BUILDING SURVEY

PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL REF: **********25

BUILDING SURVEY FOR **********

FOR **********,
**********,
********,
*****

Date of Survey: *********

Weather: Overcast but dry. 18˚C.

RICS Regulated by RICS

SURVEY CONTENTS

1.00 THE PROPERTY

1.01 Tenure: This should be verified by your solicitor.

1.02 Description

No ********* is a detached property. The property has brick walls partly overlain with render and a concrete interlocking tile roof. It has been extended to the side with an addition to an original projection which now forms the utility. It has a large garage to the front.

The extended (rear) section of the utility does not comply with any form of building regulations or good building practice. You should discuss this with your solicitor.

No. 4 faces approximately northwest.

1.03 Accommodation:

Ground Floor: Porch, entrance hall leading to stairs, cloaks/WC, living room/dining area, kitchen which leads to the utility.

First Floor: Three bedrooms and family bathroom.

Second Floor: None.

1.04 Energy efficiency:

We are advised that the property's current energy performance, as recorded in the EPC, is D. This is the national average.

We have checked for any obvious discrepancies between the EPC and the subject property and did not see any.

1.00 THE PROPERTY

1.05 Outbuildings and Parking:

The parking is to the front of the property on the private driveway or within the garage. We did not measure the garage for vehicular access.

1.06 Approximate Age:

We estimate that the property was constructed in the 1960s.
Your solicitor can verify the actual date of construction from the deeds.

1.07 Orientation:

The front of the property faces approximately northwest.

1.08 GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE LOCALITY.

The following are brief findings from an initial desk top study available from sources on the internet.

They are used by us when preparing the report and are included here for your information only.

They should not be used in place of an independent Environmental Report provided by a specialist company. Your solicitor can advise you accordingly and will usually arrange this specialist report on your behalf (see clause 28 of T&Cs B223c).

- *Location and Amenities:*

The property resides in a residential area containing properties of similar ages and styles. Amenities are a short car drive away.

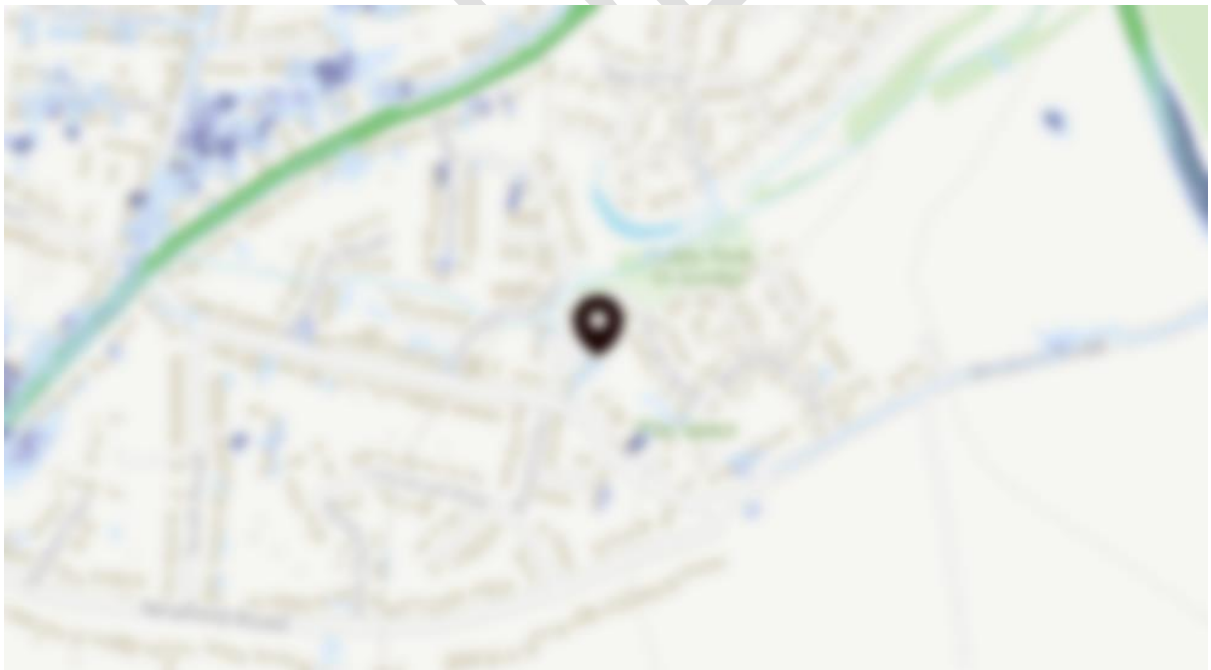
- *Roads and Footpaths*:

Your solicitor should check to ensure that roads and footpaths are fully adopted. We saw no indication to lead us to believe that they are not.

- *Flooding (Rivers, sea, surface water and reservoirs).*

https://check-long-term-flood-risk.service.gov.uk/search?postcode

Rivers, sea, surface water and reservoirs – Very low risk from flooding



Please be aware that the findings can be different on - https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/

1.08 GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE LOCALITY.

- *Radon* - https://www.ukradon.org/ .

All parts of this 1km grid square are in the lowest band of radon potential. Less than 1% of homes above the Action Level.

Every building has radon and in most areas the levels are low. Some buildings in "radon affected areas" have higher levels. Buildings in these areas should be tested for radon. High levels can be reduced by simple building works. There are three simple steps you can follow:

1. Check – is your property in a Radon Affected Area? https://www.ukradon.org/information/ukmaps
2. Measure - If you are in a radon Affected Area you should order a radon measurement pack for your home or workplace - https://www.ukradon.org/services/orderdomestic This takes three months.
3. Act - If the radon level is high, you should reduce it using simple building works- https://www.ukradon.org/information/reducelevels

- *Noise from transportation networks* – No issues were noted whilst at the property.

- *Typical geological and soil conditions* – The geological survey map indicates the ground conditions are “undefined”.

Please be aware that if this ground is overlain with a non-draining material such as clay, the garden and surrounding area could be wet during the autumn/winter/spring seasons.

https://mapapps2.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html

1.08 GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE LOCALITY.

- *Well-known but unique local and regional ground conditions* – none known.

- *Landfill sites and relevant former industrial activities* – none known.

- *Former mining activities* – The property is outside of the Coal Mining Reporting area.

https://datamine-cauk.hub.arcgis.com/

- *Future/proposed infrastructure schemes and proposals* – your solicitor should advise you accordingly.

- *Planning areas (e.g., conservation areas, areas of outstanding natural beauty and Article 4 direction)* – your solicitor should advise you accordingly.

- *Listed building status*. - None that we are aware of, but your solicitor should advise you accordingly.

- *Other general information* – You are aware of the planned housing estate to the north and south of Western Road.

1.10 THE INSPECTION

1.11 All directions are given as if facing the property from the front door.
1.12 Externally the property was inspected from ground level to the front and rear. No long ladders were used.
1.13 The property was furnished but unoccupied at the time of our inspection.
1.14 There was furniture within each room and this was not moved or removed, and we cannot confirm that walls, floors, and ceilings covered by these items are free of issues.
1.15 Kitchen units and sanitaryware were in place to the relevant rooms and these items were not moved or removed, and we cannot confirm that walls, floors and ceilings covered by these items are free of issues.
1.16 All rooms had floor finishes within them which were not lifted/removed, so no inspection was available of the structural floors.
1.17 We have not excavated trial holes or opened up any portion of the property by removing plaster, boarding, lining, brickwork, panelling, or bath panels. We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that were covered, unexposed or inaccessible.
1.18 Access to the roof space is via a hatch to the landing ceiling. The floor to the loft is fully boarded, so we could walk around the roof space; however, the underside of the roof structure is mostly covered in retrospectively fitted foil covered insulation, so we were unable to inspect most of the roof structure and the underside of the roof finish/felt. We cannot comment upon the condition of these hidden elements.
1.19 We have not tested services nor commented upon defects. The testing of the electric, gas and heating installations is recommended prior to you purchasing the property. These are carried out by specialists, and you should arrange for these at your earliest convenience.
1.20 Although our report makes comment upon general environmental issues, we have not carried out a specific flood risk, environmental, geological, mining, Radon or ground contamination survey and cannot confirm environmental, ground, near surface or under-ground conditions. Our findings are based upon a brief “desktop” study and should not be used as the basis for deciding whether or not to purchase the property. You should always arrange for a specialist Environmental Report to be carried out on the property. This can be arranged through your solicitor.
1.21 The survey does not comment on the position of boundaries. You should consult your solicitor to ascertain the correct location of fences/structures at, near or on the boundaries.
1.22 Our report is mainly concerned with matters that significantly affect the condition of the building. We have not prepared a schedule listing defects room by room or specifically mentioned every minor blemish or listed every element of each component. We have written our report in general terms.
1.23 This report is private and confidential and is prepared for your own use. It may be shown to other professional advisers acting on your behalf in connection with the purchase of the property. Its contents may not be disclosed to, nor made use of by, any other third party without our express consent in writing.

2.00 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

2.01 The purpose of the inspection and the verbal and written reports is to put the present condition of the property into an overall perspective. It is not a guarantee or an insurance policy that defects will not occur in the future.
2.02 This report follows our survey inspection of the property.
2.03 The purpose of the report is to provide you with the information which will enable you to make an informed decision about the property prior to proceeding with the purchase.
2.04 The report will give a brief description of each element and where necessary, it will make further recommendations to investigate the defect further.
2.05 Each element will be graded as follows:

CONDITION RATING 1 – The element's condition is commensurate with its age, and it is in a good or acceptable condition; however, as with all building materials, maintenance will still be required in the future.

CONDITION RATING 2 – The element's condition requires attention from a specialist to provide a quotation as we deem that the element requires maintenance or replacement. This inspection/quotation should be carried out prior to purchasing the property so that you are aware of the costs and time involved. The findings may affect the value of the property but can usually be carried out once you occupy the property.

CONDITION RATING 3 – The elements condition is serious enough that it could have a detrimental effect on your enjoyment of the property, and we deem that the issue needs immediate attention from a specialist. You should not proceed without further investigation.

NOT INSPECTED – We were unable to gain access to the element. *We cannot confirm that the elements is present. If the element is present, we cannot confirm that it is positioned correctly, functioning correctly, nor free of issues or defects.*

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

Main roof finish.

3.01 The roof is finished with concrete interlocking tiles. The tiles look original.
3.02 The ridge is finished with matching tiles. The ridge tiles have been fixed in a mortar bed.
3.03 The valleys to the cottage dormers have been retrospectively fitted with dry-fix valleys. We assume that this is due to the evidence of leakage to the rear bedrooms. We tested the water marks to the boarding to the bedrooms and they were dry, but please bear in mind the dry summer that we have experienced. Another possible cause for the water marks is condensation behind the fitted insulation against the felt lining the tiles. The condensation will roll down and dampen the bedroom ceilings. Please see our comment in 3.08.
3.04 The tiles are now approximately sixty years old. Concrete tiles are given an expected lifespan of around forty to fifty years.
3.05 We have discussed the age of the roof finish with you and advised you that the roof finish has reached the end of its expected lifespan and will need to be renewed.
3.06 You should obtain a quotation for complete renewal of the roof finish on a modern breathable membrane incorporating ventilation at the eaves and the ridge:

https://www.marley.co.uk/products/accessories/25mm-eaves-vent-system

https://www.marley.co.uk/accessories/ridgefast

3.07 There is a small risk that the bitumen felt which lines the roof tiles above the insulation contains asbestos. We have advised you to carry out an asbestos sample test on all of the suspicious material within the property.
3.08 If you decide not to follow our recommendation to replace the roof finish, the insulation should be removed from beneath the roof structure and the aforementioned ventilation measures should be installed which can be implemented into the existing roof finish.
3.09 After carrying out an asbestos sample test on the felt, split the felt beneath the ridge with a Stanley knife to allow air through the new dry-fix ridge system.
3.10 No other issues were noted.

