

JOB REF: J1063/RBS/2

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY**  
**OF**  
**The Crescent**



**FOR**  
**Mr D**

**PREPARED BY**

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## **CONTENTS**

INTRODUCTION

REPORT FORMAT  
SYNOPSIS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY  
SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

### **EXTERNAL**

CHIMNEY STACKS AND PARAPET WALLS  
ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERFELTS  
RAINWATER GOODS  
WALLS  
EXTERNAL JOINERY AND DETAILING  
EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

### **INTERNAL**

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

### **SERVICES**

ELECTRICITY  
GAS  
PLUMBING AND HEATING  
SANITARY FITTINGS  
MAIN DRAINS

### **OUTSIDE AREAS**

OUTBUILDINGS  
EXTERNAL AREAS

POINTS FOR LEGAL ADVISOR

**APPENDICES**

LIMITATIONS

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for using our services once again and your kind instruction of 5 November; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on 11 November.

As you may recall the Building Survey takes the following format; there is an introductory section (which you are currently reading), which includes a synopsis of the building, and a summary of our findings.

We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

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

As always we recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas that you wish to discuss further and phone us.

We obviously expect you to read the entire report but we would suggest that you initially look at the summary, which refers to various sections in the report which we recommend you read first so that you get a general feel for the way the report is written.

As part of our service we are more than happy to talk through the survey as many times as you wish until you are completely happy to make a decision. Ultimately, the decision to purchase the house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

# **REPORT FORMAT**

To help you understand our Report we utilise various techniques and different styles and types of text, these are as follows:-

## ***GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION***

*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" type face for clarity.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**



We utilise photographs to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area (with this property we have taken approximately one hundred photographs in total and we have enclosed a sample of these within the report).

## **ORIENTATION**

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear, which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

## **SYNOPSIS**

### **SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION**

This is a two storey semi detached Edwardian property. We are advised that it was built in 1910, which is indeed the Edwardian period; this is typical of the type of properties built for the ‘middle class’ in the leafy suburbs. The property has the usual large boxed bay to the front of the property with leaded light window, it once had turned timber finials, although these have now been removed and decorative timber work, it still has the veranda, although this has been modified. All of these are common features of an Edwardian property – but we are now starting to sound too much like an estate agent and will therefore conclude by saying the property is situated in a residential area of similar style properties, although some look a bit larger.

### **EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS**



Front elevation



Rear elevation



Rear garden

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Two reception rooms, one to the front and one to the rear, both good sizes. The front is currently being used as a lounge and the rear is currently being used as a dining room
- Kitchen
- Cloakroom

## **First Floor**

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Master bedroom with wash hand basin
- A double size room, presently used as a study
- Two smaller bedrooms
- W.C.
- Bathroom

## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

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



Master Bedroom – front left hand side



Nursery - front right hand side (accessed from master bedroom)



Study - rear right hand side



Small bedroom – rear left hand side



Lounge



Rear dining room area

# **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

## **EXTERNAL**

Chimneys:	Two brick chimneys
Main Roof:	A gable end pitched roof, which has been re-clad with concrete tiles
Rainwater Goods:	A mixture of cast iron and plastic
Walls:	Flemish bond and stretcher bond construction
External Joinery:	Substantial painted timber sliding sash windows with the fascias and soffits also being predominantly painted timber, but some have been replaced in plastic. The entrance canopy and the veranda are both formed in decorative timber with a paint finish.

## **INTERNAL**

Ceilings:	Predominantly lath and plaster with plasterboarding to the refurbished kitchen area (assumed)
Walls:	Predominantly a wet lime based plaster with modern carlite plaster to the kitchen (assumed)
Floors:	Ground Floor: A suspended timber floor with corking (assumed)  First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed)

## **OUTSIDE**

Typical sized gardens for the age of property. There is no off road parking. Parking is on a first come first served basis.

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

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full. Having said all of that, here are our comments:-

Generally we found the house in reasonable order considering the property's age, type and style; we would however draw your attention to the following issues. However, before you read on we would just like to say that it would be far easier to group all the high level work up and carry it out in one go, although some of it could last quite a few more years we would suggest it would be more prudent to carry it out together.

### 1) **Movement to the Front Bay**

As is reasonably common in this type of property there has been movement to the front bay. We explain the reason for this in detail within the main body of the report.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** None.

Please see the Walls' Section of this Report.



A diagonal crack running from the corner of the right hand lintel up to the window above.

There has also been some sideways movement.

## 2) Chimneys

This is the first of a fair list of what we would term high level work, which can all be grouped together and we suggest you get one quote for the entire lot.

The flashing to the chimneys are poor quality and a cheap substitute for the real thing, for want of a better term. Originally the chimneys would had a lead flashing. We recommend the present tile on edge flashing and cement flashing be replaced in due course with lead.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** When general high level work is carried out, which we anticipate will be in the next two to three years, at the latest five years, we recommend that the flashings are renewed.

**ANTICIPATED COSTS:** This very much depends upon whether scaffold is deemed to be needed, but we suggest it is likely to be in the thousands, rather than the hundreds, of pounds.

Please see the Chimneys' Section of this Report.



The cement mortar to the base of the chimney rather than the flashing. Also note the pointing is starting to weather.

### 3) **Roofs and Parapets**

Fairly general comments. There are some slipped tiles and some missing tiles both to the main roof and to the tile cladding to the front of the property. We would class none of this as emergency work, but nevertheless this needs doing in due course.

We are somewhat concerned about the parapet wall, as it is rendered and does not appear to have a flashing. It is therefore only a matter of time before water gets in through this. Again, as with the chimneys, we would recommend that a lead flashing detail be added. It may, upon very close inspection, be found that there is in fact a lead flashing hidden under the render detail, but nevertheless we feel we should advise you of this.

There is also some hairline cracking in the render that would benefit from repair when you are carrying out high level work.

We were unable to see the roof to the rear bay window at first floor level. We did not have a very good view of the edges that we normally would be able to spot, we think that they were perhaps covered in a mineral felt, but we certainly could not see the actual roof. On the basis that what you can't see is normally a problem, surveying-wise, and the fact that there is some cracking internally to the rear bedroom, we feel there may be a leak on this roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Ask a roofer to carry out a quotation for the rear section of the roof over the bay window. At the same time he may as well carry out a quotation to do the lead flashing to the chimneys and to the parapet wall and replace the various missing tiles. At the same time he should check the lead to the rear roof.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** For the rear roof work we would suggest in the region of £1,000 or so, depending on whether it is just re-felting or whether a new decking is required. However, you could be lucky and just patch repairs may be necessary.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

#### 4) **Rainwater Goods**

It has to be said that when the original cast iron rainwater goods have been replaced we feel it was probably on an ad hoc basis as the replacement work has not been that good. This has led to the interesting situation where you have part cast iron and part plastic rainwater goods. Repairs are definitely needed to the front left hand side where the pipe is completely broken (we advised the owners of this). There are also various other issues, which we think will come to light when you live in the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Repair the down pipe to the left hand side of the property. This is causing damp within the front room.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This very much depends on whether you wish to replace in cast iron or plastic. Plastic is the cheaper initial option, although as explained within the report cast iron in the long term tends to be cheaper.

