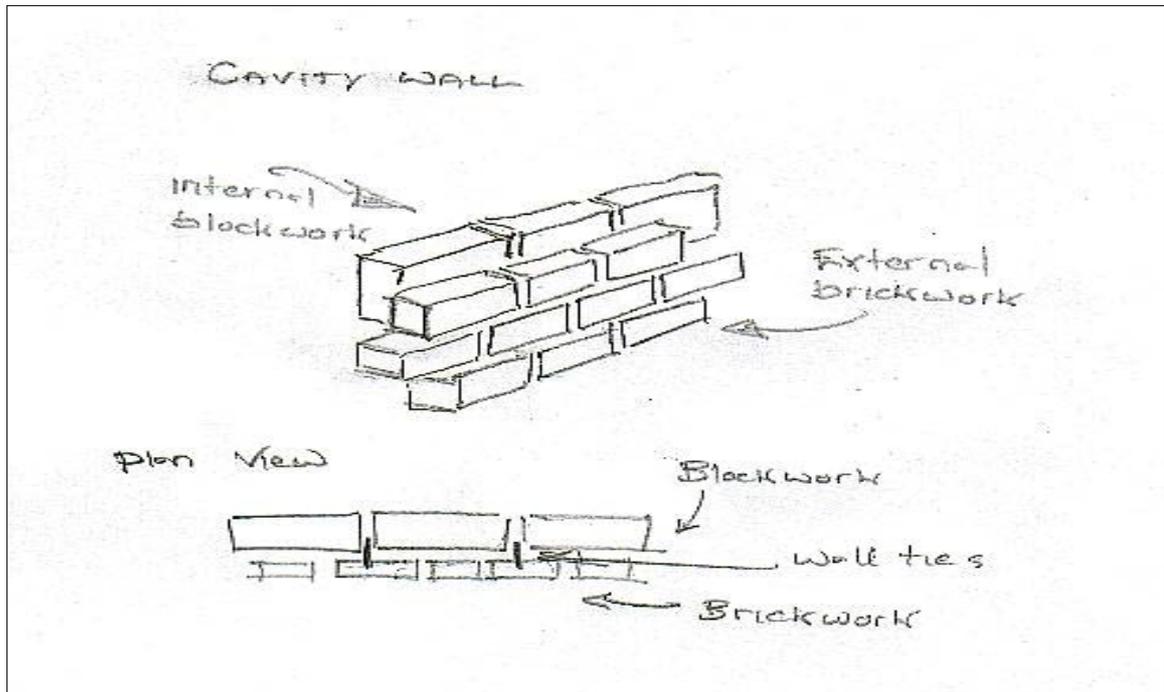
Walls of cavity construction should incorporate ties to hold together the inner and outer leaves of masonry. As there is no access to the cavity it has not been inspected and we cannot comment on the presence or condition of wall ties.

Prior to the 1980's when we didn't suitably coat our wall ties against rusting, damage has occurred to these properties.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE



At present there are no outward and visible signs of wall tie failure. As this is a progressive condition you should be aware that there is a risk that repairs/renewal might be required in the future.

Mortar

The mortar and pointing is in reasonable condition although a bit amateurish.

Cement Mortar Defined

A sand cement mix used commonly in brick houses from about the First World War onwards and is relatively strong and brittle and therefore does not allow much movement.

Hairline Cracking

We noted hairline cracking in the adjoining property to the front left hand corner, this may at some point effect the subject property and may relate to a leaking drain.

Within this property there are various hairline cracks. We have dealt with these within the Ceilings, Walls and Partitions Section later on within this Report.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Finally, where the window and door lintels are concealed by render or plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In older buildings concrete lintels or metal lintels are common which can be susceptible to deterioration which is unseen particularly if in contact with dampness. We would comment on the left hand window; this appears to have a bow in it above the window, possibly indicating there is no lintel at all in it.

The external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and randomly via a ladder within the boundaries of the property.

FOUNDATIONS

The foundations function, if suitably designed and constructed, is to transfer the dead or superimposed load through the soil so it can suitably carry the loads. Many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we now think of them, with a minimum depth of around 1 meter filled with concrete.