Condition Rating 2

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

FRONT ELEVATION.

FRONT ELEVATION.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

FRONT ELEVATION.

DRY-FIX VALLEY.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

REAR ELEVATION.

REAR ELEVATION.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

Living room bay roof finish.

3.11 This small bay roof is covered in lead with a lead flashing to the main house.
3.12 No obvious issues were noted but lead does have a lifespan of approximately fifty to seventy years. You should budget accordingly.

Condition Rating 1

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

Garage/store roof finish.

3.13 This large flat roof is finished with bitumen felt.
3.14 The felt is covered in solar reflective gravel.
3.15 The felt is aged and where it is exposed around the edge upstands, the felt has split and deteriorated. We were surprised that there is not clear evidence of leakage within the garage and store.
3.16 We climbed onto the roof and there is movement in the decking. This could be caused by leakage through the felt.
3.17 We have discussed this with you and recommended immediate renewal including new decking.
3.18 If you wish to extend the lifespan of the new roof, you should consider a long-life material such as EPDM or GRP which should last approximately thirty years. Bitumen felt will only last ten to fifteen years.
3.19 The rainwater discharge is via internal downpipes. The falls to the new roof should be altered and the rainwater taken to external gutters and downpipes.

Condition Rating 3

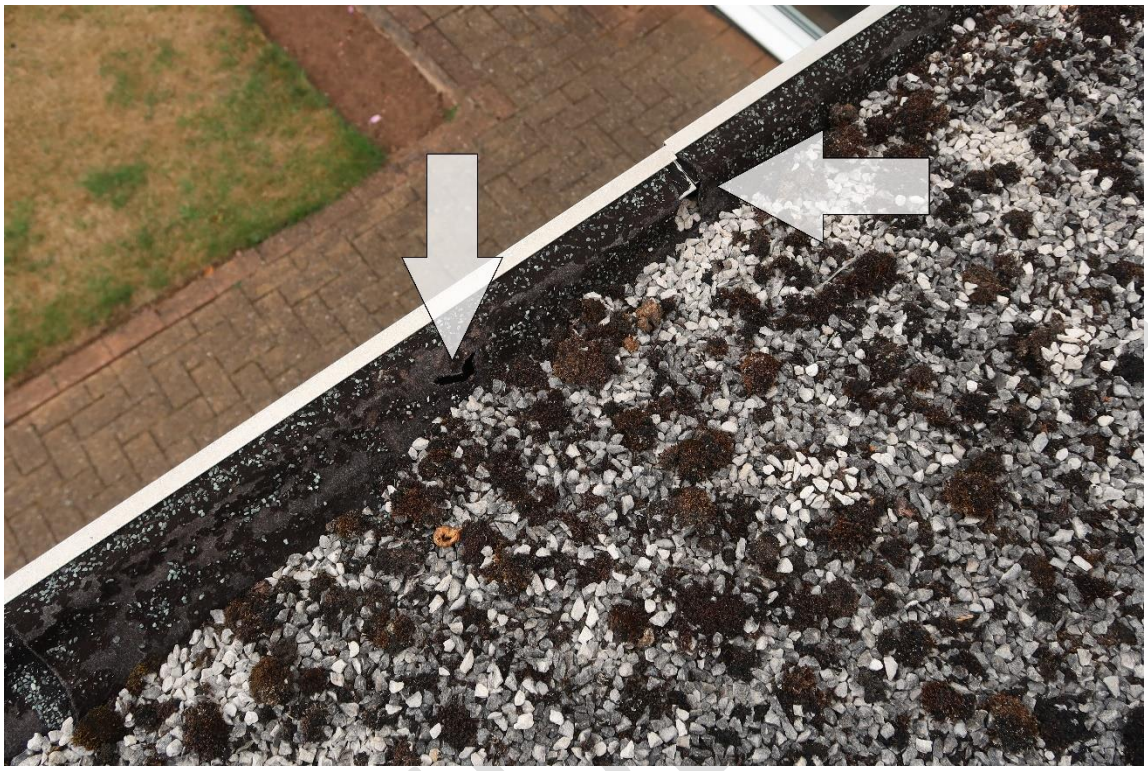
3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

GENERAL VIEW.

GENERAL VIEW.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

SPLITS TO THE EDGE.



SPLITS TO THE EDGE.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

SPLITS TO THE EDGE.

SPLITS TO THE EDGE.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

INTERNAL RAINWATER OUTLET.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

Utility roof finish.

3.20 This flat roof is also finished with bitumen felt which is covered in solar reflective gravel.
3.21 Again, the felt is aged and where it is exposed around the edge upstands, the felt has split and deteriorated. We were surprised that there is not clear evidence of leakage.
3.22 We climbed onto the roof and there is movement in the decking. This could be caused by leakage through the felt.
3.23 We have discussed this with you and recommended immediate renewal including new decking.
3.24 If you wish to extend the lifespan of the new roof, you should consider a long-life material such as EPDM or GRP which should last approximately thirty years. Bitumen felt will only last ten to fifteen years.

Condition Rating 3

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS

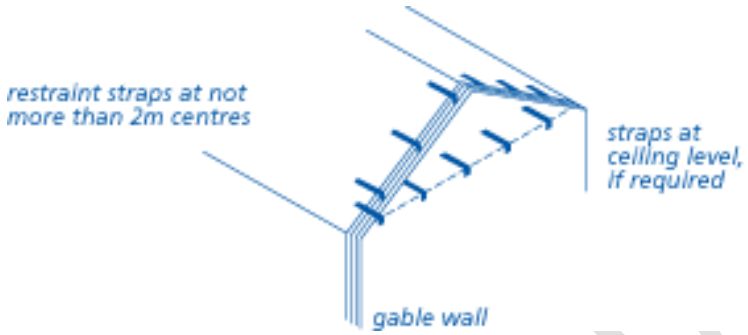
SPLITS TO THE EDGE.

4.00 ROOF SPACES

4.01 Access to the roof space is via a hatch to the landing ceiling. The floor to the loft is fully boarded, so we could walk around the roof space; however, the underside of the roof structure is mostly covered in retrospectively fitted foil covered insulation, so we were unable to inspect most of the roof structure and the underside of the roof finish/felt. We cannot comment upon the condition of these hidden elements.
4.02 The foil insulation should be removed as this could cause interstitial condensation which could affect the bedrooms. It is also forming a “warm roof” where you are in effect heating the roof space. We recommend that the floorboards are removed and 300mm of quilt insulation is installed across the floor. This forms a “cold roof” and is the most effective way to insulate a house.
4.03 We noted vermiculite insulation which can contain asbestos. We have advised you to get this asbestos tested with other material within the house. Do not disturb this material until this test has been carried out.
4.04 Although we could not fully inspect the roof structure. It is a traditional roof structure which makes it easier to convert the loft space to a bedroom. We could see the purlins and the purlin supports to the upper purlins. No issues were noted to the purlins or supports.
4.05 Through one small gap in the insulation, we could see that the roof is lined with bitumen felt. There is a small risk that this felt could contain asbestos. It will be prudent to get it asbestos sample tested with the other items listed in section 25.00.
4.06 We tested a small number of accessible roof timbers with a moisture probe meter and registered moisture readings between 9% to 11%. These are reasonably low measurements due to the hot summer. The threshold for rots and woodworm is approximately 20%. We have advised you to install ventilation into the new roof finish.
4.07 The party walls are formed with blockwork which also forms the internal skin of the walls. We noted foam coming out of gaps to the wall and could see a small hole where we could see into the cavity. We could see that the foam has disintegrated and we believe that this foam is Urea formaldehyde foam insulation (UFFI). We have discussed this with you and recommend that due to the concern that it may emit formaldehyde gas and the risk of cold bridges due to disintegrated areas of insulation, the complete cavity around the house should be cleared of this installed installation. You should obtain an immediate quotation for the removal of the foam from the cavity as this could be expensive.
4.08 To the right-hand party wall, we noted a crack which is partly along the bed joint. This type of crack can be caused by corroding wall ties and the risk of this issue increases where the cavity has been injected with insulation. Although wall ties corrosion cracks are more often seen to the outside face of the brickwork, you should commission an invasive inspection of the wall ties to ensure that they are free of corrosion.
4.09 We tested the chimney breast for dampness and did not register damp readings.

4.00 ROOF SPACES

4.10 The gables are without lateral restraint straps. Three “L” shaped straps should be fitted to each side of each of the gable triangles.



4.11 There are a small number of watermarks on the floorboards. We tested these with a damp meter and they were dry. This could be due to the hot weather as these could be condensation drips in the winter. The insulation should be removed.
4.12 We could see old electric cables and junction box.
4.13 The loft hatch may not be fire rated, if not, it should be upgraded to a fire rated unit.
4.14 We saw nothing else of note.

Condition Rating 2

4.00 ROOF SPACES

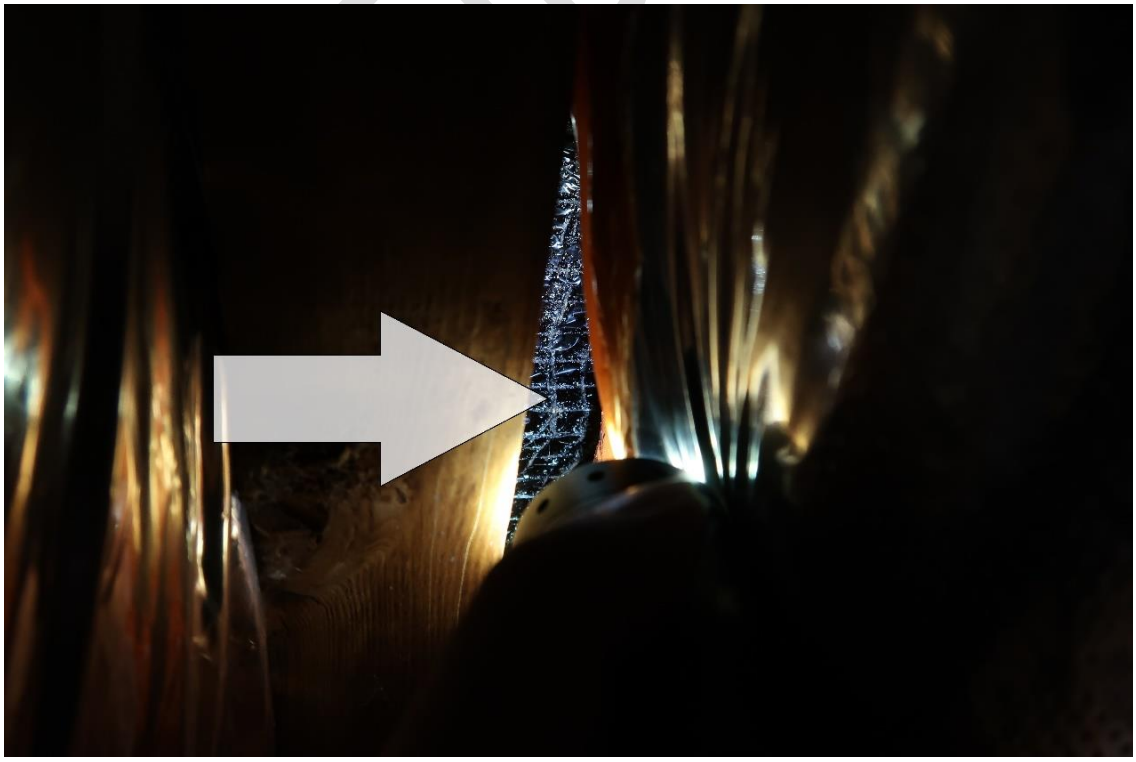
GENERAL VIEW FROM THE HATCH.

