



## A BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

**CONCERNING:**                      **Address**  
   **Address**  
   **Address**

**FOR:**                                      **Mr and Mrs**  
   **Address**  
   **Address**  
   **Address**

**CARRIED OUT BY:**                      **Angus Moss, MRICS**

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Angus Moss'.

.....Date.....

**DATE OF INSPECTION:**                      **XXXXXX, 2011**

*Please note that some text is omitted, to ensure that the file size is small enough for easy downloading. A full report normally exceeds 40 pages, including the appendices. This sample is intended to show the general content, style and layout of the report, including the use of photographs.*

# SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

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# SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.01 Clients Name and Address

Name and Address  
Of Client  
Hers

### 1.02 Address of Property

Address  
Of Property  
Here

### 1.03 State of Occupation

The property was occupied at the time of inspection.

### 1.04 Scope of Instructions

This Building Survey report has been prepared in accordance with the signed Terms and Conditions of Engagement dated XXXXX, 2011.

Many clients find it useful to read the Conclusion and Summary in Section 10 first to gain a general overview of the most significant points raised. It is, however, essential that the whole report is read and considered in detail prior to a commitment to purchase and that all works and further investigations are conducted and priced. This is so that you are fully advised as to the commitment and liabilities you will be undertaking in purchasing the property.

Two copies of the report are provided for your benefit. One copy should be passed to your legal advisor prior to a legal commitment to purchase and they should be asked to research the points mentioned within the report, particularly those under Section 7 – Legal Matters.

Again, your attention is drawn to the Terms and Conditions of Engagement and point out that this is a general Building Survey of the property and not a Schedule of Condition listing every minor detail. It is a report intended to give a general opinion as to the condition of the property.

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.

### 1.05 Conditions of Engagement

This report has been prepared solely for the benefit of Mr and Mrs XXXXXX. No liability is accepted to third parties.

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

The report does not guarantee that work carried out in the past complies with statutory/mandatory regulations or with competent manufacturers' recommendations or British Standards, Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates, etc.

A copy of the full terms and conditions is appended.

### **1.06 Limitations of Inspection**

The property was occupied and furnished at the time of inspection. All floors were covered with fitted finishes.

The weather was dry at the time of inspection. Therefore, it is not possible to state that gutter joints, roof junctions and flashings, etc. are totally watertight.

Insulation to the roof space limited inspection of the ceilings, tanks and pipework.

The right hand hip end roof slope could not be fully viewed from ground level due to the proximity of neighbouring properties. Some parts of the right hand chimney could also not be viewed from ground level.

The left hand wall of the conservatory could not be viewed as this practically abuts the neighbouring property. Plants and shrubs around the property obscured some external walls, boundary walls, fences and pavings.

Comment cannot be given on areas that are covered, concealed or not otherwise readily visible. In producing this report it has been assumed that these 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.

The inspection of the services was limited to those areas which are visible. No comment can be made as to the soundness of any pipework, wires or fittings which are not visible and the risk must be accepted that defects may exist in such hidden areas.

### **1.07 Date of Inspection**

The property was inspected on XXXXX, 2011.

### **1.08 Weather**

The weather at the time of inspection was dry and clear following an extended period of dry weather.

### **1.09 Description of Property**

The property comprises a traditionally constructed two storey semi detached house, believed to have been built in about 1906.

Accommodation is as follows:

Ground Floor: Hall, two reception rooms, a kitchen and an attached conservatory.

First Floor: Two bedrooms and a bathroom/wc.

External: There is a small front garden and side access to an average to small sized rear garden.

All directions and room locations are given as facing the property from the pavement of XXXXX Road. The front of the property faces approximately east.



### 1.10 Tenure

It has been assumed that the property is being sold on a freehold basis, with vacant possession on completion of the sale.

## 2. EXTERNAL

### 2.01 Roof Coverings and Parapets

The main roof is of pitched, timber construction covered with synthetic slates over a sarking felt underlining. There are half round concrete ridge and hip tiles. There are lead lined valleys at the junction with the front gable roof. The lower front bay roof is of splayed pitched design, also covered with synthetic slates with angled concrete hip tiles.

The synthetic slate coverings are generally intact however are rather discoloured with age and covered with moss. The precise age of these coverings is unknown and at one time, asbestos was used in the manufacture of such synthetic slates. In the event that any work is required to repair damage or deterioration of the slates, or for wholesale renewal of the covering, specialist assessment to determine the presence of asbestos will be required. Synthetic slates are susceptible to accelerated deterioration from ultra violet light which leads to them becoming brittle and as a result they tend to have a shorter service life than other forms of slating and tiling.

Ridge and hip tiles generally appear to be intact and serviceable.

Loose coaxial television aerial cables across the front slope of the roof may cause damage to the slates and these should be relocated internally or properly restrained.

The slating and lead flashings to the front bay roof appear to be intact and generally in satisfactory condition.

### 2.02 Roof Spaces

No access was available to the front bay roof structure and therefore no comment can be made on its construction or condition.

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Access to the main roof space is from the hatch in the landing ceiling. The roof structure is formed of traditional cut timber rafters and purlins, with some additional strutting. There is bituminous felt sarking material evident to the underside of the roof slopes. There is a lightweight concrete blockwork party wall, which appears to be a modern addition, providing improved security and fire resistance between the two dwellings. The ceiling is formed of timber ceiling joists and there is insulation quilt of about 100mm in depth laid between the ceiling joists. A brick chimney stack rises through the centre of the roof space and there is a second chimney stack barely visible to the right hand hip end.

From inspection in and around the roof, the timbers appear to be in reasonable condition for their type and age. There is extensive staining to the rear hip, directly above the feed and expansion tank serving the central heating system. The sarking felt is also rather stained and this suggests that the boiler has been overheating, forcing steam back through the vent pipe into the roof space and this has led to condensation occurring on the sarking felt and timbers in the roof space. The central heating system requires therefore proper servicing and adjustment of the settings to prevent this occurring on a regular basis. This also implies that the standards of ventilation to the roof space are not good and this requires improvement. It may be possible to insert proprietary eaves ventilators in the soffit boards around the edge of the roof and provided the insulation is drawn back from the eaves, this may assist in improving ventilation. If this cannot be practically achieved, the insertion of some vent slates in the roof slopes may be the only alternative and this will involve disturbing the synthetic slates on the roof. As previously noted these may incorporate a small proportion of asbestos and you will need to engage a contractor who is experienced in this type of work in order to install the ventilation.

