

COMMERCIAL BUILDING SURVEY OF A Nursing Home



FOR
Mr A Client

Instruction by:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Prepared by:

GEM Associates Limited

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

FOR ANY HELP OR ASSISTANCE CALL FREE PHONE:

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or

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INTRODUCTION

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

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 (if commissioned to organise specialist reports). We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

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

INSTRUCTION

Our instruction has been received verbally from xxxxx on behalf of xxxxx. The work has been carried out under our standard Terms and Conditions contract. We have not worked for either company previously.

We would normally receive a brief with regard to the proposed future use of the premises and any salient points on the property. As far as we are aware there is no additional brief and we have therefore carried out a Building Survey on the understanding that the property is to be used for a similar purpose.

The Building Survey can be tailored more specifically towards the specific client needs and we are more than happy to do this if you would like us to review the Building Survey. Please contact us on 0800 298 5424.

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" typeface for clarity.

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area. The sketches are not 100% technically accurate; we certainly would not expect you to carry out work based upon the sketches alone.

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

The property comprises of two buildings, an older house and a fairly modern nursing home. Both are two storey in height and set within a rural location. We are advised by the present owner that this was once a farm area, which has been sub-divided to form the xxxxxxxx Nursing Home and adjacent house with a further adjacent dwelling presently occupied by the original owners of the property.

Both buildings are set within substantial grounds on a sloping site. The grounds include semi-mature and mature trees, some of which are close to the property. There are surrounding car parking areas and a private road access.

From our discussions we believe the original property was built in the early 1900s and the nursing home was built in the late 1980s / early 1990s. If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Nursing Home



Front of Property



Rear of Property



Right Hand Side of the Property



Left Hand Side and Entrance Area



Courtyard

Original House



Front View



Rear Elevation



Right Hand Side View and Tree

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

We would refer you to the sales literature provided by xxxxxxxx.

ROOMS ACCESSED

Nursing Home

A selection of rooms and associated areas have been viewed in the Nursing Home, these are as follows:

Ground Floor:

Yellow Wing: Room 5, Room 7 and Room 9
Blue Wing: Room 12, Room 15, Stairs Area, Toilet and Kitchen
Green Wing: Toilet and Lounge Area

First Floor:

Red Wing: Room 23 and Room 27
Blue Wing: Room 31 and Room 34
Green Wing: Room 39, Room 40, Room 42, Room 47 and Stairs

Original House

All rooms viewed.

ROOFS ACCESSED

Nursing Home

Five loft hatches within the main corridor area (head and shoulder inspection)

Access hatches within Room 23 and Room 42 (head and shoulder inspection)

Original House

Head and shoulder inspection

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos of the internal of the property are to help you obtain a general ambience of the building surveyed. We have not taken photographs of each and every room – a CD of all photos taken is enclosed with this report.

Nursing Home



General Corridor View



Lounge Area



Kitchen Area



Laundry Area



Bathroom



Single Room with En Suite Facilities



Original House



Lounge Area



Kitchen



Ground Floor End Rooms

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

Nursing Home

External

Main Roof:	A pitched roof , clad with concrete tiles (interlocking)
Gutters and Downpipes:	Profile Plastic
Walls:	Finished at ground floor level in brickwork and a shingle finished render at first floor level
External Joinery:	Double glazed stained timber windows. Stained/painted timber fascias and soffits

Internal

Ceilings:	Suspended with a fibreboard ceiling tile set into an exposed metal grid (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot assumed concrete First Floor: A beam and block floor (assumed)

Services

We have not carried out any investigation with regard to services, although we are happy to offer this service if you so require.

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.

Original House

External

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	A pitched roof, clad with slates with various valleys
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic
Walls:	Finished in brickwork, assumed stretcher bond
External Joinery:	Mixture of double glazed plastic windows and timber windows and timber fascias and soffits

Internal

Ceilings:	Mixture of Lath and Plaster and Plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and studwork (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot assumed concrete First Floor: A mixture of joist and floorboards and floorboard sheets (assumed)

Services

We have not carried out any investigation with regard to services, although we are happy to offer this service if you so require.

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 when we have not received a brief and the future use of the building has not been disclosed and when we have not met the clients. We have therefore made the assumption that the building will be used in a similar manner to its previous use and for the purpose it was originally designed for. It is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the ‘character’ of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 150 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if a comment has not been discussed that you are interested in/concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it. If we have not we will happily go back.

Having said all of that, here are our comments:-

Nursing Home

Generally we found the nursing home to be in average condition considering the property’s age, type and style with a few specific exceptions which are listed below. Internally, superficially, the property appears in good order and has been redecorated recently.

Original House

With regard to the adjoining house externally we found this to be in below average condition and in need of repair work. Internally, superficially, the property is in below average condition and in need of work.

However, both of these are sweeping statements so we would also, in addition, draw your attention to the following and also recommend that you read the report in full. We have divided the Executive Summary into ‘The Good’, ‘The Bad’ and ‘The Ugly’, to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues.

The Good

Survey reports often are full of only the faults and general 'doom and gloom', so we thought we would start with some positive comments on the property!

We are advised that the properties have stood empty for a few years. Taking this into consideration the properties have been well maintained during this period.

The nursing home was purpose built as a nursing home and although standards have changed over years this is a good basis to start from (assuming it will be used for a similar use).

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

The Bad

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

Nursing Home

1) **Roofs - Valley Gutters and Ridge Tiles**

As is common on this type of property the valley gutters are starting to deteriorate slightly and would benefit from some future preventative work.



This photo shows an awkward valley gutter. This type of valley gutter is prone to leaking.



Deterioration is starting to occur to the ridge tiles.



There are the occasional displaced tiles.



ACTION REQUIRED: Generally check the cement mortar to the ridges and sides of the valley gutters and repair appropriately. At the same time check the flashings and replace missing/damaged concrete tiles.

ANTICIPATED COST: As we feel scaffolding access may be required (although it may be possible to do the work from a cherry picker crane) we would expect costs in the region of £5,000 - £10,000. Quotations should be obtained although work will be substantially cheaper if scaffolding is not required.

Cement Fillets Missing to Perimeter

A slightly different issue is the cement mortar that is starting to come loose to the perimeter of the tiles. We were surprised that the perimeter tiles were not clipped in place.



Tile clips were noted in some areas.



ACTION REQUIRED: We suggest you contact the original manufacturer and carry out investigations with regard to the correct detailing to these perimeter tiles. As the property is in a fairly exposed location it may be prudent to add tile clips.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

2) External Joinery

Whilst the majority of the windows are in reasonable condition and are certainly what we would term as 'saveable' we would estimate that approximately 30% would benefit from redecoration. This photo shows a typical window to the property.



This photo shows a close up of one of the windowsills. The timber to the base is starting to crack and open up.



ACTION REQUIRED: It would be prudent to redecorate all external joinery, including the windows and fascia and soffit boards, together with some minor repair.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £10,000 - £20,000; quotations should be obtained.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

3) Drainage / Water Leak

To the Yellow / Laundry Room / Eucalyptus Tree side of the property dampness can be seen in the beam and block floor.

This photo shows a general view of the beam and block floor.



We believe this dampness is due to either a leak from the pipework or condensation from the pipework. We have opened up the ceiling but could not see any specific reason for the dampness.

This photo shows the staining to the underside of the beam and block floor.



The leak was found to one of the first floor bathroom areas, which may have caused this dampness.



