



PETER BARRY  

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CHARTERED SURVEYORS

## Building Survey Report

*PROPERTY ADDRESS*

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## Important

In this report your attention may have been drawn to some areas of the property I was unable to inspect. For reasons explained in detail in the report I may have recommended further investigations before your purchase proceeds, or at least made you aware of matters which you should fully consider before you purchase.

It may well be that further investigations may reveal the need for additional repairs which could alter the figure at which you should purchase the property. I strongly recommend that you read all the report and then consider, with my help if you wish, the wisest course of action. Personal circumstances and the nature of the property under consideration are very often relevant in the purchase decision.

My aim has been to give you as much information as I am able at this time to allow you to make up your mind, possibly to bring some matters to the attention of your solicitor and to help you to keep the property in good condition if you decide to purchase.

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# 1 Introduction

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## 1.1 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.

Most clients find it useful to read the '*Surveyor's Overall Assessment*', (Section 4) of the report first, to gain a general 'overview' of the most significant matters. It is, however, essential that the whole report is read and considered in detail. Prior to exchange of contracts, you should conclude all of the further investigations I 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.

A copy of the report should be passed to your legal adviser with a request that the points mentioned within the report, particularly those under Section 9 (*Matters for Legal Advisor's Attention*) are researched as necessary, together with the normal searches.

This report has been prepared solely for the benefit of the named client and their professional advisors and should not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by third parties for any use without the express written authority of the surveyors. 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, Agrément Certificates, and statutory regulations.

## 1.2 Property Address

*Property address*

## 1.3 Clients' Name and Address

*Client's name and address*

## 1.4 Date of Survey

*Date of inspection*

## 1.5 Weather

The weather at the time of my inspection was sunny and dry. This followed a period of mixed weather, with some light rain during the preceding day.

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## 1.6 Limitations of Inspection

The exterior of the property was inspected from ground levels in the street, from the private gardens and from the windows of the house. Internal inspection was made from floor levels and within the accessible roof spaces.

More specific limitations are set out within Sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 of this report.

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.

Each room has been inspected in detail. Damp meter readings have been taken where possible without moving heavy furniture. Fitted carpets have not been raised unless reasonably practicable at the edges.

The roof surfaces were viewed through binoculars from ground level.

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.

It should also be appreciated that some service pipes and cables are covered and any opening access panels cannot be opened without disturbing decorations. Therefore a full inspection was not possible. Also some service pipework is below flooring, including solid flooring, making inspection impracticable. In such circumstances the discovery of leakages, if any, may not be possible.

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.

No beams, lintels or other supporting components were exposed to allow examination.

Consequently, I am unable to comment fully upon the condition of these concealed areas and therefore you must accept the risk of unseen defects should you wish to proceed without further investigation.

It should be appreciated that parts of the property are some 110 years old. Accordingly, such parts of the structure and fabric should not be expected to be 'as new' and due regard has to be given to natural deterioration due to the elements and usage. Restoration to a condition 'as new' particularly of brickwork, stonework, ironwork, joinery and roofing materials can prove uneconomic. The report has been prepared having due regard to the age and type of the building.

This report reflects the condition of the various parts of the property at the time of my inspection. It is possible that defects could arise between the date of the survey and the date upon which you take occupation.

In some cases window and door frames built from unseasoned or defective timber deteriorate gradually from within the timber itself even though fully protected on the surface and at the joints. In such circumstances, detection of rot may be impossible.

It should be appreciated that other infestations or defects may be present or may arise if those already discovered remain untreated in a proper manner.

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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.

## 1.7 Information Relied Upon In This Report

In preparing this report I have relied on the following information:-

- Property particulars provided by the selling agent.
  - Information regarding the likely soil conditions from the British Geological Survey website.
  - Information regarding the level of flood risk in this location from the Environment Agency website.
  - Information regarding the level of Radon gas contamination risk in this location from the Public Health England website.
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## 2 Description of Property

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### 2.1 Type and Age

This is a semi-detached two-storey house built in about 1900.

It has been not extended from its original construction.

### 2.2 Accommodation

<b>Ground Floor</b>	Entrance hall, living room, dining room, breakfast room, kitchen, cloakroom, access to cellar.
<b>First Floor</b>	Four bedrooms, bathroom, separate WC, landing.
<b>Second Floor</b>	Bedroom.
<b>Grounds</b>	There are private gardens to the front and rear.
<b>Garage and Parking</b>	None.

### 2.3 Tenure and Occupation

I understand from the vendor's agent that the property is being offered for sale on a freeholdbasis with vacant possession being provided on completion. You should ask your legal adviser to confirm this point.

The property was vacant at the time of my inspection. The property was partly furnished and the floors were fully covered at the time of my inspection.

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## 3 Location

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### 3.1 Location

The property is located on the west side of ....., in a residential area where there are a number of similar style, quality and age properties.

### 3.2 Orientation

The front of the property faces approximately East. All directions and room locations in this report are given as though facing the property from the street.

### 3.3 The Site and Surrounding Areas

There are some local shops to the southeast along ....., and further facilities towards the centre of ..... to the south, as well as facilities to the north in ..... There are also some local shops along .....

There are bus routes along the lane. The nearest train station is located at Grange Park.

### 3.4 Local Factors

Information available online as set out in section 1.7 indicates no elevated risk of radon gas contamination.

Information from the Environment Agency indicates that there is a high risk of surface water flooding in this location and a slightly elevated risk of reservoir flooding

Given that there is a cellar, this may be a particular issue of surface water flooding were to occur, it could be a particular issue with the cellar.

A visual inspection cannot establish whether there has been any history of flooding in this respect.

Your legal adviser should make enquiries as to whether there has been any history of flooding.

You must bear in mind that this could deter some future purchasers and could in due course have some impact upon marketability and therefore value.

Whilst no evidence of flood damage was noted at the time of survey, this may have implications for insurance. It is essential that you ensure that you raise this with your chosen insurer and can obtain appropriate insurance cover for flood damage and that the property is then kept fully insured. Problems in obtaining insurance could affect future value.

Further information can be found online:

[Weblink](#)

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To put this into some perspective, there are many areas at a similar level of risk as can be seen via the maps online.

### 3.5 Trees and Hedges

There are assorted trees, hedges and large shrubs within the gardens, although no substantial/mature trees requiring significant maintenance or risk management.

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## 4 Surveyor's Overall Assessment

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### 4.1 Surveyor's Overall Opinion

This house provides .....

The property is in a below average condition for one of its type and age, being in need of some general improvement to finishes and fittings. The issues raised in this report are typical for a property of this type and age.

In particular there are ongoing dampness issues as a result of recent water damage that need immediate attention to avoid the risk of an outbreak of rot.

However, you should not underestimate the cost of modernising this property to a good standard.

You should ensure that you understand and consider the full content of this report. This should include following up on the areas where further information and further investigation are required.

Only when you have this additional information will you be in the best position to be able to make an informed judgement about the purchase of this property.

If there are any points in the report which require clarification or on which you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

### 4.2 Areas of Concern

The apparent level of flood risk in this location. See Section 3.4.

### 4.3 Summary of Repairs

It is important that the report should be considered in its entirety before proceeding. If there are any points in the report which require clarification or on which you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact the writer. Whilst I do not attempt here to reiterate all of the points contained in the main body of the report, the following synopsis of the more significant matters (in the opinion of the surveyor) may be of some assistance.

- The need to undertake more professional drying of the property to remove the water caused by the burst pipe.
  - An overhaul to address a few loose and damaged tiles to the main roof.
  - The need for some localised brickwork and render repairs.
  - The need to improve sub floor ventilation.
  - The need for a budget for internal plaster repairs and renewals to walls and ceilings.
  - The overhaul required to windows.
  - The need to modernise the kitchen.
  - The need for external redecoration.
  - The poor decorative state internally.
  - The dampness in the hall by the stairs to the cellar, which I believe to be a separate issue to that of the burst pipe damage.
  - The woodworm/beetle infestation noted, which needs further investigation.
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- The need to budget for upgrading of the electrical installation.
- The need to modernise the sanitary accommodation.
- The dated and inefficient heating and hot water system.
- The need to overhaul the guttering to the house next door to prevent saturation.
- The poor level of insulation.
- The need to address issues of safety.
- The need to improve fire safety.
- The need to improve security.
- Sections of failing fencing.

The repairs required are typically found in properties of this age and design. This of course does not mean that they can be ignored, since more serious problems could otherwise develop.