Please see the Rainwater Goods Section of this Report.



The broken joint between the plastic and cast iron pipe.

## 5) Windows

The windows to the bottom of the property appeared in reasonable condition (considering their age), however we did note to the first floor that one of the windows had a rusting metal bracket on it, these are normally put on where the windows have failed, it is fairly typical to see them on the first floor as people do not tend to paint them or pay as much attention to first floor and roof joinery. We therefore suggest that you re-decorate these and carry out any associated repairs in the summer of 2004.

We also noted that a fair number of the windows did not open, for example in the front room we noted that the sash cords are broken; so a general overhaul of the windows would be of benefit.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Although we dislike using the term ‘overhaul’ it is probably the best term to use for your windows. It may not be important to you that they all open, however we do feel that the first floor level windows should be looked at as we feel the ‘new’ paintwork may be hiding some latent defects.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Anyone’s guess really, as sliding sash windows are fairly expensive to repair properly. We would always recommend that you save the timber if you possibly can.

Please see the External Joinery Section of this Report.



The rusting ‘L’ bracket

That completes what we would term our list of high level type work; although this may look like a long list, in actual fact a good building contractor should be able to carry out most of this work in a week or so, depending upon how bad the windows are.

## Electrics

- 6) We are slightly concerned about the age of the electrics and have therefore recommended a test in this instance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend the electrics be tested.

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as lower the level of the earth around the building, clearing the air vents, repairs to the boundary wall and the clearing of the gutters as you will live in a very leafy area. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

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

### **Purchase Price**

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

### **Every Business Transaction has a Risk**

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

## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**

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

There are a few items to add, other than the high level repairs. The first is that general re-pointing to the property is required, which we detail within the main body of the report.

Please also look at the need to vent the floor as the ventilation should carry on underneath the flooring, but we feel this has been blocked by the patio. We would refer you to the Airbricks Section of this report.

We also noted when reviewing the photographs that there was more condensation staining in the roof than we had originally recalled. This therefore leads us to add that we would strongly recommend that the roof is vented.

It suddenly occurred to us the possible reason for the problems on the rear window.



Not only does the window have the bracket to make it good, it also has a lead covered cill. This may be because water is discharging directly from the flat roof above, down the face of the window which has caused the deterioration in the window itself and also on the cill

As a general comment for any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion. If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

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

# **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

Just a few more comments about the Report format before you read the actual main body of the Report.

## **TENURE**

We have assumed that the property is to be sold Freehold or Long leasehold, with no unusual or onerous clauses and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

## **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

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

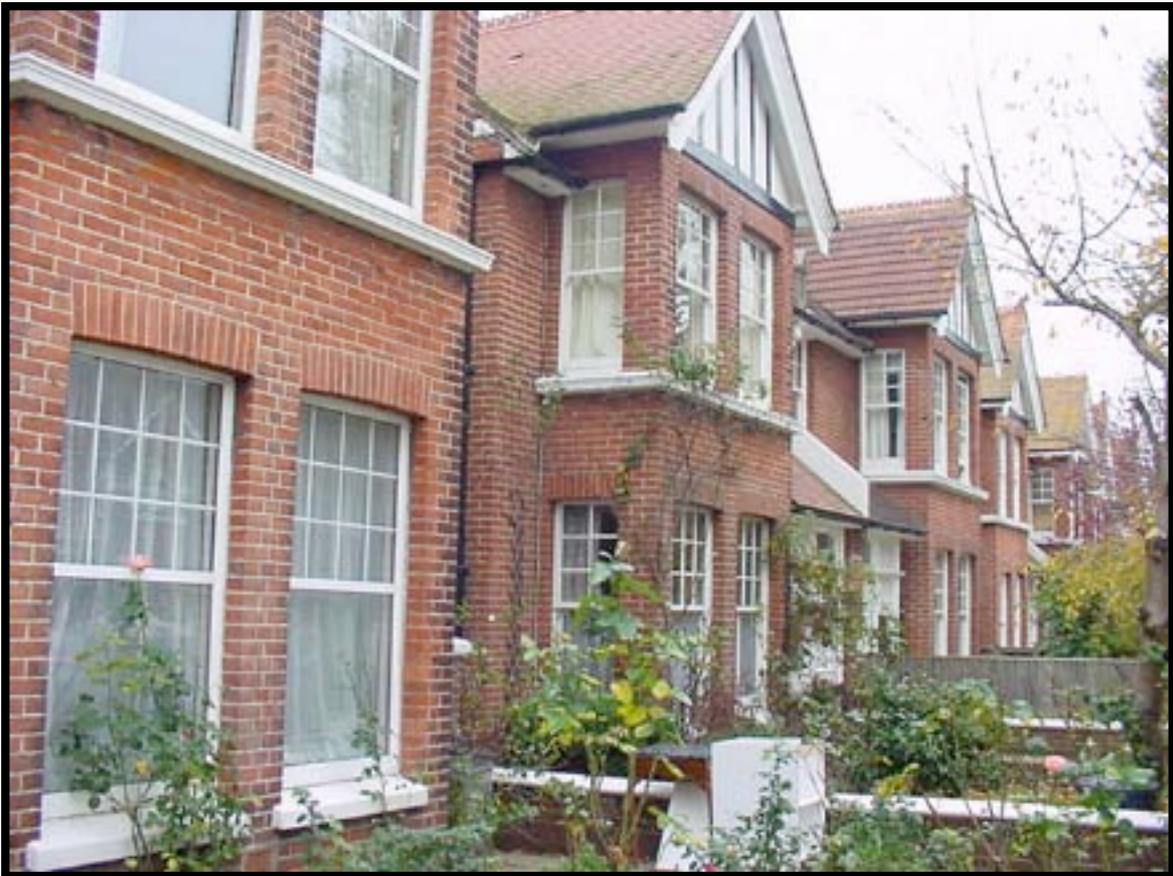
## **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

## **OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION**

Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your house purchase - just phone us.

