

SPECIFIC DEFECTS REPORT

Relating to dampness

Highbury,
London N5



FOR

Mr S

Prepared by:

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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0800 298 5424

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INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTION

We have been instructed by Mr S to prepare a report on the dampness within the study and top floor room.

We have carried out a visual inspection of the property.

The weather was a mild autumn day at the time of the inspection.

We are Independent Chartered Building Surveyors. We are registered with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and are members of the Independent Surveyors Association.

The work has been carried out as per our standard Terms and Conditions of Contract which have been emailed to you as part of the confirmation of our instructions. If you would like further clarification please do not hesitate to contact us.

SYNOPSIS

Mr S advised that he moved into the property in xxxx and that work was carried out to form the vertical roof extension in xxxx, with a ground floor glazed extension being carried out in xxxx.

Since then there have been problems with dampness in the second floor study to the left and right hand walls and top floor bedroom to the right hand walls (all directions given as you face the property) and we have been asked to comment on these.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summaries are always “dangerous” as they try and encapsulate relatively complex problems in a few precise and succinct words. Having said that here is our executive summary and recommendations:

Problem

We feel that the dampness is caused by a combination of issues which we have identified in relation to the three damp areas that we were shown:

1. The study rear left hand wall
2. The study rear right hand wall
3. The top floor bedroom

Further investigation will be needed to be more specific and we focus below what we believe to be the main issues.

1. Study rear left hand wall

We believe that dampness is coming from a combination of:

- 1.1 The chimney has been incorrectly repointed in a cement mortar. This tends to mean water gets trapped within it, particularly the softer red brick, and also some of the brickwork is starting to spall, therefore the bricks are more susceptible to drawing in dampness, particularly the red bricks.



Repointing to rear chimney

- 1.2 It may also relate to a leak in the roof above. A water test or thermal imaging will be required to check and confirm this.



Dampness to study rear left hand wall

- 1.3 It may relate to condensation if this flue is being used.

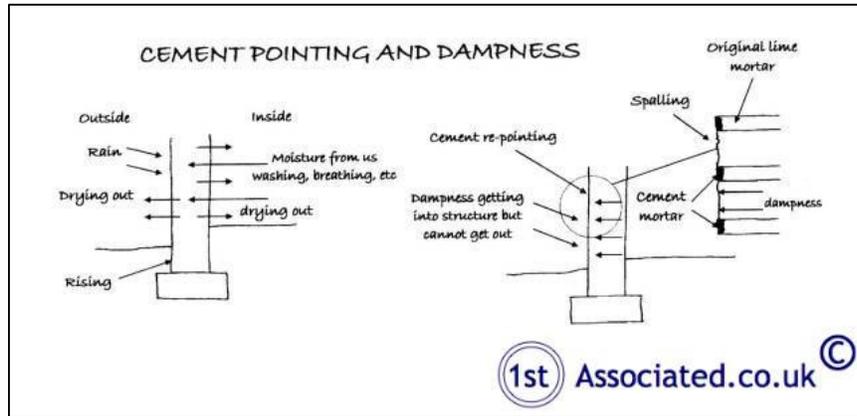
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- 1.4 It may relate to a defect on your neighbour's side.
- 1.5 The parapet wall coping stone around the flat roof drips, are not sufficient to throw the water away from the roof and we could not identify a damp proof course.



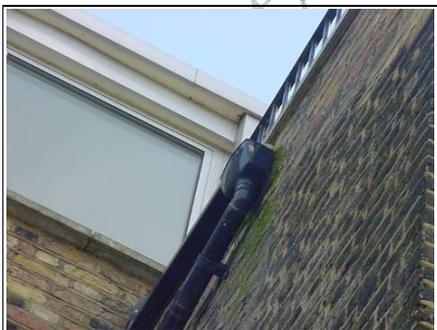
The above sketch shows how dampness dissipates in a solid wall and how the use of cement is effectively allowing this to happen.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend repointing of the chimney and the installation of a chimney pot that rain cannot go directly into.

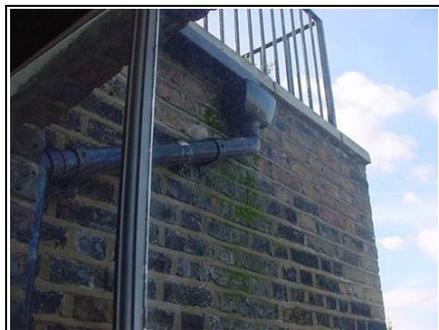
2. Study rear right hand wall

We believe the dampness to be a combination of:

- 2.1 Rainwater goods and particularly the hopper head not being able to cope with the rainfall and therefore discharging down the wall and coming in.