ACTION REQUIRED: Further investigation is required.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

4) Painted to Sell?

The interior of the property has recently been repainted and partly re-carpeted. We were advised by the owner that this was done as he intended to occupy the property, however, unfortunately, it also means that as it is newly painted this does hide many latent defects that we would normally be able to see.

We were able to identify some hairline cracking in the property to the rear, indicating that there has been some movement, which may be due to initial settlement or the surrounding trees. It was simply not possible to tell from a one-off inspection.



In this photo the location of a vertical crack is indicated by our pen.

This photo shows one of the surrounding trees.



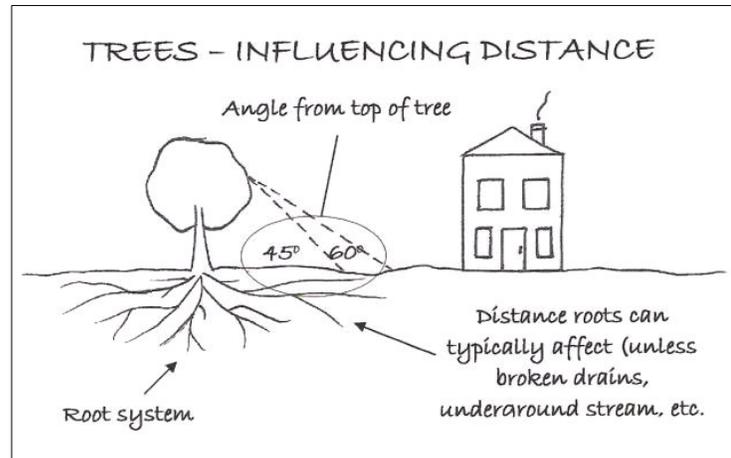
This is the rear of the property with the Eucalyptus trees to the background.



ACTION REQUIRED: We would recommend that an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to comment upon the trees and that any recommendations are carried out.

Influencing Distance Defined

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



Please see the Internal Decorations Section of this Report.

5) **Re-commissioning the Services**

We have not carried out an inspection or test of the services, but we can, if you so wish. We were advised that the property has not been utilised for two or more years and therefore a full commissioning will be required of all the services.

We would add that during the course of our inspection we noted that the heating was on and some sections of the property had water supply. However, the entirety of the installation does need re-commissioning and also we would always recommend a close circuit TV report and testing of the drainage system.

ACTION REQUIRED: Re-commissioning of the services and CCTV report and test of the drainage system. You also need to check the fire alarm system/fire precautions in the property to establish if these are up to the required standard for the future use of the premises.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: In the region of £5,000. Quotations should be obtained.

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

Original House

This is a much older property and generally in a poorer state of repair.

6) Chimneys

Re-point the right hand chimney and check the middle chimney (all directions given as you face the property from the grassed side).



We also noted sulphate attack in the central chimney. This also indicates that there is dampness in this area. The flashing looks to need some repair work, there is certainly a considerable amount of dampness coming in through this chimney.



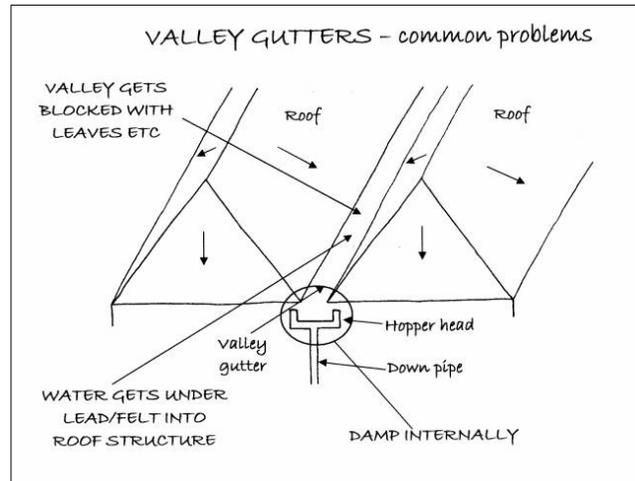
ACTION REQUIRED: Re-point the right hand chimney and check the middle chimney.

ANTICIPATED COST: The main costs will be if scaffolding is required. We would estimate costs to be in the region of £500 - £1,500. Quotations should be obtained.

Please see the Chimneys Section of this Report.

7) Roofs and Valleys

We noted some displaced slates and awkward valley gutters. We also noted that the Main Roof to the original part of the property does not have an underlayer and therefore dampness can get into the property.



A general check of the roof is required.



This photo is taken inside the roof. You can see dampness visible to some of the timbers. This may be coming in via the chimneys and walls, but we think also an element is via the roofs.



Dampness may be getting in via poor detailing to the gutters and downpipes. We believe dampness is getting in to the wall above the actual flashing.



ACTION REQUIRED: There is no obvious reason for dampness getting into the roof. It may be wind driven rain or it may be that the property has been empty. A general overhaul of the roof is required. This will require replacement of slipped, broken and missing tiles together with general clearing of the valley gutters, checking of base materials and flashings and checking of gutters and downpipes.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £500 - £2,500 to carry out investigation work and repairs as necessary.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

8) External Joinery

The external joinery is in need of redecoration in some areas. This photo shows bare timber to the fascias and soffits.



This photo shows flaking paint and bare timber visible to some of the windows.



ACTION REQUIRED: Paint/re-stain external joinery and repair as necessary.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 - £5,000. Quotations should be obtained.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.

9) Brickwork

The pointing to the brickwork is weathered and re-pointing is required.



We noted considerable efflorescence.

Efflorescence Defined

This is where salts appear on the surface of the brickwork in a white dust or crystal formation



ACTION REQUIRED: Re-point in a like-for-like mortar – this looks to be in a lime-based mortar. You may wish to use a brick cleaning product to remove the efflorescence, once the source of the problem has been established.

ANTICIPATED COST: In the region of £2,500 - £7,500. Quotations should be obtained.

Please see the External Walls Section of this Report.

10) **Painted to Sell?**

At the time of our survey the entirety of the interior had been newly painted. This could therefore be hiding latent defects.

This photo shows a newly painted room with dampness visible to the chimney breast. The yellow item in the middle of the photo is our electronic damp metre.



Please see the Internal Decorations Section of this Report.

11) Re-commissioning the Services

Please see our comments with regard to the re-commissioning of the services within the Nursing Home section. The same is applicable to this property.

The Ugly

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

The Nursing Home

12) Ground Floor

There appears to have been some movement in the ground floor to the Plant Room side of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Further investigation is required. The carpets need to be lifted in this area.

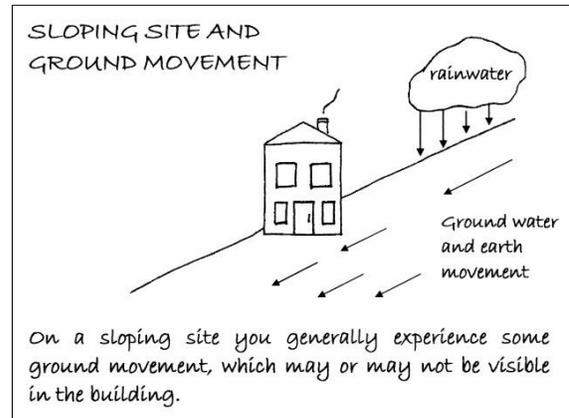
ANTICIPATED COST: For investigation work in the region of £500 - £1,000.

Please see the Floors Section of this Report.

