

JOB REF: J1050/RBS/02

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
Marlborough Road



FOR
Mrs J Little

PREPARED BY

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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for your verbal/written instructions of 8 September 2003; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on 16 September 2003.

The Building Survey takes the following format; there is an introductory section (which you are currently reading), which includes a synopsis of the building, a summary of our findings, and a Summary Upon Reflection; a summary written after we have reviewed our findings. We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a house is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

We recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas which you wish to discuss for whatever reason and call our office to discuss the matters further on 0800 298 5424.

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.

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.

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is a two storey mid terraced property, which has been altered to incorporate an extension to the roof space and has also had an enlarged rear extension. It has a small garden to the front and a reasonable sized garden to the rear, but all in keeping with this properties age and style. The usual problems with parking in Oxford apply.

As we are sure you are aware, the Thames is located at the end of the road and Oxford City centre is a nice walk away. You may or may not be aware that there is a neighbourhood watch in the area, which seemed fairly vigilant as they asked me what I was doing!

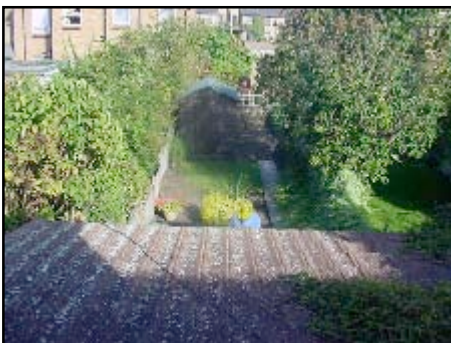
EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Garden View



Street View

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance corridor
- Reception room
- Kitchen
- Large Lounge

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- One double sized bedroom
- Study – could be used as a bedroom
- Second bedroom
- A small three piece bathroom

Top Floor (formed within the roof space)

- Double sized bedroom
- A three piece bathroom, including corner bath

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.



Front Lounge



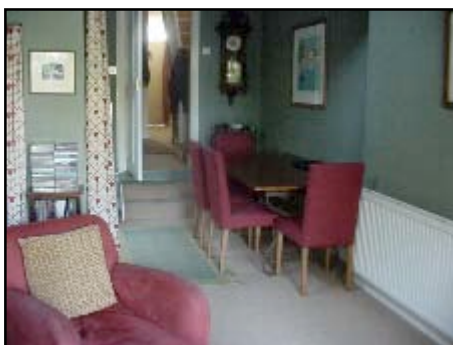
Master Bedroom



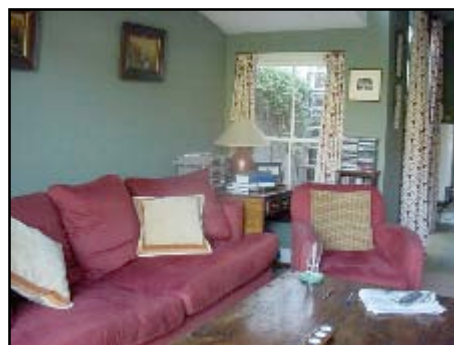
The fairly small Bathroom



Kitchen



Rear Lounge



Rear Lounge

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

EXTERNAL

- Chimneys: Two brick chimneys
- Main Roof: A duo pitched roof, clad with slates and a rear extension clad with a concrete tile
- Rainwater Goods: Mixed cast iron, plastic and possibly some asbestos
- Walls: Flemish bond construction (assumed)
- External Joinery: A mixture of original sliding sash windows and replacement sliding sash windows, all painted timber.

INTERNAL

- Ceilings: Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
- Walls: A mixture of solid and stud walls (assumed)
- Floors: Ground Floor: A mixture of a suspended timber floor to the front of the property (assumed) and a solid timber floor to the rear (assumed)
- First Floor and Top Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

OUTSIDE

A typical size front garden and a reasonable size rear garden. Parking is on a permit basis on a first come first served policy. The usual problems with parking will apply in this area.

The above is explained in full in the main body of the Report along with the technical terms used. We have used the term ‘assumed’ as we have not opened up the structure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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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:-

Generally we found the house in good order, without any significant structural issues or major maintenance issues. We would however draw your attention to the following:

1) Adjoining Roofs

There is a very poor detail between your roof and the adjoining roof on the right hand side. The problem relates to next-door using a different roofing material, which has resulted in a changing level. The roofer has tried to make a watertight bond between the two and have used a product generically known as 'flashband', which is a sticky backed bitumen covered foil and is generally considered as a temporary roof measure. The difficulty is how to resolve this with a better detail.