Hopper head too small and overflowing



Close up of hopper head. Mossing around hopper head indicating it is overflowing and leaking
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Dampness to study rear right hand side, believed to be partly caused by the hopper head

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2.2 The walls have been wrongly repointed in a cement mortar.

2.3 The roof may be leaking above.

2.4 Sorry to repeat ourselves but the parapet wall coping stone around the flat roof drips are not sufficient to throw the water away from the roof and we could not identify a damp proof course.



Leaking joints from coping stone

ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend a much larger hopper head; you may well have to have one purpose made. Ideally we would recommend larger downpipes but as you advised you would like to limit the cost to avoiding scaffolding this may not be possible, we feel a larger hopper head would improve matters.

We would advise that typically walls dry out at approximately one inch per month, so we are looking at a nine month period for this wall to dry out.

Within the study we would recommend that you add a false wall. As mentioned you could use tinted glass that we have seen before and more light to illuminate at high level, which is a nice way of lighting a room and the small false wall will allow you space to add concealed wiring.

We would remove the coping stones and add a damp proof course and then add new coping stones with appropriate drips.

3. Dampness to right hand side of top floor bedroom

We believe the dampness is coming via the capped chimney that is to the right hand side of the main property. The chimney has been repointed in a cement mortar and has spalling brickwork, particularly the red brickwork. In addition to this it has been capped and therefore should be vented to reduce dampness and the haunching across the top looks to have been repaired (where you can see the lighter cement).



Capped chimneys, therefore chimney needs venting

We would also add that the main flat roof above the top floor bedroom is very flat and therefore liable to water ponding on it.

ACTION REQUIRED: Again, we would recommend repointing and adding vents to the chimney.

We are surprised that the materials specified by your Architect and we suggest that you speak to them further and advise us the reasoning behind it.

Please get at least three quotations for any works carried out.

Request for further information

To enable us to help you further we would like as built drawings and a specification with regard to the extension that was carried out. This will enable us to comment more fully.

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INSPECTION

Visual Inspection

We have carried out a visual inspection to;

1. the rear of the property
2. the study
3. the adjoining room
4. the top floor bedroom.
5. the top floor
6. the main roof

Damp Meter Readings

We have also had a visual inspection of the top floor flat roof and the main roof, which is also flat.

We have taken Gann meter readings, which is a conductivity meter, within the study and obtained the following readings:



Readings in 90's taken with damp meter in top bedroom

Room	Readings Obtained	Typical Readings
Left hand wall (chimney wall)	92 and 95	40 to 60
Right hand wall (hopper head wall)	95 and 98	40 to 60
Study	90's	40 to 60

References

www.1stAssociated.co.uk – see articles on dampness

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SURVEY FINDINGS

Visual Inspection

From our visual external inspection we noted:

1. Chimneys

Both the chimneys, we feel, are allowing dampness into the property.

2. Main flat roof and the bedroom flat roof

Our initial thoughts on the detailing of the bedroom flat roof is that it is poor. For example, it is flat and does not fall sufficiently towards the outlet and therefore allows water to sit upon it, which is a scenario we never like. We much prefer to remove water as quickly as possible and we prefer pitched roofs. If you do wish to sit out on it then put a framework above that is level.



Water discharging from top roof into the hopper head which is too small – it will be a delicate operation to put a new hopper head on due to the glass roof below.

3. Rainwater Goods

With regards to the rainwater goods the hopper head simply cannot cope with the amount of water going into it. We feel a larger hopper head would be very beneficial but do make sure it is securely fixed and ideally put a leaf guard over as the last thing you want is the hopper head rotting and filling up with water when it is situated over your glazed roof.



Moss sitting on roof indicating fall not sufficient to take water away

1. Cause and Effect

The difficulty with these types of leaks is identifying exactly where they come from. Ideally, we need to carry out further tests.

1. We can carry out water simulation tests with dyed water.
2. We can carry out thermal imaging (although it is not 100% guaranteed it is a non-evasive way of identifying problems).
3. If prepared we can use an electric scanning system on the flat roof, but we would recommend the initial items are carried out first.