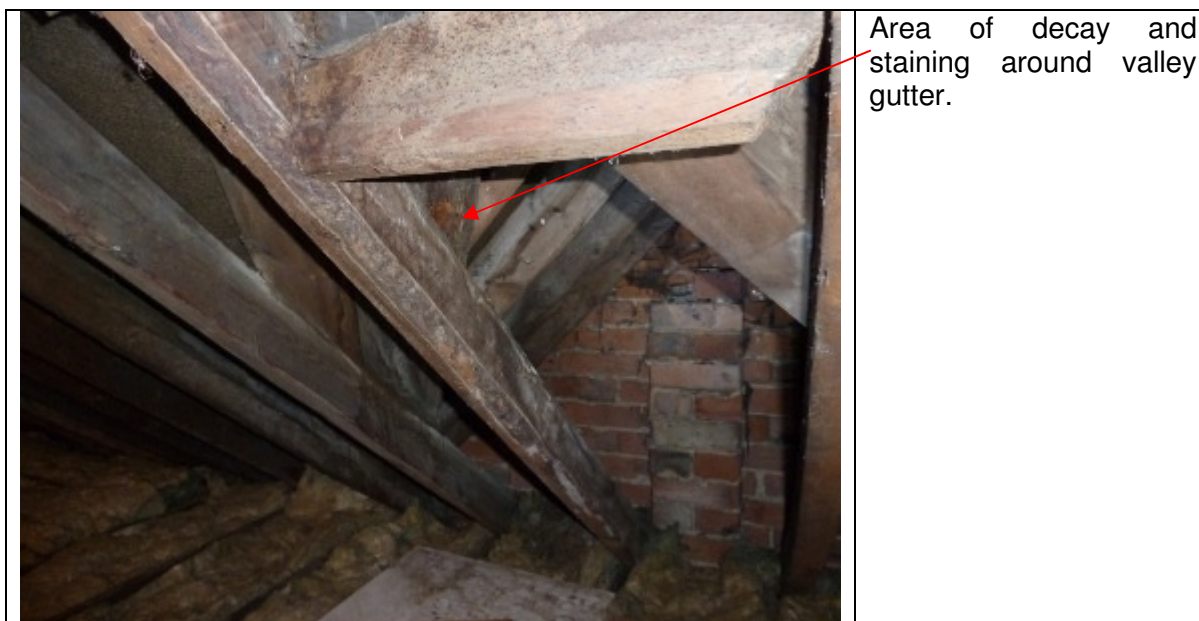


Staining, suggesting excessive heating of the boiler primary circuit. This causes hot water to be forced through the vent pipe into the feed and expansion tank, which produces steam and condensation.

A further area of damage to the roof structure was noted where the valley boards to the front main slope appear to have become saturated, due to defects in the valley gutter linings. Decay has occurred to the timbers however this does not appear to have caused any structural damage and it is thought that this is long standing and pre-dates re-covering of the roof with the current synthetic slates and lead valley linings. The prolonged period of dry weather recently experienced results in reducing the evidence of leaks and penetrating

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dampness in such circumstances and it cannot therefore be fully confirmed that the roof covering is fully watertight around the valley.



The undersides of the roof slopes have been lined in order to provide a second means of defence against water penetration. The condition of the lining is good.

The party wall appeared to be generally in satisfactory condition although typically for this lightweight blockwork construction, the blocks were found to be a little bit loose when tapped. For the most part however it appears to be generally stable and satisfactory.

Visible wiring within the roof space appears to be of PVC insulated type. In places this was buried beneath loft insulation. This can cause overheating of the wires which can lead to defects and fires. Wiring should be re-laid on top of the insulation where possible.

Chimney masonry visible within the roof space appeared to be generally satisfactory and free from signs of significant water penetration.

### 2.03 Chimney Stacks and Flashings

There are two brick chimney stacks serving the property. The left hand stack carries clay pots and has lead flashings. The right hand stack carries a single gas terminal and also has lead flashings.

From ground level inspection the stacks appear to be reasonably upright and in generally satisfactory overall condition. Some frost damage was noted to brickwork, particularly to the taller right hand stack and this will need monitoring and probable repairs in the future. There is also some fine cracking to brickwork joints around the top of the stacks. This is likely to be a sign of a continuing process of deterioration. Loosening of the upper few courses is common with chimney stacks of this age and again future repairs should be anticipated.

The chimney pots to the left hand stack appear to be generally in satisfactory condition; it has not been possible to inspect the flashings at the base of the pots and it cannot be confirmed that the pots are adequately secured in place.

To the right hand stack, the gas terminal appears to be an older style asbestos cement component and in the event that works are required to the stack, this should be removed and disposed of in accordance with current regulations pertaining to asbestos.

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Flashings around the stacks generally appeared to be in reasonable condition however it was noted that a section of the left hand stack flashing is displaced to the rear slope and again a repair will be required here in due course.

Please note that the inspection of the right hand stack was somewhat limited due to the viewpoints available.

Any works to chimney stacks will require proper access equipment and this will add significantly to costs.

A TV aerial is attached to the stack. Fixings to these can corrode eventually allowing the aerial to drop.

### **2.04 Gutters and Downpipes**

Gutters and downpipes are of plastic construction throughout. Plastic gutters are relatively maintenance free but do require periodic re-clipping and resealing of their joints. The gutters should be inspected annually and accumulated leaves, debris, etc., should be removed in order to prevent potential problems due to blockage occurring. There is a small section of slate in the front gutter, which appears to come from the neighbours roof and this should be removed.

It was not raining at the time of inspection therefore watertightness of the joints of the rainwater goods cannot be guaranteed.

### **2.05 Walls**

The outside walls are about 240mm thick and are of one brick thick solid brickwork construction. There are brick arches over window and door openings and stone sub sills to windows.

The front gable wall appears to be half brick thick, reinforced with a 9" pier to the centre, visible within the roof space (see picture above). There are a number of open brick joints to the apex of the gable and although apparently currently stable, some repair work and re-pointing may be required in due course. The front elevation generally shows evidence of need for localised patch repairs to pointing; the flank and rear walls appear to have been re-pointed throughout in recent years.

The brick arch over the kitchen window has dropped slightly, this has been re-pointed and there are no signs of subsequent movement. There is some vertical cracking beneath the kitchen window, and again this has partly been re-pointed but the cracks although fine, remain. The brick arch over the kitchen back door opening has dropped, has been re-pointed and appears to have moved slightly again. These signs indicate that the rear right hand corner has moved outwards slightly and this is probably a consequence of having two openings in the walls so close together. The main drainage runs around this corner and there is potentially a risk that drainage may be contributing to movement; leaking drains tend to wash the ground out from underneath foundations. There does not appear however to be significant downward movement of the brickwork in this area, which suggests that the foundations are substantially unaffected. No works are considered necessary currently however this part of the building should be monitored just to ensure that movement does not recur. Such problems with houses of this age are quite common and the extent of movement experienced in the last 100 years or so does not seem to be extreme. Movement in brick arches can also be associated with progressive deterioration of the timber backing lintels but these are not accessible for inspection.



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For the most part the outside walls appear to be fairly true and plumb and free from signs of significant distortion.

In a property of this age, it is probable that the foundations are shallow by modern standards and in shrinkable soils such as found in this area, the risk of structural movement is greater when foundations are shallow. This risk increases as the soil shrinks in hot dry summers. Roots from trees and shrubs can have a significant contributory effect. There are no signs of such a problem affecting the property currently and provided trees in the vicinity, including the trees on the adjacent railway embankment, are maintained within reasonable height limits the risk should be contained.

The external walls in properties of this type and age often incorporate built in timbers, including the ends of floor joists as well as lintels over window and door openings. Typically there is a compound timber lintel called a bressummer located above the opening forming the front bay and these often suffer progressive deflection over time, leading to distortion of the brick wall above the opening. In this instance there are virtually no signs of such a problem; the facades of the pair of semi detached houses appear to be unaffected in this

respect. Other concealed timbers are more difficult to assess and their condition cannot be commented upon further. It is however important to ensure that pointing and rainwater goods are maintained in as best condition as possible to prevent saturation of the outside walls, which can lead to decay in these concealed timbers.

## 2.06 Damp Proof Course

The property appears to have been constructed with an original bitumen type damp proof course.

The recommended minimum height for a damp proof course is 150mm above external ground level. The reason for this gap is to prevent soil, etc, building up and thus bridging the line of damp proof course. If this occurs, it provides a path for rising dampness to bypass the line of the damp proof course and gain entry to the property.