THE UNDERSIDE OF THE ROOF IS COVERED IN FOIL WRAPPED INSULATION.

4.00 ROOF SPACES

VERMICULITE.

FELT LINING THE ROOF TILES.



4.00 ROOF SPACES

MOISTURE TESTING A RAFTER.

MOISTURE TESTING A RAFTER.

4.00 ROOF SPACES

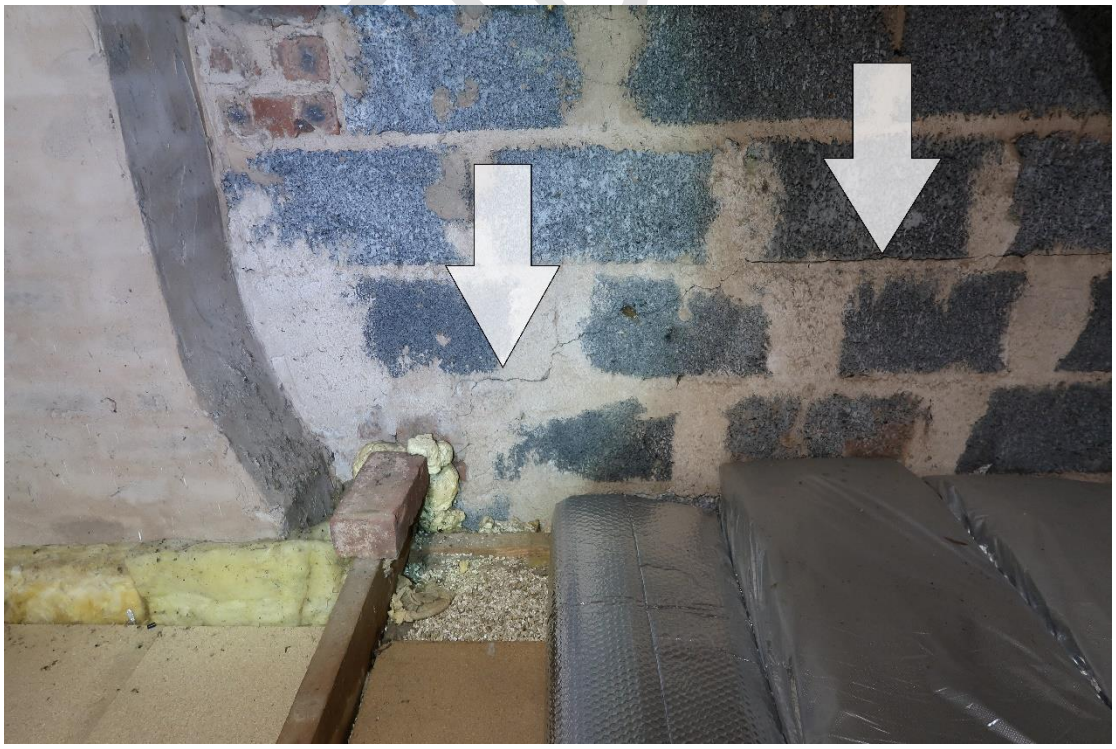
TESTING THE PURLIN NEAR THE GABLE WALL. YOU CAN SEE THE INJECTED UFFI FOAM.

HOLE IN THE PARTY WALL. YOU CAN SEE THE DETERIORATING INSULATION.

4.00 ROOF SPACES

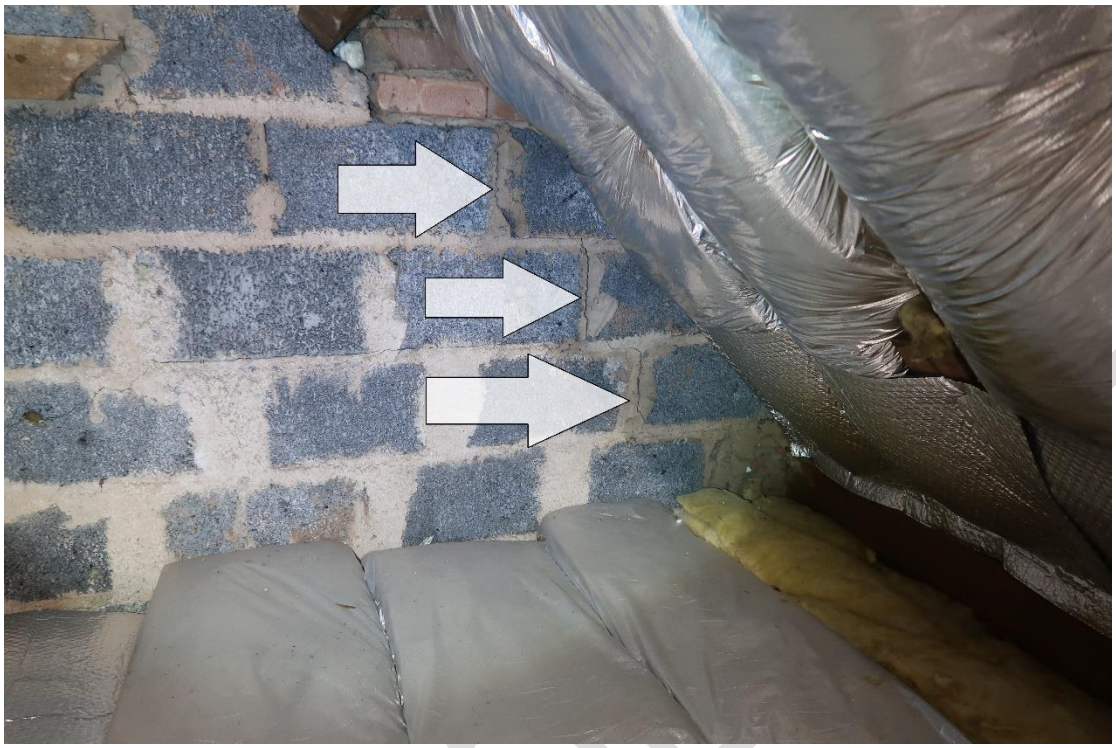
DETERIORATING INSULATION.

CRACK TO PARTY WALL.



4.00 ROOF SPACES

CRACK TO PARTY WALL.



TESTING WATER MARKS TO THE FLOOR. THEY WERE DRY.

4.00 ROOF SPACES

TESTING THE CHIMNEY BRICKWORK.

OLD ELECTRICS.

5.00 CHIMNEYSTACKS

5.01 We have commented upon what we could see from our ground level inspection, but this may only be the minimum amount of works required as there are parts of the chimney stack which cannot be seen from the ground.
5.02 There is a single chimney stack to the ridge to the right-hand side of the roof.
5.03 We noted:

1. To the sections that we could see, no issues were noted to the flashing.
2. No obvious issues were noted to the brickwork but the rear bricks may be starting to spall on their edge. If so, www.stormdry.com can be applied to the brickwork.
3. The top has one open pot with a rain hat.
4. The top will benefit from a layer of flaunching to stop rainwater percolating through the brickwork.

5.04 The roofing contractor should thoroughly inspect and repair as necessary, the chimney stack.

Condition Rating 2

5.00 CHIMNEYSTACKS

5.00 CHIMNEYSTACKS

EXAMPLE OF MORTAR FLAUNCHING.

6.00 PARAPET WALLS, RETAINING WALLS & BOUNDARY WALLS

6.01 To the front, there is a brick wall which retains this garden and then increases in height to form a privacy wall between the properties. We do not know who is responsible for this wall but we assume that it is your responsibility due to it retaining your land. Your solicitor can confirm who is responsible for this boundary. No obvious issues were noted to the actual wall but the height would have required a balustrade and here, there are none. This can be dangerous for young children and you should ensure that wherever the height exceeds 300mm the edge is suitably protected with a compliant balustrade or fence.
6.02 To the rear, there are only short decorative stone garden walls; however, once again, the height of sections of these walls would have required a balustrade and here, there are none. This can be dangerous for young children and you should ensure that wherever the height exceeds 300mm the edge is suitably protected with a compliant balustrade or fence.
6.03 We noted a number of coping stones are loose and these can be reset.

Condition Rating 2

6.00 PARAPET WALLS, RETAINING WALLS & BOUNDARY WALLS

6.00 PARAPET WALLS, RETAINING WALLS & BOUNDARY WALLS

A BALUSTRADE IS REQUIRED WHERE A WALL EXCEEDS 300mm.

6.00 PARAPET WALLS, RETAINING WALLS & BOUNDARY WALLS

SOME OF THE LOOSE COPING STONES.

7.00 FASCIAS AND SOFFITS

7.01 The main eaves are covered in UPVC boards. The soffits are unvented but no obvious issues were noted.
7.02 The main eaves may have original asbestos cement soffits beneath the UPVC boards. Do not disturb the boards such as drilling into them or cutting into them.

Condition Rating 1

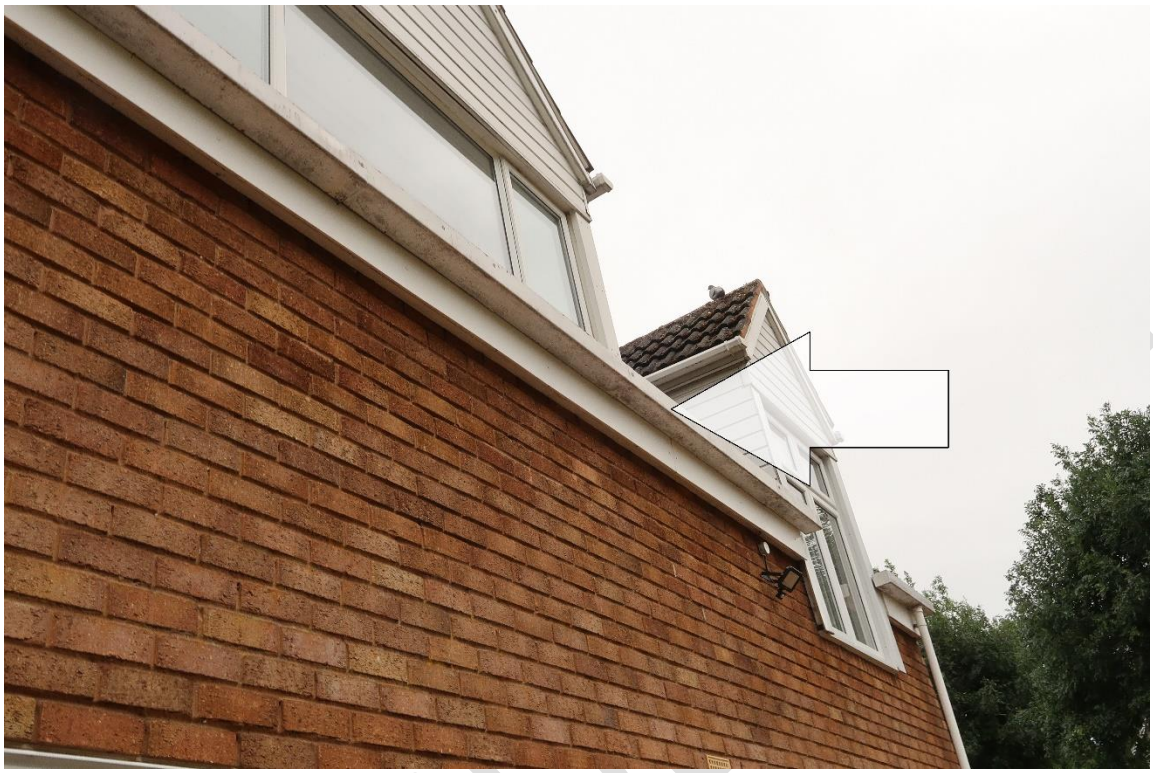
8.00 RAINWATER GOODS

8.01 The rainwater installation is unusual. To the front and rear, there is a square gutter which we could not identify the material. It did not look like asbestos but could be lead or zinc.
8.02 The downpipes are plastic.
8.03 We could not see any signs of leakage but the installation should be monitored.
8.04 The downpipes go directly into the ground and we assume but cannot confirm, connect to the storm drains. This can be checked by the drainage CCTV company.

