

JOB REF: XXXX

INITIAL FINDINGS REPORT

Relating to damage to extension floor timbers.

XXX
Barnet, Hertfordshire.
EN5 XXX



FOR

Mr X

Prepared by:

XXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTION

Further to appointment on XXX and our site visit on XXX we have prepared the following independent report for Mr X who is the representative for the builder who we have not met.

We have carried out a visual inspection of the property on XXX. At the time of our inspection the following people were present:-

- 1) Property owners were present XXX and XX
- 2) The owners surveyor XXXX
- 3) Mr X representing the builder
- 4) XXXX representing the builder.
- 5) Ourselves acting as independent surveyors
- 6) A labourer provided by Mr X to prepare two trial holes.

The weather was dry and overcast 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,

Qualifications:

XXXXX BSc MSc FBEng MRICS, MCIQB
Chartered Building Surveyor.

This is a visual inspection and has been non evasive.

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.

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SYNOPSIS

We were asked to provide a report on the likelihood of the cause of damage to the extension floor timbers based upon evidence available on the day of our visit and the report submitted by Mr X and X Report. In addition to this we are also aware of the XXXX forensic investigations have been employed by Mr X

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summaries are not ideal as they try and encapsulate relatively complex problems in a few precise and succinct words. In this case we are also awaiting additional information which is why we have titled this Report Initial Findings. Having said that here is our Executive Summary and recommendations at this point in time XXXX:

Visual Inspection

We have carried out a visual inspection which has confirmed that there is wet rot present to the floor timbers and deterioration to the lamination to the floor boarding. We assume that all experts agree on this and it is the cause rather than the affect that is the matter under discussion. Equally it needs to be decided who is to blame for the work and whether the builder in question was simply carrying out orders. This then will apportion the costs and the blames which is known as quantum.

Requests for further information and/or clarification

The Report prepared and kindly forwarded to us by XXXX Chartered Surveyors refers to:-

- 1) A Pressure Test to the supply pipes which found no issues but Mr X advised he has not seen evidence of this but will endeavour to establish this information.
- 2) In addition it refers to a CCTV Survey which Mr X confirms he has seen evidence of.
- 3) Furthermore we have taken samples of timber and had these analysed copies within the Appendices of this Report and whilst the evidence is limited as we are not in the position to be able to identify exactly where the timber came from. It showed no signs of Chlorides in the timber inspected, which consisted of a joist and plywood decking, which in turn indicates that there is no supply water present.

The above three Tests identified to us that the most likely cause of the problem is that there is a failure in the construction technique.

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Construction

From our verbal discussions with Mr X on XXX he advises that since the contract to reinstate the kitchen has been underway he has been able to note other evidence which he would like to draw to our attention (he would duly prepare a Report on this matter):-

- 1) The oversight ranged from 25mm to 75mm when it would more typically be 100mm
- 2) No hard core noted or a DPC

The cavity wall construction which consists of engineering bricks below ground level and brick outer face and block inner face above ground level has open perpendicular joints and the cavity has not been filled as is a requirement of Building Regulations Approval documents.

All the above is to be confirmed and clarified by Mr X, this is our understanding of the situation based upon our telephone discussion.

Requests for further information

- 1) Planning Permission
- 2) Building Regulations Approval documents

We are aware that Mr X has been speaking to the London Borough of Barnet with regard to any records they have with regard to this project. In addition MrX has verbally been advised by the Building Control Officer that a completion certificate has been issued but nevertheless await further information.

To aid this process we have duly sent a letter to the London Borough of Barnet advising them of the situation, the parties involved and the urgency of the matter. A copy of this letter is in the Appendices at the end of this Report.

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Building Control documentation may aid us with this case to this end Mr X has asked for the release of the information and having spoken to Building Regulations Ref: XXXXXX Building Control they have received the request for the information on XXX however they require agreement and approval from the owners Mr & Mrs X and have duly requested this via X

- 3) We need any details or information relating to how the project was completed with reference to the external areas i.e. has the patio area been added at a later date?
- 4) In the Report we have included a Time Line in the Appendices – we would like Mr X to have discussions with the builder and advise us as best as possible with the dates when work was carried out.