In a number of areas the ground levels encroach within this 150mm margin and, particularly along the right hand side of the property, some dampness was found internally. It is therefore recommended that ground levels adjacent to the wall are lowered to reduce the bridging effects of the damp course. In view of the high quality of the pavings in the vicinity, it is suggested that an open trench is formed along this side of the property and infilled with loose aggregate material of large dimensions i.e.: stones in excess of 30mm in diameter, which will prevent capillary action against the brickwork, which can lead to bridging of the damp course.



High ground levels against the right hand flank wall.

## 2.07 Sub-Floor Ventilation

There are three 9" x 6" airbricks located in the front elevation and two 9" x 6" airbricks located in the right hand flank wall of the rear conservatory addition. On the assumption that the airbricks to the conservatory floor are connected by adequate ducts in the solid floor structure, to the sub floor void of the rear reception room floor, it is likely that the sub floor ventilation will be broadly adequate. The efficacy of this arrangement cannot be confirmed from a non invasive inspection.

It is essential that adequate levels of ventilation be maintained in order to prevent damp conditions occurring suitable for an outbreak of dry rot to commence. Accordingly, as an annual maintenance measure, all airbricks should be inspected an accumulated dirt, debris, etc, be removed.

## 2.08 Doors, Windows and Joinery

External doors comprise a recently installed half glazed timber door to the front of the property and a half glazed timber door to the rear of the property. These are set in timber frames. Windows are of timber construction also, of traditional sliding sash design incorporating sealed double glazed units. There are timber fascia and soffit boards and timber barge boards at eaves level. There is a porch to the front door consisting of a timber structure supported on low brick walls, with a natural slate covering to the roof.

The vendor indicated that the doors and windows had been installed in 2009 and 2008. Copies of FENSA certificates have been seen and you should confirm via your legal advisers that the original certificates are available.

From a general inspection internally and externally, the windows and doors appeared to operate satisfactorily and be in general overall satisfactory condition. The front landing window is a little difficult to operate, but with practise no doubt these small idiosyncrasies should be manageable. Similarly, some of the bay windows are not quite weighted perfectly and these do not always remain in an equilibrium position. The kitchen window appears to have been painted shut. Some minor adjustment may therefore be considered beneficial.

From external inspection the window installation has been finished with the application of a number of small section timber mouldings, particularly around the sill areas. The use of small mouldings in external joinery commonly leads to failure of the paint film on the joints between the mouldings and the larger sections, which allows water into the joinery and this can cause accelerated or early decay particularly in smaller timbers. It will therefore be very important to maintain the paint films on these windows in the best possible condition.

The double glazing was free from internal misting at the time of inspection. Double glazing can vary in quality, particularly in respect of the seals around the edges of the glass, which can deteriorate over time, allowing moisture to penetrate resulting in condensation. Whilst no such problems were apparent during the survey, it is possible that the seals will deteriorate in the future and if so, there would be no effective remedy other than to replace the affected double glazed panes.

From ground level inspection the eaves joinery appears generally to be in reasonable overall condition. Clearly much of this is original and will have been subject to considerable wear and tear over its life span. In places, the standards of preparation have not including feathering in the original paintwork, which is probably as a result of health and safety concerns surrounding the likely existence of lead paint to the original joinery. Provided the paint films are maintained to a good standard, the joinery should continue to be serviceable. Because of the relatively inaccessible location of eaves joinery, it is commonly not maintained to a high standard and therefore some need for repairs should be anticipated when next preparing for external decoration.

The porch construction appears generally to be in reasonable and satisfactory condition. Timbers appear to be slightly worn or weathered however currently decorated to a satisfactory standard and appear to be in reasonable condition. The glazing to the side lights appears to be generally in satisfactory condition. It is not known whether these panes are of safety glass, which would be a requirement under current regulations and these may present a hazard if broken.

**2.09 Decorations**

External decorations are generally in satisfactory overall condition.

The property should be repainted on a regular basis, generally on a three to five yearly cycle depending on the quality of the paint, exposure factors, etc.

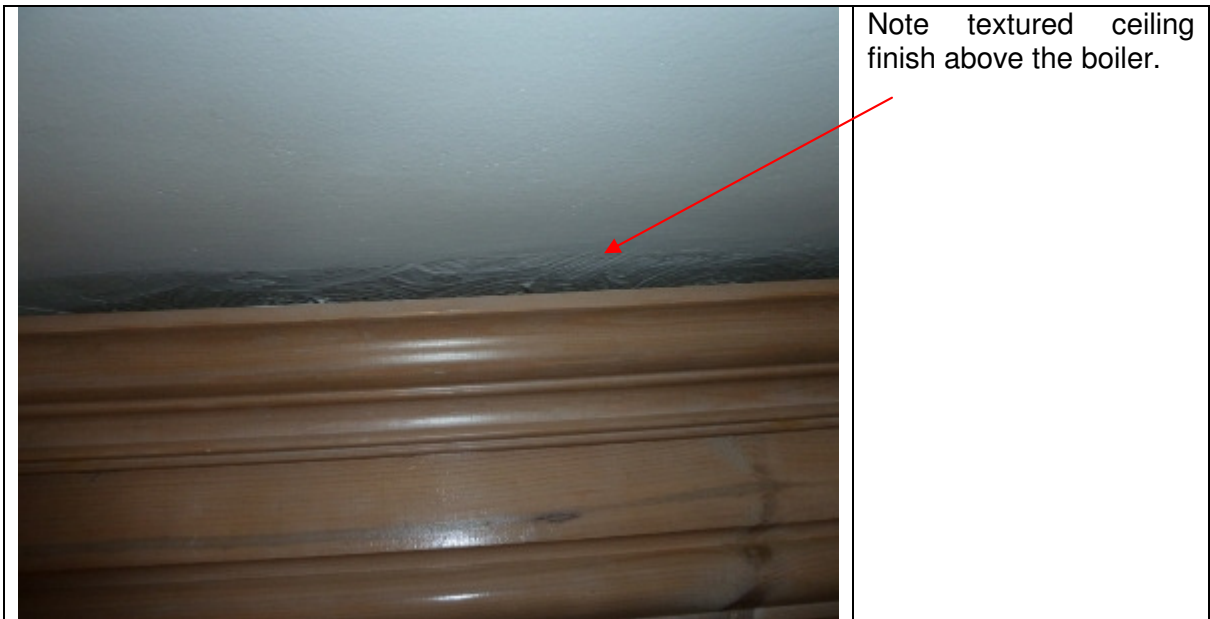
It is probable that the external decorations contain old lead based paint. Suitable precautions should be taken when rubbing down and redecorating the surfaces.

**3. INTERNAL**

**3.01 Ceilings**

Ceilings are predominantly the original lath and plaster. There are likely to be areas of loose plaster found, particularly in a property of this age. Constant vibration from foot traffic on the floors above the ceilings causes this. Future replacement must be anticipated as an ongoing maintenance item.

Many of the ceilings appear to have been over-skimmed in recent times and a number have had plaster covings installed around the perimeter. An inaccessible part of the ceiling in the kitchen, above the boiler installation shows that this ceiling has been plaster skimmed over earlier Artex type finishes.



The Artex coatings may contain a small percentage of asbestos in their composition. Accordingly, these surfaces should not be disturbed by drilling, sanding, or otherwise worked in such a way as to generate dust as this causes a hazard to health. The extent of original Artex finishes to ceilings is unknown and therefore care must be taken when working on any of the ceilings in the property.