Typically, with a property of this period, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation, approximately two foot six inches wide and deep. The base course of bricks would be 18 inches and then stepped to 14 inches and the cavity built up from this point, all laid upon a bed of cement.

The ‘new’ extension to the chalet bungalow. It is likely that the foundations will be at least a meter deep, possibly deeper as there is clay in the area and also trees nearby. Usually Building Control departments require the foundations to be deeper if there are trees in the vicinity – that is assuming that they carried out the work as required by Building Control and did not ignore them as they did on the roof structure.

We have inspected the base of the property for movement and have noted nothing unusual on this property.

Finally, the foundations cannot be inspected without considerable excavation and possible damage to the property. We cannot, therefore, comment on their construction or condition. You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave, etc.

TREES

Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs. There are a number of these in the vicinity of the building.

Within the manhole on the right hand side we found signs of tree root penetration. We assume this is from the nearby conifer trees and we assume that these were planted a few years ago given their height. The roots found were hairline fine roots rather than main artery roots. Nevertheless they need to be monitored. We noted no actual signs of structural damage attributable to the trees but future problems cannot be ruled out, particularly if they penetrate the drain.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check the drains periodically and cut the roots back.

Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property when fully grown.

Trees and shrubs should not be allowed to overgrow the property though total removal of trees or pruning should not be undertaken without specialist advice as this could also result in damage.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required a minimum foundation depth of 225mm and an oversight of 150mm. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout the Country.

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels.

In this case, a damp proof course was visible in some areas and generally we noted a thickening of the cement to the base of the property, which usually also indicates that a damp proof course is present. We found that the damp proof course was approximately two courses to most of the property, although to the right hand side it petered away to only one course and almost to ground level at one point.

ACTION REQUIRED: The earth needs to be dug back on this side to expose two to three courses of brickwork. As this is not your land you will need to obtain permission to carry out this work. There are various legal ways of gaining access to someone's land to carry out maintenance work, but we would always recommend a friendly approach to start off with.



Low damp proof course level.
Notice too the paintwork from
the render that is splattered all
over the brickwork!

Lower damp proof course level.

Finally, it is often not possible to inspect or even identify if there is a damp proof course in a wall, although sometimes the edge of the damp proofing can be seen. Very often the exact position is covered with mortar or render and is not visible. We have made our best assumptions based upon our findings during the course of this inspection.

AIRBRICKS

Airbricks are added into older properties to vent floors or cellars. Airbricks can be seen from the outside of the property, they are brick size with holes or vents within them and they are at low level normally one or two courses from the ground. These provide sub-floor ventilation to discourage rot. They need to be positioned to allow a through-put of air under the property. Sub-floor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the airbricks be obstructed.

The floors to the original part of this property are suspended timber. This means there should be a through-flow of air beneath, which we believe there probably originally was. Unfortunately the rear extension with the concrete floor has been put in the way of this through put of air.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ideally additional airbricks should be added to allow a through-put of air flow. For example there is only one presently on the right hand side of the property, which should be increased to allow a through-put of air.

EXTERNAL JOINERY

The external joinery part of this section covers windows, doors, fascias and soffits and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

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. Another element of external joinery is the fascias and soffits. These offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of guttering.

Fascias and Soffits

Most of the fascias and soffits have been replaced in plastic with the exception of the rear dormer roofs where they appear to have been forgotten completely. However, work has been carried out to the dormer roofs and is what is known as over cladding has been carried out. We suggest that this is all stripped off and the fascias are replaced with a full plastic fascia (it is very bad practice to clad over timber as this can cause rot).

To the main property the rear fascia and soffit just seems to be hanging in place. The normal practice would have been to cut the rafter feet square.

We could comment on all sorts of things, such as the end caps being missing from the fascias and soffits, the garage fascias and soffits literally hanging in place etc.

ACTION REQUIRED: It is probably easiest in the long run to start again with the fascias and soffits, remove what is there and put it back and re-secure it in place.