13) Cracks

As already mentioned we have noted cracks in the property, for example to the green stairwell area and to the yellow first floor level.

These are difficult to identify as the property has been newly decorated. These cracks would indicate minor settlement has occurred in the property. This is not unusual for a property sitting on a sloping site and being surrounded by trees and, in addition, this was once a coal mining area.



These cracks would indicate that minor settlement has occurred in the property. This is not unusual with a property sitting on a sloping site and being surrounded by trees, particularly in what was once a coal mining area.

ACTION REQUIRED: The usual investigations need to be made by your Legal Advisor, particularly with regard to the Coal Board's activities.

As mentioned earlier we would also recommend that an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to visit the property and advise on the surrounding trees.

Please see the Walls Section and the Trees Section of this Report.

Original House

14) Movement

Stepped cracking was found to the brickwork and also to the floor indicating that there is movement to the property.



This photo shows internal cracking.

Whether the movement is on-going can only be established by long-term monitoring.



However, our initial thoughts on this matter are that the movement is on-going and caused by the adjoining tree and the general poor standard of construction.

ACTION REQUIRED: This will very much depend upon the future use of the property. We would recommend that the cracking is monitored to establish whether it is moving.

ANTICIPATED COST: Costs of monitoring will be in the region of £500 - £1,000.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

15) Trees

We would refer you to the above sections for both the Nursing Home and the adjoining house itself.



ACTION REQUIRED: Specialist advice is required from an arboriculturist.

Please see the Trees Section of this Report.

16) Rising Damp

We found rising damp within the property. This may be due to the property not being occupied and/or heated for some time; equally it could be due to a defective/poor damp proof course.

In this photo the level of the damp proof course is indicated by the pen, there should be two courses of brickwork between the ground level and the damp proof course.



ACTION REQUIRED: Reduce the level of earth around the property.

Please see the Damp Proof Course Section of this Report.

DIY/Handyman/Maintenance Type Work

The Nursing Home is relatively modern, i.e. less than 100 years old, but nevertheless still requires ongoing maintenance and repair.

The original home is an older property and will initially require a fair amount of work. It too requires an ongoing maintenance budget.

Purchase Price

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we would however comment from our findings with regard to the building condition that typically the price offered is for a property in average condition for its age, type and style. We would comment that we believe there are areas that this property is below average for its age, type and style and therefore a discount should be obtained on the asking price.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

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

Estimates of Costs

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour. For unskilled labour we currently use between £50 and £75 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would probably be best to supervise the work if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



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

We would recommend that investigation work is carried out as detailed in the Executive Summary before you proceed with the purchase.

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.

This is the first time that we have worked with your company; whilst we appreciated the request to have the survey carried out as soon as possible and indeed have rearranged our programme of surveys to accommodate this request, we do not believe that this is the ideal way to work and we would like to request a meeting with you to agree a format for future reports.

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 – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)

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.

SELLING AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

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

SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR

To carry out your legal work you can use a solicitor or a legal advisor. We have used both terms within the report.

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.



THE FOLLOWING SECTION OF THE REPORT LOOKS AT THE PROPERTY IN MORE DETAIL. WE CONSIDER FIRST THE EXTERNAL OF THE PROPERTY AND THEN THE INTERNAL OF THE PROPERTY.

THE REPORT LOOKS AT BOTH THE NURSING HOME AND THE ADJACENT HOUSE TOGETHER.

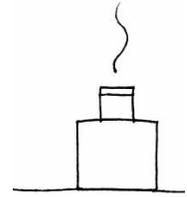
IN EACH SECTION OUR COMMENTS CONSIDER THE NURSING HOME FIRST AND THEN THE ADJACENT HOUSE.

THE EXTERNAL SECTION WORKS FROM THE TOP OF THE PROPERTIES DOWNWARDS.

THE INTERNAL PART OF THE REPORT IS BASED UPON THE ROOMS VIEWED ONLY AS DETAILED WITHIN THE EARLIER SECTIONS OF THIS REPORT.

EXTERNAL

CHIMNEY STACKS



Chimney Stacks

Chimneys developed originally from open fires placed within buildings. From this, the chimney has developed to its present day format where it is used as an aesthetic feature and focal point rather than purely just to heat the room.

Nursing Home

There are no chimneys to the Nursing Home.

Adjacent House

The house has two chimneys. One located to the right hand side and one centrally. Considering each in turn:

Chimney One – Right Hand Side

This chimney is brick finished with a lead flashing and has no chimney pots. The chimney is not in particularly good condition and will require general re-pointing and repair. Unfortunately we were unable to see the flashing but we suspect that there is a defect, we therefore cannot comment upon them.



ACTION REQUIRED: A general overhaul of the chimney, the sooner this is carried out the better. We would recommend work is carried out in the summer of 2005.

ANTICIPATED COSTS: It is very difficult to anticipate costs on chimneys as the actual access to them is usually the most costly as often it has to be carried out off scaffold.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Chimney Two - Central

This chimney is brick built and whilst it looked in reasonable condition we did find considerable dampness internally.



ACTION REQUIRED: This chimney should also be checked in the summer or 2005.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Flaunchings Defined

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

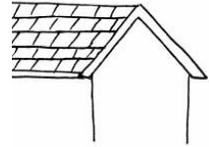
Flashings Defined

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.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks 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 UNDERLAYERS



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

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

Nursing Home

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the High Level Roofs and the Low Level Roofs.

High Level Roofs

Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and clad with interlocking concrete tiles.

This photo shows a general view of the roof.



As a general comment on the roofs as a whole, as viewed from ground level, the roof coverings showed nothing out of character for their age and type. Weak areas to this type of roof are the ridges, the valley gutters and the perimeter; all of which show signs of deterioration.



Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

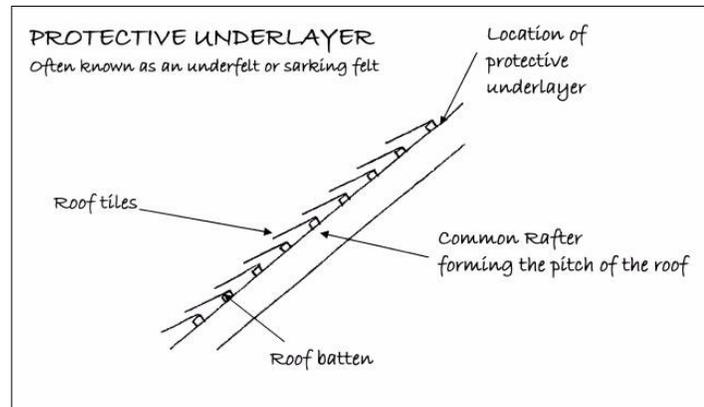
Low Level Roofs

The low level roofs are clad with an interlocking concrete tile. They are generally single pitched roofs and in reasonable condition. The only area they do need checking is where the flashing meets the main property as in some areas we noted that the mortar has started to come loose.



Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, these in more recent years have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as underfelts but now the name is not really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.



When we inspected the loft space we found a Hessian base Bitumen membrane. This type of membrane has been used since the 1960s. We generally found it to be in average condition, it is damaged in a few places but this is not unusual considering its age.

This photo shows the common rafters (the ones that form the pitch of the roof) and the dark area between is the underlayer.



Adjacent House

The roof to the adjacent house is pitched and clad with slates. As a general comment on the roofs as a whole, we did not see any particular issues externally, however, internally we noticed that water is getting into the roof. This is usually due to dampness coming in at the junctions, such as the junction of the chimney and the main roof and the valley gutters and the flashings.