The 'flashband' can be seen to the left hand side of the photo running down from the chimney.

ACTION REQUIRED: Replace in due course, it will appear to peel as it loses its stickiness.

Please see our comments within the Roof Section

2) Rising Dampness

Rising dampness was found in the dividing walls between the subject property and the left hand property. Whilst this was not physically visible it was detected by our electronic damp meter.

Please see the Dampness Section within this Report.

Anticipated Costs: If you decide to have the work carried out it may be about £1,000, depending upon the amount of plaster that is needed to be replaced; we would suggest a quotation is carried out by a damp proofing company (or several), all of which offer an insurance backed guarantee, before you legally commit to purchase this property.

3) Fire Door to Top Floor Room

The fire door to the top floor room has not been fitted very well and there is a fair amount of space beneath it.



The door closer on the fire door to the top bedroom.

Please see the Internal Joinery Section within this report.

Anticipated Costs: Probably the easiest way to solve this is to fit some type of bar that makes the door fit properly and if you do intend to rent this property out we would suggest that a new door is put in place, which could be fairly expensive as it would need to be purpose made.

4) Guttering to the Rear of the Property

A section of the guttering has come away to the rear of the property. We would recommend that this be replaced to stop any future water damage.

Please see the Rainwater Section of this Report.



Guttering completely out of alignment.

Anticipated Costs: A good jobbing builder with a set of long ladders should be able to resolve this for £100 or so.

5) Repair to Sliding Sash Window

The rear first floor bedroom's sliding sash window cord is broken and therefore needs replacement. This is a fairly skilled operation.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

Anticipated Costs: The problem is finding someone that can do this, as it will involve the opening up of the sash. We would expect in the region of £100.

6) Air Bricks

We found air ventilation to the front of the property but not to the rear. We therefore recommend that air bricks be added unless you can find them. We would suggest one vent is added in the step down into the lounge as being the easiest solution. We would not normally suggest this it is just that there is damp in the walls.

Please see the Air Bricks Section of this Report.

Anticipated Costs: To drill out an opening and fit a cover plate, approximately £50.

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as straightening up the rear fence and staining it and cutting the plant on the roof back. 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.

The above issues are explained in full within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

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

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Final thoughts

Please also see our comments in the Summary Upon Reflection Section, which is at the end of this section of the report. These comments were added after we had reviewed this report whilst still in draft format.

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:-

A fairly typical property for its age type and style with the exception of possibly the damp, but we are aware that many people manage to live quite happily in properties which have this amount of dampness, and we recall that you had more dampness than this in your previous property. If you are going to rent out the property then the suggested action on fire door should be carried out and you should just keep an eye on the 'flashband' between your roof and the adjoining roof and wait for it to start to come away.

Other than the above comments we can see no reason why you should not proceed with the purchase of this property.

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.

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 and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

Finally, 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 standard terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys.

DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT



Near by View

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS AND ROOF LIGHTS

Chimneys

There are two chimneys to this property. One to the main part sitting on a party wall and one to the rear roof.

Chimney One – Right Hand Side

Brick built with a lead flashing and looks in reasonable condition. It has been re-pointed at some point in recent years. The pots were fairly straight, indicating that it is in acceptable condition. As can be seen in our photograph there is very minor pointing necessary, but not for some years.



A brick chimney with a lead flashing. You can also see in this photo the awful 'flashband' detail between your roof and the adjoining roof.



Close up of the top of the chimney. The flashing on the top is just starting to go and will need re-pointing, but not for many years. You can usually see when it needs re-pointing as the chimney pots start to lean.

Chimney Two – Rear Chimney

This is brick built with a lead flashing. It has been re-pointed but would benefit from additional re-pointing within, say, the next ten years or so.

In all cases it was very difficult to see the flaunchings.



Rear chimney in reasonable order.

Flaunchings Defined – Also known as Haunchings

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

Flashings Defined

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

Roof Lights

There are three fairly modern roof lights to the property. One to the front, giving light to the bedroom and two to the rear, one of which also gives light to the bedroom and one of which gives light to the staircase.

We believe that the seals have gone in the double glazing in the rear bedroom window and possibly the front bedroom window. Condensation within the rear bedroom window could be seen.

There also looked to be water staining around the timber frame of the roof lights, particularly the landing one, whether this relates to condensation being caused on the inside of the window or an actual leak is difficult to say. We suspect it is due to condensation.