#### 4.4 Further Investigations

You are made aware in the report of certain risk areas relevant to the property, which have not been fully investigated at this stage. You proceed to purchase in full knowledge of these risks. You are made aware that in circumstances where essential repairs or works by specialists are not carried out further deterioration and damage may occur with subsequent increased risk and increased costs.

Where further investigations have been recommended in this report, it is very important that you pursue these matters before proceeding with the purchase, since they may reveal the need for substantial expenditure. If you are aware of these costs before exchange of contracts, then at least you will have the opportunity to renegotiate the purchase price.

The following further investigations are recommended before exchange of contracts.

- The information highlighted in Section 9 as requiring input from your legal adviser.
- The need to organise safe access to check the inaccessible areas of pitched roof, upper flat roof, parapet and stack.
- The need to have floorboards lifted to expose and check areas for further woodworm/beetle attack to timbers.
- The need to test the electrical installation.
- The need to check gas safety if there is no documentation.
- The need to have a service inspection of the boiler if the system is to be retained and used for any length of time and there is no service documentation.

The further investigations recommended above should be concluded and quotations for repairs obtained before exchange of contracts in order that all potential liabilities may be known before a legal commitment is made to purchase the property.

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## 5 Construction and Condition – Structural Frame, Exterior and Interior

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### 5.1 Constructional Principles

The house is of conventional construction with the main elements as follows:-

- Timber-framed pitched roof slopes covered with clay tiles.
- Zinc flat roof.
- Solid brick main walls.
- Timber floors.
- Mainly single-glazed timber windows.

### 5.2 Main Roof

The main roof is of pitched and hipped construction, with a ridge that runs from the gable on the left flank side across to the head of the pitched slope to the right side above the party wall with No. XX. There is a lower ridge extending out to the front gable. These roof slopes are covered with clay plain tiles finished with half-round clay ridge and hip tiles.

Inspection of the north side facing slope and some sections of the rear facing slope above the second floor bedroom area were not possible from available vantage points.

If you wish to be certain as to the condition, then these would need to be inspected from suitable safe access.

Where visible, the general condition is satisfactory.

However, there are some failed tiles including one tile sitting in the south side valley between the front roof slope and the roof slope to the front bay projection. The tile will need to be replaced. The damaged section of tile should also be removed, as this could fall and cause damage/injury.

There is also a slightly displaced tile to the front right corner just above gutter level that needs to be addressed.

There are a further two or three other tiles to the front roof slopes that are chipped/damaged and should ideally be replaced.

The ridge and hip tiles appear to be soundly bedded as far as can be assessed from ground level.

To the gable there is mortar pointing to the verge and these are in satisfactory condition.

The valleys between adjacent slopes appear to be lined with either lead or zinc. This material is in satisfactory condition at present.

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### Roof Space

The roof space is accessible from the second floor bedroom.

It can be seen that the roof is of traditional cut timber construction with rafters, purlins, ceiling joists, binders and the like.

The construction is adequate.

Beneath the tiles there are sarking boards to which the tiles are secured. There is no underfelt as with more modern construction to act as a second barrier to rainwater penetration. It is therefore important that the tiling is kept in good order.

No evidence of daylight or ongoing rainwater penetration was noted in this roof space. There is some staining of the timbers adjacent the valley gutters set in the front roof slope, but these were found to be dry at the time of inspection.

The roof space is partially boarded for storage and access to the cold water tank.

See further comments under Section 7.1.

## **5.3 Other Roofs**

### Flat roof above second floor bedroom

From ground level it can be seen from the edge detailing that this is also likely to be of zinc.

However, no safe access to inspect this roof was possible at the time of survey. A ladder could be erected on the lower flat roof, but I did not feel this safe to do.

There is no evidence of leakage through to the bedroom ceiling, but if you wish to be certain as to the condition, then this roof will need to be inspected from suitable safe access.

### Flat roof above rear right first floor bedroom

This flat roof was inspected from the window of the second floor bedroom. It is covered with zinc sheet.

This type of roof covering tends to be relatively hard-wearing, provided that it is detailed satisfactorily.

At the time of survey it could be seen to be in good condition and no evidence of leakage was noted below.

### Roof to Cloakroom

Above the cloakroom there is a small mono-pitched roof covered with clay plain tiles, with lead flashings at the abutments with the upper walls.

This is in satisfactory condition.

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#### Roof to single-storey portion of rear reception room

This is a mono-pitched roof covered with clay plain tiles with lead flashings at the abutments with the upper walls.

These coverings are in sound condition.

#### Single-storey front bay

To the front bay there is a mono-pitched and hipped roof covered with plain clay tiles with lead flashings at the abutments with the upper walls.

These coverings and flashings are in sound condition.

#### Roof spaces

There is no access to any of the roof spaces beneath these other roof slopes and flat roofs.

I cannot therefore comment upon the nature or condition of the roof structures, the underside of the roof coverings, levels of insulation and the like.

## 5.4 Chimneys

There are three chimney stacks to this property.

There are two stacks that rise above the left side gable elevation, each with two flues serving the fireplace positions in the first floor bedrooms and the reception rooms below.

These stacks are both constructed of brickwork with clay pots set in cement flashing above a tiled capping course, with lead flashings and back gutters adjacent to the roof coverings.

As far as visible, these stacks are in a serviceable condition. However, the shorter face of each stack adjacent to the upper slopes together with the lower north side of the forward stack could not be inspected fully from available vantage points.

No evidence of leakage was noted around the chimney breast in the roof space to indicate any issues with the back gutters or flashings.

The both stack have a very slight lean. This is not to a degree where it is considered to represent any structural instability at this time. Nevertheless, it should be kept under observation and any further deterioration addressed.

The third stack rises against the party wall with No.XX and adjoins a similar stack to that property.

This is also of brickwork with a tile creasing course above which there is cement flashing. There is only one flue terminal visible. This would appear to be a fibre cement gas flue, most likely serving the boiler at ground floor level.

Otherwise, inspection of this stack was limited from available vantage points. This stack should be checked from suitable safe access at the same time as the higher flat roof.

Although the visible areas are in satisfactory condition, you should be aware that the fibre cement flue terminal may have an asbestos content. This is not a hazard in its current position

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and condition, but it is something that you should be aware of if any work is undertaken to damage or remove this fitting. It is also possible that there may also be similar flue linings pipes within the chimney breast internally. See comments under Section 7.6.

## 5.5 External Walls

My 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.

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the subsoil in this district is predominantly clay. Clay subsoils are susceptible to shrinkage during periods of extremely dry weather, as the volume of the clay changes in proportion to its moisture content. The risk of foundation damage increases significantly when trees or shrubs are planted near buildings. As a general policy it is recommended that no shrubs or trees with high water demand are planted close to any buildings. It should be ensured that your buildings insurance policy includes adequate cover for subsidence and heave damage.

The main walls are of solid brick construction, finished with a mixture of red facing brickwork to the front elevation, stock facing brickwork to the side and rear elevations and with sections of pebble dash rendering. There is a smooth rendered plinth to the base of the walls.

There are masonry sills to most of the window openings. The party wall carries up above roof level to form a party parapet wall finished with clay copings.

Inspection of the party parapet wall adjacent the high level flat roof was limited.

The general condition of the render is serviceable at present with no significant areas of damage or decay requiring extensive repair work at this time.

There is a small area of damaged render to the short north-facing side elevation at the front, where the overflow pipe from the cold-water storage tank has been taken through the external wall. Some localised repair is required to prevent further deterioration.

There are some areas where the rendered plinth has some minor cracking, although this is not structural. The plinth adjacent to the right side of the front bay is starting to spall away and will require repair/renewal in the near future. There are also some areas of cracking to the plinths at the rear that will lead to further deterioration in due course.

The brickwork is also in generally sound condition overall, but with some areas needing localised repair work.

In particular, there are areas of frost damage and decay to the softer red bricks in places. This includes at low level across the front elevation where there are a number of excessively decayed bricks that should now be cut out and replaced with new matching bricks.

There are areas of white staining to brickwork the front and left side flank walls of the property. This is efflorescence, which is essentially salts on the surface of the brickwork left when salt laden moisture in the brickwork reaches the surface and evaporates. This will have occurred due to the water damage from the burst pipe. This is likely to continue until the brickwork has dried fully. The salts can be brushed off from time to time, but they will eventually disappear.

In the areas adjacent to the decayed bricks the mortar can be seen to be failing in places. Likewise, at low level across the front elevation and the front right elevation. In these locations



it is clear that some repointing work has been carried out in the past, but that the cement mortar pointing has been carried to an inadequate depth between the bricks. This is resulting in the pointing becoming loose in places and falling away. I cannot confirm whether the inadequate depth of repointing is a localised issue where there are areas of failure, or whether it is a more widespread issue.