ACTION REQUIRED: Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Protective Underlayer (Often known as the sarking felt or underfelt)

The newer part of the property also had a Hessian based underlayer; the older part of the property has what is known as 'blinding'. This is where the slates are sat onto a mortar bed. It is therefore possible that during periods of heavy and prolonged driving rain some water penetration could take place through the roof coverings.

This photo is within the right hand side of the roof. You can see the blinding that has been used to bed the slates.



This is the left hand side of the roof where you can see a modern prefabricated roof construction. In the darker area you can see the Hessian based felt.



Valley Gutters

A valley gutter is formed where two roofs meet. This can be a weak area. We would reiterate our comments made within the Executive Summary that a closer inspection is needed to establish the condition of these areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: Check the valley gutters, particularly the cement part of the valley gutter.

Flashings

Flashings are formed where there is a change from one material to the other. Generally there looked to be metal flashings throughout the property, but given the age of both the Nursing Home and the adjacent House we feel that these should be inspected.

ACTION REQUIRED: Inspect flashings to ensure that they are still bedded correctly.

Perimeter

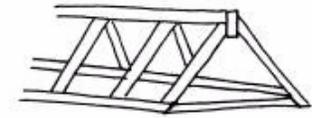
Please see our comments in the Executive Summary. Some of the perimeter is clipped and some is simply pointed.

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

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately 80 percent of the Nursing Home roofs and approximately 90 percent of the adjacent house roofs from ground level via our ladder or via any other vantage point that we managed to gain. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.

ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT



(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

Nursing Home

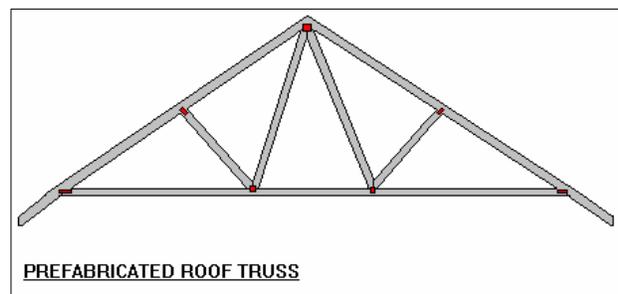
Head and Shoulders Inspection Only

Within the nursing home we have carried out a head and shoulders inspection only of the loft space.

There are numerous loft hatches located in corridors (we have inspected five) and within the adjacent rooms (we inspected two of these and believe there are at least two others).

There are no loft ladders, electric lights or secured floorboarding to any of the roof spaces. The loft space has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly. We cannot comment categorically on the roof structure other than to say the spacing and the size of the timber are in like with what we typically see on pre-fabricated trussed roofs.

The property has a pre-fabricated trussed roof rafter. These are made in a factory and transported to site and then lifted into place. Without the manufacturer's calculations and installation details we cannot comment categorically on the roof structure other than to say it is in line with what we typically see when looking at pre-fabricated trussed roofs.



Roof Timbers

We have inspected the roof for active woodworm and structural defects to the timber and wet rot. We have found the areas inspected to be in reasonable condition. However, it is feasible that there are problems in the roof.



A general view of the outer side of the roof.



A general view of the apex of the roof.



The only way to be 100 per cent certain of the condition of the roof is to have it cleared of insulation and to have each timber checked individually. Which we are happy to do if so requested.

Fire Stops

The roof structure is sub-divided into each wing. Whilst we are aware of a requirement to provide fire breaks/stops we are not familiar with the requirements on this particular property.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should seek specialist advice with regard to the fire safety within this property.

Water Tanks

We noted a water tank located in the Blue roof section, which is adjacent to the dwelling house.

We would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As people may be cleaning their teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!

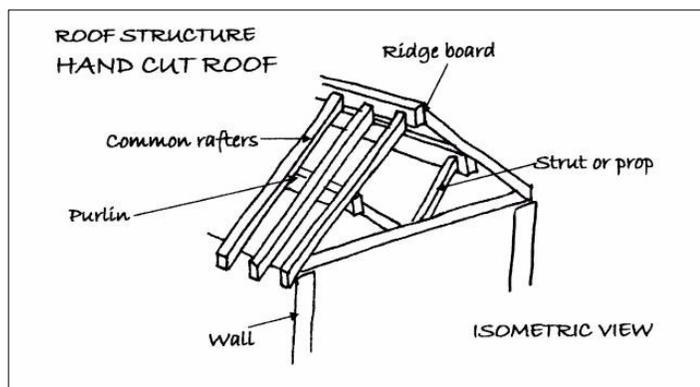


Adjacent House

The adjacent house has two loft spaces, the main roof is accessed via two loft hatches located on the landings at first floor level, one into the older part of the property and one into the newer extension. There are no loft ladders, electric light or secured floorboards. We recommend that these be added, as it will make the loft space safer and easier to use.

The loft has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

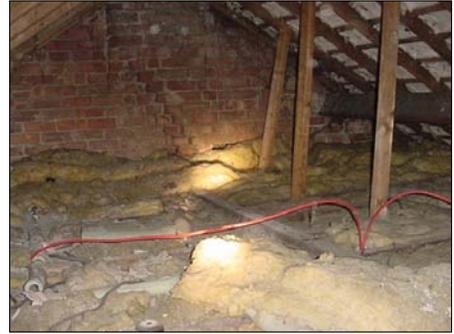
Within the original part of the roof (on the right hand side) there is a cut timber roof. This is a roof that is purpose made and hand built on site. Without the original design details we cannot categorically confirm that there are no defects; however it is in line with what we typically see.



To the newer part of the property there is a pre-fabricated trussed roof, similar in manufacturing process to that used within the Nursing Home.

Roof Timbers

We have accessed the roofs within this area and would comment that within the original part of the roof we could see that dampness is getting in, which is why we have recommended work to the roof. We also noticed signs of vermin within the roof. There may also be woodworm in this roof given its age, although we did not physically see any. We were only able to access part of this roof.



The newer section of the roof is pre-fabricated and the timbers, we assume, have been treated and generally looked in reasonable condition. This photo shows a general view of the roof looking towards the new gable end with the blockwork visible.



This is a general view of the roof looking towards the brickwork.



Water Tanks

A water tank was noted in the original part of the structure, which did restrict our view in this area.

Ventilation

Neither roof, as far as we could see, is ventilated. When the properties were built ventilation was not a requirement. However, now, where there is a protective under layer and insulation to a roof, cross ventilation is now recommended and required under the current Building Regulations. This is to

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stop condensation occurring within the roof, which can affect the timbers and also cause dampness.

ACTION REQUIRED: Should the opportunity arise then ventilation should be added to stop condensation.

Insulation

Both the Nursing Home and the Adjacent House have insulation. Please see the Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

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

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



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

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

Nursing Home

A profile guttering has been used. The property's gutters and downpipes are fairly typical of what we see; they are in average condition. There are some minor leaks where we noted that the pipes have been incorrectly fixed or parts of the gutter and downpipe were missing. These should be picked up in your day-to-day general maintenance.



We did note some specific examples of downpipes not being correctly fixed together and also dipping within the guttering section.

Adjacent House

From ground level the gutters and downpipes looked to be plastic and appeared in reasonable condition. Our main concern with this gutter and downpipe system is how the guttering copes with heavy downpours, as there are some visible signs of it overflowing.