For the most part currently the ceilings appear to be in satisfactory condition free from signs of significant cracking.

### 3.02 Walls

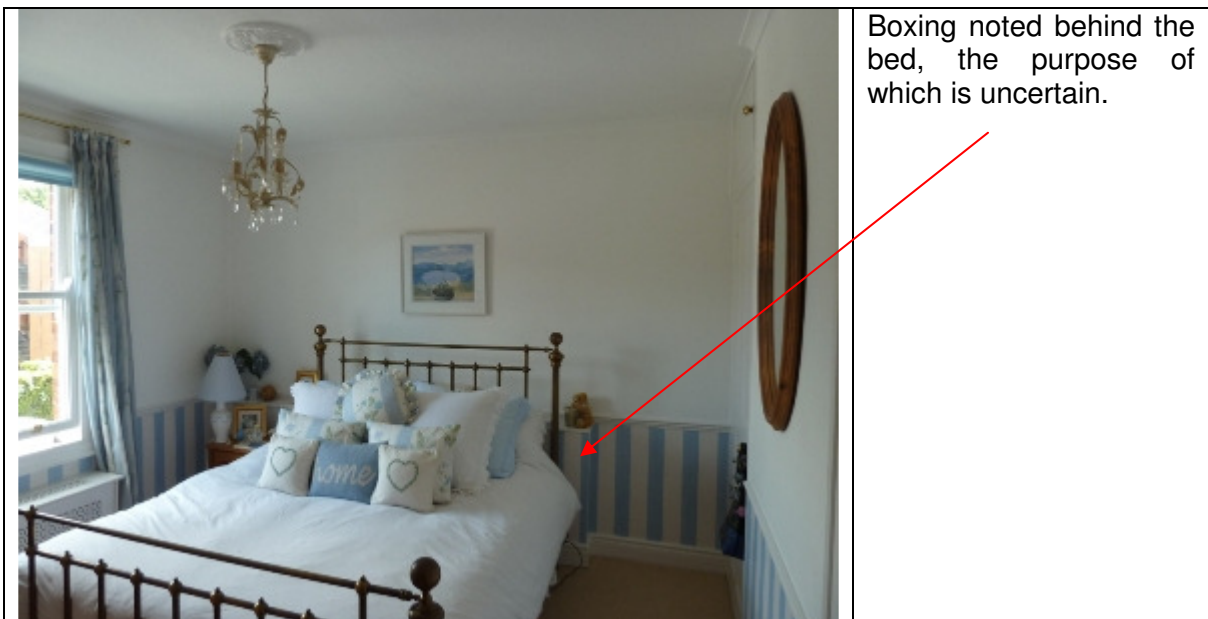
The external walls are plastered internally. The internal walls are of solid construction, also plastered. There is no evidence of any significant structural alterations to the internal walls.

For the most part the internal walls appear to be generally structurally sound. There is some evidence of settlement of the internal walls in the form of distortion of the door openings; for example the opening between the kitchen and the hallway and a number of the first floor door openings are distorted. This is fairly common in properties of this type and age and often results from differential settlement of the foundations to the internal partition walls and some deflection of the floor structures, which are also likely to affect the internal partitions. The extent of movement is largely within acceptable parameters and some ongoing easing and adjustment of doors is likely to be found to be necessary.

The condition of the plasterwork is reasonable for its age. There are a number of hollow areas where a typical loss of adhesion has occurred between the plaster and its backing material. Accordingly, it must be accepted that the patch repairs will be found to be necessary as part of the preparation process of future internal redecoration programmes.

It is understood from the vendor that a number of rooms have been largely re-plastered, for example the bathroom and it is hoped that the plaster finishes in these areas will prove more durable.

Within the front bedroom there is a half-height boxing along the party wall. The purpose of this boxing is unknown; the vendor stated that it appears only to be there to act as a shelf for the bed. If this boxing is removed, concealed defects may become apparent.



### 3.03 Fireplaces, Flues and Chimney Breasts

The chimney breasts have been retained throughout the property. For the most part these are blocked-up and out of use. Airbricks need to be fitted to sealed fireplaces in order to provide ventilation to the flues. This is required in order to prevent condensation occurring within the flues which in turn could cause damage to flue linings and decorations. At this time, suitable cowls should be fitted to the chimney pots to prevent rainwater penetration but allow some through flow of ventilation air.

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A fireplace is retained in the main front reception room and it is understood that the gas-coal effect fire, fire surround and fire back were installed in 2007 and that there is a Corgi certificate available for this installation. A vent has been installed in the floor to the left hand side of the chimney breast presumably to permit some combustion air for the gas fire.



Flues could not be examined internally and it is recommended that all flues be swept prior to use. There are no service records of this gas fire and therefore you should instruct a Gas Safe registered contractor to inspect and service this fire prior to use.

### 3.04 Ground Floor

The ground floor is of mixed suspended timber and solid construction.

It should be noted that floors are one of the hardest areas to pass comment upon due to the presence of furniture and fitted carpets. The risk must therefore be accepted that defects exist beneath the carpets that are hidden from view.

The ground floor is reasonably firm and flat and should be capable of bearing normal domestic loads. Typically for properties of this type and age there is some spring notable in the timber floor structure. This may indicate some slight deterioration of the floor timbers however this is not thought to be a significant problem currently.

The age of the house is such that it is probable that there is no damp proof membrane in the solid floor. It is therefore at potential risk from damp penetration until such time that it is replaced. The current stone floor covering shows no sign of a dampness problem and the stone and adhesive in which it is laid, may be acting as a damp proof membrane.

### 3.05 Upper Floor(s)

The first floor is of suspended timber construction. The presence of fitted finishes prevented direct visual examination of the floor structures; however they are generally fairly level under foot and exhibit no sign of defect. Again, some spring was noted underfoot however this is common in properties of this type and age.

Ceramic tiles have been laid in the bathroom. These tiles are currently in a sound condition but it must be recognised that they are inherently brittle and can become cracked when laid on timber flooring, due to the natural springiness of the flooring.

### 3.06 Dampness

Ground floor walls were tested with an electronic damp meter at regular intervals (except where furniture, etc, prevented access). A number of high damp meter readings were obtained along the right hand wall internally and on the rear wall return within the kitchen. The highest of these was obtained within the understair cupboard at about 40% wood moisture equivalent (WME). The kitchen units prevented access to the rear section of the flank wall and may conceal dampness problems. Where accessible beneath the kitchen sink, the wall plaster visible is of a hard cement based render and this was found to be entirely dry when tested. It may not be reasonable however to assume that the same plaster finish has been applied along the full length of this wall within the kitchen.

It is thought likely that this dampness is largely associated with elevated ground levels along the right hand side of the property and it is therefore strongly recommended that the ground levels are lowered to finish 150mm below the level of the damp course, and that the walls are given an opportunity to dry out. As a rule of thumb, it is considered that every inch of brickwork takes a month to dry out and therefore a 9" wall of this type will take at least 9 months to dry in good conditions. The older plaster finishes internally however may now be contaminated with hygroscopic salts (salts that will absorb moisture from the atmosphere and retain dampness) and as a result, some re-plastering may be desirable internally. Given the extent of the dampness and the likely disruption that could potentially follow from the extent of works required, it is recommended that you obtain a quotation from a competent damp proofing contractor, either a member of the BWPDA or the Property Care Association. It is possible that the best approach would be to tackle the ground levels first and wait to see how much the walls dry out in the first 1-2 years, prior to tackling any significant repairs works internally. As with any dampness, there is however an associated risk of potential decay to timbers adjacent to the outside walls and these factors must be balanced when considering the timing and extent of works.