There are some other small areas of damage, for example where original downpipe brackets to the front elevation adjacent the circular window have been removed, and some localised pointing is necessary.

There are also some assorted small areas of failing mortar pointing to the stock brickwork to the side elevation at low level.

In those areas where pointing has failed, the mortar should be raked out to a minimum depth of 25mm and repointed with a mortar mix one part cement, one part lime and six parts sand.

It would be prudent to budget for some periodic pointing as other areas start to fail.

The use of the cement pointing has also exacerbated the decay of the brickwork as it is less porous, resulting in the softer red bricks retaining more moisture after becoming saturated during periods of wet weather. In winter months this makes these softer red bricks more vulnerable to frost damage. It is therefore important that a softer mortar is used when repointing.

There is a double-tile creasing course between the bricks and the render sections. This is generally in satisfactory condition.

To the south side external wall of the second floor bedroom, there is vertical tile-hanging externally with associated lead flashings. This is in good condition. This is likely to indicate that this wall is of timber-framed construction, and it would also appear that this is lined internally with lath and plaster. The timber framework could not be inspected.

The brickwork beneath the ground floor cloakroom window is bonded in stretcher bond, indicating that it is of cavity construction. This is an alteration where this would originally have been an external door opening as can be seen to No.XX. The brickwork externally is in satisfactory condition.

There is a slight crack in the masonry sill of the arched window to the side of the hall. There is some evidence of slight cracking in the brickwork beneath that has been repaired in the past. There is a hairline crack extending down through the brickwork in this location, but this appears to be longstanding and is not thought to be of serious structural significance at this stage. No structural repair work is considered necessary at this time.

See further comments under Section 5.17 regarding evidence of structural movement.

## 5.6 Damp-Proof Courses

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 membrane in the flooring is not properly bonded to the wall damp-proof course at the edges.

Damp walls will create unhealthy living conditions. Plaster on the walls will deteriorate due to salts being carried up into the walls from the ground by the rising moisture. These salts are hygroscopic (i.e. attract moisture) and as the moisture evaporates, the salts are deposited on

the wall surface. Considerable concentrations can form which attract moisture from the air, thereby increasing the signs of dampness, particularly under humid conditions.

The property is of a type and age where I would expect it to have been built with a damp-proof course, normally of slate. However, the rendered plinth detailing externally prevents an inspection to identify the nature and the position of the damp-proof course.

It is generally recommended that ground levels be kept at a minimum of 150mm beneath damp proof course level to prevent bridging or splash back leading to saturation of the walls above.

It would appear that ground levels are generally set at a suitable position, except that the front entrance step has been built up to above floor level and is probably bridging the damp-proof course. However, this does not relate to any dampness issues inside and no work is therefore recommended in this respect at this time.

## 5.7 Floor Ventilation

Sub-floor ventilation is necessary to properties with suspended timber floors at ground level and cellars. This is to ensure that there is an adequate flow of air beneath the timbers which is important to reduce the risk of rot.

As described later, there is a cellar extending beneath most of the suspended timber ground floor.

There are three double-sized air bricks across the front elevation; there are no air bricks to the rear elevation of the rear reception room; one small single sized air brick to the rear of the breakfast room and a single air brick at the rear of the kitchen. There are no air bricks in the side external wall on the north side and no air bricks set in the main flank wall on the south side.

The provision of ventilation is limited and I would recommend that additional air bricks be inserted spaced at a minimum of 2m centres.

See also comments under Section 5.15 regarding the need to dry the property.

## 5.8 Internal Walls and Partitions

The walls and partitions have been inspected within the rooms and no opening up has been undertaken. The precise composition of the wall structures, linings and finishings cannot be ascertained without damage being caused.

The internal face of the external masonry walls, together with the party wall, chimney breasts and masonry partitions are finished with a wet-applied plaster.

The general condition is satisfactory with no significant areas of damage or decay being noted at the time of survey.

There are some areas where the plaster is unkeyed and this can be heard by the hollow sound when the walls are tapped. It is not possible to ascertain the full extent of this as part of this survey but you should be aware that this can result in the plaster/surfaces failing when the walls are stripped for redecoration.

There are some minor cracks in places, for example a slight vertical crack in the partition of the front reception room to the entrance hall. However, these are not thought to be of serious structural significance.

Where there are lightweight partitions and the tile hung bay and side external wall of the second floor bedroom, these are most likely timber framed and clad with traditional lath and plaster. This can be seen in the roof space where there are partitions to the second floor bedroom area.

These areas of plaster tend to have some cracking due to normal flexing and distortion of the timber structures and lath and plaster finishes in a property of this age can fail due to such wear and tear during the lifetime of the building.

This occurs when the plaster bond between the timber laths starts to crack and fall away, resulting in the plaster becoming loose, cracking, bulging and eventually failing.

More significantly at this time, there is extensive saturation of the masonry walls by the escape of water from the burst pipe. As noted below some additional drying is required and as part of this I would recommend that the plaster be stripped from the damp walls in the hall and front reception room.

Otherwise, there are no other significant areas that can be seen as requiring extensive repair to either the masonry walls or timber partitions. As a minimum some localised patch repair/filling of cracks will be needed. However, you should be aware that stripping of the wallpapers is likely to result in areas of failure where the plaster finishes are pulled off from the wall with the paper. Steam stripping in particular can result in 'live' plaster falling away.

Other repairs and improvements can also result in damage, such as chasing out for new pipework runs and rewiring; removal of old joinery fittings; removal of sanitary fittings and tiling etc.

Some budget for more extensive plaster repairs is therefore required as part of any refurbishment/redecoration project.

## 5.9 Fireplaces and Chimney Breasts

The original chimney breasts remain in the three ground floor reception rooms, the associated three bedrooms above and in the second floor bedroom.

The fireplaces have been removed from the four bedrooms and infilled.

In the front reception room there is a dated gas fire fitting and tiled surround which I anticipate you will wish to remove. However, if this is to be retained and used for any length of time, it must first be checked for safety. See comments under Section 6.2.

In the rear left reception room, there is an open fireplace recess with a basic surround and hearth. There is a gas pipe to the right side of the fireplace, but no gas fire. It currently houses an electric fire fitting.

In the breakfast room, the chimney breast recess houses the gas fired central heating boiler. See comments under Section 6.4.

The fireplaces and flues have not been inspected as part of this survey.

The disused fireplace positions internally should be ventilated with air bricks to prevent a build-up of moist air in the flues that could otherwise lead to condensation and the occurrence of damp staining internally.

If you wish to bring the flues into serviceable use, then these will need to be swept and tested by a HETAS or similarly registered contractor to provide a report with any recommendations. Generally speaking, however, most options for reuse of flues will involve the need for relining, which can be a costly exercise.

<https://www.hetas.co.uk/find-installer/>

## 5.10 Basements and Cellars

There is a low head height cellar extending beneath most of the ground floor, although the area beneath the breakfast room and kitchen floor is lower and is a less accessible sub floor void.

The walls are of exposed brickwork and there is an uneven basic quality concrete floor.

This is as originally built.

There are dampness readings to the wall and floor as to be expected with a space that was not designed to provide dry storage. If you wish to create a dry storage area, then you will need to consider improvements by the installation of some form of tanking system.

## 5.11 Floors

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 and, other than the access to the ground floor from the cellar, only a general comment can be made and complete assurance cannot be given that there are no concealed defects.

Fitted coverings and furniture inevitably restrict the detail of inspection. Comments are therefore based on selected areas where the edges of carpets could be turned back, with the vendor's permission, to give an indication of the method of construction used and its condition. The risk must be accepted that concealed defects may exist beneath the floor coverings.

There are timber ground, first and second floors. As the underside of the ground floor is largely accessible from the cellar, it can be seen that the timber joists are in good condition with no evidence of significant damage or decay.

There is also suspended floor to the kitchen, but the underside was not readily accessible.

The upper floors are generally even with no evidence of excessive give or distortion to give rise for concern about any major structural defects.

In some areas there are older style vinyl tiles to the floors, including in the step area from the second floor bedroom to the roof space; the bathroom and separate WC at first floor level and ground floor cloakroom. You should be aware that this type of tiling can have an asbestos content. This cannot be established by a visual inspection and in the current condition it is not a significant hazard. Nevertheless, this must be borne in mind if these tiles are to be disturbed or stripped and disposed of as part of the refurbishment works. See comments under Section 7.6.

There is some dated vinyl sheet laid to the kitchen and breakfast room. I anticipate that this will be removed. There could be the same older vinyl tiles beneath this covering.