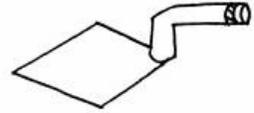
If you look closely in this photo you can see a repair to the downpipe and you can also see a repair to the perimeter of the roof tiles. Please note our earlier comment about clips being required to the roof.



ACTION REQUIRED: General maintenance to the gutters and downpipes. We would always recommend that gutters and downpipes are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes. This applies to both roofs.

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

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.

Nursing Home

The nursing home is partly brick finished and partly render finished.

Taking into consideration the age, type and style of this property we would say that the brickwork, pointing and render overall is in average condition.

Adjacent House

The original house is brick built and has had various extensions that are also brick built.

Taking into consideration the age, type and style of this property we feel that the brickwork, pointing and render is generally in below average condition. As mentioned elsewhere within this report re-pointing is required and repairs to the roofs, gutters and downpipes to stop water discharging onto the walls. There is also cracking within the brickwork. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.

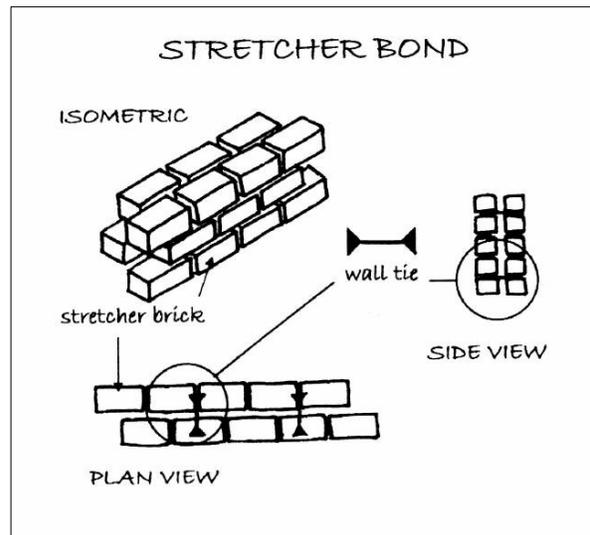
Note:

In this instance we have considered the brickwork to both the Nursing Home and the Adjacent House within the same section.

Brickwork

Both the Nursing Home and the Adjacent House are constructed in a stretcher bond.

"Stretcher Bond" 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.

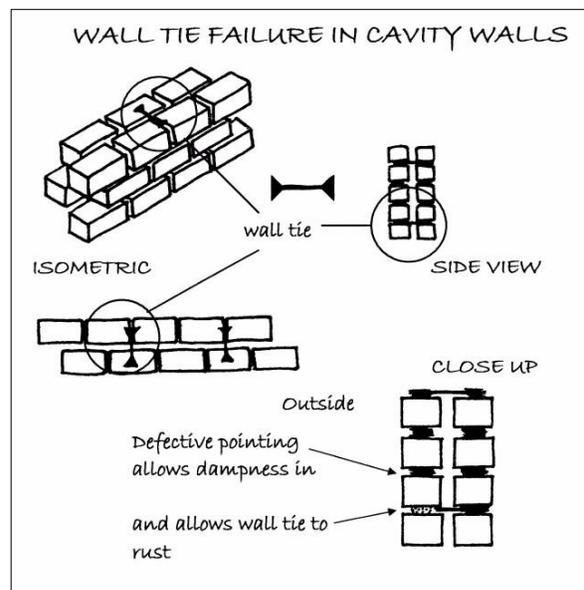


Cavity walls were first used in Victorian times. It originates from solid walls not always being waterproof against driving rain and not providing a good degree of heat insulation. The design of cavity walls makes them relatively unstable and they depend upon the wall ties.

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. This is of particular concern within the adjacent house due to the weathered nature of the pointing and also its age, as wall ties in this age of property can rust.

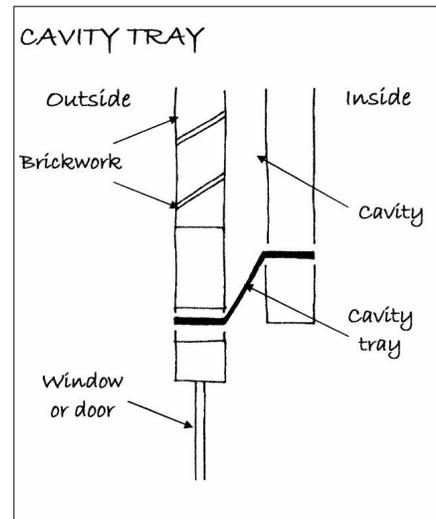
With regard to the Nursing home wall ties in properties built before the early 1980s there can be problems with wall tie failure and there can be problems with some later built properties although they are rare. At present there are no outward and visible signs of wall tie failure. As this is a progressive condition you should be aware that there is a risk that repairs/renewal might be required in the future.



Cavity Trays

Cavity trays are needed when an extension is carried out to a cavity wall, such as a conservatory or a single storey extension, as this stops dampness getting into the property.

Without opening up the structure we cannot confirm that cavity trays have been used, however in the 1980s/early 1990s they were often omitted and this can result in dampness getting into the structure. As the property has been newly repainted internally we were not able to view this.



Efflorescence

There is efflorescence both to the Nursing Home and to the Adjacent House indicating that dampness is being retained in the brickwork. To the Nursing Home we believe this is where it is sheltered by the Eucalyptus trees to the rear and therefore does not see much sunlight (see photo on right).



However to the Adjoining House (see photo on right) we believe it is due to dampness getting into the structure over and above that which would normally be expected. We have highlighted some of the areas where it may be getting in elsewhere within this report.



Efflorescence Defined

This is where salts appear on the surface of the brickwork in a white dust or crystal formation

Render

The upper walls to the Nursing Home are finished in a pebbledash render. We would normally carry out a tap test to the render (literally hitting the render with the back of a hammer to try to establish if there are any hollow areas in it), however, given the sheer scale of the property, this has been carried out around the entrance area only. Here we found the render to be in a satisfactory condition for its age, type and style.

Finally, the external walls to both properties have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork, render 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 that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

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

FOUNDATIONS



The foundations function is, if suitably designed and constructed, to transfer the weight of the property through the soil. As a general comment, many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we think of them today, and typically a two-storey property would have one metre deep foundations.

Nursing Home

As the Nursing Home is relatively new (in surveying terms, in this case, this is the last 25 or so years), it is reasonable to expect Building Regulations approval to have been gained. Over the past forty to fifty years a duty performed by the Local Authority is to check that the property is built to Building Regulations standards. Bearing in mind these factors, and that there are no visible signs to the walls to indicate any problems, we believe your foundations to be sound.

Adjacent House

Typically, with a property of this period, we would expect to find a stepped brick foundation, approximately half a metre deep and deeper foundations to the newer extensions that have been added.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor should confirm that full Local Authority approvals have been obtained for the property.

Building Insurance Policy

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

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

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

TREES



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

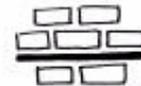
Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs. There are a number of these in the vicinity of the buildings within what is known as 'influencing distance'.

If common sense is used and trees and shrubs are not allowed to overgrow the property you should not have any problems. Equally we would not recommend the removal of trees without specialist advice, as this could damage the dynamics of the soil in the area and the water table level.

ACTION REQUIRED: Arboriculturist Report recommended.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and 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 London and then the country as a whole, although this took many for it to become standard practice.

