

ProEnergis
Chartered Surveyors



Address

XXXXX

On behalf of:

XXXXX

DATE OF INSPECTION: 18 November 2010

BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

**“a detailed report on a property’s
condition”.**

Example building survey

Making the most of your report

This form of survey report has been designed in line with comments from our customers. Our aim is to provide advice and information on your proposed new home, its construction, the materials used and its condition in a format that is clear and easy to understand.

A plain English style

We try wherever possible to use a plain English style and avoid jargon, but we do need sometimes to use technical terms to describe parts of the building. Before you start to read the report, take a look at the “House Illustration” and “Glossary of Building Terms” in the APPENDIX. This will help you understand some of the technical terms in the report. We would of course be pleased to discuss any aspect of the report with you further.

Advice on repairs and faults

The construction style of the building and the defects found by the surveyor are shown in the Survey Report and there are annotated photos where we feel that these are appropriate and helpful.

Extra construction facts

In the APPENDIX we incorporate general advice for each part of the structure. This will give you some background knowledge of main materials and construction used. They have been selected because they are relevant to this property and reading them will give you a better assessment of the repairs recommended in the report.

Useful general maintenance notes are included in APPENDIX 4. You will find Essential Guidance for your Survey Report in APPENDIX 5. Please read your report carefully and feel free to contact our surveyor to discuss any matters.

Robert Green BSc MRICS DEA NDEA
Proenergis Chartered Surveyors

CONDITION RATINGS 1,2 & 3

What everyone wants to know is how significant any defect is and whether repairs need to be dealt with now, or can the work wait until after occupation – for each repair: we tell you how urgent and significant it is. Where repair or further investigation is required, the appropriate advice about what action to take is provided at the end of the section

CONDITION RATINGS

DEFINITION

- 1 **Satisfactory Repair:** Considered to be in an acceptable state of repair and condition taking into account the age of the property. No repair is required.
2. **Maintenance Required:** Considered by the surveyor to be in a generally acceptable condition but requires some routine maintenance and repair which is considered normal for a property of this age and character. These defects or shortcomings would be taken into account by a reasonable buyer and seller when agreeing a purchase price.
3. **Urgent Repair or Further Investigation Needed:** Defects or shortcomings that are an actual or developing threat to the fabric of the building or to personal safety. Repair or further investigation is required immediately. These defects may affect your decision to purchase and the price that you pay for the property.

Remember this is just a guide but it should help you prioritise the repairs listed. Take special note of items with a condition rating 3 as further investigation may be needed by a specialist contractor. You are strongly advised to obtain quotations before exchange of contracts for any item given a rating of 2 or 3.

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SUMMARY

PROPERTY

Property address	XXXXXXXXXXXX
Property type	A traditional semi detached house with a loft conversion.
Year built	Circa 1900. Loft conversion circa 2000 (solicitors to verify).
Accommodation	Ground Floor: Living Room, Dining Room, Kitchen, Utility Room. First Floor: Three Bedrooms, Family Bathroom, En-Suite Shower Room. Second Floor:- One Bedroom. Outbuildings: There are no outbuildings with this property. External: The property has a small front forecourt and a private enclosed rear garden.
Location	The property is situated close to West Bridgford town centre with a good range of amenities and facilities. The area is a popular and generally high value suburb.
The Site and Surrounding Area	The property occupies a regular shaped level plot. The boundaries are marked physically on all sides.
Tenure	It has been assumed that the property is being sold on a freehold basis with vacant possession on completion of sale.
Floor area	145m ² .
Insurance reinstatement cost	£175,000

BRIEF OVERALL ASSESSMENT

This is a reasonably maintained and presented traditional semi detached house situated in an established and high value residential location. The property has been extended into the roof space to provide an additional bedroom and the kitchen and utility room external door and window openings have been reconfigured. This work appears to have been undertaken to a satisfactory standard.

The property is considered to be an attractive long term proposition, and we can see no fundamental reasons as to why you should be deterred from proceeding with your purchase at the agreed price which is understood to be £240,000 (two hundred and forty thousand pounds).

It is important that the report should be considered in its entirety before proceeding with your purchase. Please note, where we have provided estimates of costs for repairs, these are based on our own experience and these figures are for guidance only to help you budget. You still need to get your own quotes before exchange of contracts.

Example building survey

VALUATION

£240,000 (two hundred and forty thousand pounds).

RENTAL INCOME

Rental income would be in the region of £850 PCM.

ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The soil pipe to the rear of the property is in white asbestos. This poses no threat to health currently and can be left in situ. This pipe should not be sanded or sawn so as to release fibres.

I am not aware of any adverse environmental factors affecting the property.

I am not aware that this area has had any recent flooding problems but your solicitor will take up this enquiry for you.

MATTERS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISER

You should ask your Legal Adviser to investigate and advise on the following:

Planning

There are no planning issues noted.

Building Regulations

The loft conversion would have required Building Regulation Approvals and your Legal Adviser should confirm that this was obtained.

Roads

We assume that the road approaching the property is made up and adopted by the local authority.

Rights of way

No issues noted.

Drainage

It is assumed that the property is connected to the mains sewer.

Party Wall Etc. Act 1996

N/A.

Flying Freeholds

N/A.

Service and testing documentation

The purchasing Legal Adviser should establish whether there are service and testing documentation for the boiler and central heating system.

Guarantees

Guarantees should be obtained for the remedial damp proofing works and double glazing, if available.

Other Matters

None.

Example building survey

Signed

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Name and Qualifications	Robert Green, BSc MRICS DEA NDEA
Position	Senior Partner
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INSTRUCTION

Scope of Instructions

This building survey report has been prepared in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Engagement. It is pointed out that this is a general building survey report on the property and not a Schedule of Condition which would list every minor defect. It is a report intended to give a general opinion as to the condition of the property, and to enable you to plan for future maintenance.

This report has been prepared solely for the benefit of the named client. No liability is accepted to any third party.

No formal enquiries have been made of the Statutory Authorities or investigations made to verify information as to the tenure and existence of rights or easements.

Where work has been carried out to the property in the past, the surveyor cannot warrant that this has been done in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, British and European Standards and Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates, and statutory regulations.

Prior to exchange of contracts, you should conclude all of the further investigations we have recommended and have these and all the repairs priced so that you are fully aware of the financial commitment you will be entering into when purchasing the property.

Instruction from

XXXXXXXXXXXX.

Date of inspection

18 November 2010.

Weather

The weather was dry and overcast during the survey. This preceded a period of similar weather conditions.

Furnished or unfurnished

The property was furnished at the time of our inspection. Floors were partly covered in carpets and other floor coverings.

Limitations of inspection

Comment cannot be given on areas that are covered, concealed or not otherwise readily visible. There may be detectable signs of concealed defects, in which case recommendations are made in the report. In the absence of any such evidence it must be assumed in producing this report that such areas are free from defect. If greater assurance is required on these matters, it will be necessary to carry out exposure works. Unless these are carried out prior to exchange of contracts, there is a risk that additional defects and consequent repair costs will be discovered at a later date. This risk should be discussed with the conservation officer on site during our meeting for her opinion.

The inspection of the services was limited to those areas which are visible. No comment can be made as to the soundness of any services which are not visible. Services have not been tested but where appropriate, specific advice has been made as to the advisability of having the services inspected by a specialist contractor.

It must be accepted that this report can only comment on what is visible and reasonably accessible to the surveyor at the time of inspection.

The property had a large amount of stored items and personal possessions throughout, including within the eaves cupboards. The loft to the rear of the property was very full of stored items and whilst we have made every effort to examine this area thoroughly it must be accepted that there are certain restrictions on what can be reasonably accessed in this area.

Example building survey

Information Relied Upon in this Report

We understand that the current owners purchased the property in 2002 and the loft conversion was constructed prior to their occupation. They inform us that they have previously checked to confirm that Building Regulation Approval was obtained.

Occupancy

The property was occupied at the time of my inspection. I saw no signs of any formal or informal tenancy arrangements.

Date of report

28 February 2011.

SURVEY REPORT

CONSTRUCTIONAL PRINCIPLES & STRUCTURAL RISKS

Description The constructional principles consider the way in which a property supports vertical and lateral loads through its fabric. It therefore assesses whether the structural parts of the building i.e. walls, floors and roof, will provide adequate strength and rigidity at all times.

Although dwellings can be built in a number of different shapes and sizes, all must satisfy constructional principles which will ensure that the building does not fail when built or when reasonable loads are placed upon it.

Constructional Principles The roof is supported on timber rafters and purlins. This loading is transferred down through loadbearing external walls to foundations at ground level. Lateral restraint to the structure is likely to be provided by fixed wall plates at roof level and braced by internal floors and loadbearing walls. The floors are in turn supported on the loadbearing internal and external walls. We can expect there to be foundations of a relatively shallow depth given the age of the property.

The loft conversion has an independent loadbearing floor structure which is carried on steel beams from the party wall to the left side external wall. There is a timber framed dormer window to the rear.

Trees There is a heavily pollarded hedge made up of mainly Leylandii to the front of the property. These trees have been heavily cut back and do not pose any threat to the fabric of the building. These can be removed or reduced further in height as you wish.

Structural Movement We noticed evidence of slight past movement to the property as is common with property of this age and type in this location. This is mainly due to slight settlement of the structure (natural compression of the building materials and soil under load) and natural differential expansion and contraction thermally of the building at weak points. Internally, the dining room floor slopes slightly towards the rear left side corner. We noted minor former settlement cracks to the front door archway, over the rear dining room doorway, beneath the kitchen window and above the first floor rear bedroom window. These cracks are not related to foundation movement and are not progressive and are no a cause for concern. Remedial works are not required. The cracking would be categorised on the BRE scale as slight.

Condition Rating

1

EXTERIOR

CHIMNEY STACKS

Description There is a single brick stack to the left side of the property surmounted by three apparently open chimney pots. We cannot provide complete assurance about the condition of a chimney from a ground level inspection undertaken with binoculars.

Condition The chimney stack appears to have been rebuilt in the past as the brickwork appears to be different from the rest of the property. This is quite common to stacks which often become eroded as they are in an exposed position.

The three pots appear to be in satisfactory order although it is difficult from an inspection undertaken from ground level to give complete assurance that the pots are held securely into position. We cannot see the cement flashing (at the base of the pots) which hold the pots on the stack.

It would appear that a pot has been removed to the rear of the stack. This would formerly have served a fireplace within the property and this flue appears to have been sealed off on the stack with no form of ventilation visible. We refer you to our later comments in this regard in the fireplaces section in this report.

There are what appeared to be lead flashings around the base of the stack which appear to be adequately fixed into position. There is no evidence of any leakage internally.

When considering the adjoining semi detached house, it would appear that there would originally have been a chimney stack over the bathroom serving the kitchen beneath. In this property the stack has been completely removed.

Condition Rating

1

MAIN ROOF COVERINGS

Description

The roof to the property has composite (artificial) slates laid over a felt underlining. The dormer to the rear has a flat felt roof which could not be inspected. The bay has an older slate covered roof.