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## 5.12 Ceilings

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

The ceilings throughout are what I anticipate to be the original lath and plaster ceilings. There are various decorative plaster covings and detailing.

The general condition is satisfactory.

There are areas of minor cracking and as described for the lightweight partitions, this is typical of a lath and plaster finish. These lath and plaster finishes can also fail as described for the lightweight partitions.

Those areas that are cracked are not accompanied by significant bulging, such that it should be possible to rake out and seal these cracks rather than undertake significant repair. However, again, you should have some budget for repair/renewal if stripping any lining papers from these ceilings.

Where the paper has been removed in connection with the water damage, some small holes have been created in the ceilings, presumably to allow water to drain from the floor voids. The ceilings appear to be still be bonded in these areas, but could perhaps deteriorate through the drying process.

There are sections of polystyrene tiles to the bathroom ceiling. These can give off toxic fumes in the event of a fire. Removing these will inevitably leave the ceiling in need of renewal.

## 5.13 Windows, Doors and Joinery

### Windows

There are double-glazed PVCu replacement windows to the kitchen and to the ground floor cloakroom. These are of average quality and in a serviceable condition.

Elsewhere, there are what I anticipate to be the original single glazed timber casement and sash windows.

These are of relatively good quality fittings and the timber is generally in a serviceable condition, capable of decorative overhaul with minor localised repair rather than the need for any replacement work.

The windows are fitted internally with aluminium framed secondary glazing to give some improvement to thermal efficiency and sound insulation.

A selection of the sashes and casements were operated and these generally functioned satisfactorily, although the sashes do require some easing and adjusting. However, some are painted shut and will need to be freed when next decorating, which usually also involves replacing hinges to casements.

The glazing is largely sound, except for some small areas of cracking to those panes set within the leaded and stained sections. This is relatively typical and I would not suggest that these need to be replaced at this time.

See comments under Section 5.14 regarding external decorations.

There is also a double glazed PVCu casement to the breakfast room.

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There are some windows where the sill height is below 800mm above floor level. In these areas the glazing to the secondary glazing and the sashes/casements should be of toughened or laminated glass for safety. There are no kite marks to indicate the glazing is of adequate specification, and therefore some reglazing is required for safety.

To the separate WC and side of the bathroom at first floor level, there are louvred glazed sections set within timber sub frames. This type of louvred glazing provides very poor thermal insulation and also poor security. I anticipate that you will wish to replace these windows.

The windows with low sill levels in particular are the second floor bedroom, bedroom below and the landing windows. In addition there is a risk of slipping in the bath adjacent to the front window of the bathroom.

The low sill-height double-glazed PVCu window to the breakfast room has kite marks to the glazing.

There are two metal framed single glazed rooflights to the rear roof slope. These are original fittings. This type of fitting tends to suffer from lack of maintenance and very often the framing starts to rust outside and the putties dry, crack and fail. This results in the glass becoming loose and likely to fail. I did not therefore open these from within the space, due to the risk of failure. These should be checked carefully if they are to be operated and I would suggest that you budget for them to be reglazed, replaced or removed and replaced with tiles.

### External Doors

There is a timber front entrance door with single glazed leaded and stained glazing. This door is in sound condition.

To the kitchen there is a part single glazed timber door. The glazing to the door is not of adequate specification for safety and should be re-glazed if you intended to keep this door.

### Roof level joinery

There are timber gutter boards, soffits, bargeboards and fascias to the pitched and flat roofs. From the available vantage points these appear to be in serviceable condition. Nevertheless they will need to be checked carefully when next decorating.

### Internal doors

The internal doors to the rooms are panel timber doors with a mixture of plastic and brass-effect lever furniture. The doors are generally in a serviceable condition. They open and close satisfactorily. I anticipate that you may wish to upgrade with fittings.

Due to the saturation of the property, it is possible that some warping of internal joinery could occur as the property dries out.

### Stairs

The staircase treads and risers are largely concealed from above and below, but when walked over there was no evidence of significant give or creaking. The newel posts, handrails and balustrading are in satisfactory condition.

Where there is a step up to the access into the roof space, the height between the step and the top of the handrail/balustrade is insufficient for safety. This handrail should be raised.

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There are timber steps down to the cellar, although the bottom step is a different height to the others. This could be considered a trip hazard. Also, although there are some grab rails, I would recommend that a handrail be provided for safety.

### Skirtings and architraves

The sections and mouldings forming the skirtings, architraves, door linings, window boards and the like are generally timber based. These have suffered some wear and tear during the lifetime of the building, but are capable of decorative overhaul with no significant areas of damage or decay being noted and requiring replacement.

Again, due to the saturation of the property, it is possible that some warping of internal joinery could occur as the property dries out.

### Kitchen cupboards

There are some basic and dated kitchen fittings and I anticipate that you will wish to re-fit the kitchen, as part of the general modernisation required.

### Other fitted cupboards

There are some basic-quality fitted wardrobe cupboards in two of the bedrooms. These are of basic quality and I anticipate that you will wish to remove these when undertaking refurbishment.

## 5.14 Finishes and Decorations

### External Decorations

The external decorations comprise a gloss paintwork to the external timber joinery, and some sections of external metal pipework. There is also masonry paint to the masonry window sills.

The decorations will generally require renewal every 5 to 6 years dependent upon exposure/wear, the quality of paint and preparation, together with the condition of the painted surfaces.

At this time, the decorations are starting to wear. Decorations to the roof level joinery at the rear in particular is poor. I would recommend that you budget for renewal within the next 18 months.

### Internal Decorations

The decorative state internally is mixed, but generally dated and/or worn, such that I anticipate you will wish to redecorate to your own taste and timetable.

There is wall tiling in the kitchen, bathroom, separate WC and cloakroom. This is now dated in style and I anticipate that you will wish to remove this as part of the modernisation required.

In the bathroom, the saturation of the walls by the burst water has caused the tiling to start to fall away from the walls.

It is likely that these areas will need to be re-plastered once the tiles have been removed and removal of the wall plaster in the bathroom is also advisable in case they are also still saturated by the burst.

## 5.15 Dampness

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). The tiling in the kitchen and cloakroom prevented dampness testing.

As noted under Section 5.10, dampness readings were noted in the cellar, as to be expected with a property of this type and age.

I understand from the Vendor's agent that there has relatively recently been an escape of water due to a pipe burst/ruptured pipe in the area of the water tanks in the roof space and that the pipework affected has been repaired, but the is water damage as a result.

From my inspection I can see that there is extensive damp staining down through the front right side of the building, affecting the bathroom, cloakroom, adjacent landing, front bedroom, hall and front reception room.

The stained areas at first floor level are relatively dry when tested with a meter, but significant dampness readings persist at ground level.

This has also resulted in some fairly extensive mould growth to the surface of the walls, particularly noticeable in the hall.

The Vendor's agent has confirmed that they have had some commercial grade drying equipment in the property including dehumidifiers. However, as there are still areas of dampness present, the drying process has not been completed.

I would recommend that further drying be undertaken.

This is normally achieved by running commercial grade dehumidifiers together with air movement fans in the affected areas. The surfaces tend to dry, but any moisture in the core of the affected walls can then resurface if the process is not carried out thoroughly. This is perhaps why the lightweight timber framed partitions and ceilings have dried, but the masonry walls have not.

In my experience, it is normally best to remove the plaster from masonry walls when drying. This is for two reasons. Firstly it allows the brickwork a better opportunity to dry. Secondly, when drying through plaster, the plaster can become contaminated by the kind of salts seen on the external face of the wall. The salts tend to be hygroscopic, which means they will draw moisture from the atmosphere and liquefy. This results in the plaster becoming wet even if the masonry behind is dry. Salt contaminated plaster should therefore be removed and replaced.

I would recommend that the drying process be re-instigated including the removal of wall plaster at ground floor level. This should be carried out soon to prevent the risk of the damp conditions resulting in a wider spread of condensation, the risk of timber decay and the like.

Other steps such as removal of the bath panel will help air to circulate.

It is not possible to predict how long the drying process may take, but it will be at least 4 weeks. The drying should be carefully managed and completed with proper professional oversight to ensure there is no further damage to the property.



Such drying is best undertaken by a professional drying contractor such as ChemDry or Rainbow International, who will normally have a technician attend weekly to monitor the progress and issue a drying certificate on satisfactory completion of the process. If the vendor or agent is to organise this, then I would recommend that you ask for such a certificate to be provided.