Nursing Home

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, in this age of property, we would expect a damp proof course to have been built in.

Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

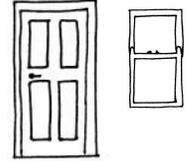
Adjacent House

In this case we would expect the original part of the house not to have a damp proof course built in and the newer part to have one built in. We found areas where the damp proof course is lower than would normally be expected.

ACTION REQUIRED: If the area is to be inhabited then a damp proof report should be obtained.

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

EXTERNAL JOINERY



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

Fascias and soffits offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of the guttering. Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property.

Nursing Home

Fascias and Soffits

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Windows and Doors

The property predominantly has casement windows these are formed in wood and are painted / stained. The windows are double glazed. Considering their age they are in reasonable condition but you should be made aware that this type of window generally is made out of poorer quality timber and therefore it is very important to keep it decorated regularly.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please see the Executive Summary.

Adjacent House

Fascias and Soffits

The fascias and soffits are constructed of timber and are in need of redecoration in some areas.

Windows and Doors

There are a mixture of double glazed plastic windows and timber windows. The timber windows are in need of redecoration in some areas. The plastic windows are generally in reasonable condition with one or two exceptions, for example, in this photo, the seal is missing around the window.



Please see our further comments in the Executive Summary.

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the external joinery. In the case of the fascias and soffits it is typically a visual inspection from ground level. With the windows and doors we have usually opened a random selection of these during the course of the survey. In this section we are aiming to give a general overview of the condition of the external joinery. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS



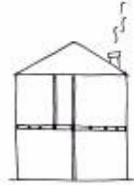
The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.

Please see the Executive Summary.

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

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL



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.

Nursing Home

Ceilings

Predominantly the ceilings within the Nursing Home are suspended with a fibreboard ceiling tile set into an exposed metal grid; from our visual inspection of the suspended ceiling seemed in reasonable condition.



Opening up of Ceiling Tiles

We have opened up a random selection of the ceiling tiles to expose the construction. Above we found a beam and block construction and, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, we noted signs of dampness coming through in some areas.



Internal Walls and Partitions

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

Perimeter Walls

The perimeter walls have a plasterboard paint or paper finish. Generally we found them to be in reasonable condition, although some have hairline cracking.

All internal walls have recently been redecorated and therefore may be hiding latent defects.

Adjacent House

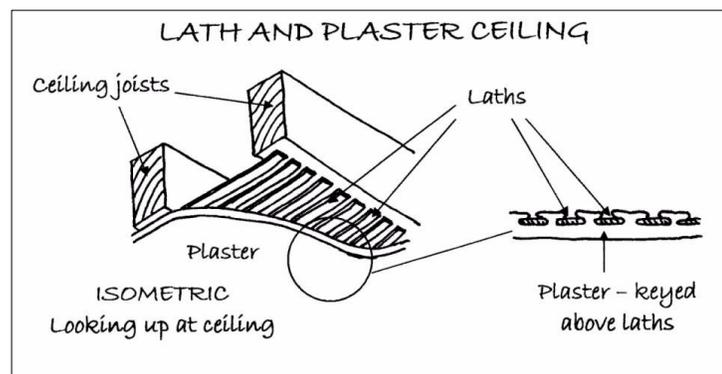
Ceilings

From our visual inspection and our inspection in the roof space we noted that the older part of the property has lath and plaster ceilings and the newer part has plasterboard.



Lath and Plaster Defined

Laths are thin strips of timbers which are fixed to the structure. Wet plaster is applied to the laths, usually in several layers. The plaster forms a key as it is forced between the laths. This plaster, once dry, is given further coats and often a decorative finish.



Plasterboard Defined

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

In this age of property, you would expect some minor hairline cracking to the lath and plaster and possibly areas where the plaster has lost its key or bond to the ceilings/walls. This is simply due to old age and possibly minor dampness, particularly around the windows and chimney areas.

Internal Walls and Partitions

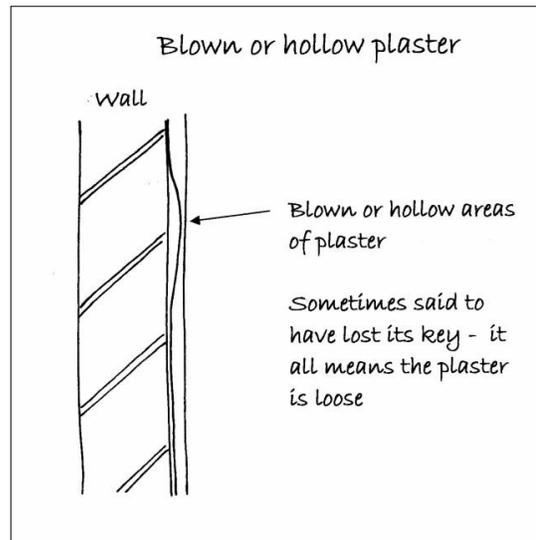
We have carried out a tap test to the internal walls and found them to be a mixture of solid walls and hollow/studwork walls. The solid walls are likely to be made from brickwork/blockwork and may well be structural walls. The studwork walls are usually purely dividing walls.

Perimeter Walls

Generally the perimeter walls were found to be in reasonable condition, although there is some 'blown' plaster, as one would expect to the older part of the property.

Blown Plaster Defined

This is where the plaster has come away from its base leaving a hollow area.



Hairline Cracking

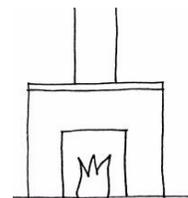
If the properties were not newly redecorated we would expect to find hairline cracking throughout the Nursing Home and the Adjacent House.

As mentioned elsewhere within this report we did note hairline cracking to the walls within the Eucalyptus tree side of the Nursing Home. We suggest a filler is used that will allow some movement, such as a decorator's putty. However, we generally find that cracking will carry on to some extent regardless, and you will need to re-fill periodically.

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken (unless permission has been obtained by yourselves). In some cases the materials employed cannot be ascertained without samples being taken and damage being caused.

We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES



With the advent of central heating fireplaces tend to be more a feature than an essential function in most properties.

Nursing Home

There are no chimneys to this property.

Adjacent House

We noted dampness and sulphate attack to the chimney. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary and the Chimney Section.

Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimney Stacks, Flues and Parapet Walls section of this Report.

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.

Nursing Home

Ground Floor

The floors felt solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, we have not accessed the floor.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

First Floor

This floor is a beam and block floor, which is fairly common in newer properties (1980s onwards). Developers started using this type of floor as it enables them to build more quickly without the need to allow traditional drying times for such things as concrete floors.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Beam and Block Flooring Construction Defined

This form of construction uses concrete beams to span the floor in between which blocks are fitted. The floor was not opened up. The floor void was not accessed.

Adjacent House

Ground Floor

The floors felt solid and firm underfoot so we have assumed they are formed in concrete, we have not accessed the floor.