With regard to the dormer roofs we suggest that you start again.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: £2,000 - £3,000 assuming that the plastic that is there can be re-used.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE



Windows

The fascia was finished in the rear of the property you have a fascia and soffit detail, where the rafter feature has not been cut back properly. Also notice that the render has not been made good up to the underside of the soffit.

Plastic Windows

The original windows have been replaced with plastic double glazed units, we are absolutely sure that these windows come without a guarantee. We noted that there was no trickle vent, which has been a Building Regulation requirement for many years and is also a sign of whether windows are good quality or not. These are therefore at the poorer quality end of the market. We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees.



We believe these windows have been left like this for over two years, which could account for the dampness that is getting in through the walls.

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

424

S NATIONWIDE

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Doors

To the rear the doors simply have not been finished off properly. Unfortunately this is now harder to do than it would have been to have done it properly to start off with. The rear kitchen door, for example, has a gap underneath it.

ACTION REQUIRED: Cut back the foam around the French doors and add a cover plate. To the rear door the gap needs to be filled in and again it needs to be made good around the door.



Whilst we know we are pointing out the obvious, the finish around the doors is very poor and now will be harder to put right than it would have been originally to have been done correctly.

Gap under the rear door.

Finally, a general and random selection and inspection of the fascias and soffits, windows and doors and any exposed timbers, for example within the roof space has been made visually to give an over-view of the general condition. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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.

Once the render is sorted out and the property is re-decorated you should appreciate that it will need re-decorating every few years to keep the property looking in good condition and also to stop the dampness from getting into it.

We would say that most people underestimate either the time involved in carrying this out and/or the money involved if you get someone else to carry out the work.

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

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

INTERNAL

CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

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

Given the age of the property we believe that most of the plasterwork is plasterboard.

We noted in some areas that the screw fixings that have been used for the plasterboard have not been carried out properly and a phenomenon known as ‘popping’ is occurring.

Popping Defined

This is where the screw head is too close to the surface and the plaster that is skimmed over it literally pops off.



The phenomenon known as ‘popping’ that is occurring, where the plasterboard has not been nailed on correctly.

Internal Walls and Partitions

Generally, internal walls have three coat plaster and the internal partitions are plastered or plasterboarded. From a tap test (literally tapping the walls) we believe the walls to be predominantly solid, which is not surprising as several of the walls were originally the outside walls. There is however the odd studwork wall.

What we did note was a considerable amount of blown areas of plaster, which will need re-plastering.

ACTION REQUIRED: The entirety of the plasterwork to the property internally needs checking. Any loose or hollow areas should be hacked back to a sound base and a new skim coat applied. Again unfortunately a very difficult job, far more difficult than doing it correctly to start off with.

As you will note going around the property there are areas of unfinished or poorly finished plaster boarding, for example in the door entrance lobby.

Studwork Defined

Usually a timber frame, clad in either lath and plaster or plasterboard and used to divide areas. Studwork can be structural, i.e. load bearing, or alternatively non-structural depending upon its construction. Within more modern properties, a proprietary metal system or a honeycomb cardboard may also be found. Modern Building Regulation requirements also require minimal sound transfer and this is usually adhered to by the incorporation of insulation.



You cannot fail to notice the layer of plaster that has come off on the stairway. There are hollow areas throughout the property indicating that the finishing coat of plaster has not been put on correctly.

One of several cracks within the property.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Crack in Bedroom



This is not a very good photo of the crack. This, we believe, relates to how the property has been bonded (the new to the old). Without opening up the structure we cannot be 100% certain and we could argue that due to the general poor standard of workmanship it is likely not to be very good. However, it does take a lot for a property to fall over and we feel it is best to live in the property prior to taking any major decision on major works to be carried out.

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.

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken. The type of materials employed cannot be ascertained fully without damage being caused.

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.

No exposure was carried out due to the restrictions of fitted carpets, floor coverings etc. The comments are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction.

Ground Floor

We believe that the floor is predominantly a suspended timber floor with the rear 'new' extension being solid, assumed concrete. This causes a problem as there needs to be an airflow underneath the suspended timber floor. Please see our comments within the Airbricks Section of this 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.