Condition

The main roof coverings appear to be in a generally satisfactory condition with no evidence of significant defect noted. There appears to be a slightly slipped slate over the rear of the property which can be fixed simply back into position.

The roof has been formerly stripped and re-laid over a felt underlining which provides a secondary defence against leakages from wind driven rain or snow. The felt appears to be in a satisfactory condition with no evidence of significant deterioration where visible.

The bay roof is in slate which appears to have been overpainted with a waterproofing type compound. This is usually applied to prolong the life of and repair a leaking slate roof. However, there is no evidence of internal leakage or external defect to lead us to suspect that any defect exists.



Bay roof

The flat felt roof over the dormer could not be inspected, however it should be noted that flat felt roofs of this type have a normal lifespan of 15-20 years and will therefore require re-covering during this timeframe. There was no evidence of any leakage internally at the current time.

We noted some tar/bitumen compound had been applied to the rear ridge to the side of the dormer roof. This is thought likely to be to repair a former leak. There is no evidence of internal leakage, however this is not likely to provide a permanent solution to a problem and we recommend that a roofing contractor is instructed to undertake a precautionary inspection of this area.



Repair to rear ridge

Condition Rating

3

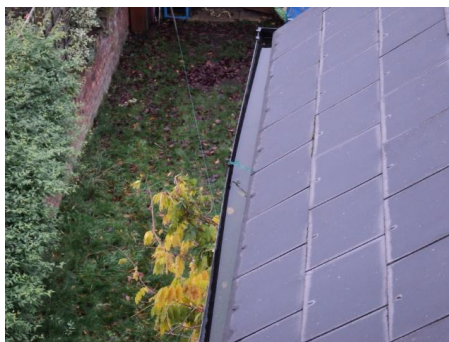
ROOF DRAINAGE

Description

The gutters and majority of the downpipes to the property are in modern plastic sections with plastic and cast iron downpipes discharging to gullies at ground level.

Condition

Inadequate disposal of rainwater can cause serious problems in a building including damp, timber decay and structural movement. Keeping gutters and downpipes (and the drains to which they connect) clean and in good condition is always important.



Misaligned gutter to rear

Condition Rating

2

EAVES, FASCIAS & SOFFITS

Description

The property has recessed timber fascias concealed behind guttering. The dormer window has plastic fascias and soffits.

Condition

The roof edge timbers are considered to be in a satisfactory condition with no evidence of any significant defect. The Wisteria on the rear of the property has been significantly cut back recently and we noted that this had grown into the roof space of the dormer distorting the fascia. The remaining dead branches should be pulled out of the roof space.



Wisteria branches in fascia

Condition Rating

1

MAIN WALLS

Description

The external walls to the property are of solid construction, circa 230 mm thickness.

The walls around the dormer roof are of timber frame construction clad externally in vertically hung tiles. The front elevation of the property is rendered in sand and cement.

Condition

Our inspection of the external surfaces of the main walls was made from ground level with the aid of binoculars, a spirit level and a standard surveyor's ladder. The inspection was also facilitated via readily accessible windows.

The foundations have not been exposed. Whilst there is a risk of unseen defects, there are no above ground signs of defective foundations. There are no signs of any unusual significant movement or distortion to the main walls.

The main walls are in a generally satisfactory condition where visible, consistent with their age and are free from any obvious significant ongoing distortion or cracking that would lead us to suspect the structural integrity of the property. There are some minor settlement, thermal and shrinkage movement cracks but these are not considered progressive and no works are required.

We understand that a new doorway was created from the former window to the rear of the dining room and the former doorway from the kitchen has been blocked up. Additionally, a new door opening has been made on the rear of the property into the utility room. There are no significant defects with this work and the standard of construction appears to be satisfactory.

The render (sand and cement coating) to the front elevation of the property

has some unkeyed and blown areas which now require localised hacking off and patch re-rendering. This was particularly noted around the porch opening and to the left side of the front elevation. A quotation should now be obtained from a building contractor for this work. It is difficult to give an estimate of the cost for this type of work as we were not able to access all parts of the render to check its soundness.



Damaged render to front

Crack below kitchen window

Condition Rating

2

SUB FLOOR VENTILATION

Description

Ventilation of the sub floor void under a timber floor is necessary to prevent timber decay occurring to the joists from stagnant and moist air conditions.

Condition

Sub floor ventilation to the living room and dining room requires some improvement. The vent to the rear of the dining room has been obscured by the door step and this should be enlarged. The two sub floor vents to the bay are partially blocked with debris and should be cleared through and a new air brick should be provided to the right side. This should be relatively low cost.



Blocked vent by rear step

Condition Rating

2

DAMP PROOF COURSE (DPC)

Description

There is a chemically injected remedial DPC and original engineering brick DPC visible to the external walls.

Condition

Walls require a damp-proof course to prevent moisture travelling up through the structure which can lead to internal dampness, perished plaster, spoilt decorations and rot in skirting boards and other timbers. Damp can penetrate if there is no damp-proof course or if the damp proof course has failed.



Chemical and blue brick DPC

We did not note any evidence of a problem with rising dampness in this property and consider that the damp proof course is effective. You should try and obtain any guarantees for the DPC installation.

Condition Rating

1

WINDOWS, DOORS & EXTERNAL JOINERY

Description

The windows to the property are formed in modern double glazed plastic sections. The front door is of single glazed timber and the dining room door is double glazed timber.

Condition

The windows are considered to be in a satisfactory condition with no evidence of significant defect noted.

The door from the dining room is a bespoke unit and is in satisfactory order. This doorframe and door have been purpose made to fit into the slightly distorted door opening.

The rear door is of timber construction and is in satisfactory order.

Condition Rating

1

EXTERIOR DECORATIONS

Description

External joinery has been decorated with a gloss paint finish. The render has been painted in masonry paint.

Condition

The exterior is in satisfactory decorative order currently. Regular maintenance and redecoration will be required if the condition of the exterior joinery is to be preserved. The external woodwork will need regular redecoration, typically on a 3-5 yearly cycle depending on the quality of paint or stain coatings, exposure factors, and the condition of the surfaces beneath.

Condition Rating

1

INTERIOR

MAIN ROOF CONSTRUCTION

Description

Access to the roof void was via a hatch in the eaves cupboards to the front and via the loft hatch to the rear of the loft conversion. The loft conversion conceals much of the structure.

The roof has been constructed in equally spaced timber rafters supported mid span on sturdy purlins spanning to the external walls. The loft conversion has additional steel joists spanning across the width of the property to support the imposed loading.

Condition

Where visible, the roof timbers appear to be coping with the imposed loading with no evidence of significant distortion or weaknesses. We assume that the loft conversion was undertaken with Building Regulation Approvals having been obtained. There are no obvious signs of defect to this part of the property and the floor appears to be firm and level underfoot indicating correct construction. Additionally the rafters around the loft conversion have been strengthened. Obviously our inspection of the loft is restricted as we have not undertaken any damaging exposure works.



Strengthened rafters to loft



Old stains to rear purlin



Steel supporting joist to loft



Insulation around loft conversion

We noted some old staining to the purlin in the rear loft space which was dry when tested with a moisture meter. There is no obvious reason for this and this may have pre dated the roof being re-covered.

Condition Rating

1

CEILINGS

Description

The ceilings have been constructed from predominantly lath and plaster with some plasterboard.

Condition

The ceilings have been inspected from within the rooms. No opening up has been undertaken. The nature of the ceiling materials cannot be ascertained fully without damage being caused.

Ceiling surfaces appear to be in a reasonable condition, consistent with their age. No signs of significant damage or distortion were noted. Minor cracks were noted to some ceiling surfaces, which have been caused by general shrinkage and the normal vibrations which tend to occur in domestic buildings. These cracks are not of structural significance, but will need to be filled when redecorating.

The first floor front and middle bedroom ceilings are cracked, however these do not require replacing at the present time. These ceilings are likely to slowly loosen further leading to the requirement for replastering in the medium term. This cracking is likely to have been exacerbated by the building work undertaken to convert the loft. You should budget for their replacement in the next few years.

Condition Rating

1

WALLS, PARTITIONS & PLASTERWORK

Description

The internal partitions have been constructed from mixed lath and plaster and solid masonry construction.

Condition

As with the ceilings, the walls and partitions have been inspected from within the rooms and no opening up has been undertaken. The precise composition of the wall structures, linings and finishings cannot be ascertained without exposure works being undertaken.

Internal wall surfaces are mostly plastered or are concealed by linings and decoration. They are in reasonable condition for the property's age but we found some localised areas of cracked and hollow plaster. Additionally we found some areas of distorted plaster to the landing and front bedroom. However, remedial works are not required at present.

There are hairline thermal movement cracks noted to various walls but these can be infilled prior to subsequent re decoration.

Condition Rating

1

FIREPLACES, FLUES & CHIMNEY BREASTS

Description

There are chimney breasts in the left side bedrooms and living rooms beneath.

Condition

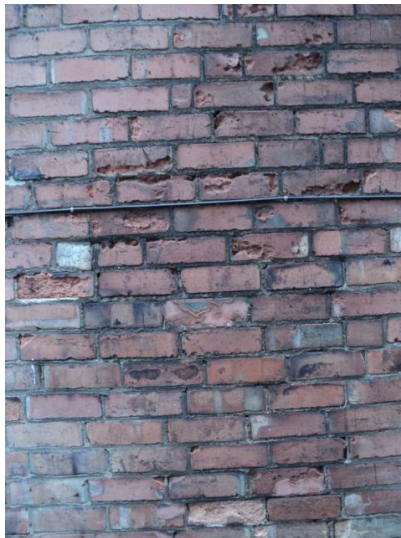
There is a fireplace with a cast iron insert housing a living flame gas fire within the front reception room. Elsewhere, the former fireplaces have been blocked with no provision for ventilation. Gas fires should ideally have a lined flue for safety. This should be discussed with a heating engineer before exchange of contracts.

Ventilation is required to redundant flues to prevent an excessive build up of moisture within the chimney flues which can cause external decay to brickwork and internal damp staining. This has occurred to the dining room chimney breast with a large number of spalled/eroded bricks now visible externally on the side of the property. This has occurred as the moisture

laden bricks freeze and the faces being forced off. We recommend that a suitable vent is placed into the front of all sealed fireplaces and the rear flue on the chimney stack is vented at its top. It may be beneficial to also provide a vent half way up each redundant flue on the external wall. This should allow the trapped moisture to naturally reduce. A quotation should now be obtained from a competent bricklayer to cut out and replace the worst brickwork on the left side of the property and to provide vents.



Stack removed



Eroded brickwork to left wall/flue

Condition Rating

2

FLOORS

Description

The ground floor is of mixed solid and suspended timber construction. The hallway, living room and dining room are of suspended timber, whilst the kitchen and utility room are of solid construction.

The upper floor is formed of suspended timber floor joists.

Condition

It should be noted that there are practical limitations on the inspection of floors, whether bare or covered by fitted coverings and furniture. Floorboards have not been lifted as this could cause damage and only a general comment can be made, and complete assurance cannot be given that there are no concealed defects. Comments are therefore based on selected areas where the edges of carpets could be turned back to give an indication of the method of construction used and its condition.