Solid external walls can be prone to rain penetration. Should such penetration occur, it can cause damage to concealed structural timbers, plaster and decorations. The risk can be minimised by maintaining gutters and downpipes in good condition. At the time of inspection there were no signs of such a problem.

Chimney breasts can become damp from rainwater soaking down through the masonry. Again, no signs of a significant problem were noted to the chimney breasts where accessible within the property.

The window seat in the front bay prevented access for damp meter readings to the front bay internally. Commonly, these are areas where damp can affect the internal wall surfaces however this cannot be confirmed.

There is no evidence of condensation within the accommodation of the property at the time of inspection. The control of condensation involves a fine balance between maintaining surface temperatures above the dew point (the point at which water vapour turns into moisture), and provision of adequate ventilation and insulation. Unfortunately, today's emphasis on thermal insulation is at odds with ventilation of properties which is one of the ways of preventing condensation. It is recommended that good levels of ventilation be provided (by way of mechanical extract ventilation), particularly to those areas where large volumes of moisture are created such as bathrooms and kitchens. Bedrooms also tend to be areas where large volumes of moisture are created. Passive ventilation fitted within window frames can help to remove this.

As previously noted, there is evidence to suggest a condensation problem within the main roof void and this has been discussed elsewhere within the report.

### **3.07 Cellar(s)**

There are no cellars or vaults to the subject property.

### **3.08 Timber Decay**

For the most part accessible structural timbers appear to be generally free from signs of significant timber decay. All reasonable care has been taken but hidden outbreaks may be present in parts of the structure which are inaccessible.

As previously noted, there are signs of past decay to one of the valley boards visible within the main roof space, to the front slope. This was dry when touched and there are no signs of an ongoing problem; it is thought that this decay occurred prior to replacement of the main roof coverings and is therefore currently inactive. The decay appears to be limited to the valley board and is not affecting the performance of the main structure.

You may however wish to obtain a second opinion on this matter and because you will be instructing a specialist to inspect the property in relation to dampness, it may be prudent to ask for a second opinion on this decay noted in the roof space.

It should be noted that a number of timbers are built into external walls and therefore it is essential to maintain the walls in as dry a condition as possible. If the walls are allowed to become damp, then the dampness will transfer to the timbers and potentially cause rot action to commence. There is no sign of such a problem having occurred.

### **3.09 Wood Boring Beetle Infestation**

There is no evidence of an outbreak of wood boring beetle infestation in the accessible timbers. All reasonable care has been taken, however hidden outbreaks may be present in parts of the structure which are inaccessible.

There is a possibility of wood boring insect attack in a property of this age, however without being able to strip back all floor finishings it is impossible to confirm or deny its existence. In practice only those areas which are still active should be treated. It is alleged that the mass use of chemicals can be injurious to health, particularly to those with respiratory problems.

The vendor indicated that a previous owner had had timber treatment work carried out however the guarantee has now expired. If possible, any paperwork relating to this treatment should be obtained from the vendor and maintained as a matter of record.

### **3.10 Joinery**

Internal joinery comprises four panel doors in conventional timber door frames with timber architraves, skirting boards etc. There is a conventional timber staircase, with a timber hand rail and balustrade. Fitted joinery in the property includes a range of modern pine units in the kitchen, a pine and laminate wardrobe fitted in the rear bedroom and two older style cupboards fitted with side of the chimney breast in the front bedroom. There is also a pine bookcase on the landing and a fitted pine dresser in the rear reception room.

For the most part the internal joinery appears to be in generally satisfactory condition. Some internal doors show signs of wear to latch mechanisms and door furniture and one or two are slightly ill fitting however this is within acceptable limits for a property of this type and age.

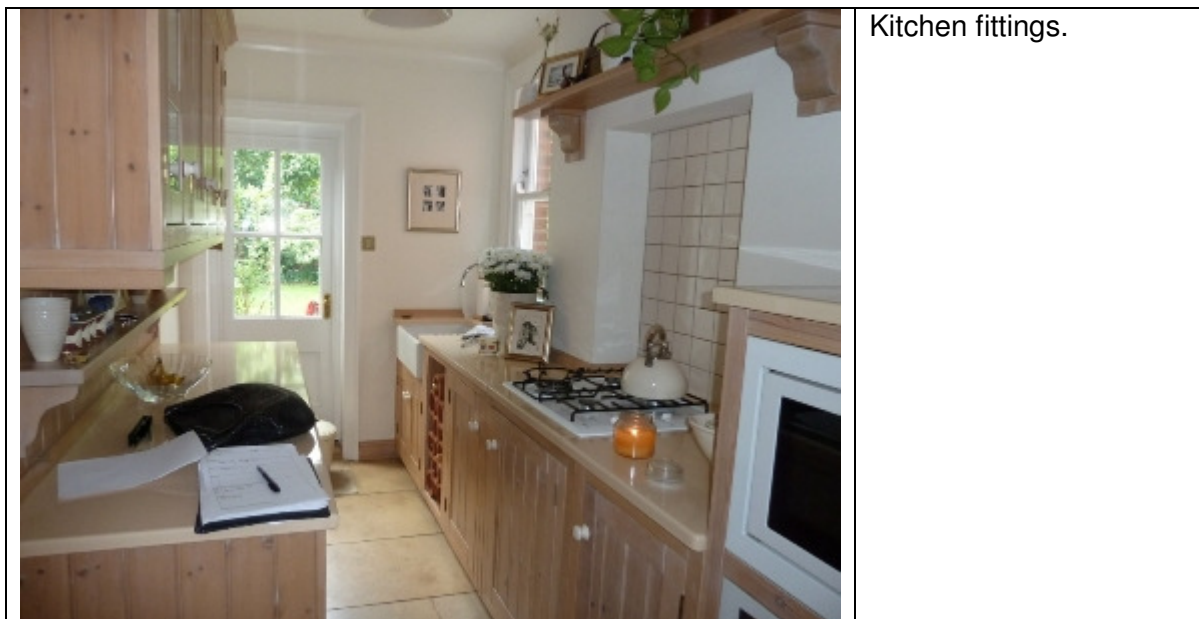


## SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

Chemical stripping processes can break down the animal based glues which were used for these doors allowing joints to open. You should therefore monitor the condition of the stripped pine doors.

The staircase appears to be reasonably sound underfoot however some treads creak slightly. The timber balustrading appears to be in fair overall condition however the gaps are a little wide, exceeding the 100mm regulation applied today. This is only a marginal issue however.

Fitted cupboards and units within the property generally appear to be in satisfactory overall condition where available for inspection and testing. There is some damage to the kitchen sink base door knob and you may wish to replace this.



### 3.11 Decorations

The internal decorations are in a good condition.

It should be noted that stripping of existing decorative coatings is likely to result in bringing down of areas of loose plaster.

## 4. SERVICES

### 4.01 Electrical

The property has a mains electricity supply. The meter and consumer unit are located under the stairs. The vendor stated that no significant works have been carried out to the electrical system during her ownership however works to the bathroom installation are apparently covered by an NICEIC test certificate and this should be confirmed. The majority of the fittings in the property such as light switches and sockets have been replaced and some rewiring of sockets was found to be necessary when this work was carried out. The consumer unit is a modern item carrying miniature circuit breakers and a residual current device. There are however old cables connected to this consumer unit, the evidence for which is that metal strap type clips are used to secure the cables, where visible under the stairs and also in some parts of the roof space. PVC insulated cables of this type have proved extremely durable, none the less these are of some age. It was also noted that there are no ceiling lights in the two reception rooms and you may wish to consider how

## SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

lighting is to be achieved in these rooms. The immersion heater is wired to a 13Amp plug, which is not good practice.