There is some dampness in the plastered wall at the head of the steps down into the cellar. This wall extends beneath external ground levels and as for the rest of the cellar may not have been damp-proofed.

Alternatively, this area of dampness could also be due to leakage and overflowing of the rainwater goods above this area. See comments under Section 6. The guttering should be addressed and the wall allowed to dry over the summer. If dampness problems persist then some waterproof tanking will be needed if you wish to have this as a dry finish.

There is also some damp staining to the ceiling of the second floor bedroom beneath the flat roof, in the area adjacent to the chimney breast. This was found to be dry at the time of inspection. Nevertheless, as set out in Section 5.3, I would recommend that this roof be checked from suitable safe access.

No other significant dampness readings were noted to indicate any problems with damp proof coursing or rainwater penetration, although issues in the hall and front reception room cannot be discounted as drying of the water from the burst could reveal the presence of ongoing issues. This will therefore need to be reviewed as and when full drying of the dampness from the burst has been undertaken.

There is evidence of significant surface mould growth in the areas saturated by the burst water. The damp conditions provide conditions conducive to such mould growth.

However, condensation mould growth was noted in some other areas of the property.

There is some condensation staining to the ceiling of the first floor bedroom beneath the flat roof. This does not appear to be due to leakage. This indicates the potential for a lack of adequate insulation within this flat roof void creating a cold surface. See comments under Section 7.1.

There are also some stains to the ceiling of the ground floor cloakroom, again most likely exacerbated due to a lack of adequate insulation in the roof void above this space.

I am not able to say whether these are exclusively due to the recent increase in levels of humidity or whether they may pre-date the burst.

Some degree of condensation will inevitably occur in other areas as the property continues to be damp from the burst water, which will increase humidity within the property.

The condensation may cease once the burst water has fully dried. However, there is an indication of limited insulation causing cold spots, which is fairly typical for a property of this type and age. Single glazed windows in particular will inevitably suffer from some condensation during colder weather.

Although I would not expect the degree of problems currently evident, some condensation issues could therefore arise as and when you occupy the property.

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. Unfortunately, the modern emphasis on draught proofing reduces ventilation in dwellings, increasing the risk of condensation.

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. Adequate heating and ventilation will help to keep condensation to a minimum.

See comments under Sections 7.1, 7.2 and 6.4.

## 5.16 Timber Defects

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.

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.

Following the water damage to the property due to the burst, the ongoing saturation property will provide conditions conducive to an outbreak of rot. The property will not dry sufficiently if just left as it stands, particularly as it is vacant with no effective level of ventilation.

As recommended above, the property will need to undergo a further period of professional 'drying out'. As noted in Section 5.7, some improvement to ongoing ventilation to the cellar area is also needed.

The property is of a type and age where some degree of woodworm attack is to be expected.

There is evidence of a recent beetle infestation in some timbers in the cellar adjacent to the steps up to the hall.

I cannot confirm whether this is a live or old/treated infestation. Likewise, I cannot confirm whether this may have spread to other concealed areas of the property.

Your legal adviser should ask the vendor to confirm whether there has been any past treatment for woodworm/beetle attack and whether there are any guarantees.

If not, I would strongly recommend that you arrange for the property to be inspected by a Property Care Association registered contractor when floorboards and the like should be lifted to carry out a more extensive inspection, and quotations should be obtained for the extent of treatment work found to be necessary. [www.property-care.org/](http://www.property-care.org/)

No evidence of timber decay was noted. This perhaps possible that there may be some decay in the second floor flat roof where damp staining was noted and this should be opened up and checked if the opportunity is taken to renew the ceiling and insulation levels.

## 5.17 Structural Movement

Although there are some minor cracks in places as described under Sections 5.5, 5.8 and 5.12, these are not considered to be of serious structural significance, and no structural repair work is considered to be necessary.

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## 6 Services

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*As far as possible, all building service installations, whether mains or privately supplied, will be visually inspected to the extent sufficient for the surveyor to form an overall opinion on the type of installation, the materials used, its apparent age, its visible condition and the need for further investigation. The surveyor will **not** be expected to carry out testing of the installations or appliances other than normal operation in everyday use. The surveyor is not expected to perform or comment upon design calculations. The inspection will be carried out without the risk of causing injury to the surveyor or damage to the property. Where access is limited, this will be recorded in the report. In respect of all services, the client is advised that further tests will be required by appropriate specialists if assurance as to the condition or capability is required.*

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected only. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied as these can only be undertaken by suitably qualified engineers. It is strongly recommended that you commission your own specialist testing of all services prior to exchange of contracts.

For the purposes of this report, only significant defects and deficiencies readily apparent from a visual inspection are reported. Compliance with regulations and adequacy of design, condition or efficiency can only be assessed as a result of tests.

### 6.1 Electrics

The property is connected to a mains electricity supply.

The meter and consumer unit are located in the cellar opposite the steps down from the hall. The consumer unit was relatively modern, but it has a plastic casing. The latest regulations dictate that such units have metal casings as these are safer. There is no enforcement action that can be taken. Having said that, given that you are likely to undertake extensive wiring work, then you will need to budget for new units.

The switch plates, sockets, light fittings and the like are in physically sound condition. However, most of these are dated and it is difficult to confirm the age and condition of the wiring that is largely concealed.

In some places, there are much older-style sockets set within timber skirtings, which is considered to be a safety risk.

The level of provision of sockets and the like is also low for modern requirements. Adding new points to older circuits can be problematic if the circuits do not stand up to testing, resulting in the need for rewiring.

It is impossible to fully assess the true 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 professional test which covers matters relating to resistance, impedance and current, etc.

The Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommend that electrical installations should be tested every 10 years or upon change of ownership.

Also, following the water damage to the property, it is important that the electrical installation is also checked after the drying process for any potential impact. Any investigations should be mindful of potential water ingress into the electrics, including saturation of cables in the vicinity of the water damage, as well as pooling/ingress into the light fittings and other electrical installations.

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I have not been provided with an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) or equivalent.

Your legal adviser should ask for this documentation based upon a test after the drying process. If this is not made available I would strongly recommend that you arrange for a professional test of each circuit to be undertaken by an NICEIC or equivalently qualified electrician to provide a report, together with quotations for any works recommended.

[www.niceic.com](http://www.niceic.com)

See also comments under Section 7.4 regarding fire safety.

## 6.2 Gas

The property is connected to a mains gas supply.

The meter is located in the cellar.

It is important for gas safety to ensure that the gas meter, pipework and gas appliances are professionally tested on an annual basis.

I have not been provided with a gas safety certificate/record.

Your legal adviser should ask for this documentation. If this is not made available, or if a gas test has not been undertaken within the last 12 months, I would strongly recommend that you arrange for a gas safety check to be undertaken by a Gas Safe registered engineer to provide a report, together with quotations for any works recommended.

I would be particularly concerned about the safe operation of the gas fire in the front reception room and the boiler.

There is a battery operated carbon monoxide detector located in the hall in the area adjacent the steps down to the cellar. You should be aware that this type of fitting tends to have a serviceable life of 10 years. I would consider it prudent for you to replace this with a new detector located in the breakfast room, if the boiler is to be retained in this position. Also with a detector placed in the kitchen and reception rooms, if there are to be gas appliances.

## 6.3 Water Supply and Plumbing

The property is connected to a mains water supply.

Every property with a mains water supply requires both internal and external stopcocks for proper control of the incoming water supply. It is important to know the position of the stopcocks so that the water can be turned off in an emergency and when carrying out alterations to the plumbing system. They should be checked regularly to ensure that they open and close properly. All occupants of the house should be aware of the stopcock locations.

There is an external stopcock located beneath a plastic cover in the pavement to the front of the property. There is a further stopcock cover set in the pavings in the front garden.

The internal stopcock is located in the cellar.

Stop taps can become stiff and difficult to operate. It would be prudent therefore to periodically open and close the valves to ensure their effectiveness in an emergency.

It can be seen in the cellar that there is a plastic main, although I cannot confirm whether this extends beneath the front garden, or whether there may be an original lead main in this position. Your legal adviser should ask the vendor to confirm whether they have any information in this respect. <http://dwi.defra.gov.uk/consumers/advice-leaflets/lead.pdf>

There is an indirect system with a plastic cold water storage tank located in the main roof space. The tank is adequately supported and lagged. The associated pipes are adequately lagged.

Nevertheless, it would seem that cold conditions may have led to the ruptured joint on the pipework resulting in the water damage.

### Sanitary fittings

Although the existing sanitary fittings are functional, they are dated and I anticipate that you will wish to re-fit the cloakroom, bathroom and separate WC as part of the general refurbishment required to the house.