Cracking

We found cracking to part of the floor.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

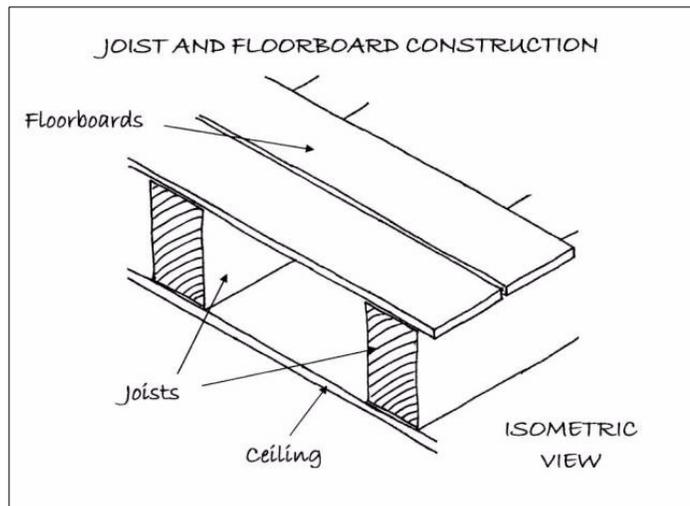


First Floor

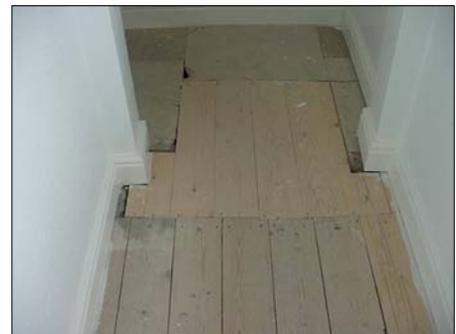
The first floor is a mixture of joist and floorboards to the older part of the property and joist and floorboarding to the newer part of the property.

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.

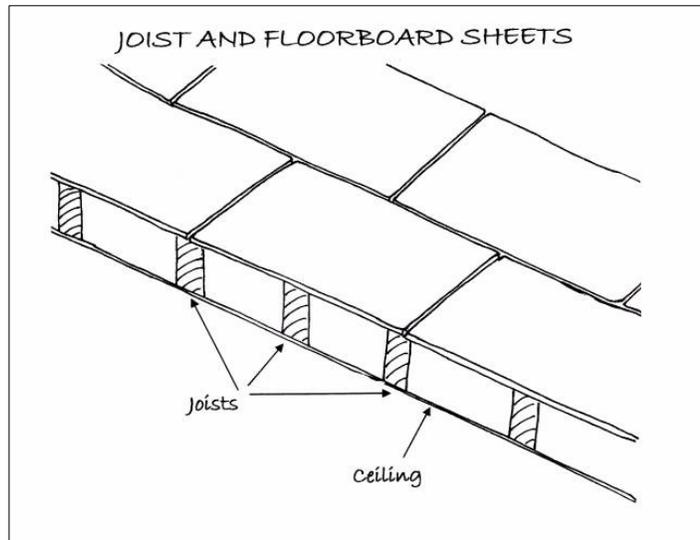


This photo shows an example of the floorboards.



Joist and Floorboarding Construction Defined

Joist and Floorboarding is very similar to joist and floorboards except that the floorboards are replaced with floorboard sheets. These are usually a few feet wide by a few feet long and are simply quicker and easier to fix.



This photo shows an example of the floorboarding.



Sound Insulation Between Rooms, Both Adjacent, Above and Below

With regard to both the Nursing Home and the Adjacent House, without proper insulation there will be noise transfer between rooms both airborne and structure-borne. In an occupied property we would normally be able to give some form of informal assessment on this. However, as the property is unoccupied it is particularly difficult to comment on this.

We are going to have to take quite a few educated guesses in this instance. The first and the overriding educated guess is that as the Nursing Home and part of the Adjacent property are fairly new they will have been constructed to Building Regulation standards of that time, which we believe did require insulation for noise resistance between the various floors.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to confirm the construction of the property and that it met current Building Regulations at the time.

Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets and floor coverings etc. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.

DAMPNESS



In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.

Nursing Home and Adjacent House

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.

A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. Although in various areas around both the nursing home and the adjacent house the damp proof course was not the required two bricks (150mm) from the ground level, from our random inspection no evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected.

However, if the adjacent house is going to be occupied as an habitable room we would recommend a damp proof check. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

ACTION REQUIRED: You should instruct a qualified and experienced contractor who is a member of the BWPDA (British Woodworm Preserving and Damp Proofing Association) issuing a long-term insurance backed guarantee to carry out a quotation on the property which should be forwarded to us for comment and to implement all necessary remedial works. In conjunction with the above, damp affected plaster should be replaced in accordance with the specifications of the specialist contractor. Failure to do so may nullify the validity of the guarantee.

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall materials or inadequate gutters and downpipes, such as poorly jointed gutters.

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

Condensation

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

There were no signs of obvious condensation in the rooms inspected, however as both properties have been unoccupied for some two years this is not surprising! We would comment that in a building such as this it very much depends upon how the rooms are used, both by the occupants and how the rooms are aired by the management team, together with general maintenance on extract fans and heating etc.

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

INTERNAL JOINERY



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

Nursing Home

Doors

We have inspected a random sample of rooms (as detailed within the Executive Summary) to which we have also inspected the doors. We would comment that the doors inspected have a stained veneered timber finish with mortise locks and were generally of a reasonable condition.

Fire Doors

We have not carried out a Fire Check to this property.

ACTION REQUIRED: Your Legal Advisor to confirm that it has a Fire Certificate and will meet current Fire Regulations.

Alternatively we would recommend that you have the property inspected by either the Fire Brigade or a specialist in this area.

Staircase

We found three stairwells within the property and in each case we were unable to examine the underside of the stair timbers due to it being lined, which precluded our inspection, so we cannot comment further upon the stair structure. We can, however, say that the lining gives a resistance to the spread of fire if such circumstances were to occur.

Commercial Kitchen

The floor was quarry tiled, the walls were tiled and the ceilings were painted.

From our cursory visual inspection the kitchen looked in reasonable condition, although it has suffered from some general day-to-day marks. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances or equipment, such as, for example, the extract fan. As the property has not been occupied for some time we would recommend that all the equipment is re-commissioned.

ACTION REQUIRED: A budget should be allocated for re-commissioning the Services.

Please see the Executive Summary.

Environmental Health

Whilst we have commented that the kitchen looks to be to a reasonable standard there may be specific issues that the Environmental Health Department may have with this property.

Commercial property premises are covered by the Food Safeties Act 1990 and its various associated rules and the Food Premises Regulations 1991.

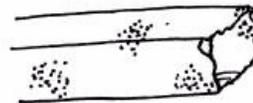
ACTION REQUIRED: Specific discussions should take place with the local Environmental Health Department.

Adjacent House

There is a domestic standard kitchen within this area. It really depends upon the future proposed use of the property, as to whether this will be an acceptable basis.

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

TIMBER DEFECTS



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

Nursing Home and Adjacent House

Dry Rot

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any dry rot and we feel it is unlikely that it is occurring, given the conditions found.

Wet Rot

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any significant wet rot, however there is an outside chance that there is wet rot present in the properties. We believe there are likely to be minor instances of it in the fascias and soffits, windows and possibly to the roof timbers, particularly to the adjoining house.

Dampness Found in Adjoining House Roof

Please see our comments in the Roof Section and also the Executive Summary with regard to this matter.

Woodworm

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

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any woodworm in the Nursing Home or Adjoining House. However, given the age of parts of the adjoining house there is an outside chance that there may be some present, although we have not physically seen any.

The roof is the main area that we look for woodworm. Within the roof we found no obvious visual signs of woodworm activity or indeed signs of past woodworm activity that has caused what we would term 'structurally significant' damage. In many properties there is an element of woodworm that is not active.