First Floor

We assume that the first floor construction was joist and floorboard. We noted that the stairs deflected slightly more than we would expect.

On reflection this is possibly due to the stairs not being the original staircase and they may have been built to a lesser standard than that normally expected by Building Regulations.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

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

General Note – Laminated Flooring

A laminated flooring has been laid throughout. You can feel as you walk on this that it gives slightly. This indicates that it has not been fixed correctly. You can either live with this or start again.

No floorboards were lifted. The floor was not accessed.

DAMPNESS

In this section we look at any problems that are being caused either by rising damp or lateral damp.

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon three components, the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation from the wall surface. The water rising from the ground will tend to rise in the raw materials and will continue to do so due to capillary action to varying degrees of intensity and height. deterioration that we discuss below.

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. No evidence was found of any significant rising dampness but the area we did expect to find it in was dry lined as mentioned earlier.

Effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling etc.

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 material, inadequate rainwater goods or corroded downpipes.

It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause, as there are also other sources of dampness such as condensation, which may inadvertently by the inexperienced eye be considered to be lateral dampness or rising damp.

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces and dampness was found predominantly in the new extension. This dampness was found to the entirety of the wall, therefore indicating that it is a failure in the render.

We also noted to parts of the old property, particularly on the left hand side, that the plasterwork had blown completely.

Condensation

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

INTERNAL JOINERY

This section looks at the windows, the doors, the stairway and the skirting boards.

Windows and Doors

These are fairly good quality doors, many are original and we assume that it was the intention to remove the doors and replace them, which is why the timber flooring has been cut in the way it has.



Making good required around the roof lights.



The thresholds were missing on nearly all the doors.

Kitchen

The property comes with a very large kitchen/breakfast area. The kitchen units are to a reasonable standard although it could be argued that they are not to the standard that you would expect for this size and location of property.

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have taken 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

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

This section considers dry rot, wet rot and woodworm.

What is Wet Rot or Dry Rot?

Wet and Dry rot are species of fungi that initially need moisture to allow their airborne spores to germinate. Dry Rot can grow rapidly when conditions are good and if water continues to enter a building unchecked, wetting internal wood, Wet Rot can also spread throughout the timber in a property over a short period of time.

Dry Rot and Wet Rot

No significant evidence was found of wet rot that we believe will cause structural problems; however due to the lack of air ventilation underneath the property there is a chance that there is some underneath the floorboards. Without opening up we cannot be certain of this.

Woodworm

We did not spot any indication of woodworm. However, we would comment that in a property of this age there is a slight possibility that woodworm is present. Whilst we did not see anything if you wish to be 100 per cent certain we suggest that we return once the property has had all the furniture and stored items removed, which we are happy to do for an agreed fee.

INTERNAL DECORATIONS

Once the re-plastering has been carried out you will need to re-decorate throughout, although of course this can be a gradual process.

As we have already stated, lots of the plaster has already lost its key and we are sure you cannot have missed that the plaster on the staircase has actually come away.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

THERMAL EFFICIENCY

It is very difficult to comment upon thermal efficiencies in a building of this age and type. For example, many requirements of present Building Regulations, which cover thermal efficiency, would not be appropriate to this type of structure as they are designed for modern buildings, which are constructed to different standards.

We would, however, comment as follows:

Roofs

Roof insulation was present (looked to be approximately 150mm) although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 200mm.

Walls

In the original part of the structure it is difficult/impossible to say whether there is insulation in there. In the new part of the property, assuming that they built to building regulations and standards, and at present it does not appear that they have, there should be insulation within the walls. The only way now to be truly certain is to actually open up the walling.

Windows

These are double-glazed and therefore have good thermal properties.

Services

Interestingly and strangely you have two boilers. This I have only come across before in very large properties and public houses! We used the one within the kitchen to turn the heating on and we are not certain of the purpose of the other boiler. Either way they looked as new and we would suggest you ask for service records, as for them to run efficiently it is essential for them to be regularly maintained.

Summary

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

We believe this property is average for what we typically see in this sort of age and style.