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



Street View

**EXTERNAL**

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## CHIMNEY STACKS AND PARAPET WALL

There are two chimneys to this property; one to the front and one to the rear.

### Chimneys

#### Chimney One – Front of property

This chimney is brick built with clay chimney pots and is in reasonable to slightly poor condition and will need some re-pointing work in the not too distant future. Probably the main issue in my mind is the tile on edge that surrounds it that has been used as a flashing. This is what we would term a 'cheap and cheerful' flashing; it would be far better replaced by lead. We also note that there is an aerial strapped around the chimney; these can cause damage as they produce pressure points on the chimney so this should also be checked.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Replace flashings with a lead flashing, re-point, check the flashings, which we were unable to see, and that the pots are bedded correctly. We suggest that this is carried out within the next five years, they could possibly last longer, but as you will see later on in this report there is a fair amount of high level work that could be grouped together and carried out all in one go.



In the summary we have showed the rear chimney, this is the front chimney. The tile detail is slightly better than the cement detail that is to the rear chimney, but not much.

## **Chimney Two – Rear right hand side, sitting on the party wall**

This is also brick built with a cement flashing, this is a very ‘cheap and cheerful’ flashing and prone to failure as the cement cracks. Again, we recommend that it is replaced in lead. We could not see the flashing, but we suspect they need some work from the angle of the chimney. There is a large chimney flue, we assume this is to stop down draughts from occurring; it does look rather ugly.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-point and replace the flashing with a lead flashing and check the flashing and pots.

### Flaunchings Defined - Also known as Haunchings

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

### Flashings Defined

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

### Cement Fillets/Cement Flashings

This is where cement has been used to cover up or fill the junctions between two areas, for example between a roof and a chimney stack to help prevent dampness. Cement is a brittle material and prone to cracking which in turn allows dampness into the structure. We would always recommend they are replaced with lead.

## **Parapet Walls**

There is a rendered parapet wall dividing this property from the adjoining property (number 26); it is rendered, which is not how we prefer them to be finished, but nevertheless providing the render is kept in good condition this should normally be satisfactory. The render to the parapet wall that we were able to see clearly was to the rear of the property at low level; this was crazed, or what is known as mapping, as it looks a bit like a map, which means that some work will be needed. Again we refer you to our five year plan on the high level work and would say that the sooner the render work is carried out the better, however it has at least five years, if not longer, from what we could see on the main roof section and to the rear, where the render is in a slightly poorer condition, probably three years; but we are always surprised how long buildings last, particularly render.



The render from this photo looks to be cement, therefore it will be fairly brittle and will crack. Note also the pot on the end is cracked nearly from top to bottom.

### **Flashings to Parapet Wall**

We simply could not see any flashings to the parapet wall. No doubt a close inspection may show there have been some flashings that have been covered over or the flashings may have been ‘bodged’ as they have around the chimneys. We feel, unfortunately, it is likely to be the ‘bodged’ job as we think what has happened is this property has been re-roofed by some of today’s less skilled craftsmen and the roofer that carried out the work has ‘bodged’ together the flashing detail to the base of the chimneys and around the parapet wall.

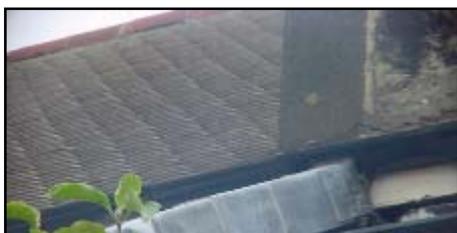
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Within the next five years you need someone to get up on the roof with long ladders. We suggest this happens before you purchase the property (as part of doing a quote for the rear flat roof, but more about this later) and does a quote to sort out your various roofing issues, which we have detailed in the Summary Upon Reflection Section.

### **Other Side of the Parapet Wall**

Try as we might unfortunately we were unable to see the other side of the parapet walls due to the trees being in the way and the angles.

### **Hidden Parapets**

To the front of the property where the veranda is there are some hidden parapets. These look like they were once brick as probably were the main ones on the house. They have then been covered with sheets of lead. Unfortunately we were only able to see the neighbour’s side of these.



This is your neighbour's side of the parapet wall as it was hidden by a tree on your side. This needs to be checked when the roof is being checked.

#### Parapet Walls Defined

These walls are usually above the roof line and often sit on the boundary of the property. Due to their position they are relatively exposed and suffer from deterioration due to the elements.

#### Render Defined

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

Earlier we have used the term party wall in relation to the rear chimney, but it also relates to the parapet wall that sits on and forms the party wall.

#### Party Structures Defined - Party Wall Act Etc. 1996

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

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

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the chimney stacks and parapet wall from the parts we could see. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

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

## ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERFELTS

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

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

We will consider the roofs in two areas; the main roof and the rear roofs, both of which have been re-roofed, we suspect in the 1960s/1970s, with a small concrete tile. The Edwardians would originally have used a clay tile, often a fairly reddish clay tile and often in decorative patterns, as the mass production techniques that they use today for concrete tiles had not as yet been invented.

### Main Roof

You have a pitched roof clad with a concrete tile with a hessian based sarking felt beneath it. The box bay to the front of the property has a pitched roof that cuts back into the main roof forming a valley gutter.

Unfortunately we were unable to see the rear box bay roof properly, we would comment that it does need a check prior to proceeding any further with the purchase.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Roofer to check this roof. He will need a set of long ladders and you must insist that he takes a set of long ladders and, we suggest, that he photographs the roof.

Whilst we would not consider the replacement of this roof, what we would term as something that should stop you buying the property, we do think that whilst the roofer is on the roof it does give him the opportunity to examine the roof quite closely and comment upon this.



This shows how flat the concrete tiles sit on the roof, which indicates to me that they have been machine made. Also to the rear you can see the chimney and the render covered parapet wall together with some ridge tiles.

Generally the roof is in reasonable condition although, as with any concrete roof, there is a very, very slight moss covering. In our opinion it is a shame that the original red tile has been removed as this is a feature of Edwardian properties.

### **Perimeter of the Roof**

We would comment that it is very difficult to see the very edge of the roof. There can often be an issue here where properties have been re-roofed, as there should be what is known as a tilting fillet at the base of the roof; this means a slight tilt to the base tile to slow down any water coming off of it. Where a cheap (and not so cheerful) roof, such as this, has been put on it is unlikely they will have added such detailing. The result of this will be that water may overshoot the guttering. The only way to see this is to wait for a rainy day.