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!



A modern roof light with surrounding drainage gutters, you can also see on the roof that some slates have been replaced with man made modern slates also some slates are missing. To the ridge you can just see a vent.



Condensation occurring in the roof light.



Staining to the roof lights

Earlier we have used the term party wall in relation to one of the chimneys.

Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks and roof lights 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 function is to prevent wind and minimise water damage. 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 low level roofs.

Main Roof

The property looks to have its original slate roof covering. This is in reasonable condition for its age but it is however starting to de-laminate.

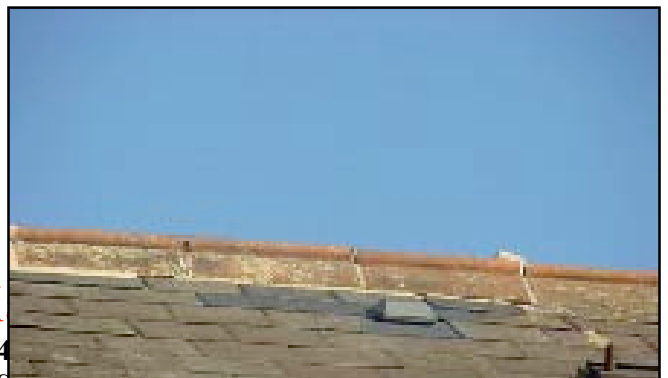


Here you can see the slate is starting to delaminate.

General Information on Slates

Slate has been commonly used as a roofing material in many areas, particularly where it was available as a natural resource. It was towards the end of the Georgian period, that slates tended to supersede the use of tiles in most parts of the country becoming very predominant during the Victorian age. This was partly due to improved transport systems which made slates readily available to those that wished to use them and partly due to fashion. Slates continued to be used up until the end of the 19th Century.

From the end of the 19th Century industrial production methods benefited the making of tiles making them more economical than slate. Slates saw a brief revival during the mass building periods at the end of the First World War and the Second World War, which with the development of the transport system meant that they were used throughout the country.



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General view of the roof. Predominantly the original slates, but with some new man made slates mixed in. Also you can see the mushroom vents, which is a modern requirement for this type of roof.

Close up reveals that the mortar to the ridge of the roof is starting to deteriorate to the right hand side and you can see to the left hand side that some re-pointing has been carried out.

Delamination Defined

This is where the natural layers of the slate start to come away, it is a natural warring process and you should not be overly concerned about it unless we specifically comment upon it needing work in the survey report.

Adjoining Roof to the Right Hand Side (directions given as you face the property)

The adjoining property on the right hand side has been re-roofed. It looks to have been re-roofed with an asbestos tile, which means there is a small change in levels between the two roofs. This small change in levels is best resolved by putting what is known as an invisible gutter between the two roofs.

Invisible gutter defined

This is a fairly modern technique and accepts the fact that there is a gap and change in level between the two roofs and that water may eventually get through. The roof incorporates a pre-formed plastic gutter beneath the slates, thereby catching any rainwater that gets through and discharging it down to the rainwater gutter at the base of the roof.

In this case a product generically known as ‘flashband’, which is a sticky backed bitumen covered foil, has been used. The adhesion on this usually does not last that long and it is normally considered as a temporary repair material for roofs.

ACTION REQUIRED: Whilst the detailing that has been carried out is very poor there is no easy or cheap way of solving this problem. We suggest it is almost worth waiting until the ‘flashband’ deteriorates before taking any action, then you have a choice of replacing the ‘flashband’ with lead, which is a far better detail, or biting the bullet, so to speak, and having an invisible gutter put in place. This however will be fairly expensive and should, in theory, be a shared cost with your neighbour as they have effectively caused the problem. However, it is far easier said than done to come to such an agreement with your neighbour.



General view of the rear roof, again slates can be seen to have been replaced. You can also see the ‘flashband’ between your roof and the adjoining roof. You can also see where part of the wall has been rebuilt on the rear gable on the right hand side of this picture above the window near the satellite dish. Finally, you can see where the guttering needs re-fixing in the centre of the picture.

Adjoining Roof to the Left Hand Side

Here there is a small step in the roof levels, which has allowed for a rendered covered plinth, which has a lead flashing to it and is a reasonable detail.