There is only a cold water supply to the basin in the cloakroom, although there is a hot supply pipe terminated beneath the basin position. There is a plastic tub on the floor beneath the back of the WC in the cloakroom, indicating that there may be some leakage issues. This should be addressed if this fitting is to be retained for any period, to ensure that there is no risk of decay to the adjacent timbers.

There is no basin to the first floor WC.

## 6.4 Space Heating and Hot Water

There is a dated electric water heater providing hot water to the wash hand basin in the second floor bedroom. This appliance was not tested as part of this survey. Likewise, the electric water heater and shower fittings in the bathroom.

I anticipate that you will wish to remove them. An electrician would need to check the safety of these appliances before use if they are to be retained for any period of time. See Section 6.1.

There is a floor-mounted Ideal Mexico 2 gas-fired central heating boiler located in the breakfast room.

The system was functional at the time of the survey with warmth being obtained from radiators and hot water from taps.

However, this is likely to be a relatively inefficient appliance that is likely to be coming to the end of its useful life. I would recommend that you budget for a new boiler.

Timing control is via mechanical clocks adjacent to the boiler, together with temperature control via a wall thermostat in the front first floor bedroom. Some closer control is possible where thermostatic radiator valves are fitted to some of the radiators including the breakfast room, entrance hall, and bathroom. There are no thermostatic radiator valves elsewhere.

There is no radiator in the kitchen area, although this space is sufficiently of open plan to gain heat from the large radiator in the breakfast room.

There is no radiator or heat source to the ground floor cloakroom and the first floor WC. I anticipate that you will wish to extend the system.

The heating circuits are largely concealed, but where visible are in satisfactory condition with no evidence of leakage. Likewise, the radiators.

Where the pipes are exposed in the cellar, they have some dated lagging. This should be improved both for improved efficiency and to guard against the risk of freezing conditions leading to burst pipes.

Hot water is supplied via a cylinder located in a cupboard in the bathroom. This has a factory-applied lagging jacket. Heating via the boiler can be supplemented via an electric immersion heater, although this appliance was not tested as part of this survey. Temperature control is possible via a thermostat fitted to the cylinder.

Energy efficiency could be improved by fitting an additional jacket and also lagging the hot water pipework.

The heating system is open-vented with a plastic feed and expansion tank within the roof space. This tank is adequately supported and lagged.

This type of system can tend to silt relatively easily. This can cause problems with circulation of heat around the system. This did not appear to be a particular issue at the time of the survey, but if the existing circuits and radiators are to be retained and the boiler replaced, the system should be power-flushed at that time.

## 6.5 Drains

It is assumed that the property is served by mains foul drainage.

There is an inspection chamber set in the pavings of the rear patio adjacent to the kitchen door. The cover was lifted and the drains were found to be clear and free-flowing.

This chamber takes one branch which is assumed to be from the kitchen gulley adjacent, and extends forward beneath the property. The second chamber is located in the pavings at the front of the property, where there is a drain branch passing through and out towards the road, presumably into the main sewer.

There are no additional branches into this chamber. I anticipate that there will be a 'blind' connection from the adjacent soil stack serving the bathroom and first floor WC, as well as the ground floor cloakroom.

The chambers and covers are in a satisfactory condition. The drains, where visible, were found to be clear and free-flowing.

Inspection of the drainage system was limited to the readily accessible chambers. 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.

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## 6.6 Foul and Surface Water

### Above ground foul drainage

The above-ground foul drainage waste pipework within the house is largely concealed, although where visible beneath the sink and basin positions, and behind the WCs the pipework is in satisfactory condition with no evidence of significant leakage.

I also anticipate that this pipework will largely be renewed in tandem with the replacement of the sanitary fittings as part of the modernisation now required.

Externally at the rear, there are two plastic waste pipes from the kitchen into the gulley, together with a metal waste pipe extending from the wash hand basin position to the second floor bedroom.

These fittings are in serviceable condition.

To the front elevation there are plastic waste pipes from the bathroom discharging to a plastic hopper head and downpipe that carry down to a gulley.

There is a cast iron soil and vent pipe, with a plastic base that takes a connection from the first floor WC, together with branch connections from the ground floor cloakroom that are also in plastic. These are in satisfactory condition.

### Rainwater goods

The pitched roof slopes and flat roofs are served by half-round plastic gutters with plastic downpipes.

The general condition of these fittings is satisfactory. No evidence of significant leakage or overflowing was noted at the time of survey.

However, to the front elevation it could be seen that there is a blockage to the guttering to the front of No.XX, resulting in overflowing and saturation of the walls and cloakroom roof below. This could cause dampness penetration and future decay within No.XX, and may be the source of dampness at the head of the steps down into the cellar. Some liaison with the adjoining owner about clearing this will be necessary.

Defective rainwater goods are a very common cause of dampness which can lead to deterioration in building fabric and the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems such as dry rot are to be avoided.

The gutters should be inspected at least once a year and accumulated leaves, silt and other debris be removed to prevent blockages.

At the rear, the downpipes extend down to a single gulley position. At the front, there is a downpipe discharging to a surface water gulley adjacent to the front of the cloakroom, and also to the left of the entrance. The gullies were found to be clear. This should be checked and cleared periodically.

The nature, condition and route of the below ground surface water drains cannot be confirmed as there is no access into the system. These can clog up over time and may require relaying. A good indication to this can be overflowing of the gullies during rain.

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## 7 Environmental and Other Issues

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### 7.1 Thermal Insulation and Energy Efficiency

As the property has been marked for sale, the Agent should be able to provide you with a copy of the full Energy Performance Certificate.

Alternatively, this can be downloaded online.

[www.epcregister.com/reportSearchAddressTerms.html?redirect=reportSearchAddressByPostcode](http://www.epcregister.com/reportSearchAddressTerms.html?redirect=reportSearchAddressByPostcode)

The full Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) certificate will also give some recommendations for improvements. You should obtain a copy of the EPC and consider the recommendations.

From my inspection, the following were noted:-

- The external walls to the original house are of solid brickwork, with no provision of insulation. These will have inherently low levels of energy performance. This is normal for a property of this type and age, but it does mean that the walls will lose heat rapidly compared to modern insulated construction. There is normally little that can be done to improve this economically. Walls can be insulated and rendered externally although this is costly and for this property would significantly change the external appearance. The external walls can be lined internally with insulated plasterboard, although this can also be costly as it does have an impact in respect of skirtings, picture rails and other joinery, as well as power points, light switches, radiators and decorative finishes. It also slightly reduces the size of rooms. Upgrading insulation internally in this manner is normally considered when the condition of wall plaster is poor or when extensive refurbishment is planned/required. In this case, it may well be worth considering in those areas to be stripped to address the dampness issues.
  - To the second floor bedroom the side wall is tile hung externally and likely to be timber-framed, and will also suffer significant heat loss unless there is insulation within the timber framing. This cannot be established from a visual inspection, but is unlikely, the lath and plaster will need to be removed, the wall insulated and the internal finish renewed with a vapour barrier and insulated plasterboard finish. The same could be undertaken to the front bay.
  - In areas in the main roof space there is approximately 200mm thickness of fibreglass quilt insulation. However, there is no insulation beneath the timber boarding. Insulation should be improved to a minimum thickness of 270mm of fibreglass quilt or equivalent boarding throughout. To accommodate the storage boarding, this would need to be raised on a suitable platform.
  - In the roof space, the rear face of the vertical partitions are not insulated. These should also be insulated between the timber studs with a good quality foil-backed insulation board.
  - I cannot confirm the presence or quality of insulation within the inaccessible roof voids, but this is likely to be poor. Again, plasterboard finishes would need to be removed and reinstated to allow access to make improvements. Levels of insulation are improved to these other spaces, in particular the flat roofs, then space and provision
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for roof void ventilation above the insulation must be factored in. this usually means having to install a 50mm board t level with the underside of flat roof joists and then reinstating the ceiling with an insulated plasterboard, bringing the height down slightly.

- See comments under Section 5.13 regarding the mixture of double-glazed windows, single-glazed windows, some of which have secondary glazing. Secondary glazing will add relatively modest improvements.
- It can be seen from within the cellar and adjacent floor void, that there is no insulation to the timber ground floor. With the access that is available there is an opportunity to improve this by inserting insulation boards between the floor joists.
- See comments under Section 6.4 regarding heating system and associated controls.
- You should consider installing some low energy light fittings.

## 7.2 Ventilation

The habitable rooms have openable casement windows of adequate proportions for rapid/purge ventilation.