### **Ridge Tiles and Finials**

A standard feature of Edwardian properties was decorative ridge tiles and finials (finials being the decorative point on top of an upright, for example at the apex of a roof). Unfortunately in this instance when the property was re-roofed the ridge tiles and finials were also removed, which is a crying shame and probably pays a lot of testament to the quality of this job, i.e. cheap. If you look to the adjoining properties you will see that many of them still have their original tiles, ridge tiles and finials.



The removed finial. Also note the vertical tiling with the fish scale pattern, this is a typical feature of Edwardian properties



The finial on the adjoining property.

### **Junction of Front Bay Roof and Main Building**

Where these roofs meet there is bound to be a weak point in the valley gutter that we mentioned earlier. Unfortunately we have not been able to see this and therefore cannot comment upon it.

### **Rear Bay Roof**

As mentioned already (we thought we had better reiterate the comment) we were unable to see this roof at all or the junctions that it has with the main roof. We did note a crack internally and believe this may be a thermal movement crack, which does indicate that there may be some repair work needed to this roof, as generally things that are out of sight are usually out of mind; we think this should be checked.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This roof needs to be checked prior to legal commitment to purchase. The roofer needs to have a set of long ladders and we suggest that you ask him to photograph the roof, to make sure he has actually had a look at it (as many unscrupulous roofers simply won't, or are we being cynical surveyors).

### **Sarking Felt**

There is a hessian based sarking felt that was no doubt added when the property was re-roofed as the Edwardians did not have the benefit of such materials. This looked in reasonable condition, although it could be argued that the roof should be vented and this would now be a requirement of Building Regulations.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Add vents to roof.

### **Rear Single Storey Extension Roof**

There are two small outbuildings to the rear of the property that were once, probably used as coal sheds. These also have concrete tile roofs and we have no real further comments to add in this area with regard to the roof tiler, however we would say that the flashings here are very poor and we suggest these are replaced.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We suggest these are replaced when the high level work to the roof is carried out.



A very messy flashing detail. It also looks like the ridge tiles could do with some re-bedding, which involves lifting them, placing cement mortar on the ridge and re-bedding them.

### **Close Boarding**

Close boarding has been used in the outbuilding and there looks to be some leaks getting in, or it may simply be that the area has not been painted for a long time.

#### Close Boarding Defined

These are timbers positioned on the common rafters which are butt jointed together. They add to the wind resistance and water-tightness of the roof together with the overall structural integrity of the roof. Usually this type of roof does not have an underfelt, this can lead to problems if the roof is not cross-battened as wet rot will occur to the underside of the timbers. This is very difficult to identify.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. Single storey roofs to the rear have been inspected from upper floor windows.

## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND ROOF VOIDS** **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

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

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located on the first floor landing. There is no loft ladder, however there is a roof light and there are some floorboards although we are not sure whether they are secured! We recommend that a loft ladder be added as it will make the roof space safer and easier to use and we also recommend that the securing of the floorboards would help.

The roof space has been viewed with the aid of a torch light, at the perimeter, which has limited our viewing slightly.

This property has a cut timber double roof. This means that the roof was cut and made on site. The common rafters - the ones that form the pitch of the roof - are of such a length to have purlin supports to the front and rear (this is common practice in this age of property) therefore doubling the length of joists that can be used.

As we would expect with this age of roof there are stress marks in structural timbers and there is also some salts visible from condensation staining. Ironically the original clay tile roof would have been fully vented to stop such a problem, we built without venting for a while and have now come back full circle and require ventilation within roofs again.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that some vents are added, although we would suggest you avoid the rather ugly plastic mushroom-type vent as there are now vents available that sit underneath the tile and could be carried out at the same time as the high level work is being done.



A general view of the roof. You can see the sarking felt, which is the black between the timber. You can also see some slight sign of condensation on the timbers. But what interested us most of all was the way that the purlin (the horizontal timber) has been supported on a metal bracket. We would guess that this has been added after.

## **Fire Walls**

Fire walls help prevent the spread of fire through roofs and are a relatively recent Building Regulation requirement.

The original brickwork partition wall is in place and is equally useful as a fire wall.

## **Water Tanks and Header Tanks**

The water tanks are formed in plastic, we therefore assume they are relatively new. We were pleased to see that the water tanks were insulated.

## **Roof timbers general comment**

We have inspected a random sample of the roof for active woodworm and structural defects to the timber and wet rot but our examination was impeded to some extent by the stored items and/or insulation, which covered the timber. However, in the area inspected we did not note any problems. We spent approximately half an hour inspecting the roof structure, it is therefore feasible that there may be problems in the roof, although we think it is unlikely, which are hidden. The only way to be 100 per cent sure is to have the roof cleared and checked.

## **Stored Items**

We must comment on the amount of stored items in the roof as this made it fairly difficult for us to manoeuvre around the roof and lots of the timbers were hidden. We are sorry to have to put this caveat in, but whilst we moved a reasonable amount of the memorabilia? there simply is not time in a survey to move the amount of items stored in this roof.

Finally, we would ask you to note that a general inspection of the roof timbers has been made, we have not examined every single timber because some parts of the roof are inaccessible and it is simply not practical.

## RAINWATER GOODS

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

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

Originally this property would have had cast iron rainwater goods. These have been replaced in part with plastic ones. It looks like they have been replaced on an as and when needed basis. This can often lead to problems where the plastic and cast iron join. In fact to the front left hand side a leak is occurring that is causing dampness in the front room (not visible but detectable on a damp metre); the pipes simply need joining together.

We mentioned this to the present owners who advised us that dampness had been identified when they came into the property, but they could not find the cause. This is likely to be happening in several places where there are joints in the pipe work between cast iron and plastic.

We have recently read research that shows when you look at the whole life costs of cast iron and plastic rainwater goods that cast iron is actually cheaper, although it is more expensive initially, but it does last longer. The article showed cast iron having a life expectancy of 60 years, more if it is cleaned and maintained at a typical cost per year of £2.26 and uPVC having a life expectancy of 15 years at a cost per year of £3.00. The figures were produced by English Heritage who are a fairly reliable source, which brings me back to the point we are trying to make, perhaps you should be replacing the plastic rainwater goods with cast iron as they are both in keeping with the age of the property and offer, in the long term, better value for money.