The kitchen and utility room floors are solid and were generally reasonably firm and level. The timber floors to the living room, dining room and hall were reasonably firm underfoot, but the dining room slopes slightly to the rear left side. There were a suitable number of sub floor vents around the property to

allow air to circulate around the floor timbers to prevent rot occurring, but as previously mentioned these need clearing through.

The upper floors are of suspended timber and these are in satisfactory order. There is a damaged floorboard to the rear bedroom but this replacement is not essential.



Damaged floorboard

The flooring beneath the bathroom fittings could not be inspected as this would involve damaging investigations which are beyond the scope of a normal survey.

Condition Rating

1

DAMPNESS

Inspection

Tests were conducted with an electronic moisture meter at appropriate positions throughout the property (except where impermeable surface finishes, furniture, fitted cupboards and stored goods prevented access to take readings).

Rising Damp

Rising dampness is caused by the natural effect of moisture from the ground rising up through a structure by means of capillary action. This will occur where there is failure or lack of a damp-proof course. Rising dampness will inevitably lead to spoilt decorations, defective plaster, and rot to timbers, and creates an unhealthy environment in which to live.

Ground storey walls were tested with a moisture meter and we found no evidence of rising dampness. We conclude that the damp proof course is in satisfactory working order.

Penetrating Damp

Penetrating dampness can occur when rain penetrates the external fabric of the building. We did not find any current evidence of this.

Condensation

No indications of any problems with condensation were noted internally. However, condensation may be a problem for one occupier where it was not for the previous one. It can often be controlled by careful management of heating and ventilation rather than by physical works. The control of condensation involves maintaining surface temperatures above the dew point (the humidity related temperature at which water vapour turns into moisture), and the provision of adequate thermal insulation and proper ventilation.

The extent of condensation in a dwelling will depend not only on its orientation and construction, but on variable factors such as weather conditions, lifestyle, and how the property is heated and ventilated. It is essential that moisture producing rooms, such as kitchens, bathrooms and

utilities, are adequately heated and ventilated at all times to prevent future problems.

As mentioned earlier, there is a condensation/moisture build up in the sealed chimney flue to the dining room and vents are now required.

We noted some elevated readings on a moisture meter to the right side of the utility room which is likely to be caused by condensation. No remedial works are required.

Condition Rating

1

TIMBER DEFECTS

Description

We have inspected all accessible timbers for damage and decay. We are, however, unable to comment on the condition of hidden timbers which have not been inspected.

It is our experience that in some properties, there are likely to be timbers incorporated within the structure which have over the years deteriorated from possible wood boring infestation, penetrating or rising damp and can be a cause of potential problems. Without opening up the structure it is not possible to comment in any detail on such timbers. When buying a property of this age and type it is a potential hazard which should be borne in mind when calculating future maintenance costs. The possibility of having to carry out localised treatment and repair should not be discounted.

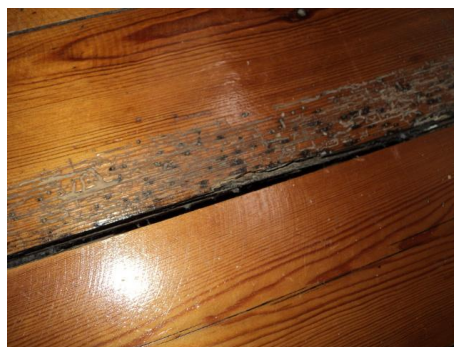
Wet Rot

Wet rot is usually associated with neglect or poor detailing in buildings, occurring in timbers which are definitely wet, or having a persistent moisture content in excess of around 20%. Wet rot can occur in internal as well as external timbers. It is often limited in extent and does not extend beyond damp timbers. In addition to external joinery exposed to the weather, areas particularly at risk include timbers built into damp walls, and floors beneath leaking sanitary fittings. Damp roof timbers and ground floor timbers are also vulnerable.

We noted evidence of wet rot to the porch door frame and localised repairs are required.

Wood Boring Beetle

Wood boring beetles lay their eggs in timber which bore out when hatched and this can affect the structural strength of timbers over time. We found no evidence of active woodboring beetle attack to the timbers around the property, however almost certainly in a property of this age, there will be some in hidden floor timbers. There is evidence of old attack to floorboards around the house but nothing to suggest that this is active.



Old worm to the floorboards

Dry Rot

Dry rot is a fungus which develops in damp timber usually under conditions of dampness and inadequate ventilation. The fungus does not like light and often grows between materials where light is excluded. This characteristic

can conceal an outbreak at the development stage. Poorly ventilated, damp sub-floor and roof voids are places at high risk from dry rot attack. The fungus produces strands which can extend for several metres over and through such materials as plasterwork and brickwork, allowing secondary outbreaks to occur. It is possible for a dry rot outbreak to pass between adjoining dwellings. Eradication can be difficult, disruptive and expensive to achieve. However, there were no indications of dry rot in this property.

Condition Rating

1

BASEMENTS & CELLARS

Description

None.

Condition Rating

1

INTERNAL JOINERY

Description

Internal joinery is in reasonable order generally.

Interior Doors

The internal doors are of timber construction. These are found in a serviceable condition with no significant defects noted. The door handle is broken on the living room door and requires replacement.

Staircases

The staircases appear to be of traditional construction formed by timber treads and risers. They appear serviceable, and there are satisfactory handrails.

Built In Kitchen Fittings

The kitchen is modern and is to a satisfactory standard for the property.



Condition Rating

1

SANITARY FITTINGS

Description

Sanitary fittings are found within the family bathroom and en-suite.

Condition

The sanitary fittings appear serviceable, but were not exhaustively tested. We found no evidence of significant defects to these rooms although condensation appears to be a slight problem to the en-suite bathroom. We recommend that the extractor fan is upgraded and provided with a humidity sensing switch.

The en-suite bathroom is provided with a macerator to deal with waste matter from the WC. We cannot see why this is necessary as there is a full sized soil pipe externally in this location.

The long extractor fan duct in the rear roof space from the family bathroom is unlikely to be effective. Extracted moist air will simply condense in the pipe and require regular emptying. We recommend that a fan is placed directly into the external wall of the bathroom or the existing fan is ducted out via the roof directly above.

Condition Rating

INTERIOR DECORATIONS

Description

The internal areas have been decorated with predominantly painted finishes.

Condition

The interior is to a satisfactory condition with no evidence of significant defect.

Condition Rating

SERVICES

DRAINAGE

Description

The property is connected to the mains drainage system.

Condition

Inspection of the drainage system was limited to the readily accessible chamber. The underground pipes could not be seen. The absence of any obvious problems within the chambers does not necessarily mean that the concealed parts are free from defect. In the absence of a full inspection by a drainage specialist, you must accept the risk of such defects existing.

We raised the inspection chamber cover to the left side of the property and found that this is showing some signs of previous blockage. However, at the time of our inspection this was free flowing.

There are two soil pipes on the left side serving each bathroom. One is plastic and the other is Asbestos. These were in satisfactory order with no evidence of leakages.

Rainwater downpipes from the roof discharge to into the ground via gullies. No evidence of any significant defects was found. Your Legal Adviser will be able to check if the surface water and foul sewer are channelled together or whether the systems are separate.

Condition Rating

1

COLD WATER

Description

Mains water is connected to the property.

Condition

Mains water connects to copper plumbing internally where visible. The internal stop tap is located beneath the kitchen sink. The incoming main appears to be in copper where visible although it is likely that the main into the house is in the original lead piping. Our understanding is that in our region this does not pose a health hazard. More detailed advice can be obtained from the water supplier, Severn Trent Water.

The plastic storage tanks in the roof space appear to be free from leakage.

There was an adequate pressure to the taps when tested.

Condition Rating

1

GAS

Description

The property is connected to a mains gas supply and the meter is located in the dining room cupboard.

Condition

We noted no specific defects with the installation although you are advised to have this checked by a Gas Safe qualified contractor as a precaution. As you are considering letting the property, you will need a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate.

Condition Rating

3

ELECTRICITY

Example building survey

Description

The property is connected to a mains electrical supply. The meter and consumer unit are located within the front reception room cupboard.

Condition

The consumer unit (fuseboard) is a modern trip switch device. The installation has plastic covered cables and reasonably modern switch gear. We did not note any areas of concern, however, it is impossible to fully assess the condition of an electrical installation on the basis of a visual inspection only. There are many factors relating to the adequacy of electrical installations which can only be identified by a test which covers matters relating to resistance, impedance and current, etc. A specialist test by a NICEIC contractor should now be obtained prior to purchase.

Condition Rating

3

HEATING & HOT WATER

Description

Central heating is provided by the gas fired boiler located in the rear roof space.

Condition

The boiler appears to be relatively modern and you should check whether this has been serviced recently. Boilers require an annual service for safety and efficiency purposes. If this has not been undertaken within the last 12 months you should undertake this work before exchange of contracts. The hot water is stored in the cylinder within the dining room. The position of the cylinder means that there is not a natural gravity feed to the system and we found that hot water was delivered to the bathrooms in a low pressure. However, there was adequate hot water to the taps.

The condensate pipe from the boiler on the rear should be fixed to the wall and straightened.



Condition Rating

1

THERMAL INSULATION

Description

Properties of this type are inherently less thermally efficient than modern properties particularly because lower levels of insulation in walls and roofs, less efficient heating systems and older glazing.

Example building survey

Condition

We have not covered this area in detail as the Energy Performance Certificate has all the relevant information on this, and you should obtain a full copy from the agent. We did note that the property requires additional insulation between the loft conversion and right side party wall in the rear roof space.

Condition Rating

1

GROUNDS

GARAGES

Description

There are no garages or outbuildings with this property.

Condition Rating

N/A

PERMANENT OUTBUILDINGS

Description

None.

EXTERNAL AREAS/PATIOS/PATHS/ DRIVEWAYS ETC.

Description

The paths are in Tarmac.

Condition

The grounds and boundaries show no evidence of significant defects. It is always sensible, when purchasing any property, to be sure about the ownership of individual boundaries and responsibility for their maintenance. You are advised to check with your Legal Advisers.

Paths and drives will inevitably wear and become distorted with time. Although serviceable at present, some future maintenance and repair should be anticipated.

Condition Rating

1

BOUNDARIES & FENCES

Description

Boundaries are generally formed by brick walls and timber panelled fences.

Condition

Most of the boundaries are adequately defined and found in a serviceable condition. Liability for the maintenance of all boundaries should be clarified by your Legal Advisers.

Condition Rating

1

Example building survey

GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Noise Disturbance

None noted.

Means of Escape

Fire is always a danger but we see no abnormal risks in this property. It is recommended that a fire drill is agreed with all occupants and regularly practised so that they know what to do in the event of a fire. Further advice can be obtained from the local fire and rescue service.

Smoke detectors are a valuable asset to a property and should be maintained in a working condition at all times.