There is some background ventilation possible to the kitchen via air bricks through the external walls, although I recommend the installation of an extractor fan as and when the kitchen is re-fitted.

There is an air brick to the first floor WC for background ventilation.

Although there is an air brick to the external wall of the bathroom for background ventilation, this has been sealed-over internally.

In the rear reception room, there is an air brick to the side wall internally, but no opening externally. This may have been for ventilation of a gas fire fitting in the past.

There are no extractor fans to the cloakroom, bathroom or separate WC. I would recommend that extractor fans be installed when these rooms are modernised.

For some reason there is an extractor fan set into the ceiling of the front bedroom at first floor level. This is not ducted to the outside air but just extracts into the roof space. It appears to serve no useful purpose and I anticipate that you will wish to remove it.

## 7.3 Noise and Disturbance

This section of road is moderately busy, such that there may be some traffic noise.

Otherwise I am not aware of any activities or operations in the immediate vicinity that could be considered as a potential noise disturbance.

## 7.4 Means of Escape

The habitable rooms have openable windows of adequate proportions for direct means of escape. These will need to be eased and adjusted to allow them to be operated easily in the event of an emergency.

Internally, escape would be via the staircases, landing and hallway. These are separated from the habitable rooms by partitions and doors.

However, in comparison to modern standards for residential accommodation spread over three floors, the means of escape precautions are inadequate.

There is no smoke detection and alarm system, only some independent battery-operated smoke detectors. This type of stand-alone fitting tends to have a serviceable life of about 10 years and may not give a sufficient audible warning between floors.

I would strongly recommend the installation of a fully integrated smoke detection and alarm system which is mains powered with battery backup.

As a minimum, this should include two smoke detectors in the entrance hall at each different ceiling level; one each to the two levels of first floor landing ceiling; to the second floor landing and at least one in the cellar. This should be supplemented by a heat detector in the kitchen.

The doors into the habitable rooms are not self-closing fire rated doors and frames. These should either be replaced, or alternatively the detection system extended to also provide smoke detectors in each of the habitable rooms, that is to say the bedrooms and three reception rooms.

## 7.5 Other Health and Safety Concerns

See comments under Section 5.13 regarding the need for areas of safe glazing.

See comments under Section 5.13 regarding the need for an improved handrail to the cellar steps and a higher guard rail by the steps up into the roof space.

See also under Section 5.2 regarding some loose tiles to the roof that should be removed, otherwise they could fall and cause injury. Likewise, the need to check whether the glazing to the rooflights is secure.

See comments under Section 6 regarding the need to check the safety of the services installations.

See comments under Section 7.7 regarding the option of installing restrictors to the opening of upper floor windows.

## 7.6 Hazardous Materials

As noted under Sections 5.3 and 5.11, there are some materials present that can have some asbestos content.

This cannot be assessed by visual inspection alone and samples would need to be taken and laboratory tested to verify.

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This should either be undertaken before these materials are disturbed, or an assumption made that there is an asbestos content and works then carried out strictly in accordance with the recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive.

[www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/](http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/essentials/)

## 7.7 Security

Additional locks are required to the windows. These must be kept unlocked for fire safety when the rooms are occupied.

You may also wish to consider installing casement/sash restrictors to upper floor windows for safety.

The kitchen door has inadequate locking mechanisms.

There are adequate locks to the front door.

There is no intruder alarm system.

The poor quality external door/hatch to the cellar should be upgraded/replaced or bricked up for security.

You should consider the minimum requirements of your chosen insurers and undertake improvements as necessary.

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## 8 Outbuildings, Grounds and Boundaries

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### 8.1 Gardens and Grounds

There are private gardens to the front and rear. These are adequately maintained.

There are no boundary fences between this property and the adjacent houses at the front. There is a low concrete block wall along the front pavement boundary.

At the rear, there are timber fences. These are in a mixed condition, with the fence to the rear of No. XX in particular being in poor condition with leaning posts and one panel section that has fallen down.

Boundary ownership should be clarified with your legal adviser.

There is a timber shed to the foot of the garden. Timber buildings such as sheds and summer houses are considered as temporary buildings and are beyond the scope of the report. This has not been inspected.

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## 9 Matters For Legal Advisor's Attention

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*In addition to the legal advisor's usual pre-contract enquiries, legal issues may arise from the survey inspection itself. In such cases, the surveyor will alert the client to physical or other issues which could affect the property that may need investigation or clarification. Where the inspection reveals that there are areas of particular concern or relevance these will be appropriately highlighted.*

*A copy of the report should be forwarded to your legal advisor with a request to investigate the items detailed below.*

### 9.1 Statutory

No comments.

### 9.2 Rights of Way Easements and Shared Services

No comments.

### 9.3 Boundaries

Your legal advisor should determine the ownership of and liabilities for maintenance of the perimeter fences and walls.

### 9.4 Environmental

See comments under Section 3.4 regarding the level of flood risk.

Your legal adviser should ask the Vendor specifically to confirm whether they have experienced any problems with flood water.

### 9.5 Guarantees and Warranties

Your legal adviser should check obtain the testing and service records for the electrical, gas and heating installations.

Dependent upon arrangements made for the drying out of the property, I would recommend that a drying certificate from a professional drying contractor be requested.

Where work has been carried out to the property, it is recommended that guarantees are obtained. These should ideally be indemnified against eventualities such as the contractors going out of business, and should cover workmanship as well as materials. Guarantees are worth little if not backed by insurance. Confirmation should also be obtained that the residue of the guarantees will transfer with the ownership of the property.

Where any work is carried out now or in the future it is recommended that only reputable and indemnified contractors, installers or specialists are used. At least two competing firms should be asked to quote for the work.

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Before deciding, you should ask to see examples of recent work and references should be sought. Companies should be affiliated to recognised trade associations.

Examples include Chartered Building Companies, The Property Care Association, Arboricultural Association, International Institute of Arboriculturists, National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation and Contractors, Confederation of Registered Gas Installers, etc. Whilst these affiliations do not necessarily guarantee good workmanship, in most cases they do provide a greater likelihood of satisfactory work.

**Signed:** .....

*Surveyor & qualifications*  
**Peter Barry**, Chartered Surveyors

**Date:** *Date of report*

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## Photo Index

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## GLOSSARY OF BUILDING TERMS

<b>Aggregate</b>	Pebbles, shingle, gravel, etc used in the manufacture of concrete, and in the construction of "soakaways".
<b>Air Brick</b>	Perforated brick or metal/plastic grille used for ventilation, especially to floor voids (beneath timber floors) and roof spaces.
<b>Architrave</b>	Joinery moulding around window or doorway.
<b>Asbestos</b>	Fibrous mineral used in the past for insulation. Can be a health hazard - specialist advice should be sought if asbestos is found.
<b>Asbestos Cement</b>	Cement with 10-15% asbestos fibre as reinforcement. Fragile - will not bear heavy weights. Hazardous fibres may be released if cut or drilled.
<b>Ashlar</b>	Finely dressed natural stone: the best grade of masonry
<b>Asphalt</b>	Black, tar-like substance, strongly adhesive and 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 (see also "Fan Assisted Flues").
<b>Batten</b>	Thin lengths of timber used in the fixing of roof tiles or slates.
<b>Beetle Infestation</b>	(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.
<b>Benching</b>	Smoothly contoured concrete slope beside drainage channel within an inspection chamber. Also known as "Haunching".
<b>Bitumen</b>	Black, sticky substance, related to asphalt. Used in sealants, mineral felts and damp proof courses.
<b>Breeze Block</b>	Originally made from cinders ("breeze") - the term now commonly used to refer to various types of concrete and cement building blocks.
<b>Carbonation</b>	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.
<b>Cavity Wall</b>	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).
<b>Cavity Wall Insulation</b>	Filling of wall cavities by one of various forms of insulation material:  <b>Beads:</b> Polystyrene beads pumped into the cavities. Will easily fall out if the wall is broken open for any reason.  <b>Fibreglass:</b> Can lead to problems if becomes damp.