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

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

## WALLS

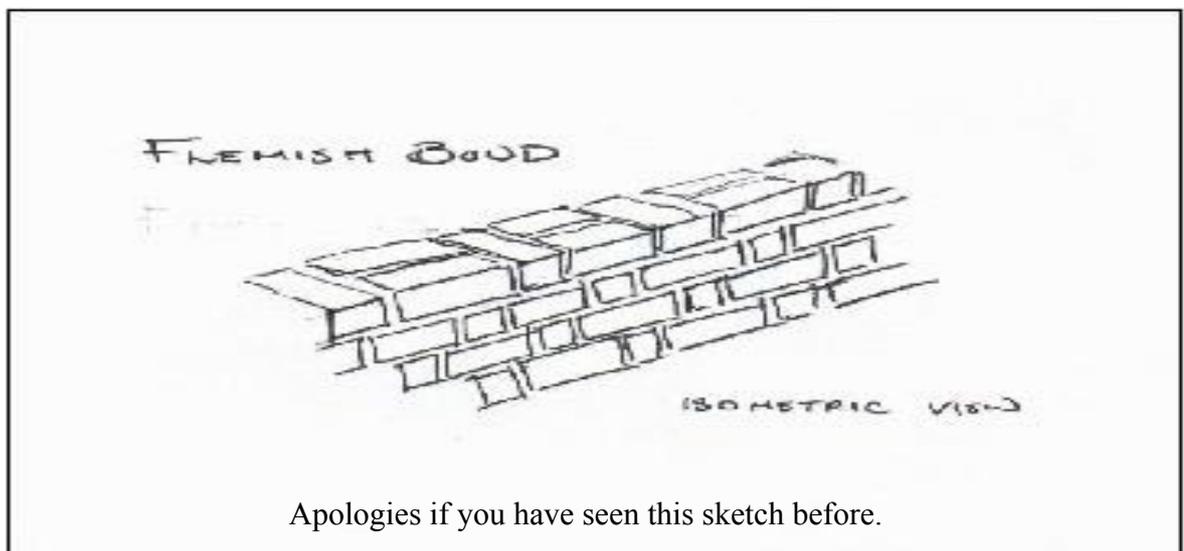
*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

## **Brickwork**

The property is built in a red stock brick. It is bedded originally in lime mortar and has more recently been re-pointed in cement mortar. The brickwork bond is Flemish.

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

We also noted that some areas have stretcher bond. We have previously come across early examples of stretcher bond in properties that are tied together using cast iron, as was common in this age. This can result in problems when the cast iron rusts; this normally leads to horizontal cracking in the brickwork as the rust expands the iron. We have inspected it for this and cannot see it.



## **Pointing**

Generally Flemish Bond brickwork is liable to penetrating dampness internally, dependent upon the condition of the brickwork and the exposure to the weather. In this case the cement pointing is in reasonable condition although we were able to pick sections of it out. It is essential that external faces are kept in good condition.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** When we say reasonable condition we would recommend re-pointing in the next five years, particularly at higher levels as these tend to be missed. We refer you again to our comments on high level repairs that are needed, this should be carried out at the same time. We would recommend the re-pointing is carried out in lime and gradually you replace the damage that has been done with a cement mortar by replacing it with lime. Please read the next section.

## **Lime Every Time**

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

### Lime Mortar Defined

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

### Cement Mortar Defined

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



Here you can see the cement mortar pointing that is starting to come away to reveal the original lime mortar below



Some fairly awful repair work has been carried out within the veranda. The efflorescence (salts) is still coming through indicating this area must have been wet for quite a long time from a leaking roof, or it may still be getting wet from your adjoining neighbour. If you look in the Neighbourhood Section you will see that the upper storey of next door is very poorly maintained.



This shows a variety of re-pointing that has occurred and also generally the weathered joints.



You can see the spalling brickwork at the base of this photograph, this is the effect of using cement mortar.

### **Movement to Front Bay**

There are clear signs of movement to the front bay of this property on the right hand side. This is fairly common in bay windowed properties and results from the weight from the top of the building being distributed down either side of the bay window effectively causing point loads in these areas due to the generous window width that the Edwardians used to use; this then is transferred into the ground. The only problem is that it was not that unusual for the bays to have next to no foundations or for them to be a foot to two foot at the deepest. The Edwardians simply did not understand how the structures would work over the years; not that this is a problem.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** More of an issue is the very poor way that it has been re-pointed, which if anything emphasises it. Again, we suggest that whilst all the high level work is being carried out, assuming you are

happy with the quality of tradesmanship, that this is re-pointed. The mortar should be matched like for like when dry and some cleaning up of the existing brickwork will be required.

### **Vertical Tiling**

There is some decorative vertical tiling to the property, as is common in many Edwardian properties. A fish scale-type pattern has been used. As we are sure you will have noticed some of the tiles have slipped and need to be re-positioned. We also suggest you try to locate a good supply of replacement tiles as these are hard to find.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Re-position slipped tiles.



Here you can see that the tiles have slipped. It will be fairly difficult to get replacements for these.

### **Lintels**

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

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

## **FOUNDATIONS**

*The foundations function, if suitably designed and constructed, is to transfer the dead or superimposed load through the soil so it can suitably carry the loads. Many properties*

*prior to the 19th Century have little or not foundations, as we now think of them, with a minimum depth of around one metre filled with concrete.*

Typically, with a Edwardian property of this period, if we excavated around the foundations, In theory we would expect it to follow the Building Act of 1878 which required a minimum concrete foundation of 9 inches and an oversite layer of concrete 6 inches thick but in practice a stepped brick foundation maybe present. It is simply not possible to tell without excavation. However we have inspected the base of the property to see if there is any movement in the structure over and above that which we would expect for this age, style and type of property. We have taken into account the movement in the bay and we do not note anything unusual.

Our only slight cause for concern is the drains that run down the left hand side where we could see a dip in the pathway that indicates there has been some settlement in this area, possibly from a slight leak to the drains.



The slightly hollow shape of the path.

### **Building Insurance Policy**

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

Finally, no examination has been made of any foundation to the building because to do so requires extensive excavation. We therefore cannot confirm 100 per cent the stability of the walls the foundations support but we have drawn conclusions from the surface evidence available at the time of the inspection and our general knowledge of this type of construction.

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



## **TREES**

There are some trees and bushes within the vicinity of the property, what is known as influencing distance, there is an ivy to the rear and a holly tree, both of which root systems could be/are within influencing distance of the property.

Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs.

Although there were no signs of structural damage attributable to trees at the time of the inspection the possibility of future problems cannot be ruled out – although we think it unlikely. Trees and shrubs should not be allowed to overgrow the property though total removal of trees or pruning should not be undertaken without specialist advice as this could also result in damage.

### Influencing Distance Defined

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

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



The holly to the left and the ivy to the right.

## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout the Country.*

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, we think the property has a damp proof course, although we have not been able to see it. We have based this on that we were unable to find any significant dampness within the property other than the dampness caused by the leaking rainwater pipe. Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

## AIRBRICKS

The floors to this property are suspended timber. This means there should be a through flow of air beneath. Sub floor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the airbricks be obstructed. In this case we found a few airbricks; we would have normally expected to find more. We feel that the patio to the rear has possibly covered up some of the airbricks, which is not good news. We therefore recommend that more airbricks are added.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We suggest you have a closer look to see if there are any airbricks to the rear of the property that have been hidden and have been carried out by a thoughtful builder when, for example, he did the patio alteration. If you cannot find anything we suggest you give us a call and we will re-visit the property and have one final check before we recommend putting in airbricks, as it would be a shame to add a modern airbrick as it would not be in keeping with this property.



You do not have many of these and you probably require more now that the patio has been added to the rear.

## **EXTERNAL JOINERY**

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

*Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property. Another element of external joinery is the fascias and soffits. These offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of guttering.*

### **Fascias and Soffits**

A feature of Edwardian properties is the decorative barge boards that are used. Unfortunately we think these were probably removed when the roofing work was carried out, if they ever existed. We have mentioned earlier our concerns that because the concrete tiled roof was a fairly cheap job there may be no tilting fillet to the edge of the roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We are recommending that the fascias and soffits are checked when the high level work is carried out; although they looked in fair condition.

We were unfortunately hindered in this part of our survey as there was a baby in the front right hand room asleep. However, from what we could see a cover plastic fascia has been placed over the original timber fascia in this area. Putting aside the fact that we personally do not feel plastic of any sort should be used on this type of property, the way this plastic work has been carried out is incorrect. It has covered over the original timber and this can lead to wet rot and dry rot.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that this is removed and replaced with a proper timber fascia board.

### **Windows**

Another feature of Edwardian properties are the large but decorative sash windows and the use of stained glass and they generally make Georgian and Victorian windows look rather plain. In this instance the windows look in reasonable condition to the ground floor, however to the upper floors we could see that repairs have been carried out. The upper rear right hand bedroom, for example, has had an angle bracket fixed on it, which normally is carried out when the joints have failed. Unfortunately even the quality of the repair is

poor and they have used an 'L' shaped metal angle bracket and this in turn has started to rust.

We are aware that redecoration was carried out about two years ago and therefore this could hide all sorts of anomalies in the timber.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The upper windows to be checked when the high level work is being carried out.



The rusting angle bracket



We have already stated the following in the Summary Upon Reflection:  
There seemed to be general problems to the windows in this area, not only does the window have the bracket to make it good, it also has a lead covered cill. This may be because water is discharging directly from the flat roof above and down the face of the window, which has caused the deterioration in the window itself and also on the cill.

we were intrigued by the movement to this window. The only thing we could think of was that the brickwork had perhaps got damp when the veranda above it was deteriorating and there has been differential movement between the brickwork and the window. We would suggest it is filled to stop any dampness getting in.



There really are some 'classic' windows at this property, such as this one to the front door.

## **Doors**

Edwardians used larger style doors. These are still in place and in reasonable condition. We would comment that the French doors to the rear perhaps could be made a little bit more secure as they are a well known way of getting into this type of property.

Finally, a general and random selection and inspection of the fascias and soffits, windows and doors and any exposed timbers, has been made visually to give an over-view of the general condition. 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.*

The external decoration is in reasonably good order; we are advised it was carried out two years ago. We feel it is likely to be hiding some defects at first floor level to the windows and possibly to the fascia and soffit board. This is simply human nature that we generally do not take as much time to prepare joinery at higher level, because you are standing on a ladder and also no one can see it that well.

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

## CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.*

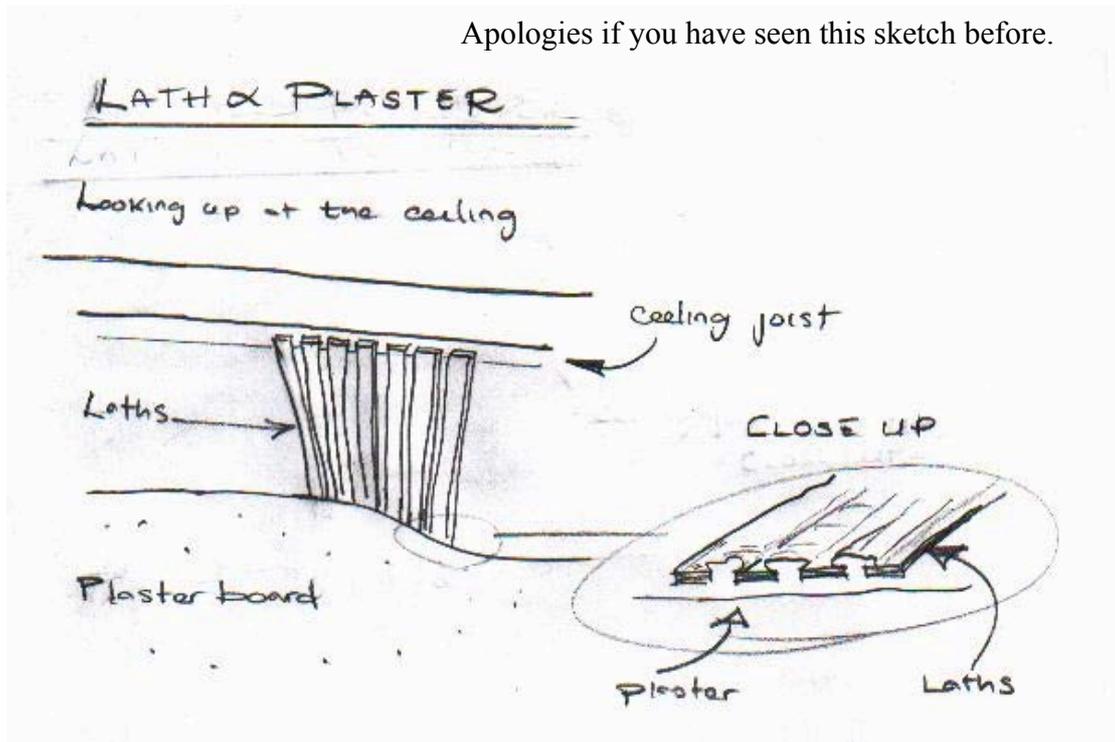
### Ceilings

From within the roof space we were able to identify the ceilings as being formed in lath and plaster. Without removing all the stored items in the roofs and the boarding etc, we cannot be certain of its overall condition. However, during the course of our discussion and our question and answer session with the present owner, we are aware that modern plaster has been used to the kitchen alteration.

#### 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.

Apologies if you have seen this sketch before.



Common defects with this type of plastering are that the laths are placed too close together or too far apart therefore the plaster cannot form a key. It can also deteriorate due to dampness within the structure, general vibrations, structural movement and age.