Hazardous Materials

We found white asbestos during the course of our survey to the soil pipe. Although the manufacture of asbestos based building materials has now generally ceased, many products containing asbestos can still be found on and within buildings. These can include roofing felt, roof sheetings and slates, thermoplastic floor tiles, Artex surface coatings, ceiling tiles, fireproof linings, roof edge verges and eaves soffits, soil and vent pipes, drainpipes, hoppers and waste pipes, gutters and downpipes. Asbestos waste has also been found in lofts and floors, sometimes installed by owners as insulation. This is not a cause for concern if left alone but this should not be sanded or drilled etc so to cause any dust.

Security

Although the property is secure, some improvements should be considered after occupation. I recommend the following:

Modern burglar alarm system to be installed.

Radon

None known.

Flooding

Your Legal Adviser should ask the owners about any former flooding and check with the Environment Agency about the risk.

Listed Building

N/A.

Planning application nearby

None known.

No environmental factors

No significant adverse environmental factors are known.

Old mine works

N/A

Clay sub soil

It is possible that the property is built on ground which contains an amount of clay. Clay soils can shrink and swell, depending on the levels of rainfall in a period of time. This will make it particularly important to maintain drains in good condition at all times.

High Voltage Electricity

Not noted as a risk.

APPENDIX 1
GENERAL ADVICE

GENERAL INFORMATION

MAIN ROOF

Pitched Roofs

- A pitched roof is the name given to any roof with an angle of pitch greater than 10 degrees. Such roofs can be covered with a wide choice of material but, with residential property, tile, slate or thatch are the principle ones.
- The actual angle of the roof slope has to be right for the chosen roof material whilst the roof construction (i.e. the timberwork) must be designed to bear not only the weight of the covering but also the extra weight of rain, snow and wind, etc. If the design of the timberwork is wrong the roof timbers may deflect and water penetration is likely to occur.
- Where the edges of a roof butt up against brickwork or a chimney, etc. it is necessary to insert seals known as soakers or flashings. These are ideally formed in lead but in older properties cement mortar or concrete is often used as a cheaper alternative. These eventually crack and leak.
- Where two roof slopes join (often at right angles), a valley junction is created. These valleys can be formed with tiles or they can be lined in materials such as lead, zinc or glass fibre. The only way valley gutters can work effectively is to have them cleaned out on a regular basis even although access is often difficult. If you do not clean out valley gutters, leaks are very likely.

OTHER ROOFS

Flat Roofs

- It is impossible to predict accurately the life of a flat roof. Even if the external materials appear sound, a minor puncture in the covering material can cause problems beneath (often out of sight). Reports that predict the likely life of a flat roof should be viewed with caution, although we often attempt to give a general guide to be helpful.
- Flat roofs have always been considered a part of residential house design. Traditionally they were used on small or secondary areas. From the 1960's onward, large flat-roofed areas were brought into use but these days we try to minimise flat roof areas and create pitch roofs where possible since most flat roofs are troublesome to some extent or other.
- A flat roof is defined as a roof as having a slope less than 10 degrees. To enable the rainwater to run off its surface, the flat roof must be laid with some slope and if this is too shallow water will collect in puddles on the surface. Such puddles or "ponding" can cause the roof to deteriorate. Damage can also be caused to the substructure under the covering.
- Most flat roofs are not designed for walking on and chippings pressed underfoot can cause punctures in the roofing material. Walkway tiles can, however, be purchased and bedded down when a walkway route is needed.
- Many problems with flat roofs occur on the edges of the roof or in the junctions with walls or nearby roof slopes. Any vertical edging or flashing often indicates a better than average attention to detail. Felt upstands and edge kerbs are very often torn and need careful and regular attention and checking.
- The best designed flat roofs will incorporate modern levels of insulation and will also contain sufficient ventilation to reduce the risk of rot in concealed structural timbers. Being realistic the majority of flat roofs are not built this way and are therefore prone to problems developing out of sight.
- Although felt in one form or another is the most common material found on modern flat roofs, there are others including lead, copper, zinc, fibreglass and asphalt.

COVERINGS

Thatched Coverings

- Thatch is one of the oldest techniques still used in building construction today. There are two main materials used – water reed and wheat straw. Water reed is more durable, lasting up to 80 years approximately. Wheat straw comes as either long straw (lasting up to 25 years approximately) or combed wheat reed (which can last up to 40 years).
- The speed at which a thatch roof deteriorates is difficult to judge. Generally, the further west a property is, the faster its thatch deteriorates due to the wetter climate. The quality of the thatching material and the slope of the roof also affect the life of a thatch.
- The steeper the roof slope, the longer the thatch is likely to last. Thatched roofs should never be less than 45° and sometimes can be steeper. It is common for thatched roofs to need patching or replacement of the ridge which is likely to be needed every 10-15 years.
- Fire is a well known risk with thatch. Electrical wiring needs to be checked regularly and ideally a spark arrestor should be fitted to the top of the chimney to prevent sparks and materials falling onto the thatch. It is always good practice to have the chimney lined. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are essential additions within the property.

Slate Coverings

- Slate can last anything up to 100 years or more depending on quality, source, thickness, and the skill with which it was cut.
- Natural slates are formed by very thin layers of rock being bonded together. Poorer quality slates may contain impurities which react with water and force the layers apart. This "delaminating" is common on the underside of the slates.
- Slates are held by nails fixed via holes drilled either close to one end or at the centre. It is quite common for slates to split when being fixed but then be left in place, only to slip later. Nails inevitably corrode in time and slates start to slip. This is known as "nail sickness". Take note of this if it is listed in Section 3 Roof, as it will mean that you face ongoing maintenance. You can identify where slates have already been re-set as they are usually held in place by lead or copper clips, known as tingles. Old slates often shale to a degree whereby their effectiveness is very limited.
- Problems with slate roofs have led some owners to apply a coating over the whole of the covering. This should never be considered an appropriate repair. It can make the roof watertight for a few years. It will certainly mean that complete renewal of the roof will be necessary, as good slates when over-coated cannot be reused. It is also likely to cause condensation problems as the roof stops breathing.
- Traditionally, slate roofs were not underfelted and, this allows the slates to breathe. This practice still has its supporters, but generally, underfelted is considered as important with a slate roof as with a tiled roof. The underfelt provides a secondary protection against leaks if the slates are breached.
- There are various proprietary coatings available which are applied to the underside of old slate roofs. Whilst these do undoubtedly provide a short term repair, the medium or long term merits of such a system are untested and a lot of surveyors believe these under spraying systems to have a limited life.

Example building survey

Clay Tiles

- Clay tiles come in all shapes and sizes ranging from flat (plain) tiles to those which overlap at the edges and form vertical rolls on the roof slope. Clay Tiles have been used widely for many years, although since the post-second world war period, concrete tiles have tended to have been used as an alternative.
- By nature a clay tile is not impervious to moisture and, as it ages, some water enters into the tile. This can lead to damage of the tile surface (lamination) when the moisture freezes and breaks off the face of the tile itself, both internally and externally. Where this is visible, beware – ongoing maintenance is needed.
- Tiles are either nailed onto roofing battens or hung onto the battens by means of nibs which are formed in their upper edge. Most manufacturers recommend that even tiles with nibs are nailed at regular intervals to prevent them being lifted by the wind. Corrosion of nail fixings is commonplace (known as nail sickness) and will mean ongoing maintenance. Due to the method of manufacture, tiles are often not flat, which allows water to be blown or drawn up between them and can cause dampness inside, especially if the roof is an unlined one. In time the nibs can shale away.
- Occasionally old wood pegs or aged random nails are found on very elderly roofs.
- If you are considering recovering a roof, do take advice before changing the covering material.
- There are various proprietary coatings available which are applied to the underside of old clay tiled roofs. Whilst these do undoubtedly provide a short term repair, the medium or long term merits of such a system are untested and most surveyors believe these under spraying systems to have a limited life.

Concrete Tiles

- Concrete tiles are reckoned to last at least 50 years. The general performance of concrete tiles is impressive, though they can be prone to lose surface colour which shows up replacement tiles.
- Sometimes a powdery “efflorescence” can be seen under the tiles. This is simply salts contained in some earlier concrete tiles emerging due to heat and dampness over a period of years. Eventually the tiles’ nibs can be eroded away, though this is likely to take many years.
- Certain tile shapes (especially pantiles) have an open void in them which needs sealing at gutter/base level mainly to prevent birds nesting under tiling and causing damage. It is often difficult to tell from ground level whether these seals are in place and it is always sensible to carry out a check whenever a property is being maintained or painted. Modern patent eaves level seals also allow important ventilation.
- In the course of time concrete tiles can become brittle.

RAINWATER GOODS

- Inadequate disposal of rainwater can cause serious problems in a building including damp, timber decay and structural movement. Keeping gutters and downpipes (and the drains to which they connect) clean and in good condition is always important.
- Gutters and downpipes are traditionally made in cast iron but with modern property, plastic is generally used. In addition, however, we frequently survey properties with asbestos, lead, tin or aluminium as alternatives. All gutters need to be laid to a slope in order to enable rainwater to run to a downpipe outlet. Guttering should always be fixed so that it catches as much water flow as possible from the roof above. Guttering systems frequently run on an inter-neighbour basis with semi-detached or terraced homes.
- Metal fittings are particularly prone to corrode and joints often fail. They need regular checks and maintenance if they are to be preserved.
- Traditionally downpipes discharge over open gulleys but today many downpipes are taken directly into the underground drainage system without an access gully. This can cause problems for cleaning.

CHIMNEYS

- Chimney stacks can be built in a variety of shapes heights and sizes, often elaborate for architectural purposes. However, the flues within the stacks are formed in one of two ways. Older houses have flues with a rendered internal face that can often fail and erode, causing smoke and fumes to escape and also causing general inefficiency. More modern properties have continuous liners that are effective for solid fuel and other fuels. Some old properties have flues which are just not adequate for modern use.
- Flue soundness and efficiency in older homes must never be assumed. Proper smoke tests are normally required to check flue soundness. If necessary old flues can be lined in order to bring them up to modern standards.

EXTERNAL WALLS

Stone Walls

- Stone is described according to the manner in which it is prepared and laid. The two main categories are known as ashlar and rubble. When stones are squared to a regular size and have smooth faces, they are known as ashlar. Rubble comprises stones of differing sizes which are either laid at random (a crazy paving appearance) or they can be laid roughly in courses.
- Many of our stone buildings are made of stone which is very aged and may have been re-cycled from previous buildings. Some types of stone are harder and more durable than others
- Frost is a major problem with some stones softening as water penetrates the surface and freezes, causing the surface to break off and at the same time allowing more water to penetrate into the core of the wall causing more damage.
- Poor repairs to stone work and the pointing between the stones can cause ongoing problems and it is always sensible to take the advice of a stone mason to ensure that repairs are appropriate.
- Because stone walls are generally thick, there is a popular conception that they are solid from inside to out. This is not always the case and the core of the wall is often filled with rubble and general debris.