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

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.

OTHER MATTERS

Security

A security system was not noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. As a matter of policy we do not comment upon layout and design. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services) Telephone No 01628-637512, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

Smoke Alarms

No smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply.

We would recommend, for your own safety, that battery operated smoke detectors are installed in each room and, should the opportunity present itself during say redecoration, they are wired in to the electricity supply. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local fire authority is usually happy to give advice.

Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company 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

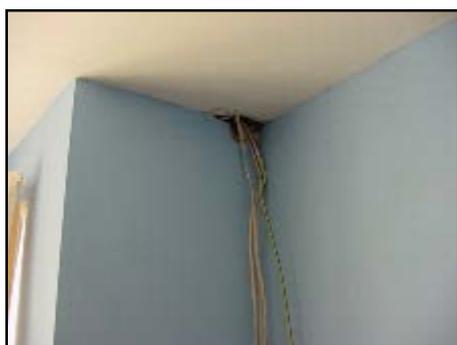
This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating or drainage, as they were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey.

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. The vendor should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

ELECTRICITY

The consumer units and fuse boards were not found during the course of our inspection. Due to the general standard throughout we recommend electrical tests.

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.



These electrics are obviously not finished.

GAS

Due to the standard throughout we feel that it is only sensible to recommend a CORGI registered plumber carries out a test and inspection upon the entire plumbing installation.

PLUMBING AND HEATING

Water Supply

We did not locate the controlling stopcock because we literally ran out of time. 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.

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.

Cold Water Cistern

We did not find one and can only assume that everything is on direct feed.

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.

Heating

We had the heating switched on for approximately five minutes. We checked a random selection of radiators and these seemed to be starting to warm up reasonably well. Obviously this is not a proper check of the heating.

We have no idea why there are two boilers.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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.



The water discharging down the wall, after we turned the taps on in the en suite bathroom – leak on wash hand basin.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

SANITARY FITTINGS

In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bath, the wash hand basin and the WC. We also include comments relating to the kitchen sink and utility room/shower room as applicable.

The sanitary fittings are as new throughout. Both the family bathroom and the en suite bathroom consisted of three piece bathroom suites and the en suite bathroom had a corner bath.

The tiling in both of the rooms looked as new, although it was not finished – which is a fairly typical comment for the property as a whole. When the tiling is completed it is important to ensure that the tiling and seals are properly made and maintained at the junction between wall surfaces and baths, showers, etc. as damp penetration can lead to the development of fungal decay in concealed areas. This may not become apparent until a major attack has developed necessitating extensive and costly repairs.

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.

The cold taps have been run for approximately half an hour in the bathroom and kitchen and no build up or back up occurred during this time.

As mentioned in the Executive Summary, when we ran the taps in the two bathrooms and the kitchen the en suite wash hand basin waste was leaking and discharged into the room below. We had a look at sorting this out and due to its location it was fiddly and probably needs the wash hand basin taking out and re-plumbing.

We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting a manhole and undoing one rodding eye and running water from the sanitary fittings within the house.

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.

Manholes

We found one manhole located on the right hand side of the property, this was duly lifted and found to be a traditionally built (brick) manhole and was free flowing at the time of our inspection. We did however notice tree roots in it.

Please see the Tree Section of this Report.



Free flowing manhole, but there are fine roots, which will need to be monitored.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Rodding Eye

This is on the right hand side of the property; it was duly lifted and was formed in plastic and found to be free flowing at the time of our inspection.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor should discover if the manhole or the rodding eye have been passed by Building Control.

Please note they appear to be on the adjoining neighbours land.

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

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of surface water disposal discharging via the rainwater goods from the property's roof areas.

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 note our earlier comments that the downpipe to the right hand side is not actually discharging into the drainage point.

Please also see our comments within the Rainwater Goods section.

EXTERNAL

GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS

There is a good sized garage to the property. It is detached and located to the rear. Under Planning and Building Regulations you can build up to 30 meters square without requiring permission. We think, bearing in mind the other issues on the property, that your Legal Advisor should check and confirm that this garage is acceptable.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to confirm the legality of the garage, by specifically requesting advice from the Local Authority.