Junction of Main Roof and Rear Extension

To the rear of the main roof is a junction with the rear extension, it has not been possible for us to view this roof properly, however we have obtained a very limited view from the bedroom window via our digital camera. We literally were able to reach out of the window and take a photograph of the junction. From this photograph, which is included below, we were able to see that there is a lead flashing detail, which assuming it has been carried out correctly, is as good a detail as you are going to get.



This is the only view we have of the joint between the main roof and the rear roof, taken whilst precariously leaning out of the window! We were pleased to see that there is a lead flashing, which should minimise any problems.

Sarking Felt

Normally we would be able to access the main roof and inspect the sarking felt, in this instance as the top floor room has been built within the roof we were unable to inspect it in the usual way. We have however been able to inspect a small area to the rear, within a cupboard area and here we found a hessian based sarking felt, which is the usual felt used by roofing contractors today.

We would imagine that the entirety of the main roof was re-roofed when the extension into the roof space took place and the opportunity at that time was taken to add the sarking felt.

We also noted polystyrene insulation, which is good as this reduces heat gain/heat loss within the roof space.

Low Level Roofs

There are two low level roofs. One fairly large one to the rear of the property, which is a monopitched roof clad with what looks to be a concrete tile and to the front of the property there is a bay window roof clad in slate. Considering each roof in turn:

Rear Single Storey Roof

This is a very shallow pitched concrete tile monopitched (single pitched) roof. We believe it is probably below the recommended pitch for this type of roof, which is normally about 17°, however various provisions can be made, or may have been made, if you are using the roof below the recommended pitch, such as putting extra layers of felt beneath it and what is known as cross battening.

Without opening up the structure, we cannot confirm that this has been carried out, but in our opinion even a shallow pitched roof is far better than a flat roof!

Junction of Single Storey Extension with Main Building

We note the junction is formed within lead, which as you may have gathered from the rest of this report we feel is a good quality detail, providing it has been carried out correctly.

You will have noted the ivy that is on part of the roof. This is not ideal and should be cut back. We would normally recommend that a trelliswork be placed between the ivy and the building to stop any deterioration and damage.



Due to the rear roof being relatively flat, the bush should be cut back as it will allow water to sit on the roof.

Awkward Roof Detail

There is a slightly awkward roof detail where a second pitch has been added. If you look at the photos you will see that it is covered with the ivy and therefore it is difficult to see how it works properly, we assume it is just two pitches meeting each other, but there is normally a need for some sort of ridge joint.



The plant is taking over the roof and needs cutting back, as already mentioned.

Junction of Adjoining Roofs

There is a step, or a change in level, between the subject roof and the adjoining roof.

Front Bay Roof

This is in slate and looks in reasonable condition with nice lead rolled joints where the bay changes direction.

Junction of Bay Window Roof and Main Building

This is formed in lead, which again is a good detail providing it is carried out correctly, which it looks to have been.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level or from rear windows 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.

There is not a roof void, in the usual sense, as a room has been formed within it. There is a small cupboard to the rear, which allowed us to view the roof, although it was full of stored items and we had to use torchlight, which limited our viewing slightly.

We were pleased to see, as already mentioned, that a sarking felt has been added. We were also pleased to see that insulation has been added as this helps reduce the amount of heat gain and heat loss within the room in the roof, which is usually a problem in roof conversions. In addition to this we noted that there are vents to the roof (these are the mushroom shaped objects that can be seen on the roof). Unfortunately we were unable to see very little else. There is a purlin that is visible, but this is within the room and looks of a fairly average size for this type of roof.

We removed one of the sections of insulation. Behind this we found sarking felt and we could see two of the common joists, which again looked reasonable sizing and reasonable spacing for this type of roof.



Insulation has been removed to reveal the Hessian base sarking felt (the black bit) and the common rafters (the timbers) to either side.

Woodworm and Structural Defects.

Our inspection of the timber structure was very limited. From what we could see we could not see any active woodworm and/or structural defects and/or wet rot. However, our examination was impeded by insulation and stored items within the cupboard and the fact that we literally could not see most of

the roof structure as it was clad with plasterboard. It is feasible that there are problems within the roof that are hidden. The only way to be 100% certain is to have random areas of the roof exposed, which from what we have seen we do not feel is necessary, but if you wish to be certain then we recommend that the roof is opened up.

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 a mixture of cast iron, replacement plastic and possibly asbestos.