Without lifting all the roof insulation, we cannot be certain of its condition.

### **Lights in Kitchen Ceiling**

The ceiling lights were noted; they are fairly fashionable. The older type used to pass heat up into the fitting itself and could be a fire hazard. During our question and answer session the owners confirmed that these were a recent addition and therefore should meet the current IEE Regulations (Institute of Electrical Engineers Regulations).

### **Internal Walls and Partitions**

The plaster, when we did our tap test (literally tapping it with the back of our hand), was found to be hollow and loose, perhaps more so than we would normally expect. In this age of property we do expect hollow and loose plaster around the windows and on the chimneybreast. In fact it is almost held in place by the wallpaper in many instances.

This indicates that these areas have lost their key, which is not unusual in this age of property, you just need to be aware of it and that when you redecorate some re-plastering may also be required unless you decorate over the top of what is there, or the other alternative is not to redecorate but to simply paint over what is currently there.

On reflection we would comment that possibly the property was not re-pointed until more recent years and the dampness had got into the structure and caused it to loose its key. Plaster of this age is likely to be made of lime, sand and very little cement if any, and incorporated Ox, horse, cow or goat hair to strengthen the finish. Failure can arise for many reasons. As we have not opened up the ceiling or walls, we cannot express an opinion as to how long they are likely to last.



It was nice to see that the property had picture rails and that they were being used.

### **Hairline Crack to the Rear of the Property**

There is a hairline crack in the rear left hand bedroom. We believe this has been caused by a combination of issues: the point load from the RSJ (a metal beam) that runs across that area to support the bay window, probably the main cause, although there may be some thermal movement caused by the flat roof above where there will typically be no insulation and there may even have been some rainwater that has got into it.

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

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**

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

We are advised that the chimneys were last swept five years ago. The one in the main room is used during the winter months and the one in the dining room has not been used. They are therefore in need of a new sweep if you intend to use them.

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 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.*

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

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor construction is a suspended timber floor, which felt fairly level and true under foot in the areas we walked upon. We were pleased to see it had been corked, an expense that many people do not go to and the exposed timber floor made quite a nice feature – this is where the gaps between the floorboards are filled.

Within the kitchen there is a quarry tile, we could not tell whether this area was still suspended or not. It would have made more sense for it to have been replaced in concrete as the firmer sub base is much better to lay quarry tiles on. We were advised that there is under floor heating in the kitchen, which again is a very nice feature.

No floorboards were lifted and the floor was not accessed.

### Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via air bricks within the walls.

## **First Floor**

The floors were generally covered with carpet. We assume that the first floor construction was joist and floorboard. No floorboards were lifted, and the floor was not accessed.

### 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.

## **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 as there are also other sources of dampness such as condensation, which may inadvertently be considered to be lateral dampness or rising damp.*

### **Rising Damp**

*Rising damp depends upon three components, the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation from the wall surface. The water rising from the ground will tend to rise in the raw materials and will continue to do so due to capillary action to varying degrees of intensity and height. It may not be confined merely to walls but may also occur in floors and other parts of the structure such as internal partitions, particularly where they are in direct contact with the soil. Damage and deterioration can result. It is the extent of this damage and deterioration that we discuss below.*

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal wall surfaces. The only dampness we found relates to the leaking downpipe.

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

### **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

*This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall material, inadequate rainwater goods or corroded downpipes.*

Our damp meter readings were in line with what we would expect for this age of property.

### **Condensation**

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

## **INTERNAL JOINERY**

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

## **Doors**

The doors have been stripped by the present occupiers. Whilst this is not how they would have originally been, indeed the Edwardians would have probably been horrified by this type of look, it is nevertheless fashionable at present.

## **Staircase**

We were able to access under the staircase and found it to be lined with timber, this is good as it will slow any fire down in a worse case scenario, particularly as the electrics are located under the stairs.

## **Kitchen**

The kitchen has been completely re-fitted fairly recently. The estate agent described it as ‘fabulous and beautifully fitted’, which is perhaps showing the salesman side of the estate agent. We are advised that the Aga-style unit is possibly staying and is subject to negotiation and not included within the details.

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

# **TIMBER DEFECTS**

*This section considers dry rot, wet rot and woodworm.*

## **What is Wet Rot or Dry Rot?**

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

## **Dry Rot and Wet Rot**

No obvious signs of significant dry rot or wet rot were noted. There will no doubt be some wet rot to the timber frames and fascia and soffit boards, but nothing excessive given the property's age. We did see condensation staining within the roof, which is why we have recommended it is vented.

## **Woodworm**

The roof space was inspected for woodworm and there were no obvious visual signs of it or indeed signs that past woodworm activity had caused any structurally significant damage, however, if you wish to be 100 per cent certain the only way would be to have a check when the property is emptied of furniture and various stored items (in this case there was a fair amount in the roof space). Although I think it is unlikely there is active woodworm you can never be 100 per cent certain.

**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.

## **INTERNAL DECORATIONS**

The property is decorated to a reasonable standard all in fairly neutral colours. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater than for example within a spare bedroom.

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**

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

We would, however, comment as follows:-

### **Roofs**

There is insulation present within the roof, probably to about 100mm. Currently it is recommended at 200mm under the Building Regulations. However if additional insulation is added this will increase the condensation issues in the roof, so it must be ventilated.

### **Walls**

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space.

### **Windows**

These are single glazed sliding sash windows that are renowned for being draughty. This is probably why the ones in the front lounge remain unopened and are probably painted shut.

### **Services**

We are advised that the boiler was serviced about 18 months ago.

## **Summary**

Thermally the building is fairly average, based upon what we typically see.

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

Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:-

*HTTP//www.est.org.UK which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*or alternatively www.cat.org.UK*

*or www.ecocentre.org.UK for an alternative technological view.*

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **Security**

A security system was not noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. As a matter of policy we do not comment upon layout and design. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services) or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### **Smoke Alarms**

No Smoke detectors were noted.

The current Building Regulations require that smoke detectors be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age that is difficult to do retrospectively unless major work is being carried out. However, you may wish to do this when redecoration or building work is taking place. We would recommend, for your own safety, that battery-operated smoke detectors are installed in each room and checked on a monthly basis. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local fire authority is usually happy to give advice.

### **Insurance**

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

## **SERVICES**

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

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied. Conclusive tests can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors. The vendor should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

## **ELECTRICITY**

The electric fuse and consumer units was located under the stairs and looked to be about 40 years old. We were advised that the current owners have not had any electrical work carried out other than that necessary to do the kitchen work.