The timber used on the garage has not been treated at all. We could also mention that the fascia board does not appear to have been fixed correctly and the guttering leaves something to be desired.



Some of the tiles are missing and the fascia board is not fixed properly.



The metal to the front of the garage is rusting.



Here you can see the fascia board has not been fitted correctly, and you can also see dampness in some of the rafters and that the rainwater goods do not have a cap on the end.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

EXTERNAL AREAS

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.

Front Garden

There is a good size wall, railing and iron gate for security. It is predominantly brick paved and suitable for off road parking, which is important on Barton Road.

During our question and answer session with both the sister and the owner's parents they advised that the husband was in a fair amount of debt and there have been various solicitors trying to repossess whatever from the property. We feel that we should advise you of this.

The mother of the owner had quite an account of her experience of coming face to face with a burglar.

Rear Garden

Mainly laid to lawn and fairly level. There is a pond, although this looked to be leaking and there is wooden fencing around most of the garden. We did note somewhat unusually that the fence was not complete at the end of the garden. Obviously this should be completed. We are advised that a recent burglar got in through this gap in the fence.

Neighbours

We have spoken to the neighbours at 111a; this is one of two new houses that use the access road to the right of your proposed purchase. They advised us that they were built about two years ago and were once part of the garden of the proposed purchase.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

We were also fortunate enough to speak to some local builders who have worked next to this property about two years ago. We asked them to visit the property and they advised that it was pretty much in the same condition as it had been two years ago. They also commented that the windows had not been put in very professionally and that they were asked to get involved but had refused.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property your Legal Advisor should check the following points:-

- 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) Cavity wall insulation (and cavity wall tie repairs).
 - iv) Double glazing (replacement windows).
 - v) Roof and similar renewals.
 - vi) Central heating installation.
 - vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - viii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.

- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or of the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) 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.

LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA

From our investigations the property has not been identified as being Listed or in a Conservation Area.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm the above and carry out any searches he/she feels are necessary.

PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Planning and Building Control

Building Regulations were sought for work on the kitchen, lounge and the first floor bedroom and bathroom. No mention of Building Control having viewed the property.

There was an application in July 2000 for a two storey side and rear extension plus a double garage.

This was confirmed by Anne Seabrook of the Planning Department at Luton Borough Council on 3 October 2003 at 11.00am.

We subsequently visited Building Control on 6 October 2003 at Luton Town Hall to try to establish the planning and building regulation situation. It would appear from our discussions that planning permission has been received but all Building Regulation approval has never actually been agreed. Please see our earlier comments within the Executive Summary.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm this and carry out any checks he/she feels necessary.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

“When you receive your full structural survey (now known as a Building Survey) or House Buyers Report, do remember that you have requested a list of the property’s faults so it is unlikely to make cheerful reading. Every property has its faults but what you are looking for are the serious ones. If your Report does reveal a serious problem that you had not anticipated when making your offer, the first thing to do is to decide whether you want to take on the repairs if an adjustment is made to the price. If you do, then get quotes for the work as quickly as possible and present your case in a fair manner. Most people are reasonable under such circumstances and will compromise but inevitably there are those who are sufficiently confident of their position to say take it or leave it. In a very active market, prices may have moved up sufficiently to cover the extra expenditure in theory and the vendor will not hasten to point this out but remember that he has probably got a vendor pressing him to proceed quickly and starting with a new purchaser will cause him delay”

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.

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

APPENDICES

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

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 30 September 2003 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.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

WEATHER

It was a slightly overcast 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 are probably aware the year 2000 was the wettest year on record and 2003 the driest year on records, this may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

The property was occupied at the time of our survey by a relative of the owner, who advised that she did not know anything about what had been going on in the property. Later on in the day the mother and father of the owner came over and were able to answer a few of our questions. As the property was occupied there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the roof space and obviously day to day household goods throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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

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

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE

www.hometrack.co.uk

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

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.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

ASSOCIATED OFFICES NATIONWIDE