Solid Brickwork

- Until the mid-1930's most domestic property in this country was built in solid construction. This means that the bricks are laid in such a way that they run through the depth of the wall from inside to out and as a consequence this can permit damp to travel through the wall onto the internal surfaces. Generally a wall which is exposed to heavy driving rain will be more susceptible to damage than one which is sheltered.
- Areas under window sills tend to be more susceptible to water damage than other wall areas.
- In order to minimise the risk of damp penetration, the outside pointing and brickwork should be kept in as good a state as possible. Modern coatings are available to apply to solid brickwork to help weatherproof them but these do not always look attractive. They can cause problems if damp breaks through the coating and gets behind the weatherproofing.
- Heat loss tends to be greater through solid wall construction than it is through a cavity wall. A solid wall with a rendered finish can perform well if the render is maintained in a sound state.
- It tends to be inevitable that houses with solid wall detail suffer on occasions from condensation problems.

Example building survey

- Many older and inter-war built houses have projecting bays as a feature of the wall design. Often the upper storey bay wall is not built in brick at all but in timber – generally without any insulation.

Cavity Walls

- This is the normal form of construction found on houses from the mid-1930's to the present day, although many older houses have a variation of the same form of wall detail.
- As the name implies, cavity walls are constructed with two leaves of brick or block work – with a cavity between. The benefits of the cavity are that the wall cannot let water through its depth whilst the air in the cavity offers improved insulation standards.
- The outer and inner leaves of a cavity wall are usually stabilised with ties made of galvanised steel or plastic.
- In some cases, the ties which hold the outer and inner leaves together begin to rust. At first, they expand causing the outer leaf to bow and eventually may collapse. Cavity wall tie failure is more common in older houses (prior to 1980) and is often known to be a problem in particular areas. We will alert you to potential maintenance regarding cavity wall ties if there are visible signs of problems or if we are aware of previous problems in nearby properties.
- Even though cavity construction is effective, water can sometimes penetrate the outer skin of the wall. Cavity trays should be inserted over window and door openings to catch this water. There should be drainage channels left through the mortar joints from these trays although they are frequently omitted.
- Brick is the most common form of outside finish on a cavity wall. Frost often attacks older bricks causing the surface to break off. This is known as "spalling". Repair work is possible but costly if the job is to be done properly and the best approach is to cut out the failed bricks and replace them.
- It is common to see salty stains, particularly on new brickwork. They are of no structural significance and can be brushed off or left to be dispersed by weather action over a period of time.
- A rendered finish or some form of cladding applied to the outside of a modern cavity wall often indicates that both leaves of the wall are of block without any brick content.

Rendering

- Modern cement render can be inappropriate for old buildings because it is incompatible with the construction of most old buildings and can cause or accelerate serious decay. Modern buildings generally depend on an impervious outer layer and cavities to keep out moisture. By contrast, old buildings tend to rely on their porous nature ('breathability') to allow water absorbed by the fabric to evaporate back out.
- The use of an impervious Portland cement render in place of a traditional lime-based covering restricts evaporation. Hairline cracks form due to the mortar being more rigid than the wall. These then draw in water that becomes trapped in the fabric. Timber-framed and earth constructed buildings in particular can suffer major structural damage if moisture builds up behind a cement rendering.
- It is generally a mistake not to replace render. There is a good chance that the building was rendered originally. Even if it was not, the rendering may have been applied at a later date as necessary protection against the weather.
- When a cement render has been removed, re-rendering should be delayed for a short period to allow drying out if the underlying fabric is saturated. Additionally, any areas of decayed backing must be made sound before the new render is applied to prevent its early failure.

WINDOWS, DOORS AND EXTERNAL JOINERY

Windows

- Traditionally windows were constructed in wood and generally old timber tends to be better than new timber and hardwood is more long lived than softwood.
- Increasingly wooden windows are being replaced with man made materials. During the 1970's and early 1980's aluminium units set in hardwood frames were very popular. Many of these windows, however, have become temperamental in the way they open and close. These days uPVC is the most commonly used material for replacement units and if looked after and if of a good standard these windows perform well.
- With PVC windows it is important to keep the material as clean and dry as possible and to maintain the mastic seals around the frames in a good state to help prevent any damp penetration. Regular maintenance of the window mechanisms tends to be necessary. Failure of the rubber seals and bushes tends to occur. It is vital to check whether any current guarantees are in force.
- With increased importance being paid within the building industry to insulation standards the quality of glazing has improved over the years, but many houses still have comparatively "ordinary" single glazed windows whilst some high quality triple glazed units are sometimes found.
- Unfortunately many double glazed windows suffer from failure causing the glass to mist over and the only solution is to replace the glazing. This type of failure can occur without warning. There are some indications that the average life of a sealed double glazing unit is some ten years only.
- Some houses built between 1920 and 1960 had steel framed windows. These are prone to rusting and as the metal corrodes and expands, the windows can become twisted or buckled and panes crack or break. This type of material also creates a cold surface which can lead to a high level of condensation.
- Lead light windows may look pretty, but they are troublesome to clean and do weaken with age.

Doors

- External softwood doors are the cheapest to fit, but the least durable. Unless very regularly decorated they will decay. Hardwood doors are better. Aluminium or uPVC replacement units are claimed to be the most efficient of all.
- The raised sill sections used with uPVC doors are vulnerable to foot damage.

DAMP PROOF COURSES

- A damp-proof course (DPC) is a waterproof layer built into, or formed within, the walls to prevent ground dampness from rising.
- Virtually every urban property built in the last 120 years or so will have some sort of damp proof course in its wall. Many materials are in use, some being better and longer lived than others. The majority of the houses built in the last 60 years or so has a felt or pick based damp proof course along with blue brickwork. Before then slate or bitumen were frequently used. Many older houses have no built-in anti-damp protection.
- In order that a DPC can perform properly its line ought always to be at least two clear courses of brick above paths or garden surfaces. Whenever a lesser distance exists, the DPC can become ineffective and internal dampness can occur.
- Many older buildings suffer dampness due to inadequate damp proofing measures. The installation of a modern injection system (often identified by a series of drill holes in the brickwork) together with associated internal replastering can remedy such dampness. All damp

Example building survey

proofing work ought to be dealt with by a competent and recognized specialist firm who can issue a valid guarantee. Internal replastering is an essential part of most damp proofing schemes.

INTERNAL WALLS AND PARTITIONS

- Traditional, internal walls have always been built in solid materials (brick or block), or timber. Contrary to popular belief, timber walls can be load bearing.
- Modern houses often have lightweight non-load bearing thin partition walls especially at first floor level.
- All these different wall types give differing standards of noise and thermal insulation.
- Many wooden or partition walls are difficult to use to support heavy fixings or pictures. Special fixings are generally available for most wall types.
- Many modern homes have a dry lined (plasterboard type) finish to walls which may not easily accept heavy fixtures, but the system is effective and plaster shrinkage problems are minimised.
- In older properties, the walls are often lined with board to disguise or overcome problems of poor plaster, damp and insulation. This can be effective but long term problems can still arise.

FLOORS

Solid Floors

- Solid floors are normally made up with a concrete slab laid on a hardcore base. The hardcore helps spread the load evenly over the soil beneath and protects the concrete from chemicals in the soil. To achieve a floor that does not settle, hardcore needs to be well compacted. If the floors should subside, repair work is possible but can be costly.
- Concrete slabs are typically around 150mm thick and have a thin top layer (screed) which gives a level base for the floor finish (tile, carpet etc). Sometimes the slab is just smoothed off to provide a finishing surface without a screed.
- Solid floors should include a damp proof membrane (dpm). This is usually either a liquid bitumen coat or a layer of polythene or bitumen sheet. The dpm reduces moisture coming up through the floor by capillary action, though it does not resist direct water pressure. Poor workmanship on site often means that a dpm is torn or laid with gaps or laid with gaps which become damp spots later.
- In older properties original floors tend not to have a dpm and often suffer from dampness. These floors are often an important feature of the property and if the level of dampness is felt not sufficient to warrant lifting and re-laying the floor surface to include a dpm, these floors tend to be left and the damp lived with. However these floors should not be surfaced with any impermeable covering such as vinyl or rubber-backed carpet (and ideally should be left exposed).

Timber Floors

- Suspended timber floors have been used for many years without great design changes. Most problems result from under-sizing of the joists or poor conditions at the end support (bearing), or poor sub-ground ventilation.
- Joists bearing into solid walls (usually pre-World War II) can rot, particularly if the wall is exposed to prevailing winds and rain soaks through the brick or stonework.
- Very often, joists are cut or notched, to allow pipes and wiring to run under floorboards. There are clear regulations which now restrict what can be done, but all too often mistakes are made, sometimes resulting in the floor becoming springy. If the surveyor suspects this fault we will suggest further investigation is made.
- To prevent joists twisting, strutting is inserted usually some halfway along its length. Strutting is usually made with pieces of timber which are nailed between two joists at right angles to their length. When they are omitted the floor can become uneven or springy.
- When surveying a building it is rarely possible to carry out a full level of sub-floor checks and the surveyor will base their view on such inspection as is readily possible.
- More recent properties often have sheet chipboard/man made board flooring in place of more traditional floorboards. Because these materials can be laid in large panels, removal to access services can result in a very squeaky floor developing since the sheets are rarely properly re-fixed. The material tends to disintegrate on prolonged exposure to moisture and problems often occur near showers or washing machines in particular.

CEILINGS

Lath and Plaster Ceilings

- Most modern ceilings are made of plasterboard, but up to World War II a plaster mix was applied onto thin strips of wood called laths. (In very old properties reeds or straw were often used to strengthen the material). The strength of this type of ceiling depends on how well the plaster keys into the laths. When the plaster starts to pull loose from the laths, it often becomes widespread and repair of a small crack can soon become a large repair. Vibration and noise can often be a cause of a lath and plaster ceiling to fail. The installation of central heating can also cause old plaster to simply dry out so much that it cracks and fails.
- It is not uncommon for old lathed ceilings to be covered over with a variety of materials and finishes. Over boarding in modern plasterboard is a common solution to a troublesome ceiling.
- Lathed ceilings are heavy and can fall unexpectedly if damaged!

Plasterboard Ceilings

- For nearly 50 years now plasterboard has replaced the use of lath and plaster in most ceiling construction. Boards come in a variety of thickness and in general are relatively maintenance free.
- Joints between boards are most commonly covered by tape. Hairline cracking along the joints, however, is not uncommon though relatively simple to fill and redecorate or lining paper can be applied prior to a decorative finish.
- Dampness is a problem for plasterboard which is made up of a plaster centre covered by heavy paper on both sides. When moist, the paper covering deteriorates and the plaster content generally swells and crumbles. Replacement is then normally necessary.
- Artex or similar textured finishes are popular but these are not easy to repair to a good standard.

DAMPNESS

Damp & Timber Treatment – Guarantees

- Very often in older properties we find that previous damp and timber treatments have been carried out and are subject to guarantees.
- Particular care needs to be exercised in respect of wood-rot, woodworm/beetle and damp guarantees.

Example building survey

- A guarantee will normally only cover those areas specifically treated, and this is normally identified in the original report, specification and plan.
- It is important that such documents are made available to you and your Legal Adviser.
- Insurance protection is sometimes available for un-treated areas.