Our inspection is usually restricted by insulation covering some of the timbers and general stored items in the roof, as it is restricted throughout the property by general fixtures and fittings. If you wish to be 100 per cent certain that there is no woodworm the only way would be to check the property when is emptied of fixtures and fittings, insulation etc.

ACTION REQUIRED: If you wish to be 100 per cent certain get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings and furniture etc.

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

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

INTERNAL DECORATIONS



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

Painted to Sell?

When we carried out the survey the re-decoration had been newly carried out throughout the entire Nursing Home and the Adjacent House.

The paintwork could be hiding defects that may become apparent as the decorations start to age.

We noted the property has Artexed ceilings, Artex often contains asbestos. It should not be rubbed down as this will release asbestos fibres.

Please see our general note in the Appendices with regard to asbestos.

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

THERMAL EFFICIENCY



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

Roofs

Some roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 200mm. We typically find in roofs between 100mm – 150mm of insulation.

Nursing Home

The nursing home has approximately 100mm of loose-fill insulation.

Adjacent House

The adjacent house has approximately 100mm of fibreglass insulation.

Walls

Nursing Home

The property has a stretcher bond construction, we can only assume from the age of the property that it is likely that it included cavity insulation. There may be records advising of this, otherwise we recommend that the structure be opened up to confirm.

Adjacent House

Whilst the cavity wall construction allows the opportunity to put insulation in, in this age of property it was not common practice. Without opening up the wall we cannot confirm whether insulation was added or not.

Windows

Nursing Home and Adjacent House

The windows are double glazed and therefore will have reasonable thermal properties.

Services

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

During our question and answer session with the present owner they advised that the services had been regularly serviced.

OTHER MATTERS



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

Nursing Home

Security

A security system has been installed. A good alarm system should not only help reduce break-ins but also your insurance. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. Further information should be obtained from the vendor and the installer at a later date.

Adjacent House

Security

No security system was noted. You may wish to have one installed depending upon the ultimate use of this property.

Nursing Home

Fire Alarm / Smoke Alarm Systems

We note that there is a fire alarm/smoke alarm system within the Nursing Home. We are not experts in this area. Certificates etc. should be obtained from the manufacturer.

ACTION REQUIRED: A full test and report on the Fire Alarm System should be carried out. Your Legal Advisor to obtain any guarantees and certificates available from the installer.

The property is likely to fall under the following Act.

Fire Precautions Act

Commercial properties are covered by the Fire Precautions Act 1971 and the Fire Precautions (Work Place) Regulations 1997.

Asbestos

Products containing asbestos have, until recent years, been widely used in domestic construction and the mere presence of asbestos does not, in itself, necessarily constitute a health hazard. Removing undamaged material may release more dust than leaving it in place and it is only when asbestos materials are in a damaged or friable condition, or during installation, modification, removal or demolition, that there is likely to be a significant health risk.

We are not asbestos surveyors.

ACTION REQUIRED: A specialist asbestos report should be carried out in all properties.

Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company, and then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

Environmental Health Issues

As already mentioned, commercial property premises are covered by the Food Safeties Act 1990 and its various associated rules and the Food Premises Regulations 1991.

ACTION REQUIRED: Specific discussions should take place with the local Environmental Health Department.

SERVICES

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply, circuits, heating or drainage.

Conclusive tests to be carried out/undertaken by suitably qualified contractors/specialists. The vendor/seller should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

Where specialist equipment is present for business use etc., we would recommend test reports on the following areas.

Tests and Reports

We have not carried out any tests and reports on the following items but would be happy to carry them out if you so wish.

- Electricity
- Heating / Cooking Equipment
- Drainage
- Fire/Smoke Alarm Systems
- Security Systems

Drainage

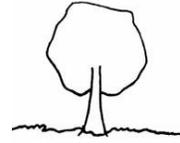
It must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a drainage test which includes close circuit TV camera reports etc.; such a test has not been required. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, 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.

Rainwater / Surface Water Drainage

Rainwater/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.

OUTSIDE AREAS

COMMUNAL GROUNDS AND PARKING



Communal Grounds

There are grassed communal grounds surrounding the property. The properties are set on a sloping site and we do not know if secured fencing sits around this. There is the obvious close-by hazard of the main road and there is also a residential dwelling to one side of the property.

The grounds contain mature trees, many of which are close to the Nursing Home and the adjacent house. We recommend an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon) is asked to carry out a report.

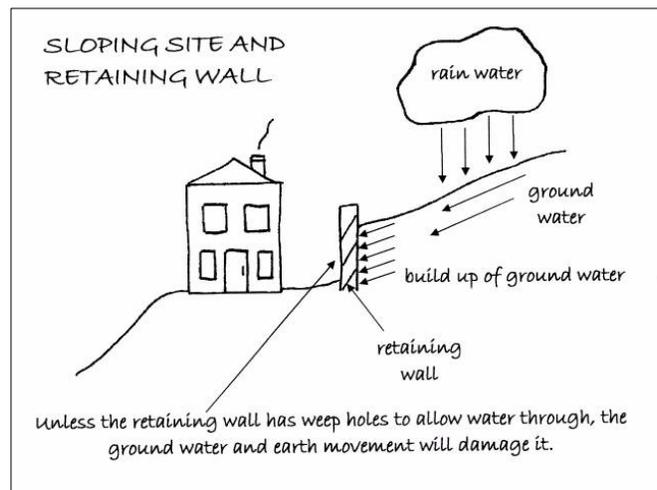
The boundary/perimeter of the grounds was noted but we have not walked around them.

Parking

There is tarmac parking around the property together with an access road that is tarmaced. We have not inspected the road or the drainage system with it, other than a cursory inspection when we walked around the main building. We would comment that superficially it appears in reasonable condition.

Boundary Walls

As the property is sitting on a sloping site there are boundary walls around it. We note that some of them do not have weep holes, particularly to the side that faces the adjacent house.



Finally, 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.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

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

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) 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.
 - v) Roof and similar renewals.
 - vi) Central heating installation.
 - vii) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - viii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- c) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- d) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- e) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- f) Adjoining roads and services.
- g) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- h) General development proposals in the locality.
- i) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

- j) 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.
- k) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- l) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- m) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area 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 of it.
- n) Any other matters brought to your attention within this report.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES

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

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

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

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

For and on Behalf of

**GEM Associates Limited
Chartered Surveyors**

This Report is dated: xxxxxxxxxxxx

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

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.*

APPENDICES

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 xxxxxx 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.

DETERIOUS MATERIALS

We would refer you to our Terms and Conditions. We have not carried out any specific searches for deteriorious materials, such as asbestos, high alumina cement etc. We have to advise that under the terms of our insurance policy that we are not asbestos approved surveyors.

WEATHER

It was a cold, overcast winter's 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, 2003 the driest year on record and August 2004 was the wettest August on record in many areas, this may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

NOT LOCAL

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

EMPTY PROPERTY

The property was empty at the time of our survey and we have therefore not been able to carry out our normal question and answer session with an occupier. We have met the owner briefly.

INSPECTION LIMITED

We have made various assumptions with regard to this survey as we have not received a brief. We have assumed, for example, that the properties will be used for similar purposes as the original constructed purposes. We have also not carried out any service testing, which may have lead us to draw different conclusions with regards to what we have seen.

Finally we would reiterate that we have not carried out any tests for deteriorious materials.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

www.landreg.org.uk

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

www.rics.org.uk

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

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