The consumer unit in the under stair cupboard.

In the absence of a comprehensive test certificate covering the entire property you should arrange for a competent electrician to inspect and test the system on your behalf prior to occupation of the property. Current advice from the Institution of Electrical Engineers is that domestic electrical installations should be tested every five years.

### 4.02 Gas

The property has a mains gas supply. The meter is located in the cupboard under the stairs.

There were no signs of any defects in the gas installation however the meter is of some age and the gas pipe externally is wrapped, concealing the material from which the pipe is made. This installation is generally likely to be of some age.

It is recommended that the gas supply service is checked and tested by a Gas Safe contractor on an annual basis when the boiler is serviced.

### 4.03 Cold Water

The property has a mains water supply. The vendor indicated that the stopcock is located under the kitchen sink however this has not been confirmed as being the main stopcock. Access for inspection was strictly limited and the mains service pipe has therefore not been inspected. In properties of this type and age, the original main water service pipe would have been of either lead or cast iron and these materials are now considered obsolete for potable water supplies. If the main pipe has not been replaced, it may be found necessary to install a modern water supply using polythene pipe.

Internally, plumbing appears to be carried out in a mixture of copper and plastic pipes and where accessible was found to be free from signs of significant leaks. There is a modern plastic water storage tank within the main roof space which appears generally to be in satisfactory overall condition, although some damage has occurred to the screened air vent on top of the tank and this should be replaced or properly secured to ensure that no extraneous material or insects enter the water tank.

**4.04 Hot Water**

Hot water is provided by the Baxi gas fired boiler in the kitchen and is stored in a cylinder in the rear bedroom airing cupboard. The cylinder has a factory made insulation jacket which restricted the inspection. A supplementary electric immersion heater is also installed, which is wired to a 13amp plug. This is not normally considered to be good practice and a dedicated supply should be installed to service the immersion heater.



Hot water cylinder. Note the immersion heater is wired to a 13 Amp plug.

**4.05 Heating**

Space heating is provided by the Baxi gas fired boiler located in the kitchen, which serves a system of radiators around the property. It is understood from the vendor that the boiler was installed in 2002 and was last serviced in March 2011. The boiler is largely concealed within a cupboard in the kitchen and the radiators are also concealed by radiator boxes around the property. This will restrict access for servicing.



Baxi boiler in the kitchen.

## SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

There is a programmer serving the system in the airing cupboard and a room thermostat located in the hallway, however it is not known whether radiators are fitted with individual thermostatic valves. The space heating service to the rear conservatory is understood to be an under-floor system and again this is concealed which limited the inspection.

As previously noted there are signs of excess venting of the boiler into the roof, suggesting a problem with a thermostat or running at too high a temperature. The feed and expansion tank is also badly scaled and the water level very low; from first inspection, it was thought that this tank was obsolete, however the type of boiler installed does not appear to run on a pressurised system and no pressure vessel was noted within the property, suggesting that the feed and expansion tank is still in service.



Feed and expansion tank in the roof space.

As a result, it is thought prudent that an inspection is carried out of the heating system, including the feed and expansion tank, to establish whether there is an ongoing problem with the tank or with venting of the hot water system into the roof space.

It is recommended that service records are obtained from the vendor and if the boiler has not been serviced recently, a Gas Safe registered heating engineer should be instructed to undertake a full service including checking the ventilation to the boiler and checking and cleaning out the flues as found to be necessary.

### 4.06 Sanitary Fittings

Sanitary fittings within the property comprise a bath, basin and wc in the first floor bathroom. It is understood from the vendor that these were installed in 2010 by Dolphin and that a 5 year guarantee is available for the installation. This guarantee has not been seen. From inspection, the fittings appear to be in good overall condition and free from signs of significant leaks.

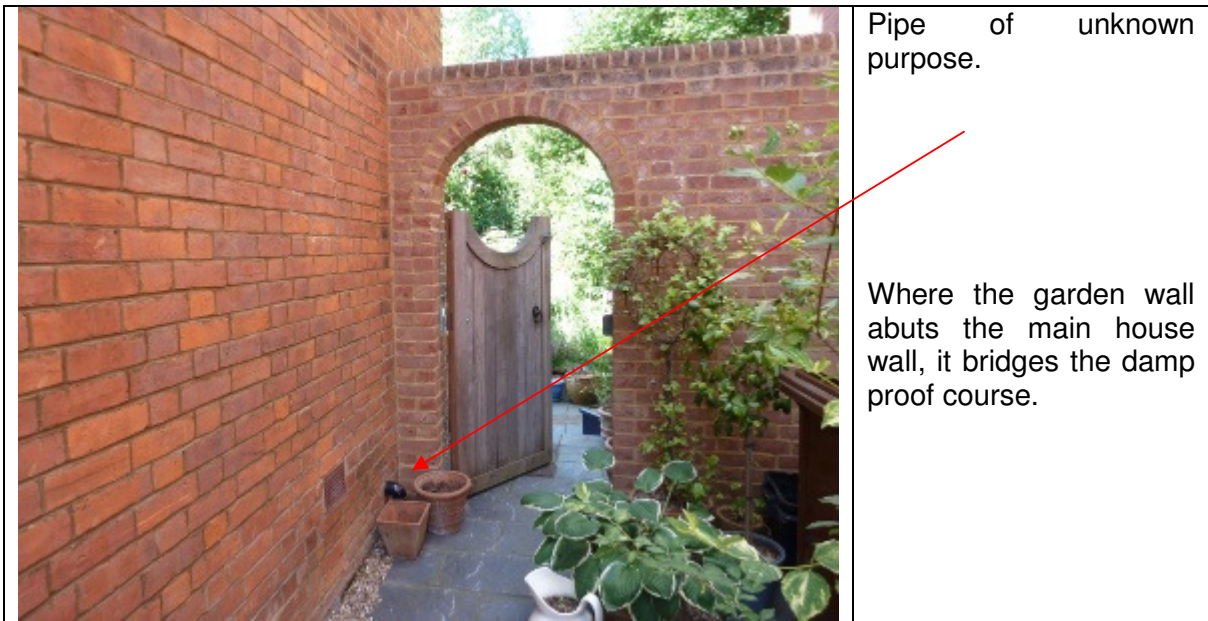
The flooring beneath the bath could not be inspected as this would involve damaging investigations which are beyond the scope of a normal survey. If there has been leakage, because of defective pipework, gaps in the wall tiles or at the junction between the wall tiles and the sanitary fittings, dampness may have caused considerable decay and possible rot in the floor. There are no signs of a problem to the floor in the bathroom at the time of inspection.

## SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

It is very important to ensure that the seals to the sanitary appliances, in particular baths and showers, are maintained in good condition to avoid water penetration to the floors below, which could result in serious decay problems developing.

### 4.07 Above Ground Drainage

Above ground drainage to the property comprises a plastic soil pipe to the rear of the property and a number of plastic waste pipes, all of which appeared to be in generally satisfactory overall condition. There is a small section of 3" pipework visible to the flank wall, the purpose of which could not be established from inspection. This appears to discharge into the drainage system, however may allow smells to escape form the drains and appears to serve no useful purpose for the house currently. It may be therefore prudent to cap this pipe off or remove it completely.