TIMBER DEFECTS

Timber Defects

- As a general word of caution, in older properties of this type, it is our experience that there are likely to be timbers within the structure which have deteriorated over the years due to possible wood-worm/beetle infestation, damp or other reasons, and may be decayed and a cause of potential problems in the future.

GAS

- As with electricity, defects can be life-threatening and are even harder to detect. We can form some impression of the attention given to the gas installation by the appearance of the fittings and will note concerns in Section 4. That apart it is essential that every property which is provided with gas has a test and service every year. If a test is overdue, arrange one immediately. Make sure that the contractor you instruct on any gas matters has a current registration with Gas Safe. If the surveyor considers that further investigations are needed he will say so.
- All gas appliances and flues must be subject to an annual check and test.
- Surface run gas pipes both inside and out must be treated with care to avoid damage.

WATER SUPPLY AND PLUMBING

Pipework & Tanks

- Most pipework in a building is concealed within the structure and fabric and we can only form an opinion based on the exposed parts of the installation.
- Copper tube is the most popular material used but in many new installations plastic is becoming increasingly popular as a cost effective alternative.
- In many older houses we still find old lead or galvanised piping, especially on the underground supply pipe. Some homeowners consider lead pipes to be a health risk. Old underground pipes can leak for many years undetected or suddenly burst unexpectedly. Replacing underground/floor pipes can be costly and disruptive.
- Water tanks come in a variety of shapes and sizes but plastic is the preferred modern material. In older properties we find older galvanised steel or cement asbestos tanks and ideally these should now be replaced.

HOT WATER INSTALLATION, BOILERS, CONTROL EQUIPMENT, SPACE HEATING, ETC.

- The ability of any central heating system to sufficiently heat all areas required depends on the efficiency of the boiler and the size and efficiency of the pipe runs and radiators. In order to tell accurately whether a central heating system is adequate, Heating Engineers have to carry out a series of calculations involving size of radiators, room and window sizes, capacity of the boiler etc. For this degree of assessment, a Heating Engineers' involvement is essential.
- Modern combination boilers are increasingly popular, but they may produce limited amounts of hot water for bathing with poor levels of pressure.

FOUL AND SURFACE WATER

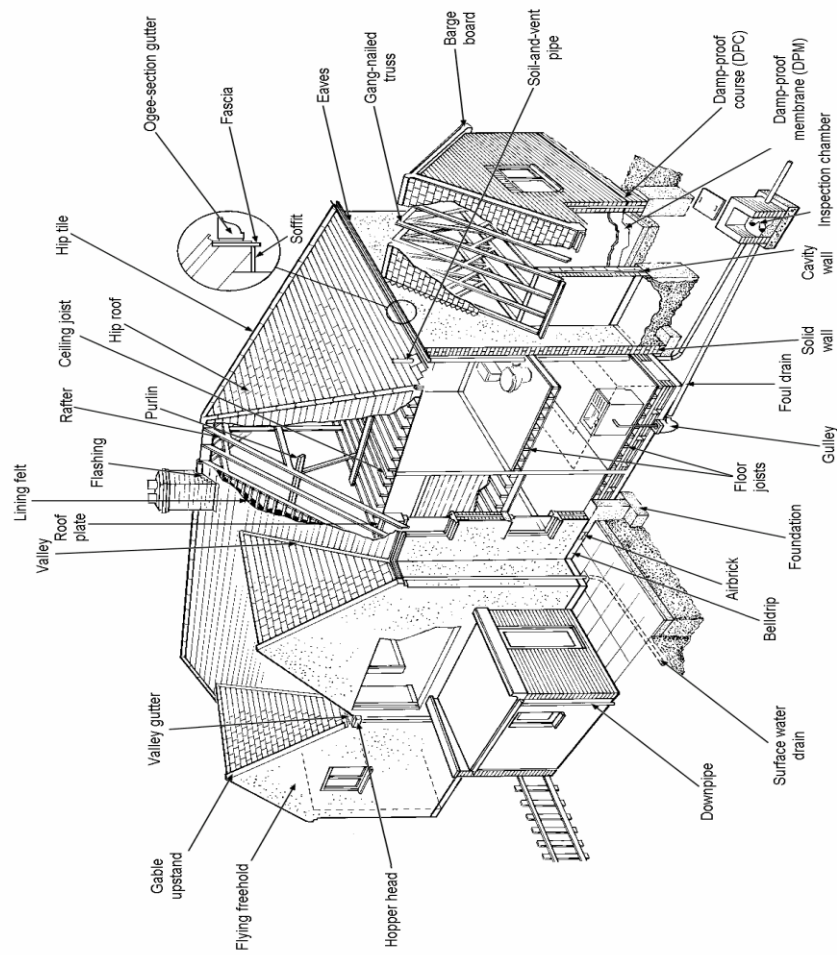
Drains

- Foul drains are those taking waste from inside the building – WC, bath, kitchen, etc
- Below ground drainage systems must fulfil two functions in order to avoid problems:
 1. they must discharge waste efficiently into the main sewer
 2. they must avoid foul smells escaping near to the property
- A correct slope (fall) is required to all drainage runs. Where gradients are too shallow, matter can build up and drains will need to be rodded on a regular basis. It is for this reason that the building regulations insist that an inspection chamber is provided where ever drains change direction or gradient. In some cases, small access gullies known as rodding eyes are provided.
- One of the most common causes of problems in drains is damage caused by tree roots which get into drains in search of water. We will advise you if there are likely problems in this regard, though it is important not to plant shrubs or trees close to drainage runs.
- Many houses of all ages have drain runs which are not as watertight as they should be. This can only be determined by the carrying out of a formal test which is not part of a Building Survey inspection.
- It is a good practice to regularly flush through drains with hot soapy water.

APPENDIX 2

*SKETCH TO ILLUSTRATE
BUILDING TERMS*

Example building survey



APPENDIX 3
GLOSSARY OF BUILDING
TERMS

GLOSSARY OF BUILDING TERMS

Aggregate	Pebbles, shingle, gravel, etc used in the manufacture of concrete, and in the construction of "soakaways".
Air Brick	Perforated brick or metal/plastic grille used for ventilation, especially to floor voids (beneath timber floors) and roof spaces.
Architrave	Joinery moulding around window or doorway.
Asbestos	Fibrous mineral used in the past for insulation. Can be a health hazard - specialist advice should be sought if asbestos is found.
Asbestos Cement	Cement with 10-15% asbestos fibre as reinforcement. Fragile - will not bear heavy weights. Hazardous fibres may be released if cut or drilled.
Ashlar	Finely dressed natural stone: the best grade of masonry
Asphalt	Black, tar-like substance, strongly adhesive and impervious to moisture. Used on flat roofs and floors.
Barge Board	See "Verge Board".
Balanced Flue	Common metal device normally serving gas appliances which allows air to be drawn to the appliance whilst also allowing fumes to escape (see also "Fan Assisted Flues").
Batten	Thin lengths of timber used in the fixing of roof tiles or slates.
Beetle Infestation	(Wood-boring insects: eg woodworm) Larvae of various species of beetle which tunnel into timber causing damage. Specialist treatment normally required. Can also affect furniture.
Benching	Smoothly contoured concrete slope beside drainage channel within an inspection chamber. Also known as "Haunching".
Bitumen	Black, sticky substance, related to asphalt. Used in sealants, mineral felts and damp proof courses.
Breeze Block	Originally made from cinders ("breeze") - the term now commonly used to refer to various types of concrete and cement building blocks.
Carbonation	A natural process affecting the outer layer of concrete. Metal reinforcement within that layer is liable to early corrosion, with consequent fracturing of the concrete.
Cavity Wall	Standard modern method of building external walls of houses comprising two leaves of brick or blockwork separated by a gap ("cavity") of about 50mm (2 inches).
Cavity Wall Insulation	Filling of wall cavities by one of various forms of insulation material: Beads: Polystyrene beads pumped into the cavities. Will easily fall out if the wall is broken open for any reason. Fibreglass: Can lead to problems if becomes damp. Foam: Urea formaldehyde form, mixed on site, and pumped into the cavities where it sets. Can lead to problems of dampness and make investigation/replacement of wall ties more difficult. Rockwool: Inert mineral fibre pumped into the cavity.
Cavity Wall Tie	Metal device bedded into the inner and outer leaves of cavity wall. Failure by corrosion can result in the wall becoming unstable - specialist replacement ties are then required.
Cesspool	A simple method of drainage comprising a holding tank which needs frequent emptying. Not to be confused with "Septic Tank".
Chipboard	Also referred to as "Particle Board". Chips of wood compressed and glued into sheet form. Cheap method of decking to flat roofs and (with formica or melamine surface) furniture, especially kitchen units. Also commonly used on floors. Tends to swell if moisture content increased.
Collar	Horizontal timber member intended to restrain opposing roof slopes. Absence, removal or weakening can lead to roof spread.
Combination Boiler	Modern form of gas boiler which activates on demand. With this form of boiler there is no need for water storage tanks, hot water cylinders, etc but are complex and more expensive to repair. Water supply rate can be slow.
Coping/Coping Stone	Usually stone or concrete, laid on top of a wall as a decorative finish and to stop rainwater soaking into the wall.
Corbel	Projection of stone, brick, timber or metal jutting out from a wall to support a weight.

Example building survey

Cornice	Ornamental moulded projection around the top of a building or around the wall of a room just below the ceiling.
Coving	Curved junction piece to cover the join between wall and ceiling surfaces.
Dado Rail	Wooden moulding fixed horizontally to a wall, about 1 metre (3ft 4in) above the floor, originally intended to protect the wall against damage by chair backs.
Damp Proof Course	Layer of impervious material (mineral felt, PVC, etc) incorporated into a wall to prevent dampness around windows, doors, etc. Various proprietary methods are available for damp proofing existing walls including "electro-osmosis" and chemical injection.
Damp Proof Membrane	Usually polythene, incorporated within ground floor slabs to prevent rising dampness.
Deathwatch Beetle	Serious insect pest in structural timbers, usually affects old hardwoods with fungal decay already present.
Double Glazing	A method of thermal insulation usually either: Sealed unit: Two panes of glass fixed and hermetically sealed together; or Secondary: In effect a second "window" placed inside the original window.
Dry Rot	A fungus which attacks structural and joinery timbers, often with devastating results. Can flourish in moist, unventilated areas.
Eaves	The overhanging edge of a roof at gutter level.
Efflorescence	Salts crystallised on the surface of a wall as a result of moisture evaporation.
Engineering Brick	Particularly strong and dense type of brick, sometimes used as a damp proof course. Usually blue in colour.
Fan Assisted Flues	Similar to "Balanced Flue" but with fan assistance to move air or gases.
Fibreboard	Cheap, lightweight board material of little strength, used in ceilings or as insulation to attics.
Fillet	Mortar used to seal the junction between two surfaces, ie between a slate roof and a brick chimney stack.
Flashing	Thin sheet material used to prevent leakage at a roof joint. Normally metal (lead, zinc or copper).
Flaunching	Contoured cement around the base of cement pots, to secure the pot and to throw off rain.
Flue	A smoke duct in a chimney, or a proprietary pipe serving a heat producing appliance such as a central heating boiler.
Flue Lining	Metal (usually stainless steel) tube within a flue - essential for high output gas appliances such as boilers. May also be manufactured from clay and built into the flue.
Foundations	Normally concrete, laid underground as a structural base to a wall; in older buildings may be brick or stone.
Frog	A depression imprinted in the upper surface of a brick, to save clay, reduce weight and increase the strength of the wall.
Gable	Upper section of a wall, usually triangular in shape, at either end of a ridged roof.
Ground Heave	Swelling of clay subsoil due to absorption of moisture; can cause an upward movement in foundations.
Gulley	An opening into a drain, normally at ground level, placed to receive water, etc from downpipes and waste pipes.
Haunching	See "Benching". Also term used to describe the support to an underground drain.
Hip	The external junction between two intersecting roof slopes.
Inspection Chamber	Commonly called "manhole"; provides access to a drain comprising a chamber (of brick, concrete or plastic) with the drainage channel at its base and a removable cover at ground level.
Jamb	Side part of a doorway or window (see also "reveals").
Joist	Horizontal structural timber used in flat roof, ceiling and floor construction. Occasionally also metal.
Landslip	Downhill movement of unstable earth, clay, rock, etc often following prolonged heavy rain or coastal erosion, but sometimes due entirely to subsoil having little cohesive integrity.
Lath	Thin strip of wood used as a backing to plaster.
Lintel	Horizontal structural beam of timber, stone, steel or concrete placed over window or door openings.