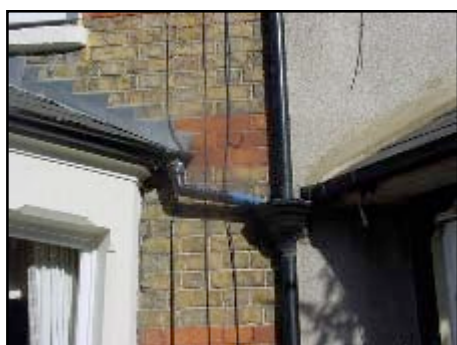
Mixture of Cast Iron, Replacement Plastic and possibly Asbestos

The property of the property has a mixture of the original cast iron rainwater goods and plastic rainwater goods. The cast iron is normally changed when it leaks, usually from the result of it rusting.

We noted to the rear a section of the guttering had come away, this section looked to be formed in asbestos, which was often used in the post war years up to about 1970. We pointed this out to the present owners.

ACTION REQUIRED: This is typical of what we would expect the present owners to resolve, prior to selling the property.

We would always recommend that the rainwater goods are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.



This photo shows the mix of rainwater goods. There is a cast iron gutter to the bay window, the downpipe from the bay window to the hopper head is painted plastic and the hopper head and the down pipe in this instance is cast iron. There is some rusting to the base of the hopperhead.



The guttering is completely out of alignment, we thought possibly asbestos guttering was present on the left hand side and the additional weight is pulling the guttering down. You can also see in this photo quite clearly the difference in the two roofing materials.

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. We were not able to make a close inspection of the roof level rainwater goods (our ladders are not long enough) and therefore cannot be 100% certain of the type of material used or the condition. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

WALLS

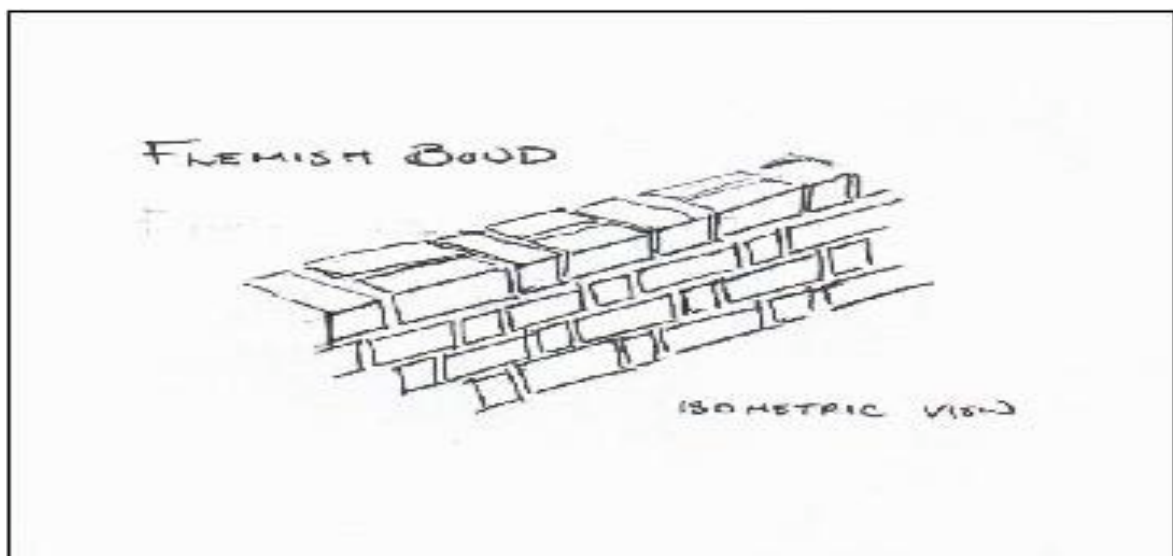
External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.

Brickwork

The property is built in a yellow/white stock brick with detailing in a red stock brick. It is bedded in the original lime mortar, which was at one time pinch pointed. There have been some more recent repair works carried out in cement mortar. The brickwork bond is known as Flemish bond.

The term Flemish Bond brickwork relates to the way the bricks are bonded together. We are only able to see the outside of the brickwork. In some instances, tradesmen would imitate this pattern with a single skin of brickwork, bonding a cheaper brick on the inside, thereby saving money/increasing profits and reducing structural integrity. This is rare, however the only way to be 100% certain is to open up the wall.

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case the pointing seemed in reasonable condition. It is essential that external faces are kept in good condition.