### 4.08 Underground Drainage

The property is understood to be connected to the mains sewer, via an exclusive connection. The main drain run is to the right hand side of the property, returning around the rear towards what would have been the original outside toilet. There are 3 inspection chambers providing access to this system however it was not possible to remove the cover to the rear inspection chamber, because this has seized in place. The other 2 covers were lifted and the system was found to be substantially clear and free from signs of obvious defects. There appears to have been a number of alterations to the drainage over the years and a number of the connections may currently be redundant. This system appears to be a combined system that is carrying both foul and surface water from the property, which is common for properties of this type and age.

Inspection of the drainage system was limited to the chambers which were readily accessible on the site. The absence of any obvious problems within the chambers does not necessarily mean that the concealed parts are free from defect.

The inspection chambers themselves appear to be in reasonable overall condition but will require some periodic maintenance including removal of root growth and repairs to mortar benching and pointing. It is important to maintain the drainage system in sound condition; leaking pipe joints can be a cause of structural movement in properties and the proximity of the drain run to the flank wall does present a risk in this respect.

## **5. OTHER**

### **5.01 Means of Escape in Case of Fire**

The property is of two storey construction only and therefore there are no special requirements in relation to means of escape in case of fire. There appears to be a mains powered smoke detector located on the hall ceiling; this has not been tested and this should be tested on a regular basis to ensure that early warning of a potential fire is provided.

### **5.02 Thermal Insulation**

The roof space has been insulated with 100mm fibreglass quilting. Current recommendations are that a 270mm thickness be provided and therefore, it is recommended that the present thickness be enhanced as necessary.

It is recommended that thermostatically controlled valves be fitted to radiators.

You should refer to the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for this property, which should be available in full from the estate agent. The EPC provides advice for improving the energy efficiency of the property.

### **5.03 Security**

The property has a burglar alarm fitted. This has not been tested. Alarm systems require regular servicing. The service record should be checked and if the system has not been serviced within the last 12 months, a service should be commissioned from a specialist. Confirmation should be obtained that an automatic cut out device is in place.

## **6. THE SITE**

### **6.01 Grounds and Boundaries**

The property occupies a reasonably level site, in an area which is not thought to be at risk of river flooding. There are no trees in the immediate vicinity which are thought to present a significant hazard to the property currently. There are a number of young Poplar trees growing on the embankment to the rear of the house, which are currently probably not of significant size to pose a threat however their maintenance is in the hands of Network Rail and it will be necessary to ensure that these are maintained within reasonable limits.

Boundaries around the property are formed in brick walls and timber fences. For the most part the walls appear to be in generally satisfactory condition. The fences however are rather patchy and a number are concealed by plant growth. Maintenance and repair should be anticipated.

The hardwood gates to the front driveway have dropped a little and will require some general maintenance. The installation of diagonal braces to these gates will help to prevent them from dropping further. These gates and the side gate are rather weathered and may benefit from application of a suitable preservative or oil to prolong their life.

The 9" wall dividing the driveway from the rear garden appears generally to be sound and stable; this wall does however bridge the damp course of the main house and it has not been possible to establish whether suitable measures have been taken to prevent dampness bridging the damp course. This may be associated with the cause of dampness internally however this wall aligns with fitted units in the kitchen, where internal inspection was not possible.

## SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

Hard surfaces around the property are mostly of slate and gravel pavings, are fairly recent and appear to be in satisfactory overall condition. As previously noted, ground levels along the left hand flank wall are rather too high and these should be lowered.

The driveway to the side of the house is approximately 2.4m in width between houses. You should establish for yourself whether this driveway suits your purposes; it has not been confirmed that it is possible to park a car on this drive.

### **6.02 Conservatory**

The vendor indicated that the conservatory was constructed in about 1998. This is largely of brick and timber construction incorporating sealed double glazed units in the timber upper sections including the lantern light to the roof. The perimeter of the roof is finished with GRP (glass reinforced plastic) with chippings applied. The floor is finishes with natural stone slabs or tiles and it is understood that there is an under floor heating system installed.

From internal and external inspection the conservatory appears generally to be in satisfactory overall condition. The following points however should be noted:-

1. There was no access to the left hand side of the conservatory; this wall virtually abuts the neighbouring property and is inaccessible for inspection.
2. There are some signs of weathering to the GRP roof coverings and these may need periodic maintenance including application of additional resin and glass fibre.
3. The left hand rear window cannot be opened because it is binding and some adjustment and easing is required.
4. Comments concerning the durability of sealed double glazed units have been made elsewhere and these also apply to the conservatory.
5. The conservatory forms part of the heated envelope of the house. At the time of construction Building Regulations Approval should have been obtained in order to comply with Part L, which relates to the conservation of fuel and power. This is achieved by ensuring that the components of a structure have adequate resistance to the passage of heat. It is thought very unlikely that the high proportion of glazing to this structure would comply with the necessary "U" values which demonstrate thermal efficiency. It is understood that Building Regulations were not obtained at the time and this may therefore present a problem. Disconnection of the under floor heating system and re-installation of a suitable door between the rear reception room and the conservatory would bring this into line with permitted development requirements, which would not require Building Regulations approval however this may be considered inconvenient. You should obtain further advice from your solicitor concerning the implications of this matter.

### **6.03 Garages**

There is no garage.

### **6.04 Outbuildings**

There are no other permanent outbuildings. There is a timber shed to the rear of the property which has not been inspected.

## **7. LEGAL MATTERS**

### **7.01 Solicitors Enquiries**

Prior to a legal commitment to purchase you should forward one copy of this report to your legal advisor, particularly drawing his attention to this section.

In addition to the normal searches carried out, it is recommended that further investigations are made on the following:

- Ownership and location of boundaries.
- That guarantees exist in respect of the following:-
  1. The conservatory construction (now probably out of date);
  2. The window and door installations;
  3. The kitchen and bathroom installations;and that their residue will transfer with the ownership of the property.
- Obtain the service records in respect of the gas fire in the living room, the alarm system and the central heating system and confirm that these are up to date.
- Confirm that the embankment to the rear of the property will be maintained to a satisfactory standard by Network Rail in particular in relation to the trees.

### **7.02 Local Authority Approvals**

Confirmation should be obtained from the Local Authority that Building Regulations and Town and Country Planning approvals have been obtained in respect of the rear conservatory and that there is Part P certification in respect of electrical works to the property.

### **7.03 Listed Building**

The property is not thought to be a Listed building or located in a conservation area however this should be confirmed by your legal adviser.

## **8. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS**

By reference to the Environment Agency web site flood map, the property is not in an area at risk from river flooding. The property is not thought to be in an area of high levels of radon gas.

There is a possibility that materials containing asbestos are present within the property. Suspect materials noted during the inspection include the synthetic roof slates, the gas terminal to the chimney stack and textured ceiling finishes. It is possible that there are further similar materials in concealed areas. Provided the materials remain in substantially good condition and are un-disturbed, they should not normally present a significant hazard to occupants of the property. If these materials need to be disturbed for the purposes of repairs or maintenance, then specialist advice should first be obtained.



## 9. CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

The property appears to have been well maintained and modernised by the current owner. There are however a number of issues arising, which are common to properties of this type and age and are described in detail in the body of the report. The following are some of the more important items noted during the inspection, however these must be read in conjunction with the full contents of this report. The items noted below are not in any particular order of importance.