Condition Rating 1

8.00 RAINWATER GOODS

UNUSUAL SQUARE GUTTER.



THE GUTTER DOES LOOK LIKE LEAD OR ZINC.

8.00 RAINWATER GOODS

DOWNPIPE INTO THE GROUND.

9.00 EXTERNAL SOIL, WASTE AND VENTILATION PIPEWORK

9.01 The soil and ventilation pipe appears to be within the ground-floor WC where it drops down from the bathroom. It crosses the ceiling and drops down to the front of the WC. It appears to be vented via an outlet to the side elevation.
9.02 Due to the boxing, we cannot confirm the condition of the pipe nor the base.
9.03 The base can be inspected by the drain CCTV company.

NOT INSPECTED

WE ASSUME THAT THE SVP IS HERE.

9.00 EXTERNAL SOIL, WASTE AND VENTILATION PIPEWORK

WE ASSUME THAT THE SVP IS HERE.

WE ASSUME THAT THIS VENTS THE SVP.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

10.01 The original house walls are approximately 310mm thick; this is classed as “cavity construction”.
10.02 The property has received a cavity wall insulation injection which looks like UFFI.
10.03 We have discussed this type of foam with you and advised you of the concerns relating to the release of formaldehyde gas and the risk of cold/condensation areas and have recommended that you commission a company to remove the foam completely from the cavity.
10.04 The two skins of brickwork/blockwork will have wall ties between them. These ties could be iron or steel or may not be sufficiently galvanised and this can lead to corrosion and then failure. We noted a crack to the party wall within the roof space which is partly horizontal in orientation and this type of crack can be caused by wall-tie corrosion. To accurately determine the presence of the defect, an invasive test needs to be carried out which involves locating the ties and removing bricks to expose the end of the tie. We have not carried out this inspection and cannot confirm to you that the wall-ties within the walls, are free of corrosion. Due to the risk of this defect, you should commission a specialist company to carry out this invasive test. Companies can be found at https://www.property-care.org/
10.05 We reiterate, no invasive inspection of the walls was carried out.
10.06 There may not be lintels above the openings. This means that the panel of brickwork above window and door openings may be unsupported and simply resting upon the window/door frames. You should be aware of the potential lack of lintels whenever you change window and door frames.
10.07 The utility rear section is not original and the wall here is only “single skin” brickwork. The risk here is rain penetration, heat-loss and condensation issues. This indicates that this extension to the utility was carried out to a DIY standard and does not comply with good building practice nor building regulations.
10.08 To the external walls, we noted:

Front elevation:

1. We do not know why there are protruding bricks.
2. The lower section of the wall has a render coat. There are hairline cracks and peeling paint. This does not look structural but the cracks could allow rainwater into the render. The render should be repaired/sealed and repainted.
3. The brickwork below the render will benefit from raking out and repointing wherever joints are soft or recessed.
4. No further issues.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

Right-hand side elevation:

1. Minor cracking above the bin store door can be raked out and repointed.
2. Paving is too close to the DPC but the render will protect the wall. Ensure that the render remains in good condition.
3. High level recessed joints. These will need to be raked out and repointed at some point in the future but scaffold/tower access will be required.
4. We have commented upon the rear section of the utility being "single skin" construction. There is a hairline crack which looks like thermal contraction/expansion. It can be decorator filled.

Rear elevation:

1. Initially, we thought that there was damp damage to the side of the patio doors but our damp meter did not detect any dampness.
2. Again, the brickwork below the render will benefit from raking out and repointing where necessary.
3. No further issues.

Left-hand side elevation:

1. Paint damage to the render.
2. High level recessed joints. These will need to be raked out and repointed at some point in the future but scaffold/tower access will be required.

10.09 General raking out and repointing will be required to brickwork below and above the render wherever the joints are soft or recessed.
10.10 Where cracked, the render should be sealed and requires painting.

Condition Rating 2

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

PROTRUDING BRICK.

HAIRLINE CRACKS AND PEELING PAINT.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

PEELING PAINT.

JOINTS BELOW THE RENDER WILL BENEFIT FROM RAKING OUT AND REPOINTING.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

MINOR CRACKING ABOVE BIN STORE DOOR.

PAVING IS TOO CLOSE TO THE DPC.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

HAIRLINE CRACKING TO SIDE OF UTILITY WHERE “SINGLE SKIN” SECTION HAS BEEN ADDED.

HAIRLINE CRACKING TO SIDE OF UTILITY WHERE “SINGLE SKIN” SECTION HAS BEEN ADDED.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

THIS LOOKS LIKE DAMP DAMAGE.

THE WALL IS DRY.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

THE WALL IS DRY.

THE WALL IS DRY.

10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS

DAMAGED PAINT TO THE LEFT-HAND SIDE.

RECESSED JOINTS TO LEFT-HAND GABLE.

11.00 DPC

11.01 Due to the render, we could not see the edge of the DPC, so cannot confirm that one is in place.
11.02 In a house of this age, a bitumen DPC is commonly used and we could see the edge of the garage DPC and it is bitumen.
11.03 Bitumen will eventually turn brittle and crack when used as a DPC. This is because it cannot accommodate movement in the bed joint and if it cracks it becomes ineffective as a barrier to water. Unfortunately, a timescale cannot be given for this as it depends on location which influences movement. See section 19.00 for our measurement for damp.
11.04 This bitumen DPC could contain asbestos. There is no danger to health where it is encapsulated within the brickwork, but to the garage, it is exposed and if it is damaged, it could release asbestos fibres. We have discussed this with you and recommended a full house inspection for asbestos.

NOT INSPECTED

EXPOSED DPC TO THE GARAGE.

12.00 WINDOWS

12.01 The windows are a mix of modern and aged UPVC frames with double glazed units.
12.02 Your solicitor see if there is a FENSA certificate and guarantee for the installation (may be too old for the older installation).
12.03 We noted:

- Living room front: Modern, no issues.
- WC and kitchen: Aged but no issues.
- Utility: This window is aluminium. The casement is very stiff and the unit is not toughened, so safety film should be applied to the glass. The handles are Cockspur handles, so there are no security measures within the frame.
- Landing: Aged. It is positioned where a person could fall against it and the unit is not toughened, so safety film should be applied to the glass.
- Bathroom: Aged and the left-hand unit has failed and requires replacement.
- Front bedroom: Modern. Failed left-hand unit which requires replacement. Rainwater may be getting into the frame because the fixings are corroding. The window complies with fire escape regulations and the units are toughened.
  Put child restrictors on the casements.
- Rear left-hand bedroom: Modern and no issues. The window complies with fire escape regulations and the units are toughened.
  Put child restrictors on the casements.
- Rear right-hand bedroom: Aged and the cill height of this window means that it does not comply with fire escape regulations which means that you could get trapped in a fire and not be able to climb out of the window to a fire service ladder. Unless you reduce the structural opening, you cannot change this situation. As a minimum, you should implement all fire detection measures recommended later within the report. If this cill height concerns you, obtain a quotation to reduce the window cill height to comply with fire escape regulations.

12.04 The older windows will require renewal in the coming years and you should budget accordingly.
12.05 Whenever you replace windows, please note our comments regarding the lack of lintels above the openings.
12.06 All external silicone sealing should be checked and repaired as damage was noted to bedroom reveals.

Condition Rating 2

12.00 WINDOWS

COCKSPUR HANDLE TO UTILITY.

THE LANDING WINDOW IS POSITIONED WHERE YOU COULD FALL AGAINST IT.

12.00 WINDOWS

FAILED BATHROOM UNIT.

FAILED BEDROOM UNIT.

12.00 WINDOWS

FRONT BEDROOM CASEMENT MEETS FIRE REGULATIONS.

RAINWATER MAY BE GETTING INTO THE FRONT BEDROOM FRAME.

12.00 WINDOWS

REAR RIGHT HAND BEDROOM: TO COMPLY WITH FIRE ESCAPE REGULATIONS, THE CILL SHOULD NOT BE HIGHER THAN 1100mm.

CHECK ALL SILICONE SEALS.

13.00 EXTERNAL DOORS

13.01 The front porch is aged UPVC with a double-glazed units. The double-glazed units are toughened. The Euro cylinder to the door should be changed for a 3* security cylinder. The door operated satisfactorily. We did not have a key to test the lock.
13.02 The front entrance door and side screens are aged UPVC with double-glazed units. The double-glazed units are toughened. The Euro cylinder to the door should be changed for a 3* security cylinder. The door operated satisfactorily.
13.03 The living room rear patio doors are aged sliding aluminium with double-glazed units. The double-glazed units are toughened. The Euro cylinder to the door should be changed for a 3* security cylinder. The door operated satisfactorily.
13.04 The kitchen/utility door is a timber door with small glass panes. There are no marks to indicate that the glazing is safety glass. You should apply safety film to the glass. The door operated satisfactorily.
13.05 The utility rear door is an aged aluminium door with double-glazed units. The units are not toughened, so safety film should be applied to the glass. The door opened and closed satisfactorily. The Euro cylinder to the door should be changed for a 3* security cylinder.