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SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

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

We believe it is going to be very difficult to completely eliminate dampness with this property. A combination of reducing the dampness coming in and false walls we feel will be your best option, particularly as there are budget limitations, which may limit further investigation scaffold access.

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

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LIMITATIONS

Specific Defects Report

1. Conditions of Engagement

Please note: references to the masculine include, where appropriate, the feminine.

Subject to express agreement to the contrary (which in this particular case has been none) and any agreed amendments/additions (of which in this particular case there have been none), the terms on which the Surveyor will undertake the Specific Defects Report are set out below.

Based upon a visual inspection as defined below the Surveyor will advise the Client by means of a written report as to his opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the specific problem or problems only. In this instance there is dampness in the study and top floor bedroom.

2. The Inspection

a) Accessibility and Voids

The Surveyor will base this report on a visual inspection and accordingly its scope is limited. It does not include an inspection of those areas, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible. Our visual inspection will relate to the specific defects shown to us only.

b) Floors

We have not opened up the floor structure. We have only carried out a visual inspection and any conclusions will be based upon our best assumptions. We can open up the floor if so required at an extra fee.

c) Roofs

The Surveyor will carry out a visual inspection of the main roof and the top floor bedroom. No opening up will be carried out.

d) Boundaries, Grounds and Outbuildings

The inspection will not include boundaries, grounds and outbuildings unless specifically stated (none stated).

e) Services

No services inspected.

f) Areas not inspected

The Surveyor will have only inspected those areas identified within the report. His report will be based upon possible or probable defects based upon what he has seen together with his knowledge of that type of structure. If you feel that any further areas need inspection then please advise us immediately.

g) Specific Defects Report

As this is a report upon a Specific Defect we do not offer any comment or guidance upon reactive maintenance and/or planned or routine maintenance items.

h) Whilst we have used reasonable skill and care in preparing this report, it should be appreciated that the Chartered Surveyors cannot offer any guarantee that the property will be free from future defects or that existing defects will not suffer from further deterioration;

3. Deleterious and Hazardous materials

- a) Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. However the Surveyor will advise in the report if in his view there is a likelihood that high alumina cement (HAC) concrete has been used in the construction and that in such cases specific enquiries should be made or tests carried out by a specialist.

4. Contamination

The Surveyor will not comment upon the existence of contamination as this can only be established by appropriate specialists. Where, from his local knowledge or the inspection he considers that contamination might be a problem he should advise as to the importance of obtaining a report from an appropriate specialist.

5. Consents, Approvals and Searches

- a) The Surveyor will assume that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property.
- b) The Surveyor will assume that all bye-laws, Building Regulations and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings and alterations and extensions, which require statutory consents or approval the Surveyor will not verify whether, such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or his legal advisers.

Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor. It is the Clients responsibility to forward any drawings and specifications that he has or knows the whereabouts of to us to include information in our report. If these are not

forthcoming we will make our best assumptions based upon the information available.

- c) The Surveyor will assume that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the usual enquiries or by a Statutory Notice and that neither the property nor its condition its use or intended use is or will be unlawful.

6. Fees and Expenses

The Client will pay the Surveyor the agreed fee for the Report and any expressly agreed disbursements in addition.

7. Restrictions on Disclosures

- a) This report is for the sole use of the Client in connection with the property and is limited to the current brief. No responsibility is accepted by the Chartered Surveyors if used outside these terms.
- b) Should any disputes arise they will be dealt with and settled under English law;
- c) This report does not fall under the Third Parties Rights Act.

8. Safe Working Practices

The Surveyor will follow the guidance given in Surveying Safely issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

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APPENDIX 1

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CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys; one capped
Main Roof:	Pitched slate roof
Gutters and Downpipes: And soil and vent pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Flemish Bond brickwork, repointed in cement mortar (assumed)
External Joinery:	Single and double glazed timber and metal windows
Foundations:	Typically stepped brick foundations; not inspected

Internal

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster or plasterboard (assumed)
Walls	Solid brickwork with plaster applied or studwork (assumed)
Floors: Second Floor:	Joist and floorboards (assumed)
Top Floor:	Joist and floorboards (assumed)

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

We have only accessed and viewed the study area on the second floor and the bedroom on the top floor.

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APPENDIX 2

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Time Line – A brief history of the structure

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DATE	DESCRIPTION
xxxx	Mr S moves into property
xxxx	Vertical roof extension
xxxx	Dampness noted
xxxx	Ground floor glazed extension

Can you confirm that these dates are correct.

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