Lime Every Time

Unfortunately the re-pointing, whilst well meaning, is not appropriate for this type of construction. A cement mortar has been used rather than a lime based mortar. We recommend you use lime mortar in any future repairs regardless of what the builders say! Using lime mortar will limit further damage to the brickwork, which is almost impossible to repair successfully.

Alterations to Brickwork

On the property there have been a few alterations over the years, for example above the French doors to the rear of the property, the ones that lead into the very small courtyard area, probably once was a window and the brickwork has been amended above as the window looked to be a different size. The kitchen window has also been amended with a row of bricks to allow the fitting, we assume, of a standard size window. Also there has been a re-building of the rear extension gable, but we deal with this separately.



There is a hairline crack to the window. The brickwork is of Flemish bond construction. The decorative brickwork at eaves level is also shown. You may be interested to note new pointing to the soldier course of brickwork above the window, known as pinch pointing, which involves striking the centre of the mortar and pointing in white. At one time the entirety of the building would have had this look.



Close up of the pinch pointing.

Rebuilding of the Rear Wall

It is fairly common for movement to occur in the very rear portion of the roof. This is often due to failing lintels. Here you can see it has been re-built.



The wall has been re-built here.

Render

There is a small section of painted render to the bay at the front of the property. The render looks in reasonable condition given the properties age.

Lime Mortar Defined

A mix used to bed bricks upon; its characteristics being that it flexes and moves with the structure. It was used up to the War years.

Cement Mortar Defined

A sand cement mix used commonly in brick houses from about the First World War onwards (first invented about 150 years ago). It is relatively strong and brittle and therefore does not allow much movement.

Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

Lintels

Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork and plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age timber lintels, concrete lintels or metal lintels are common which can be susceptible to deterioration which is unseen particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

FOUNDATIONS

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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 not foundations, as we now think of them, with a minimum depth of around one metre filled with concrete.

Typically, with a Victorian property of this period, if we excavated around the foundations theoretically we would expect it to follow the Building Act of 1878. This Act required a minimum concrete foundation of 9 inches and an oversite layer of concrete 6 inches thick. In practice a stepped brick foundation may be present. It is simply not possible to tell without excavation.

We have inspected the walls for any signs of movement and found nothing untoward.

A common problem area with Victorian terraces is that the weight of the front wall is carried on a beam over the bay window and transferred down through the piers between the bay window and entrance door. This often resulted in settlement, not only in the region of the entrance door but above the bay window as well. We found nothing of this sort of problem.

Another common problem with Victorian properties is that the bay windows are sometimes not tied into the main property, which allows them to move away from the main building. We noted minor movement to the top of the bay window, but nothing untoward.

A further common problem with Victorian properties is the settlement of rear extensions. This is often caused by the rear extension being built at a later date and to a different standard to the main property. Again nothing untoward was found.

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, no examination has been made of any foundation to the building because to do so requires extensive excavation. We therefore cannot confirm 100 per cent the stability of the walls the foundations support but we have

drawn conclusions from the surface evidence available at the time of the inspection and our general knowledge of this type of construction.

Likewise, we cannot comment upon how the foundations are constructed, we can only offer you our best assumptions, which we duly have done.

TREES

There are no trees within influencing distance of the main house. Although as mentioned elsewhere in this report the bush/ivy needs cutting back and bringing under control.

Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout 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, we could not see a damp proof course, although we did note in a few areas a render plinth, which was a common way of trying to stop, or minimise, dampness. We noted to the kitchen wall signs that a damp proof course had been inserted (drilled holes into the wall), we found damp to the entrance corridor/hallway and therefore recommend a dampness report. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.



The pencil is within one of the old holes where the damp proof course should have been added. As you can see it does not extend pass the kitchen wall.

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.

AIR BRICKS

Air bricks are added into older properties to vent floors or cellars. Air bricks in this property can be seen to the front bay. They are brick size and double brick size, formed in a metal grill with holes, which has been painted over with white paint. They are approximately one or two courses from ground level. These provide sub-floor ventilation to discourage rot. They need to be positioned to allow a through-put of air under the property.

The floors to this property to the front are what is known as suspended timber floors. This means there should be a through flow of air beneath. Sub-floor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the air bricks be obstructed. In this instance whilst you have ventilation to the front of the property we could not see any to the rear. In theory there should be vents to the kitchen wall and where the step down into the lounge is.

ACTION REQUIRED: As the property is damp we would recommend that vents are added to the rear walls.



The air bricks are the white grills. Also note your gas meter outside the door.