Condition Rating 2

14.00 EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

14.01 This involves the render only.
14.02 This will benefit from sealing where cracked/damaged and redecoration.

Condition Rating 2

15.00 INTERNAL WALLS, PARTITIONS & CEILINGS

15.01 The internal partitions throughout the ground floor appear to be solid partitions.
15.02 The first-floor partitions appear to be solid partitions except to bedroom one/bedroom two and bedroom three/landing which appear to be stud partitions.
15.03 The perimeter external walls are two-coat plaster.
15.04 The ceilings are all covered so we cannot confirm the specification.
15.05 We noted:

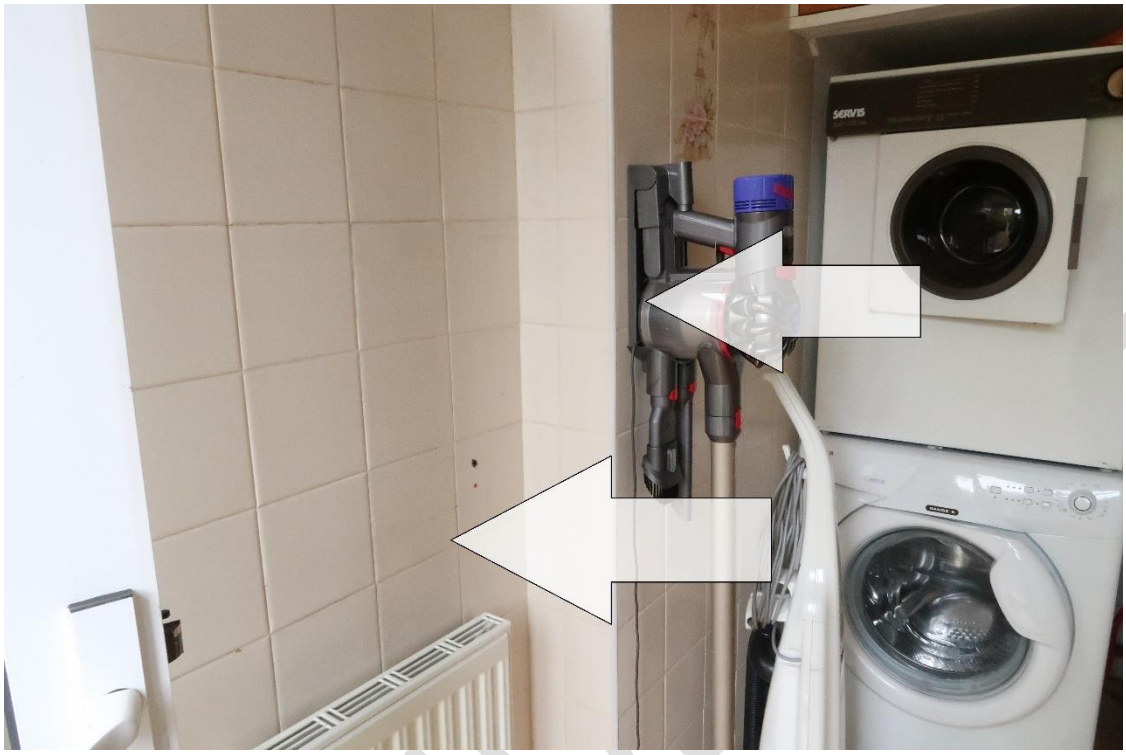
- Utility: We have commented upon the "single skin" extended section. This can be seen internally.
  The polystyrene ceiling tiles should be removed as they are a fire hazard.
- Front bedroom: Minor cracking to the ceiling can be decorator filled.
- Rear left-hand bedroom: A built-in wardrobe covers the wall where the crack is above within the roof space, so we are unable to comment on whether it extends downwards into the bedroom.
  Water marks where the ceiling meets the rear wall. Is this roof leakage or condensation within the roof space? It was dry but we have experienced a long, dry summer. This should be monitored. See recommendations in section 3.00.
- Rear right-hand bedroom: What is the strange material on the walls and ceiling? This should be asbestos sample tested at the earliest opportunity to make sure that it is not an asbestos insulating board.
  Again, water marks where the ceiling meets the rear wall. Is this roof leakage or condensation within the roof space? It was dry but we have experienced a long, dry summer. This should be monitored. See recommendations in section 3.00.

15.06 We saw no issues to the rooms not listed above.
15.07 The drop-down sections of the first-floor ceilings will not be insulated. Heat-loss will occur through uninsulated elements. If you replace the roof finish, these uninsulated areas can be insulated.
15.08 We noted damaged window reveals and have recommended that the silicone to window frames is checked.
15.09 Because the walls have old plaster upon them, you may lose plaster when you redecorate. You should budget accordingly.
15.10 The bathroom downlighters should be checked to ensure that they are fire rated. They are most probably not, so you should budget for fire rated units.

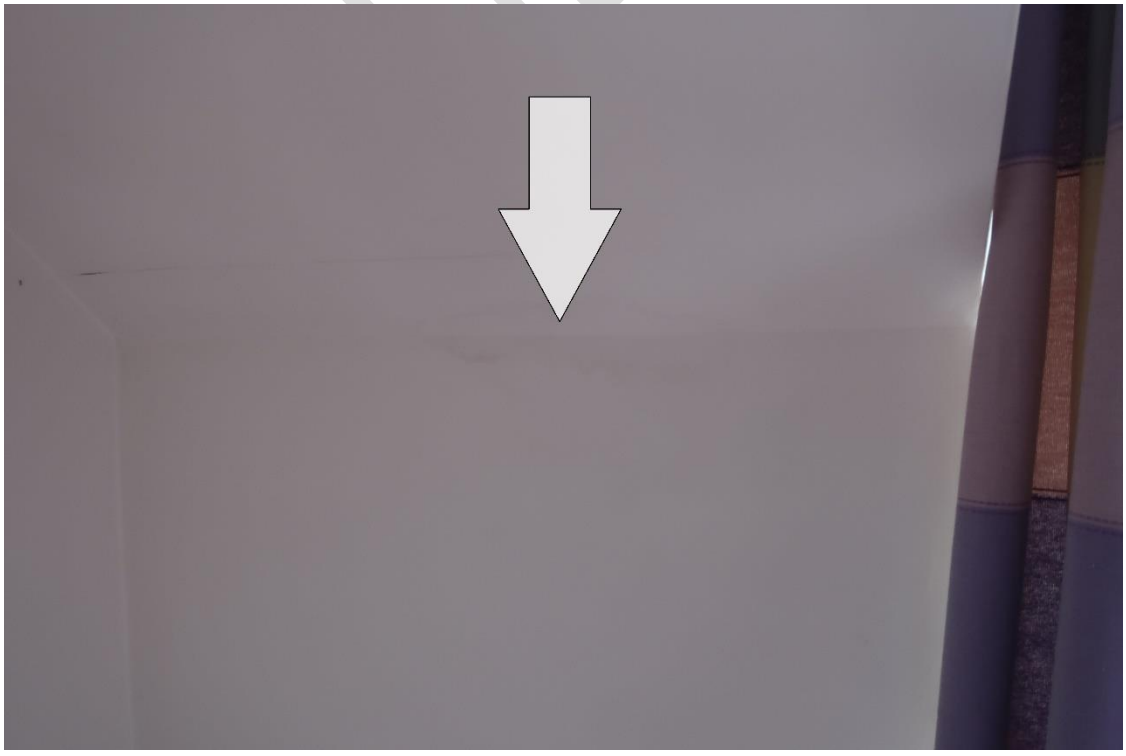
Condition Rating 1

15.00 INTERNAL WALLS, PARTITIONS & CEILINGS

YOU CAN SEE WHERE THE WALL GOES FROM ORIGINAL CAVITY CONSTRUCTION TO A “SINGLE SKIN” EXTENDED SECTION.



WATER MARK TO THE REAR LEFT-HAND BEDROOM WALL/CEILING.



15.00 INTERNAL WALLS, PARTITIONS & CEILINGS

THE MARK IS DRY.

WATER MARK TO THE REAR RIGHT-HAND BEDROOM WALL/CEILING.

15.00 INTERNAL WALLS, PARTITIONS & CEILINGS

THE MARK IS DRY.

THE MARK IS DRY.

16.00 FIREPLACES, FLUES AND CHIMNEYBREASTS

16.01 The chimney breast is still in place.
16.02 No dampness was found to the ground floor nor the first-floor section of the chimney breast.
16.03 There is a wood burning stove. Do not use it without a HETAS engineer inspecting the stove and flue arrangement.
16.04 We noted that there is no combustible air to the room. We understand that this is a requirement for a wood burning stove.
16.05 A CO detector should be installed.
16.06 Your solicitor should obtain the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate, guarantee and service records for the stove etc.

NOT INSPECTED

17.00 FLOORS

17.01 All of the floors were covered with finishes and furniture. Our comments are therefore based on what could be determined through coverings. We cannot confirm that the covered or inaccessible structural elements of the floors are free of defects.
17.02 The ground floor is suspended timber to the living room/dining, porch and hall with the remaining areas being solid construction.
17.03 Solid floors in houses of this age can suffer from a defect called sulphate attack. We did not see any signs of this defect. The garage did not display this issue and we are not aware of the problem in this immediate area. If this concerns you, you should commission an independent sulphate test. We can discuss this further if you wish.
17.04 The solid floors will probably be damp but this is reasonably common in older houses although it can affect your choice of floor finishes such as engineered wood.
17.05 The upper floors are suspended timber.
17.06 We cannot comment further.

NOT INSPECTED

18.00 CELLAR

18.01 None and we were unable to inspect the sub-floor voids.

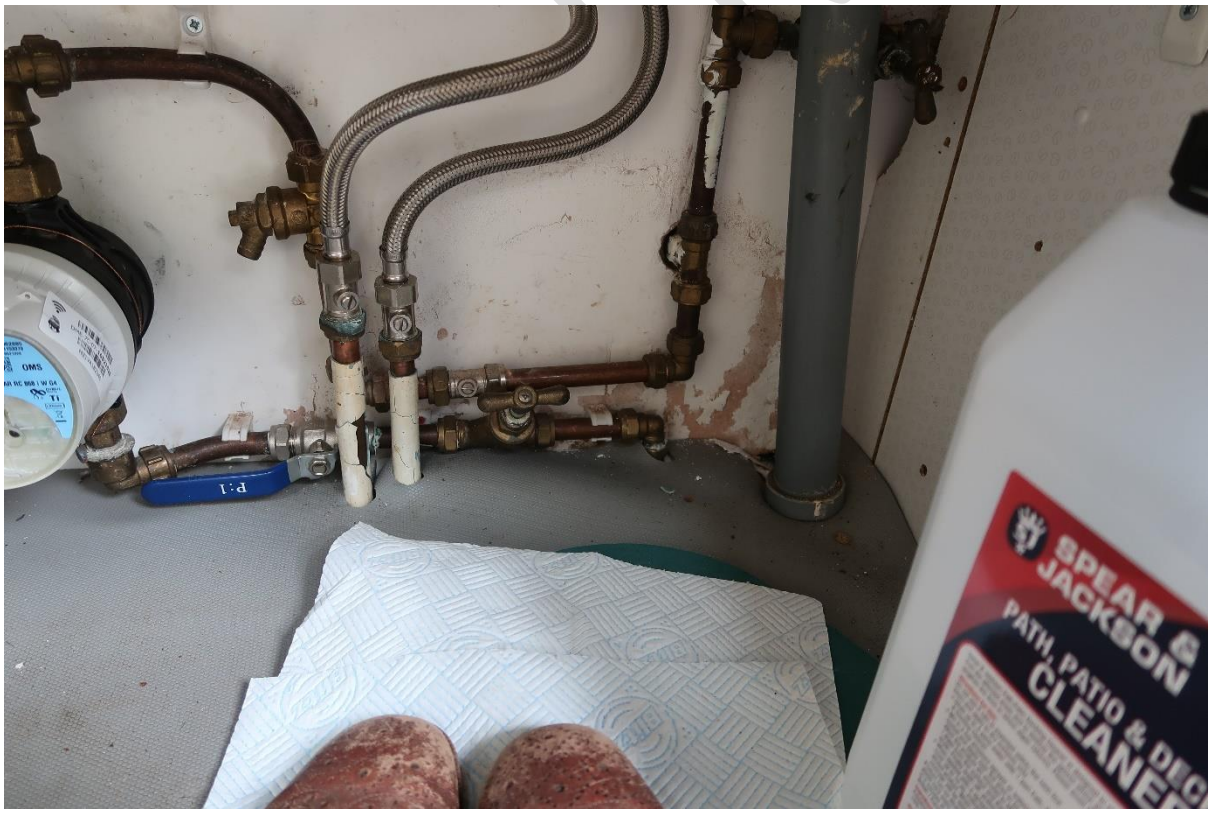
NOT INSPECTED

19.00 DAMP

19.01 We could not test behind kitchen units nor other fixed units etc.
19.02 We did not move furniture.
19.03 We measured damp readings within the garage but this is common within garages.
19.04 We did note what looked like damp damage within the utility sink unit. It tested dry with a damp meter.
19.05 Where we could reach the internal house walls, we tested the low-level sections of the walls and did not find high damp readings.
19.06 We tested the upper sections of the walls, and again, did not register high readings.
19.07 We did not find high readings to the chimney breast areas.
19.08 Due to coverings, we could not accurately test solid floors but high damp readings are often found in older solid floors (Suitable DPM was not used until the early 1970s).