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	<p><b>Foam:</b> Urea formaldehyde foam, 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.</p> <p><b>Rockwool:</b> Inert mineral fibre pumped into the cavity.</p>
<b>Cavity Wall Tie</b>	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.
<b>Cesspool</b>	A simple method of drainage comprising a holding tank which needs frequent emptying. Not to be confused with "Septic Tank".
<b>Chipboard</b>	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.
<b>Collar</b>	Horizontal timber member intended to restrain opposing roof slopes. Absence, removal or weakening can lead to roof spread.
<b>Combination Boiler</b>	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.
<b>Coping/Coping Stone</b>	Usually stone or concrete, laid on top of a wall as a decorative finish and to stop rainwater soaking into the wall.
<b>Corbel</b>	Projection of stone, brick, timber or metal jutting out from a wall to support a weight.
<b>Cornice</b>	Ornamental moulded projection around the top of a building or around the wall of a room just below the ceiling.
<b>Coving</b>	Curved junction piece to cover the join between wall and ceiling surfaces.
<b>Dado Rail</b>	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.
<b>Damp Proof Course</b>	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.
<b>Damp Proof Membrane</b>	Usually polythene, incorporated within ground floor slabs to prevent rising dampness.
<b>Deathwatch Beetle</b>	Serious insect pest in structural timbers, usually affects old hardwoods with fungal decay already present.
<b>Double Glazing</b>	A method of thermal insulation usually either: <p><b>Sealed unit:</b> Two panes of glass fixed and hermetically sealed together; or</p> <p><b>Secondary:</b> In effect a second "window" placed inside the original window.</p>

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<b>Dry Rot</b>	A fungus which attacks structural and joinery timbers, often with devastating results. Can flourish in moist, unventilated areas.
<b>Eaves</b>	The overhanging edge of a roof at gutter level.
<b>Efflorescence</b>	Salts crystallised on the surface of a wall as a result of moisture evaporation.
<b>Engineering Brick</b>	Particularly strong and dense type of brick, sometimes used as a damp proof course. Usually blue in colour.
<b>Fan Assisted Flues</b>	Similar to "Balanced Flue" but with fan assistance to move air or gases.
<b>Fibreboard</b>	Cheap, lightweight board material of little strength, used in ceilings or as insulation to attics.
<b>Fillet</b>	Mortar used to seal the junction between two surfaces, ie between a slate roof and a brick chimney stack.
<b>Flashing</b>	Building technique used to prevent leakage at a roof joint. Normally metal (lead, zinc or copper).
<b>Flaunching</b>	Contoured cement around the base of cement pots, to secure the pot and to throw off rain.
<b>Flue</b>	A smoke duct in a chimney, or a proprietary pipe serving a heat producing appliance such as a central heating boiler.
<b>Flue Lining</b>	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.
<b>Foundations</b>	Normally concrete, laid underground as a structural base to a wall; in older buildings may be brick or stone.
<b>Frog</b>	A depression imprinted in the upper surface of a brick, to save clay, reduce weight and increase the strength of the wall.
<b>Gable</b>	Upper section of a wall, usually triangular in shape, at either end of a ridged roof.
<b>Ground Heave</b>	Swelling of clay subsoil due to absorption of moisture; can cause an upward movement in foundations.
<b>Gulley</b>	An opening into a drain, normally at ground level, placed to receive water, etc from downpipes and waste pipes.
<b>Haunching</b>	See "Benching". Also term used to describe the support to an underground rain.
<b>Hip</b>	The external junction between two intersecting roof slopes.
<b>Inspection Chamber</b>	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.
<b>Jamb</b>	Side part of a doorway or window.
<b>Joist</b>	Horizontal structural timber used in flat roof, ceiling and floor construction. Occasionally also metal.

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<b>Landslip</b>	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.
<b>Lath</b>	Thin strip of wood used as a backing to plaster.
<b>Lintel</b>	Horizontal structural beam of timber, stone, steel or concrete placed over window or door openings.
<b>Longhorn Beetle</b>	A serious insect pest mainly confined to the extreme south east of England, which can totally destroy the structural strength of wood.
<b>LPG</b>	Liquid Petroleum Gas (or Propane). Available to serve gas appliances in areas without mains gas. Requires a storage tank.
<b>Mortar</b>	Traditionally a mixture of lime and sand. Modern mortar is a mixture of cement and sand.
<b>Mullion</b>	Vertical bar dividing individual lights in a window.
<b>Newel</b>	Stout post supporting a staircase handrail at top and bottom. Also, the central pillar of a winding or spiral staircase.
<b>Oversite</b>	Rough concrete below timber ground floors; the level of the oversite should be above external ground level.
<b>Parapet</b>	Low wall along the edge of a flat roof, balcony, etc.
<b>Pier</b>	A vertical column of brickwork or other material, used to strengthen the wall or to support a weight.
<b>Plasterboard</b>	Stiff "sandwich" of plaster between coarse papers. Now in widespread use for ceilings and walls.
<b>Pointing</b>	Smooth outer edge of mortar joint between bricks, stones, etc.
<b>Powder Post Beetle</b>	A relatively uncommon pest which can, if untreated, cause widespread damage to structural timbers.
<b>Purlin</b>	Horizontal beam in a roof upon which rafters rest.
<b>Quoin</b>	The external angle of a building, or, specifically, bricks or stone blocks forming that angle.
<b>Rafter</b>	A sloping roof beam, usually timber, forming the carcass of a roof.
<b>Random Rubble</b>	Primitive method of stone wall construction with no attempt at bonding or coursing.
<b>Rendering</b>	Vertical covering of a wall either plaster (internally) or cement based (externally), sometimes with pebbledash, stucco or Tyrolean textured finishes.
<b>Reveals</b>	The side faces of a window or door opening.
<b>Ridge</b>	The apex of a roof.
<b>Riser</b>	The vertical part of a step or stair.
<b>Rising Damp</b>	Moisture soaking up a wall from below ground, by capillary action causing rot in timbers, plaster decay, decoration failure, etc.
<b>Roof Spread</b>	Outward bowing of a wall caused by the thrust of a badly restrained roof structure (see "Collar").

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<b>Screed</b>	Final, smooth finish of a solid floor; usually mortar, concrete or asphalt.
<b>Septic Tank</b>	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.
<b>Settlement</b>	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.
<b>Shakes</b>	Naturally occurring cracks in timber; in building timbers, shakes can appear quite dramatic, but strength is not always impaired.
<b>Shingles</b>	Small rectangular pieces of wood used on roofs instead of tiles, slates, etc.
<b>Soaker</b>	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.
<b>Soffit</b>	The under-surface of eaves, balcony, arch, etc.
<b>Solid Fuel</b>	Heating fuel, normally coal, coke or one of a variety of proprietary fuels.
<b>Spandrel</b>	Space above and to the sides of an arch; also the space below a staircase.
<b>Stud Partition</b>	Lightweight, sometimes non-loadbearing wall construction comprising a framework of timber faced with plaster, plasterboard or other finish.
<b>Subsidence</b>	Ground movement possibly as a result of mining activities, clay shrinkage or drainage problems.
<b>Subsoil</b>	Soil lying immediately below the top soil, upon which foundations usually bear.
<b>Sulphate Attack</b>	Chemical reaction, activated by water, between tricalcium aluminate and soluble sulphates. Can cause deterioration in brick walls, concrete floors and external rendering.
<b>Tie Bar</b>	Heavy metal bar passing through a wall, or walls, to brace a structure suffering from structural instability.
<b>Torching</b>	Mortar applied on the underside of roof tiles or slates to help prevent moisture penetration. Not necessary when a roof is underdrawn with felt.
<b>Transom</b>	Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or top of door.
<b>Tread</b>	The horizontal part of a step or stair.
<b>Trussed Rafters</b>	Method of roof construction utilising prefabricated triangular framework of timbers. Now widely used in domestic construction.
<b>Underpinning</b>	Methods of strengthening weak foundations whereby a new, stronger foundation is placed beneath the original.
<b>Valley Gutter</b>	Horizontal or sloping gutter, usually lead or tile lined, at the internal intersection between two roof slopes.

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<b>Ventilation</b>	<p>Necessary in all buildings to disperse moisture resulting from bathing, cooking, breathing, etc, and to assist in prevention of condensation.</p> <p><b>Floors:</b> Necessary to avoid rot, especially dry rot, achieved by air bricks near to ground level.</p> <p><b>Roofs:</b> Necessary to disperse condensation within roof spaces; achieved either by air bricks in gables or ducts at the eaves.</p>
<b>Verge</b>	<p>The edge of a roof, especially over a gable.</p>
<b>Verge Board</b>	<p>Timber, sometimes decorative, placed at the verge of a roof; also known as a "Barge Board".</p>
<b>Wainscott</b>	<p>Wood panelling or boarding on the lower part of an internal wall.</p>
<b>Wallplate</b>	<p>Timber placed at the eaves of a roof to take the weight of the roof timbers.</p>
<b>Wet Rot</b>	<p>Decay of timber due to damp conditions. Not to be confused with the more serious "Dry Rot".</p>
<b>Woodworm</b>	<p>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.</p>

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