Visible wiring and fittings are of a modern type. If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years. This is often an insurance company recommendation as well



Not the red and black wiring; this has been superseded for many years. From what we could see this is an old electrical installation

## **GAS**

The gas consumer unit is located in the kitchen near the rear door. It is a very modern gas unit and therefore we assume that some alterations have taken place to the gas supply fairly recently.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your Legal Advisor should confirm what gas work has been carried out.

The gas boiler is fitted to the ground floor above the ground floor W.C. and is a Potterton Netaheat boiler, which are fairly common in our experience. Generally it is considered that this type of boiler has a life of 15-20 years. The newer combination boilers would appear to have a lot shorter life of 5-10 years, this is assuming they are serviced regularly.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of CORGI (the Council of Registered Gas Installers); works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a CORGI registered contractor. Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

## **PLUMBING AND HEATING**

### **Water Supply**

The internal stopcock is located in the ground floor W.C. and the external stopcock is located near the gate. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

It should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

## **Water Pressure**

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed reasonable.

The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

## **Cold Water Cistern and Hot Water Cylinder**

The cold water cistern is located within the roof space and the hot water cylinder is located in the rear bedroom and is fairly old as it is not the factory lagged variety.

## **Plumbing**

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper pipework. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors.

## **Heating**

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

## **Soil and Vent Pipe**

Located on the left hand side of the property and is a mixture of cast iron and plastic, again no doubt ad hoc repairs have been carried out.

## SANITARY FITTINGS

*In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.*

Generally the sanitary fittings are in reasonable condition and in some areas they are as new. We thought that perhaps the bathroom was slightly small when compared with the house as a whole. However you have to remember that the attitude to bathing was very different in the Edwardian time and in fact we are talking about an era where it would have been common to have not had running water or drains or indeed electricity.

And finally, it is important to ensure that the tiling and seals are properly made and maintained at the junction between wall surfaces and baths, showers etc., as damp penetration can lead to the development of fungal decay in concealed areas. This may not become apparent until a major attack has developed necessitating extensive and costly repairs.



The modern, almost as new bath.

## **MAIN DRAINS**

*The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the Victorian era and works so successfully today it is often taken for granted. It is only in recent years that re-investment has taken place to upgrade the original drainage systems.*

It is assumed that the foul drains from the property discharge into a public sewer; this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same.

### **Manholes**

There are two manholes to the left hand side of the property. These were duly lifted and both found to be traditionally built and were free flowing at the time of our inspection.

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

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

It must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the building's foundations. Drainage repairs are inevitably costly and may result in damage being caused to those areas of the property beneath, or adjacent to, which the drains have been run.

### **Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal.

Rain/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.

### **Leaking Drain**

There is a slight recess in the path above the drains that indicates to us that there has been some movement in this area. It is not unusual for this age of property to have slight leaks to the drains, so do not be overly concerned, however you should be aware that you, along with everyone in this age of property are starting to live on borrowed time with regard to the drains that have exceeded the original life span.

Please also see our comments within the Rainwater Goods section.

## OUTSIDE AREAS

### GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS

As you are well aware there is no garage with this property, it would be most unusual if there were. There are however two outbuildings that are in a reasonable condition considering what they are. They are brick built and have been re-roofed with a concrete tile.

### EXTERNAL AREAS

#### Boundaries

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.

The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

#### Gardens

The gardens are of reasonable size for this age of property and are both fairly level.

We would however comment on the boundary walls requiring some work, such as re-pointing and re-rendering in some instances.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** General re-pointing and re-rendering.



Some re-pointing required to this boundary wall.

#### Neighbours

We knocked on your adjoining neighbours' doors, 26a and 26b. We spoke to the neighbour in 26a who lives on the upper floor. This flat decoratively is in a very poor state getting almost to the stage where it may start to devalue your property. We would suggest that you tactfully as possible have a 'cup of tea chat' with the next door neighbours to see if you think they have any intention of ever re-decorating. Having walked up and down the road several times the upper storey of this house really does let the road as a whole down.



If you look closely you can see the peeling paintwork to the window.

## **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) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:-
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations. We have been advised verbally that no treatment has ever been carried out.
  - ii) Rising damp treatments. We have been advised verbally that no treatment has ever been carried out.
  - iii) Roof and similar renewals.
  - iv) Central heating installation.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.

- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or of the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls into a flood plain, old landfill site etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them about it.

## **LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA**

From our investigations the property has not been identified as being a Listed building, however it is in the Pembroke and Princes Conservation Area and has an Article 4 restriction, which means that any work to the property or any work to the front boundary wall will require planning permission.

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

## **PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL**

### Planning and Building Control

We have been advised that no applications have been made for planning permission within the last ten years, however an application was made in 2001 for Building Regulations to enlarge the opening to the kitchen.

This was confirmed by the Jeff Bennett of the Planning Department on 4 November 2003 at 10.00 am.

Any enquiries going back more than ten years must be put in writing to the Planning Department. We therefore advise that your Legal Advisor should carry out any checks he/she feels necessary and confirm the above information.

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

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

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

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

**For and on Behalf of**

**[Http://www.1stassociated.co.uk](http://www.1stassociated.co.uk)  
Chartered Surveyors**

**This Report is dated 12 November 2003**

## **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.*

House Builders Bible  
*By mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

# 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 3 November 2003 and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

## **ENGLISH LAW**

We would remind you that this report should not be published or reproduced in any way without the surveyor's expressed permission and is governed by English Law and any dispute arising there from shall be adjudicated upon only by the English Courts.

## **SOLE USE**

This report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his professional advisors. Any other persons rely on the Report at their own risk.

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

Although we are pointing out the obvious, our Surveyors obviously can't see through walls, floors, heavy furniture, fixed kitchen units etc. they have therefore made their best assumptions in these areas.

As this is a one off inspection, we cannot guarantee that there are no other defects than those mentioned in the report and also that defects can subsequently develop.

## **WEATHER**

It was fairly pleasant and warm autumn day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

We would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you are probably aware the year 2000 was the wettest year on record and 2003 the driest year on records, this may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

## **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.

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

The property was occupied at the time of our survey, which meant that there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the roof space and obviously day to day household goods throughout the property. Access to the front box room was somewhat limited due to a baby being asleep in it at the time of our survey. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

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

[www.landreg.org.uk](http://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](http://www.rics.org.uk)

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

[www.halifax.co.uk](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://www.nationwide.co.uk)

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

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

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

[Motleyfool.co.uk](http://Motleyfool.co.uk)

We also like the Motley Fool website which is a general financial site and although it is selling financial services and other services they do tend to give a very readable view of the housing market.