Condition Rating 1

THIS LOOKS LIKE DAMP DAMAGE BUT IT IS DRY.



20.00 WOODBORING BEETLE AND ROT

20.01 We could not fully inspect the roof structure and sections of the timbers are covered in the foil wrapped insulation. We cannot confirm that covered timbers are free of issues.
20.02 Elsewhere, where we could inspect, we did not see any signs of an infestation to the inside of the house.

Condition Rating 1

21.00 INTERNAL FINISHES

21.01. The internal decorations/finishes are to a satisfactory standard.
21.02 Paint containing lead may have been used within the property. Use respiratory protection whenever you sand down the paintwork.
21.03 As part of any future redecoration, you should budget for plaster repairs/renewal.

Condition Rating 1

22.00 INTERNAL JOINERY

22.01 Stairs: Timber construction – The landing balustrade is not quite high enough to comply with regulations. It should be 900mm to comply with regulations. If this concerns you, you should arrange for a carpenter to change the balustrade. Similarly, the stair balustrade is short and here, it can also be moved. Again, this can be fixed by a carpenter.
22.02 Internal Doors: The doors are a mixture of glazed and moulded. We could not see a mark on the glass to the kitchen/hall glazed panels to indicate that safety glass has been used. Safety film should be applied to the glass. All doors were tested and all operated satisfactorily.
22.03 Skirtings and Architraves: Softwood small section. No issues were noted.
22.04 Kitchen Units: Modern style. You should ensure that they meet your needs. There is an extractor fan.

Condition Rating 2

23.00 SANITARYWARE

23.01 The ground floor WC operated satisfactorily.
23.02 The WC does not have an extractor fan but there is an opening window.
23.03 The bathroom WC operated satisfactorily.
23.04 The shower is linked to the bath taps although it is powerful. This type of arrangement will not have a thermostatic valve and you should consider a dedicated shower.
23.05 There is a working extractor fan. The discharge should be checked as the front air grill looks to be in the wrong place for the extractor fan to be connected to it.

Condition Rating 1

24.00 SERVICES

24.01 Specialist tests should be carried out to ensure that electric, gas and heating installations are safe.
24.02 Internal Wastes: Where visible these are plastic. We cannot confirm the condition of the hidden installation.
24.03 Plumbing Installation:
The pipework that we could see is a mix of plastic and copper pipework. We cannot confirm the quality of the hidden installation.
The incoming main, stop-tap and meter are in the unit to the utility. We could not see the material for actual incoming main but would expect to see a section of MDPE pipe if it had been replaced. This should be checked and if the pipe is lead, we recommend that the complete main to the back of footpath is replaced in MDPE. This could be expensive, and you should obtain a quotation from a specialist company.
24.04 Heating Installation and Boiler:
The central heating boiler is in the bathroom cupboard. It is a Worcester Bosch combination condensing boiler.
The boiler has a sticker upon it indicating that it was installed in 2011. This is very old for a boiler and we have advised you to budget for immediate renewal.
The condensate drain goes into the floor of the cupboard. We assume but cannot confirm that it connects to a waste pipe.
The boiler worked for both hot water demand and central heating demand.
We cannot comment upon the size of the radiators throughout the house.
Do not use the boiler without a Gas Safe engineer safety testing the boiler.
24.05 Gas Installation:
The gas meter is in the garage. The electrical earth bonding is in place but looks undersized.
The installation should be checked by a Gas Safe engineer.

24.00 SERVICES

24.06 Electrical Installation:
The main consumer unit is in the porch. It is a modern metal unit with RCD earth leakage protection. It looks like the unit was installed in 2020 and there is a recommendation to reinspect the complete installation in 2025.
The house has very few circuits for example only one socket circuit instead of a socket circuit for the ground floor and another for the first floor.
We could see old electrics/junction box to the roof space.
The bathroom downlighters do not look like they are fire-rated. This should be checked.
Overall, apart from the consumer unit, the electrical installation looks aged and we have recommended that as a minimum, it is safety tested but you should budget for complete renewal as the installation looks too old to keep in place.
Do not use the installation until you have commissioned a test by a NICEIC/ECA qualified electrician to determine that the installation is safe and meets your requirements in respect of socket outlets etc. They should comment upon the issues which we have raised.
24.07 Drainage Installation:

24.07.01 There are three inspection chambers to the property. All of them have block in-fill covers which are too heavy to lift.
24.07.02 The gullies that we could see are original.
24.07.03 Your solicitor should see if there is a drainage plan and if it indicates whether there are “shared” drains on the property.
24.07.04 The garage side wall is displaying cracks and this is close to the underground drains. Leaking drains can cause subsidence.
24.07.05 Due to lack of access, we cannot comment further upon the drains.
24.07.06 Underground drainage is prone to leaking, becoming blocked or suffering damaged. This can only be assessed by carrying out a CCTV survey. We recommend that a CCTV survey is carried out prior to purchase and necessary works are carried out to ensure the integrity of the system. All connections should be included in the survey.

Condition Rating 3

24.00 SERVICES

INCOMING WATER MAIN, STOP TAP AND METER.

BOILER STICKER FROM 2011.

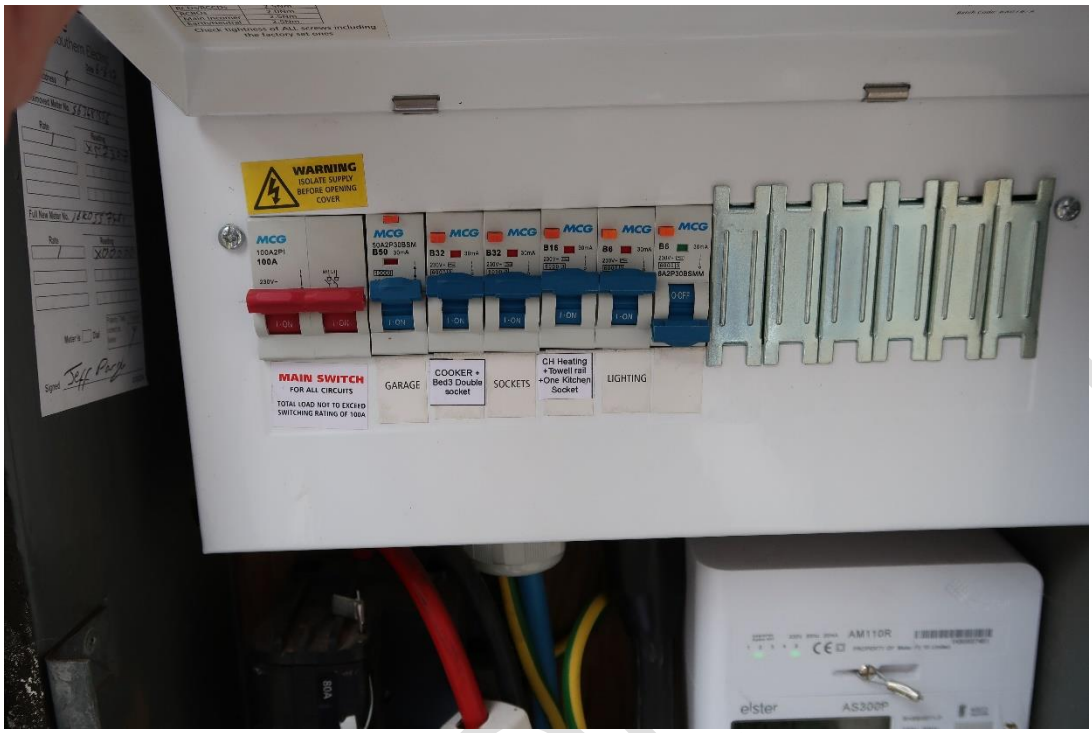
24.00 SERVICES

MAGNETIC SYSTEM CLEAN.

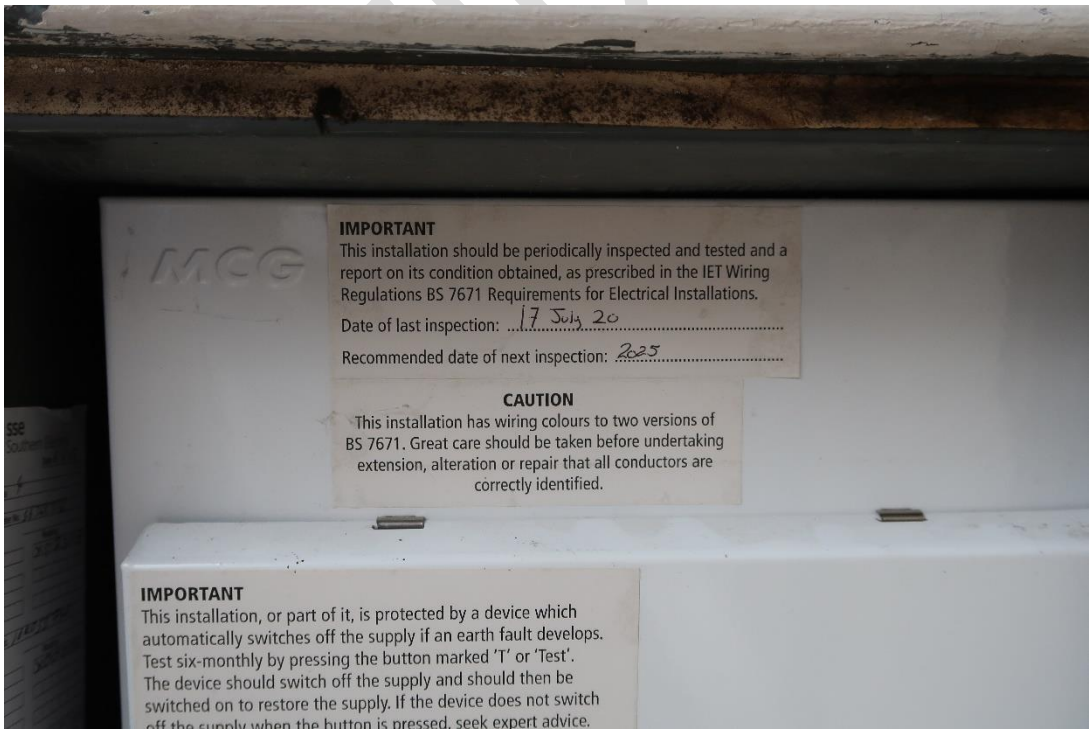
CONDENSATE PIPE.