1. Potential asbestos in the roof coverings, ceiling finishes and gas terminal. This may have implications for future repairs costs.
2. Condensation in the main roof space apparently caused by a lack of adequate ventilation and defects in the heating system.
3. Old decay noted in the valley board to the front gable.
4. The need to reduce ground levels around the property and attend to dampness internally. Inspection by a damp and timber specialist is recommended.

There will also be a need for future maintenance of a number of areas, some of which represent a risk, which is difficult to quantify from a single inspection.

1. Repairs to chimney stacks.
2. Re-pointing to areas of the front main wall, including the front gable.
3. Evidence of a small amount of movement to the rear right hand corner of the house, which may be affected by concealed defects in the drainage system.
4. Maintenance of the windows.
5. The possible need to replace the water main.

The above issues should be investigated and quotations for necessary works obtained before exchange of contracts. The legal enquiries and their implications should be fully understood before a legal commitment to purchase.

The property was constructed many years ago and therefore will not comply with modern regulations and standards in many respects. This does not, however mean that the building is not fit for habitable purposes. It will however require ongoing maintenance and repair, as well as some improvements, throughout its future life.



Rear view.

**APPENDIX 1**

**BUILDING TERMS EXPLAINED**

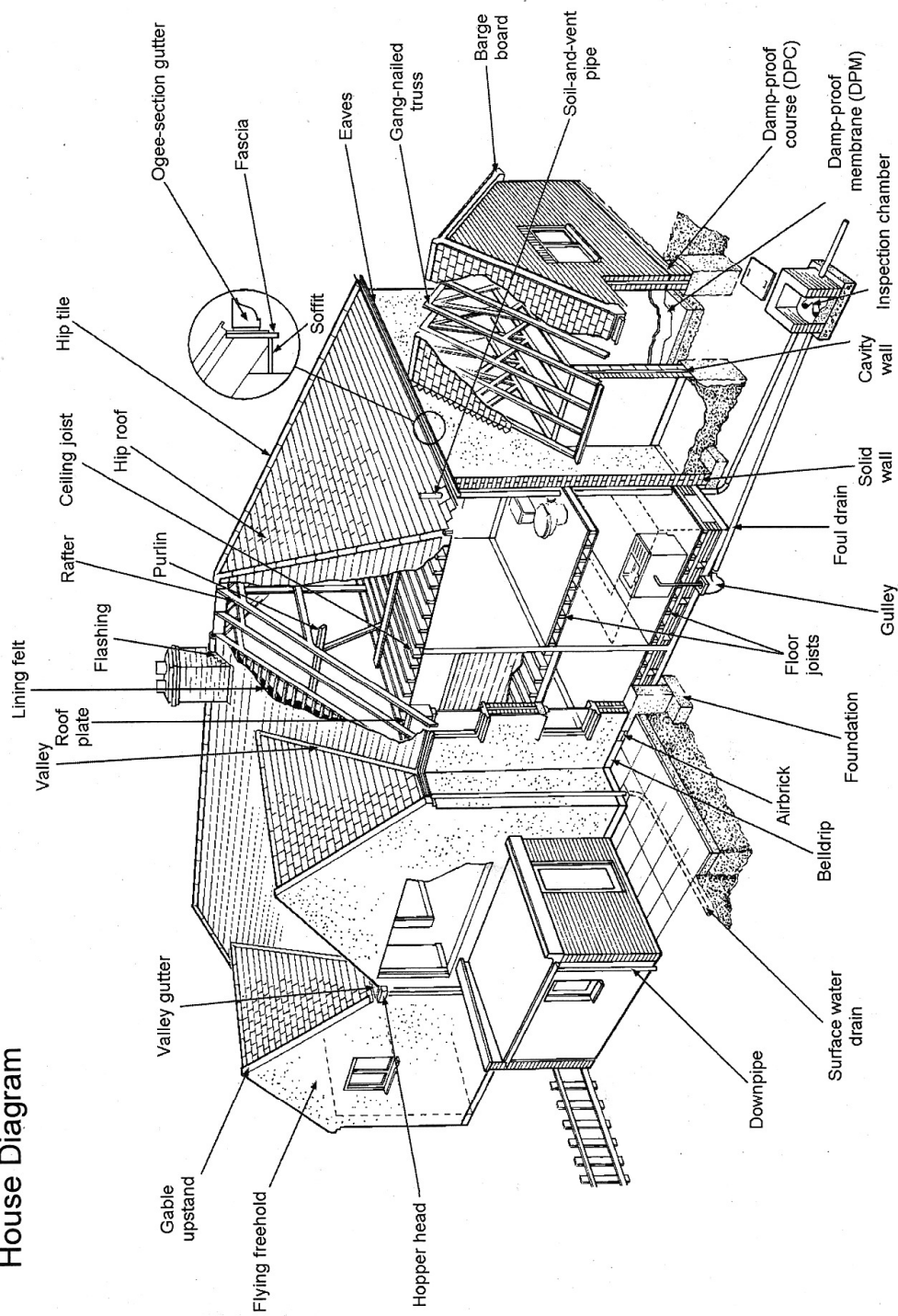
<b>Aggregate</b>	Broken stone, gravel or sand used with cement to form concrete. Aggregates may be coarse or fine and are often used in the construction of “soakaways”.
<b>Airbrick</b>	A perforated brick built into a wall for the purpose of providing air for ventilation purposes. Used for instance, to ventilate the underside of a wooden floor or a roof space.
<b>Architrave</b>	A moulding around a door or window opening. It usually covers the joints between the frame and the wall finish, thus hiding any shrinkage gaps which may occur.
<b>Asbestos</b>	Material used in the past for insulation. Can sometimes be a health hazard – specialist advice should be sought if asbestos (especially blue asbestos) is found.
<b>Asbestos Cement</b>	Cement mixed with 15% asbestos fibre as reinforcement. Fragile – will not usually bear heavy weights. Hazardous fibres may be released if cut or drilled.
<b>Asphalt</b>	Black, tar-like substance, designed to be impervious to moisture. Used on flat roofs and floors.
<b>Barge Board</b>	See “Verge Board”.
<b>Balanced Flue</b>	Common metal device normally serving gas appliances which allows air to be drawn to the appliance whilst also allowing fumes to escape.
<b>Baluster</b>	A post or vertical pillar supporting a hand rail or parapet rail.
<b>Balustrade</b>	A collective name for a row of balusters or other infilling below a hand rail on a stair or parapet.
<b>Beetle Infestation</b>	(Wood boring insects e.g. woodworm.) Larvae of various species of beetle can tunnel into timber causing damage. Specialist treatment normally required. Can also affect furniture.
<b>Benching</b>	Shaped concrete slope beside drainage channel within an inspection chamber. Also known as “haunching”.
<b>Bitumen</b>	Black, sticky substance, similar to asphalt. Used in sealants, mineral felts and damp-proof courses.
<b>Bond</b>	The regular arrangements of bricks or stones in a wall so that the units may be joined together. The principal types of “bond” used in domestic construction being English, Flemish, header, stretcher, diagonal or garden wall bond.
<b>Breeze Block</b>	Originally made from clinker cinders or (“breeze”) – the term now commonly but incorrectly used to refer to various types of concrete and cement building blocks.

## SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

**Wet Rot** (*Coniophora Puteana*). 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 (*Anobium Punctatum*): by far the most frequently encountered insect attack in structural and joinery timbers.

House Diagram



**SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY REPORT**

**APPENDIX 2**

**Property Maintenance Check List**

**APPENDIX 3**

**Terms and Conditions**

**APPENDIX 4**

**Photograph Contact Sheet**