Example building survey

Longhorn Beetle	A serious insect pest mainly confined to the extreme south east of England, which can totally destroy the structural strength of wood.
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas (or Propane). Available to serve gas appliances in areas without mains gas. Requires a storage tank.
Mortar	Traditionally a mixture of lime and sand. Modern mortar is a mixture of cement and sand. Used for bonding brickwork, etc.
Mullion	Vertical bar dividing individual lights in a window.
Newel	Stout post supporting a staircase handrail at top and bottom. Also, the central pillar of a winding or spiral staircase.
Oversite	Rough concrete below timber ground floors.
Parapet	Low wall along the edge of a flat roof, balcony, etc.
Pier	A vertical column of brickwork or other material, used to strengthen the wall or to support a weight.
Plasterboard	Stiff "sandwich" of plaster between coarse paper. Now in widespread use for ceilings and walls.
Pointing	Smooth outer edge of mortar joint between bricks, stones, etc.
Powder Post Beetle	A relatively uncommon pest which can, if untreated, cause widespread damage to structural timbers.
Purlin	Horizontal beam in a roof upon which rafters rest.
Quoin	The external angle of a building, or, specifically, bricks or stone blocks forming that angle.
Rafter	A sloping roof beam, usually timber, forming the carcass of a roof.
Random Rubble	Primitive method of stone wall construction with no attempt at bonding or coursing.
Rendering	Vertical covering of a wall either plaster (internally) or cement based (externally), sometimes with pebbledash, stucco or Tyrolean textured finishes.
Reveals	The side faces of a window or door opening (see also "jambs").
Ridge	The apex of a roof.
Riser	The vertical part of a step or stair.
Rising Damp	Moisture soaking up a wall from below ground, by capillary action causing rot in timbers, plaster decay, decoration failure, etc.
Roof Spread	The thrust of a badly restrained roof structure (see "Collar") causing outward bowing of a wall.
Screed	Final, smooth finish of a solid floor; usually mortar, concrete or asphalt.
Septic Tank	Drain installation whereby sewage decomposes through bacteriological action, which can be slowed down or stopped altogether by the use of chemicals such as bleach, biological washing powders, etc.
Settlement	General disturbance in a structure showing as distortion in walls, etc, usually as the result of the initial compacting of the ground due to the loading of the building.
Shakes	Naturally occurring cracks in timber; in building timbers, shakes can appear quite dramatic, but strength is not always impaired.
Shingles	Small rectangular pieces of wood used on roofs instead of tiles, slates, etc.
Soaker	Sheet metal (usually lead, zinc or copper) at the junction of a roof with a vertical surface of a chimney stack, adjoining wall, etc. Associated with flashings which should overlay soakers.
Soffit	The under-surface of eaves, balcony, arch, etc.
Solid Fuel	Heating fuel, normally coal, coke or one of a variety of proprietary fuels.
Spandrel	Space above and to the sides of an arch.
Stud Partition	Lightweight, sometimes non-loadbearing wall construction comprising a framework of timber faced with plaster, plasterboard or other finish.
Subsidence	Ground movement possibly as a result of mining activities, clay shrinkage or drainage problems.
Subsoil	Soil lying immediately below the top soil, upon which foundations usually bear.

Example building survey

Sulphate Attack	Chemical reaction, activated by water, between tricalcium aluminate and soluble sulphates. Can cause deterioration in brick walls, concrete floors and external rendering.
Tie Bar	Heavy metal bar passing through a wall, or walls, to brace a structure suffering from structural instability.
Torching	Mortar applied on the underside of roof tiles or slates to help prevent moisture penetration. Not necessary when a roof is underdrawn with felt.
Transom	Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or top of door.
Tread	The horizontal part of a step or stair.
Trussed Rafters	Method of roof construction utilising prefabricated triangular framework of timbers. Now widely used in domestic construction.
Underpinning	Methods of strengthening weak foundations whereby a new, stronger foundation is placed beneath the original.
Valley Gutter	Horizontal or sloping gutter, usually lead or tile lined, at the internal intersection between two roof slopes.
Ventilation	<p>Necessary in all buildings to disperse moisture resulting from bathing, cooking, breathing, etc, and to assist in prevention of condensation.</p> <p>Floors: Necessary to avoid rot, especially dry rot, achieved by air bricks near to ground level.</p> <p>Roofs: Necessary to disperse condensation within roof spaces; achieved either by air bricks in gables or ducts at the eaves.</p>
Verge	The edge of a roof, especially over a gable.
Verge Board	Timber, sometimes decorative, placed at the verge of a roof; also known as a "Barge Board".
Wainscot	Wood panelling or boarding on the lower part of an internal wall.
Wallplate	Timber placed at the eaves of a roof to take the weight of the roof timbers.
Wet Rot	Decay of timber due to damp conditions. Not to be confused with the more serious "Dry Rot".
Woodworm	Colloquial term for beetle infestation; usually intended to mean Common Furniture Beetle, by far the most frequently encountered insect attack in structural and joinery timbers.

APPENDIX 4
GENERAL MAINTENANCE
NOTES

Example building survey

GENERAL MAINTENANCE NOTES

These notes are provided as a guide to enable you to inspect your property on a regular basis, to help keep it in good order. They must not be considered to be definitive or fully comprehensive. Regular maintenance inspections and prompt repair of any defects noticed will help keep your repair costs to a minimum. If neglected they may lead to more expensive repairs.

You should look at:

The Roofs

1. Check that all the tiles and slates are in good order and replace any that are cracked, slipped or damaged. Ensure that the mortar pointing at the roof edges is kept in good condition.

Flat Roofs

2. Make sure that the chippings remain evenly laid. If cracked or bubbled areas are noticed, have these repaired immediately.

Lead and Mortar Flashings

3. Lead flashing should lay properly, mortar fillets should be free from cracks. Mortar fillets are not fully satisfactory and are best replaced with lead.

Guttering

4. Should run to the downpipe heads at an even slope and be free from splits and cracks. Replace or repair missing or defective sections immediately to protect the property. Clean out the gutters regularly to remove weeds, leaves and granite chippings. Gutter joints do deteriorate with age and the need for resealing must be anticipated from time to time.

Downpipes

5. Check that the junctions of the gutters to the downpipes are in good order and also the joints between the downpipes and the underground piping at ground level. If any downpipes discharge over gulley grids, clear and maintain brick surrounds to stop debris blocking the gulleys.
6. Replace or repair missing or defective sections immediately.

Chimneys

7. Keep chimney pots in good order and ensure they are securely joined to the top of the chimney. Keep the brickwork mortar joints in good condition. If you notice any cracking of the brickwork have it repaired at once.
8. If television aerials have been fixed to the chimney ensure that they are properly secured.

External Joinery (incl. Gutter and Barge Boards, Verge Cappings and Snow Boards)

9. Keep in good repair and well decorated.

Outside Walls

10. Keep the brickwork, mortar joints in good order. Poor maintenance of brick pointing leads to damp penetration and damage to the brick

Example building survey

surface.

11. Make sure the mortar joint protecting the damp proof course is kept in good condition.
12. Keep the joints between the window and door frames and the brickwork in good watertight condition with pliable mastic sealant.
13. Make sure that the mortar around the waste pipes is in good condition.
14. Keep soil and paths at least 150mm below the level of the floors inside to prevent penetrating dampness.
15. If there are air bricks, make sure they are in good order and free from blockage.
16. If the walls are mortar rendered, make sure it is not cracked or loose. Water will get behind poor rendering leading to dampness. All cracked or loose areas should be repaired or replaced.
17. Regularly redecorate any painted walls or timber boarded areas.

Windows and Doors

18. Periodically inspect the frames and repair any timbers affected by wet rot. Regular painting helps avoid timber going rotten.
19. Replace cracked and broken panes of glass and renew loose or missing putties before redecoration to avoid wet rot in the frames.
20. Replace broken sash cords and window catches.

Inside the Loft

21. Make a regular inspection to check for signs of leaks which can lead to wet or dry rot taking hold. Carry out any necessary repairs immediately.
22. Check the chimney brickwork for heat cracks.
23. Make sure the roof timbers are not broken, split or affected by rot.
24. Clean out water tanks, maintain ball valves and keep tanks and pipes properly insulated and covered.
25. Insulate the loft if this has not been done. Do not insulate right up to the eaves or below the water tanks. Make sure the electrical cables are not covered by the insulation.
26. Look for wood-boring beetle flight holes and if in any doubt have a specialist firm make an inspection.
27. Check ceilings under flat roofs for any signs of leaks and repair affected areas immediately.

Plumbing, Heating and Electrics

28. Ensure that the external and internal stopcocks are readily available in an emergency.
29. Keep the plumbing pipework in good condition and periodically clean out the traps to baths, sinks and wash basins.
30. Have the central heating appliances annually serviced by a Gas Safe registered contractor.
31. Do not make any alterations to the electrical wiring without qualified advice. Amateur repairs and additions can lead to failure of the circuits, fire and risk of electric shock.
32. It is advised that the electrical installation is checked by the Electricity Board at least every five years as cables and fittings deteriorate with age.

Decorations

33. Internally, keep the ceilings, walls and woodwork in good decorative condition.
34. External paintwork should not be left more than four years without redecoration.

Drainage

35. Periodically lift the manhole covers and have the drains cleaned out if necessary. Keep manhole covers and surrounding mortar in good condition.

Example building survey

36. If you have a septic tank; have it pumped out at least once a year.

In the Garden

37. Keep the hedges, walls, fences, gates, paths and driveways in good order.
38. Keep soil, shrubs and trees away from outside walls. Shrubs and trees can break drainage pipes and potentially cause subsidence.
39. Cut back wall creepers regularly as they can destroy the mortar joints between brickwork, stonework, etc encourage dampness and insects and block gutters.