24.00 SERVICES

ELECTRICAL CONSUMER UNIT.



ELECTRICAL CONSUMER UNIT INSPECTION STICKER.



24.00 SERVICES

INSPECTION CHAMBER.

INSPECTION CHAMBER.

24.00 SERVICES

INSPECTION CHAMBER.

ORIGINAL DRAINAGE GULLEY.

25.00 ASBESTOS

25.01 We have not carried out an asbestos survey. Where visible, we have commented upon the potential for asbestos or asbestos containing materials within the property, but this is not an exhaustive list and caution should be exercised when working upon, breaking into, or removing potential risk items.
25.02 We noted:

1. Bitumen DPC (potential).
2. Original soffit board beneath the UPVC board (potential).
3. Original felt beneath the tiles (potential within the material).
4. Vermiculite to the roof space.
5. Strange boarding to the rear right-hand bedroom (potential).
6. Original vinyl tiles to the WC and utility.

25.03 We have discussed the amount of potential asbestos within this property and you are arranging a full house inspection by a testing company.

Condition Rating 2

ORIGINAL VINYL TILES.

26.00 FIRE PROTECTION AND MEANS OF ESCAPE

26.01 The escape in the event of a fire is via the front door.
26.02 There are only battery detectors within the house.
26.03 We recommend that mains operated, interlinked fire/smoke detectors are fitted to the kitchen (with heat detection), utility, living room/dining room, hall and landing.
26.04 We also recommend that a modern carbon monoxide detector is fitted adjacent to the central heating boiler, log burner, hall and to the landing.
26.05 We have commented upon the rear right-hand bedroom window cill height. As a minimum, you should ensure that you can easily exit from the opening. If this concerns you, you should arrange for a quotation to reduce the opening cill height.

Condition Rating 2

27.00 NOISE SEPARATION

27.01 The only increase or enhancement to the original structure to assist in reducing noise transference are the double-glazed windows.
27.02 Whilst at the property, we could not hear loud external noise.

NOT INSPECTED

28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

28.01 No issues were noted to the front or rear landscaping but we did note a clump of bamboo at the rear of the garden. If this is the spreading type, it can be invasive and because it is on the boundary, could cause neighbour issues.
28.02 We have commented upon the garage roof finish and internal dampness within the report. We also noted to the garage:

1. There is a crack beneath the side window. We have recommended that the drains are inspected as leaking drains can cause subsidence.
2. To the left-hand side wall of the garage, it looks like raking cracks have been repointed and then painted. The cracks have not clearly reopened and the outside of the wall is covered in planting, so we were unable to inspect the outside face of the wall. We cannot comment further.
3. The DPC is exposed. This should be asbestos sample tested.
4. The window is single glazed. Safety film should be applied to the glass.
5. The rear personnel door is rotting at the base.
6. No issues were noted to the main front vehicle door which opened and closed satisfactorily.
7. The brickwork at the base of the store is damp damaged.
8. The side wall of the garage does not look like it is part of the neighbour's house; there is a small gap between the two properties. The roofing felt is cut-into the neighbour's gable wall which may not be allowed although other houses have a similar arrangement.
9. The garage electrical installation is again due for reinspection.

28.03 We did not inspect the timber summer house nor timber garden shed but did note that the roof to the summer house is very old and the felt to the shed is loose.

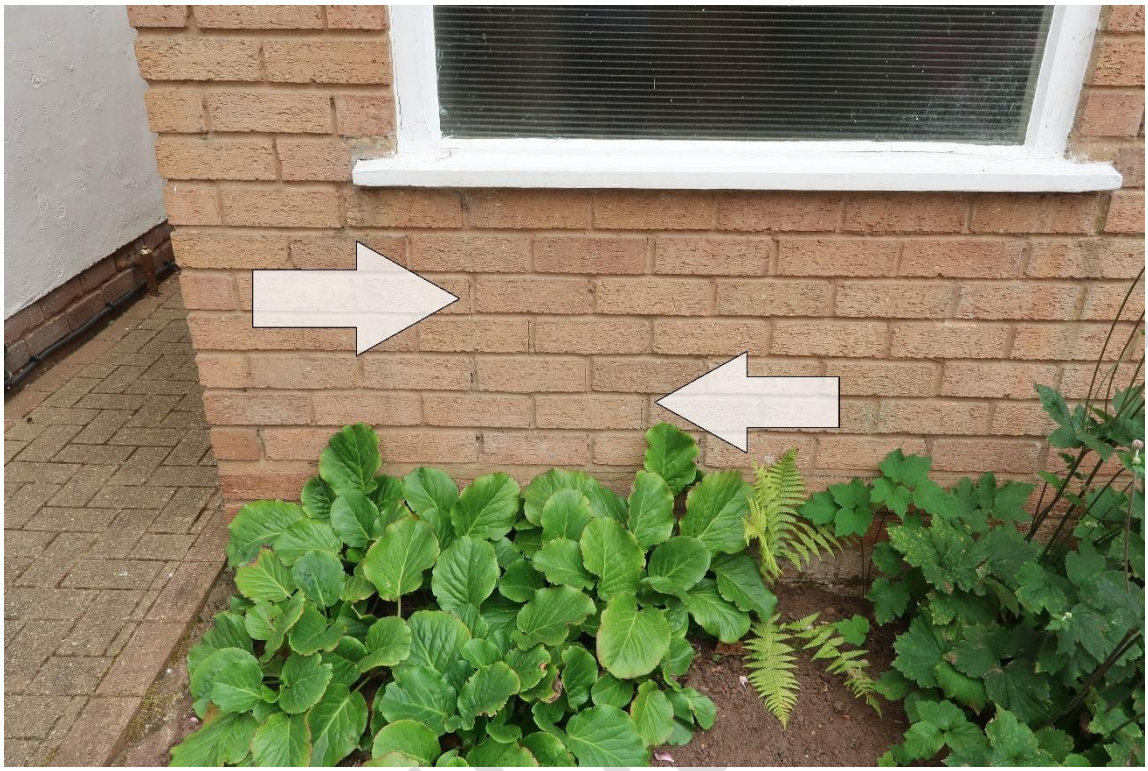
Condition Rating 1

28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

RAKING CRACK TO GARAGE.

28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

RAKING CRACK TO GARAGE.



THIS WALL LOOKS LIKE SEVERAL CRACKS HAVE BEEN REPOINTED.

28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

PLANTING COVERED THE OUTSIDE OF THE WALL.

BASE OF DOOR IS ROTTING.

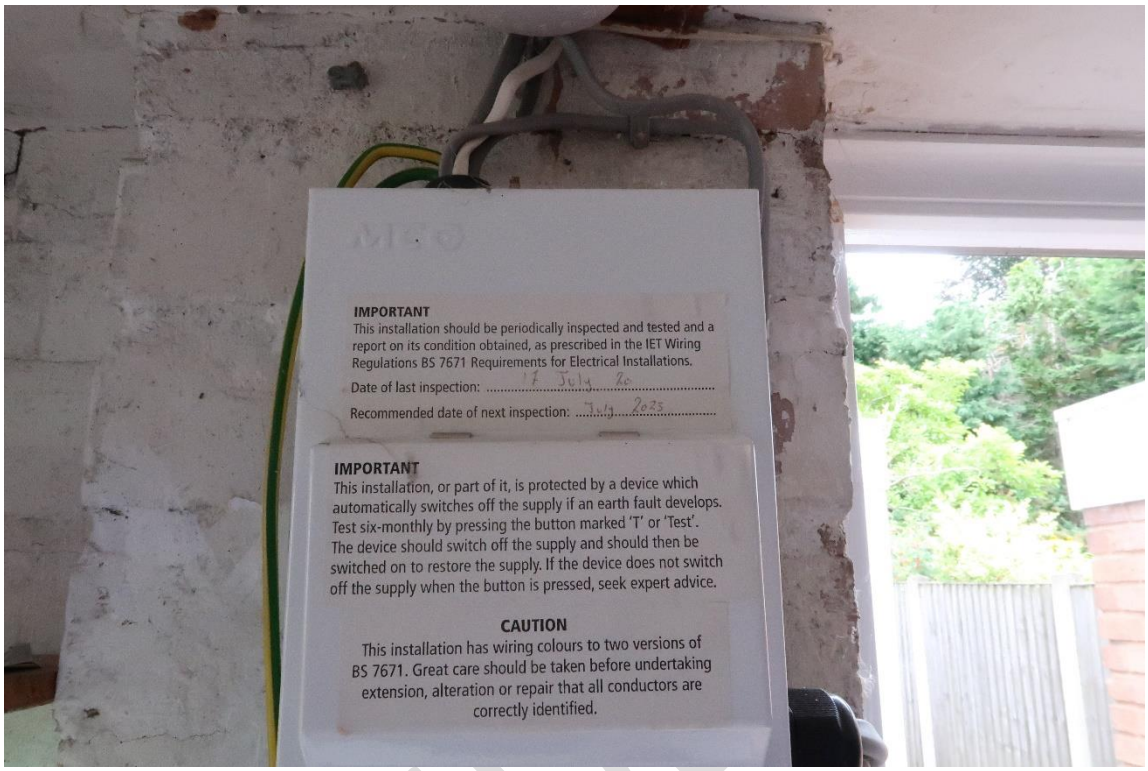
28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

DAMP DAMAGE TO THE BASE OF THE STORE WALL.

THERE IS A SMALL GAP BETWEEN THE GARAGE AND THE NEIGHBOUR'S HOUSE.

28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

THE GARAGE ELECTRICS ARE DUE FOR REINSPECTION.



ROOF IS VERY OLD TO THE SUMMER HOUSE.

28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING

ROOF FELT IS LOOSE.

29.00 LEGAL MATTERS

29.01 Carry out an Environmental report from a specialist company.
29.02 Your solicitor should obtain Building Regulations Completion Certificate and structural engineer's design for the extension to the utility (most probably not available as the construction does not comply with regulations).
29.03 Obtain the FENSA certificate and guarantee for the modern UPVC windows.
29.04 Obtain the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate and service records for the central heating boiler (we have recommended renewal).
29.05 Obtain the Building Regulations Compliance Certificate, warranty details and service records for the log burning stove.
29.06 Has the incoming water main been replaced? If so, is there documentary evidence.
29.07 Is there a drainage plan in existence which will identify the location of drains and if any shared drainage (water board responsibility) cross the property. Is the drainage a separate or a combined system?
29.08 Who is responsible for each boundary?

30.00 SUMMARY

CONDITION RATING 1 – The element's condition is commensurate with its age, and it is in a good or acceptable condition; however, as with all building materials, maintenance will still be required in the future.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS **– *Living room bay roof finish.***
7.00 FASCIAS AND SOFFITS
8.00 RAINWATER GOODS **– *Requirement to monitor especially unusual gutters.***
15.00 INTERNAL WALLS, PARTITIONS & CEILINGS
19.00 DAMPNESS **– *where we could inspect.***
20.00 WOODBORING BEETLE AND ROT **– *No inspection of covered roof structure. Elsewhere, where we could inspect.***
21.00 INTERNAL FINISHES
23.00 SANITARY WARE
28.00 EXTERNAL BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATORIES AND LANDSCAPING **– *Note comments to garage.***

CONDITION RATING 2 – The element's condition requires attention from a specialist to provide a quotation as we deem that the element requires maintenance or replacement. This inspection/quotation should be carried out prior to purchasing the property so that you are aware of the costs and time involved. The findings may affect the value of the property but can usually be carried out once you occupy the property.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS **– *Main roof finish.***
4.00 ROOF SPACES
5.00 CHIMNEYSTACKS
6.00 PARAPET WALLS, RETAINING WALLS & BOUNDARY WALLS
10.00 EXTERNAL WALLS
12.00 WINDOWS
13.00 EXTERNAL DOORS
14.00 EXTERNAL REDECORATION
22.00 INTERNAL JOINERY
25.00 ASBESTOS **– *Requirement for a complete house survey.***
26.00 FIRE PROTECTION AND MEANS OF ESCAPE

CONDITION RATING 3 – The elements condition is serious enough that it could have a detrimental effect on your enjoyment of the property, and we deem that the issue needs immediate attention from a specialist. You should not proceed without further investigation.