From the information available from the initial inspection and the report on XXX we would make the following comments:-

- 1) The original construction of the floor was due to be in concrete this has at some point in time been changed to timber. It needs to be established who made this change and in turn this will then enable us to establish us who was managing/supervising the contract.
- 2) The construction detailing would appear to be the cause of the wet rot and in particular the covering of the airbricks and the water table level would have aided the problem with wet rot.
- 3) However it is likely there is a combination of issues here and whilst the tests indicate that there is no supply water leaks staining that we noted that was concentrated in specific areas. Therefore this could relate to condensation, we have previously experienced this where condensation occurred to a cold water pipe.
- 4) Who is to blame? We would think the proportion of the blame relates to whoever was making the decisions with regard to how the property was being built. However equally, we feel, there may be an element of blame on the builder regardless as, we believe, they should have a knowledge of construction.

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PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD



Corner airbrick from within the extension



Partially blocked airbrick



Floor tiles that have been removed



Floor joists in kitchen running from side to side



Breakfast room joists run from front to back



Decaying timber

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Decaying timber decking stored outside



Underside of decking showing deterioration around the white goods area



Ply wood formed decking set on outside paving showing signs of deterioration



Ply wood formed decking set on outside paving showing signs of deterioration



Proto meter damp meter reading 20.5



Overview of floor

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Deteriorating floor joists kitchen side



Example of kitchen unit still present



New trial hole to establish water table level



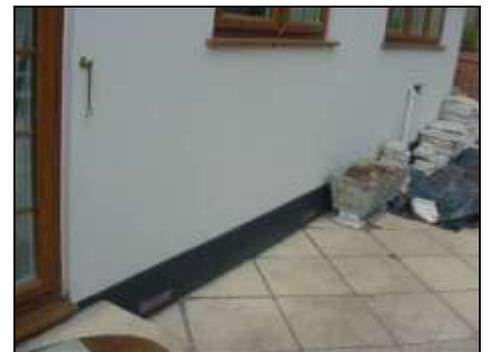
Previous trial hole



Fruiting body



Support to the joists – is it called a honeycomb floor??????



Airbricks to rear

INSPECTION

Our visual inspection has been specifically related to the damage to the extension floor timbers issues detailed below:

Visual Inspection

Our inspection has taken the format of a visual inspection:

1. External of the property of the
 - i. rear
 - ii. side

2. Internal of the property

We have viewed:

Ground Floor Extension

- i. Kitchen/Breakfast room

3. Surrounding areas

- i. patio

4. We have had the benefit of brief discussions with the owner occupiers and we would like to have the benefit of requesting a question and answer session with them.

5. It was agreed that we would utilise Mr X Protimeter resistance meter readings.

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SURVEY FINDINGS

1. From our visual external inspection we noted:
 - i. Walls – we noted airbricks slightly lower than we would expect and we also noted it was on a sloping site

2. From our visual internal inspection we noted
 - i. Walls – these were built of a block inner face, a cavity and a brick outer face with engineering bricks below ground level. Airbricks – we were advised that the airbricks were covered by Mr X

 - ii. Floors – the floor construction was a timber joist and floorboards with sleeper walls and timber bearers a DPC was noted

 - iii. Sub floor – the sub floor consisted of a oversight although this was shown not to be very deep when trial holes were dug at the time of our inspection.

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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:

The Report was limited due to a lack of information. We hope however it helps towards your assessment with regards to your clients situation.

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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APPENDIX 1

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APPENDIX CONTENTS

Construction Summary – Extension

Construction Summary – Main Building

Time Line

Letter from X

Report from X

Letter from X to Barnet Borough Council Building Control

Limitations

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CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

EXTENSION

External

Extension Roof:	Shallow tiled pitched
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Walls:	Cavity wall construction (assumed) with low level airbricks
External Joinery:	Plastic double glazed windows Patio doors
Foundations:	Not inspected

Internal

Ceilings:	Gypsum plaster finish (assumed)
Walls	Cavity walls (assumed)
Floors Ground Floor:	Suspended timber (assumed) within this area there is a kitchen/diner

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

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CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

MAIN BUILDING

External

Main Roof:	Pitched and clad with tiles
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Walls:	Cavity wall construction (assumed) with low level airbricks
External Joinery:	Plastic double glazed windows Patio doors
Foundations:	Not inspected

Internal

Ceilings:	Gypsum plaster finish (assumed)
Walls	Cavity walls (assumed)
Floors Ground Floor:	Suspended timber (assumed) within this area there is a kitchen/diner

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

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Time Line – A brief history of the structure

This has been based upon a discussion with Mr X

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LIMITATIONS

Specific Defects Report/Expert Witness 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/Expert Witness 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 the floor area.

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

This is the focus of this report and the floor was fully opened up on the day of our inspection.

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c) Roofs

The Surveyor will not inspect the roofs in this instance.

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) Other 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/Expert Witness Report

As this is a report upon a Specific Defect/Expert Witness Report 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

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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

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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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