Outbuildings/Garages

40. Check the roofs, gutters, downpipes and walls as suggested for the house.
41. Regularly redecorate timber surfaces.
42. Keep door hinges and locks well oiled. Regularly clean out sliding door channels.

APPENDIX 5
ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE

ESSENTIAL GUIDANCE FOR YOUR SURVEY REPORT

- If you have any questions about this report please contact me.
- It is important that you discuss the contents of this report with your conveyancer.
- To make sure you are properly covered tell your conveyancer to check existing guarantees and maintenance contracts e.g. central heating, damp and timber treatments, double glazing etc. Remember I have not tested any services.
- If I have mentioned such things as planning permissions, building regulations, listed building consents, freeholder consents, title restrictions, road and sewer bonds etc. tell your conveyancer to advise you further.
- If I have mentioned contaminated land tell your conveyancer to check what steps have been taken to deal with any possible contamination.
- If you are going to extend, alter or improve the property you should get advice from the Local Authority.
- Defects or issues may have been highlighted and you should get your own independent advice. You may require reports and estimates and I suggest you use a contractor with an insurance backed guarantee and who is preferably a member of a trade organisation.
- When investigating the full extent of any defects I have reported, your contractor may go beyond the scope of the standard inspection e.g. by lifting carpets or floorboards and this may reveal more serious problems. Repairs or maintenance to the upper parts of the building may involve the use of expensive scaffolding.
- Central heating systems and heating appliances should be tested before you buy the property and then on a regular basis.
- Information and testing of electrical systems can be obtained from a qualified member of N.I.C.E.I.C on 020 7564 2323 or the ECA on 020 7313 4800.
- Testing of gas appliances can only be carried out by a Gas Safe registered specialist. For further advice and names telephone 01256 372200.
- Advice on asbestos can be obtained from the Environmental Health Department at your Local Authority. You should be aware public perception of the possible health risks of asbestos may affect the value and future saleability of the property.
- For your own safety, smoke alarms, carbon monoxide detectors etc. should be fitted and regularly tested.
- Advice on radon can be obtained from the National Radiological Protection Board (NRPB) telephone 0800 614529. Advice on high voltage electrical supply apparatus or telecommunication masts can be obtained from NRPB on 01235 831600.
- If I have mentioned flooding, advice can be obtained on 0845 9881188 (England, Wales & Scotland) and 02890 253430 (Northern Ireland).
- No responsibility whatsoever is accepted by Proenergis Chartered Surveyors to any third party and this report should not be relied upon for any commercial purposes or any other use without Proenergis Chartered Surveyors written authority.
- A copy of this report can be made available in large print, Braille or audio.

APPENDIX 6
TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF
ENGAGEMENT

Example building survey

Building Survey

Terms and Conditions of Engagement

General Terms

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This document sets out the contractual terms upon which the Surveyor will advise the Client by means of a written report as to his or her opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the Property.
- 1.2. The individual carrying out the inspection and providing advice will be a chartered surveyor.
- 1.3. The Surveyor will use all of the care and skill to be reasonably expected of an appropriately experienced chartered surveyor.

2. Content of the Report

In accordance with these terms the Surveyor will report upon:

- 2.1. the main aspects of the Property including assessing the site/location, the design, structural framework, fabric and services;
- 2.2. the grounds, boundaries and environmental aspects considered to affect the Property;
- 2.3. any requirements for further investigation arising from the inspection.

3. Delivery of the Report

- 3.1. The Report is to be delivered by the date agreed or at such later date as is reasonable in the circumstances.
- 3.2. The Surveyor will send the Report to the Client's address (or other agreed address) by first class post for the sole use of the Client. The Client agrees to keep the Report confidential disclosing its contents only to the Client's professional Advisers. In particular (but without limit) the Client must not disclose the whole or any part of the Report to any person (other than a professional Adviser) who may intend to rely upon it for the purpose of any transaction.

4. Payment of Fees

The Client will pay the Agreed Fee, any Additional Fees, any VAT and any agreed disbursements prior to the issue of the report.

5. Assumptions

Unless otherwise expressly agreed the Surveyor while preparing the Report will assume that:

- 5.1. the property (if for sale) is offered with vacant possession;
- 5.2. the Property is connected to mains services with appropriate rights on a basis that is known and acceptable to the Client; and
- 5.3. access to the Property is as of right upon terms known and acceptable to the Client.

Scope of the inspection

5.4. Generally

- 5.4.1. The Surveyor will consider his or her advice carefully but is not required to advise on any matter the significance of which in relation to the Property is not apparent at the time of inspection from the inspection itself.
- 5.4.2. The Surveyor will inspect diligently but is not required to undertake any action which would risk damage to the Property or injury to him- or herself.
- 5.4.3. The Surveyor will not undertake any structural or other calculations.

Example building survey

5.5. Accessibility

5.5.1. The Surveyor will inspect as much of the internal and external surface area of the building as is practicable but will not inspect those areas which are covered, unexposed or not reasonably accessible from within the site, or adjacent public areas.

5.5.2. The Surveyor is not required to move any obstruction to inspection including, but not limited to, furniture and floor coverings.

5.6. Floors

5.6.1. The Surveyor will lift accessible sample loose floorboards and trap doors, if any, which are not covered by heavy furniture, ply or hardboard, fitted carpets or other fixed floor coverings. The Surveyor will not attempt to cut or lift fixed floorboards without express permission of the owner.

5.7. Fixed covers or housings

5.7.1. The surveyor will not attempt to remove securely fixed covers or housings without the express permission of the owner.

5.8. Roofs

5.8.1. The Surveyor will inspect the roof spaces if there are available hatches which are not more than three metres above the adjacent floor or ground. Where no reasonable access is available, the roof spaces will not be inspected. Similarly, outer surfaces of the roof or adjacent areas will be inspected using binoculars, but will be excluded if they cannot be seen.

5.9. Boundaries, grounds and outbuildings

5.9.1. The inspection will include boundaries, grounds and permanent outbuildings but will not include constructions or equipment with a specific leisure purpose including, without limit, swimming pools or tennis courts.

5.10. Services

5.10.1. The Surveyor will carry out a visual inspection of the service installations where accessible. Drainage inspection covers will be lifted where they are accessible and it is safe and practicable to do so. No tests of the service installations will be carried out unless previously agreed, although general overall comments will be made where possible and practicable. The Surveyor will report if it is considered that tests are advisable.

5.11. Areas not inspected

5.11.1. The Surveyor will identify any areas which would normally be inspected but which he or she was unable to inspect.

5.12. Flats or maisonettes

5.12.1. Unless otherwise agreed, the Surveyor will inspect only the subject flat and garage (if any), the related internal and external common parts and the structure of the building or particular block in which the subject flat is situated. Other flats will not be inspected. The Surveyor will state in the Report the limits of access and/or visibility in relation to the common parts and structure. The Surveyor will state whether he or she has seen a copy of the lease and, if not, the assumptions as to repairing obligations on which he or she is working.

5.13. Environmental and other issues

5.13.1. Particular noise and disturbance affecting the Property will only be noted if it is significant at the time of the inspection or if specific investigation has been agreed between the Surveyor and the Client and confirmed in writing.

5.13.2. The Surveyor will report on any obvious health and safety hazards to the extent that they are apparent from elements of the Property considered as part of the inspection.

6. Hazardous Materials

6.1. Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques

Example building survey

have been used in the construction of the Property. However, the Surveyor will advise in the Report if, in his or her view, there is likelihood that deleterious material has been used in the construction and specific enquiries should be made or tests should be carried out by a specialist.

- 6.2. Subject to clause 6.2 the Surveyor, based upon a limited visual inspection, will note and advise upon the presence of lead water supply pipes.
- 6.3. The Surveyor will advise in the Report if the Property is in an area where, based on information published by the National Radiological Protection Board, there is a risk of radon. In such cases the Surveyor will advise that tests should be carried out to establish the radon level.
- 6.4. The Surveyor will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines which might give rise to an electro-magnetic field, either over the subject Property or visible immediately adjacent to the Property. The Surveyor is not required to assess any possible effect on health or to report on any underground cables.
- 6.5. Asbestos was commonly used in building materials up to the end of the 20th century, by which time it became a banned substance. Asbestos is not usually harmful unless the fibres can be released into the air by it becoming damaged or showing signs of wear. It is not possible to identify whether asbestos fibres are contained in a building material without a specialist test. Because asbestos was used in such a wide diversity of materials it is impossible to identify all the materials that may contain asbestos and it is beyond the scope of this report to test for asbestos. If you are concerned then you should commission a test for asbestos, which can be arranged on your behalf.
- 6.6. This report will **not** identify moulds that could be harmful to health. If mould is present at the time of inspection then it will be recorded and you will need to arrange your own test.

7. Ground Conditions

- 7.1. The Surveyor will not be required to comment upon the possible existence of noxious substances, landfill or mineral extraction, or other forms of contamination.

8. Consents, approvals and searches

- 8.1. The Surveyor will be entitled to assume that the Property is not subject to any unusual or onerous restrictions, obligations or covenants which apply to the Property or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the Property.
- 8.2. The Surveyor will be entitled to assume that all planning, Building Regulations and other consents required in relation to the Property have been obtained. The Surveyor will not verify whether such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or the Client's Legal Advisers. Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor unless otherwise previously agreed.
- 8.3. The Surveyor will be entitled to assume that the Property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a Statutory Notice, and that neither the Property, nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

9. Insurance rebuilding cost assessment

- 9.1. The Surveyor will provide an insurance rebuilding cost assessment only if this is agreed at the time of taking instructions. Building insurance cost assessments will be calculated using the current edition of the BCIS *Guide to House Rebuilding Costs*.

10. Additional Services

- 10.1. The Surveyor will provide, for an additional fee, such additional services as may be specified in the Specific Terms or are agreed between the Surveyor and the Client and confirmed by the Surveyor in writing.

11. Miscellaneous

- 11.1. In the event of a conflict between these General Terms and the Specific Terms, the Specific Terms prevail.
- 11.2. Unless expressly provided, no term in the agreement between the Surveyor and the Client is enforceable under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 by any person other than the Surveyor or the Client.

Example building survey

- 11.3. Where the Client has instructed the Surveyor to make investigations which cause damage to the Property on the basis that the Client has obtained the owner's consent, the Client will indemnify the Surveyor against any loss or cost arising.
- 11.4. Dispute Resolution In the event that the Client has a complaint regarding the standard of service he or she has received, a formal complaints handling procedure will be followed. A copy of the Surveyor's complaints handling procedure is available upon request. Using the Surveyor's complaints handling procedure will not affect the Client's legal rights.
- 11.5. The Client may only rely upon the Surveyor's advice and Report for purposes described in the Particulars or communicated to the Surveyor in writing prior to the agreement of the Fee and if the client wishes to rely upon such advice and Report for any other purpose he or she may only do so with the written consent of the Surveyor.