3.00 ROOF COVERINGS AND FLASHINGS **– *Garage/store and utility roof finish.***
24.00 SERVICES **– *Central heating boiler and electrical installation.***

NOT INSPECTED – We were unable to gain access to the element. We cannot confirm that the elements is present. If the element is present, we cannot confirm that it is positioned correctly, functioning correctly, nor free of issues or defects.

4.00 ROOF SPACES **– *Covered roof structure and underside of roof finish.***
9.00 EXTERNAL SOIL WASTE AND VENTILATION PIPEWORK
11.00 DAMP PROOF COURSE
16.00 FIREPLACES, FLUES AND CHIMNEY BREASTS **– *Flue.***
17.00 FLOORS
18.00 Cellar **– *Sub-floor voids.***
27.00 NOISE SEPARATION

31.00 SURVEYS OVERALL OPINION

31.01 The property offers you a detached house in popular *******.

The property is in satisfactory condition but we have identified several issues which need highlighting. These are:

1. Age of roof finish: The main roof finish is original and has exceeded the age where we would expect a concrete tile to require replacing. We have recommended that the main roof finish is replaced incorporating modern ventilation measures.
2. Felt flat roofs: The roofs to the garage/store and utility require immediate renewal and we have advised you to obtain a quotation as replacement will be expensive.
3. UFFI Foam. We note what appears to be UFFI foam and have discussed the implications of this material with you and advised to remove this material from the cavity. Again, we have advised you to obtain a quotation as removal will be expensive.
4. Utility extension: This small extension has been carried out in single-skin brickwork which means that heat-loss and condensation will be a risk. This is to a DIY standard and does not comply with good building practice nor statutory building regulations.
5. Windows: A number of the windows are old and appear to have reached the expected lifespan of a UPVC window (twenty years). We have scheduled issues where necessary to the windows and you need to decide if you wish to repair the older installation or replace with new modern windows. Whatever you decide, you should take note of our comments regarding the cill height of the rear right-hand bedroom window which does not comply with fire escape regulations which stipulate a cill height to allow you to escape to a fire service ladder.
6. Wood burning stove: We have identified a couple of issues with the stove arrangement and you should not use it until a HETAS engineer has inspected it.
7. Boiler age: The boiler is nearly fifteen years old which is far beyond the expected lifespan of a combination boiler. You should budget for immediate renewal.
8. Electrical installation: Generally, the installation looks aged and you should arrange for a safety inspection from an NICEIC/ECA electrician as soon as possible. We have advised you to assume complete renewal.
9. Potential asbestos containing materials: There are a number of suspicious materials within this house and we have advised you to commission a full house asbestos inspection.
10. Fire detection measures: Ensure that the full fire detection measures are implemented especially if you are going to use the rear right-hand bedroom as a bedroom and do not reduce the window cill height.
11. Cracking to garage: There is at least one small crack and further areas where cracks may have been repointed. This could be movement to the walls/foundations caused by leaking drains. You should arrange for a CCTV inspection of the drains to ensure that they are free of issues.

The other items identified can be dealt with as recommended within the report.

31.00 SURVEYS OVERALL OPINION

We strongly recommend that you obtain quotations for all the works and further investigations recommended within our report; these should be carried out prior to purchasing the property so that you know the financial and time implications associated with any findings.

31.02 Further Investigations.

- Commission a safety test on the electrical installation by a NICEIC/ECA electrician.
- If you are keeping the boiler, commission a Gas Safe service of the boiler including inspection of the radiators and pipework.
- Carry out a CCTV survey of the complete drainage installation.
- Commission an invasive inspection of the wall ties to ensure that they are free of corrosion.
- Do not use the log burning stove until a HETAS engineer has inspected the complete arrangement.
- Commission a full house inspection for all asbestos containing materials. Sample test and remove materials as required.
- Remove UFFI foam to cavity (can be carried out when you own the property but arrange a quotation).

Inspection carried out and report prepared and compiled by:

Midland Property Surveys Limited
132 Knightlow Road,
Harborne,
Birmingham,
B17 8QA.

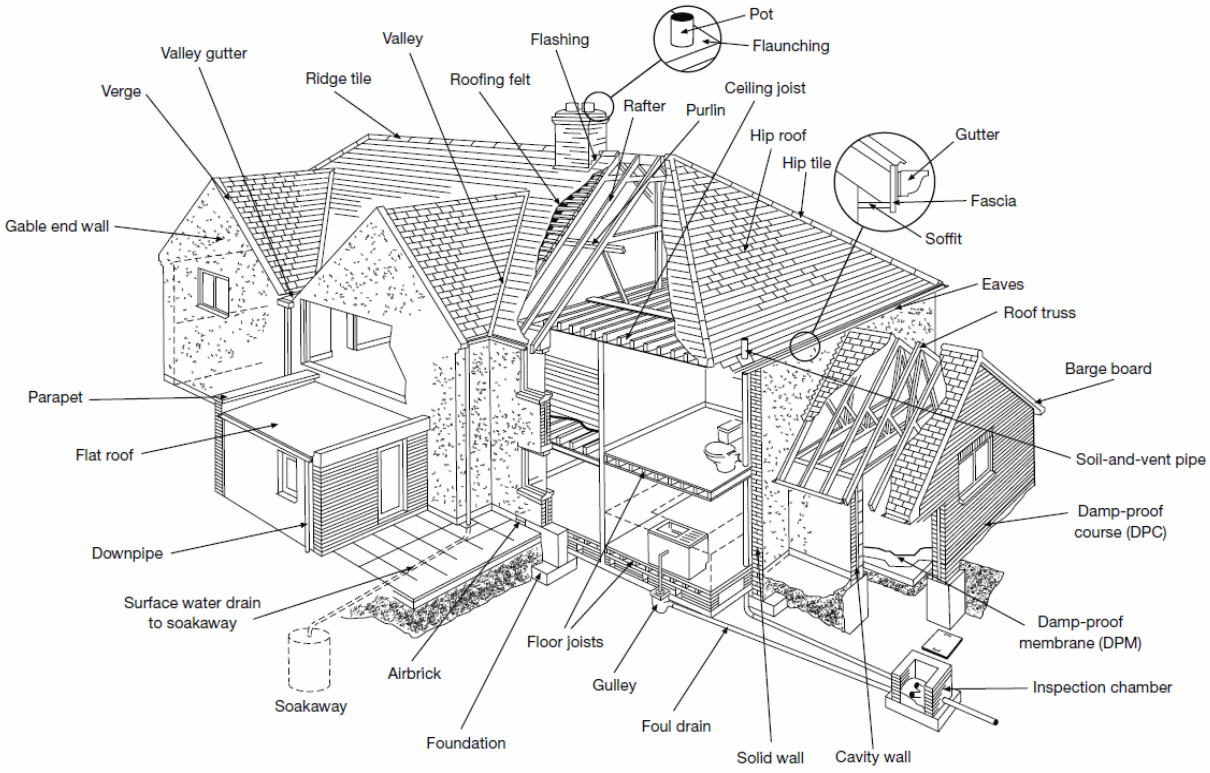
For and on behalf of Midland Property Surveys Limited,
Warren Gill MRICS
Chartered Building Surveyor
www.mpsurveys.co.uk

2nd September 2025

Regulated by RICS
We pride ourselves on delivering a high level of service in accordance with the RICS regulations.

Typical house diagram

This diagram illustrates where you may find some of the building elements referred to in the report.



~~34.00 GENERAL INFORMATION~~

~~*MAIN ROOF*~~

~~Pitched Roofs~~

~~A pitched roof is the name given to any roof with an angle of pitch greater than 10 degrees. Such roofs can be covered with a wide choice of material but, with residential property, tile, slate or thatch are the principle ones.~~

~~The actual angle of the roof slope has to be right for the chosen roof material whilst the roof construction (i.e. the timberwork) must be designed to bear not only the weight of the covering but also the extra weight of rain, snow and wind, etc. If the design of the timberwork is wrong the roof timbers may deflect and water penetration is likely to occur.~~

~~Where the edges of a roof butt up against brickwork or a chimney, etc. it is necessary to insert seals known as soakers or flashings. These are ideally formed in lead but in older properties cement mortar or concrete is often used as a cheaper alternative. These eventually crack and leak.~~

~~Where two roof slopes join (often at right angles), a valley junction is created. These valleys can be formed with tiles or they can be lined in materials such as lead, zinc or glass fibre. The only way valley gutters can work effectively is to have them cleaned out on a regular basis even although access is often difficult. If you do not clean out valley gutters, leaks are very likely.~~

~~*OTHER ROOFS*~~

~~Flat Roofs~~

~~It is impossible to predict accurately the life of a flat roof. Even if the external materials appear sound, a minor puncture in the covering material can cause problems beneath (often out of sight). Reports that predict the likely life of a flat roof should be viewed with caution, although we often attempt to give a general guide to be helpful.~~

~~Flat roofs have always been considered a part of residential house design. Traditionally they were used on small or secondary areas. From the 1960's onward, large flat roofed areas were brought into use but these days we try to minimise flat roof areas and create pitch roofs where possible since most flat roofs are troublesome to some extent or other.~~

~~A flat roof is defined as a roof as having a slope less than 10 degrees. To enable the rainwater to run off its surface, the flat roof must be laid with some slope and if this is too shallow water will collect in puddles on the surface. Such puddles or "ponding" can cause the roof to deteriorate. Damage can also be caused to the substructure under the covering.~~

~~Most flat roofs are not designed for walking on and chippings pressed underfoot can cause punctures in the roofing material. Walkway tiles can, however, be purchased and bedded down when a walkway route is needed.~~

~~Many problems with flat roofs occur on the edges of the roof or in the junctions with walls or nearby roof slopes. Any vertical edging or flashing often indicates a better than average attention to detail. Felt upstands and edge kerbs are very often torn and need careful and regular attention and checking.~~

~~The best designed flat roofs will incorporate modern levels of insulation and will also contain sufficient ventilation to reduce the risk of rot in concealed structural timbers. Being realistic the majority of flat roofs are not built this way and are therefore prone to problems developing out of sight.~~

~~Although felt in one form or another is the most common material found on modern flat roofs, there are others including lead, copper, zinc, fibreglass and asphalt.~~

COVERINGS

Thatched Coverings

Thatch is one of the oldest techniques still used in building construction today. There are two main materials used – water reed and wheat straw. Water reed is more durable, lasting up to 80 years approximately. Wheat straw comes as either long straw (lasting up to 25 years approximately) or combed wheat reed (which can last up to 40 years).

The speed at which a thatch roof deteriorates is difficult to judge. Generally, the further west a property is, the faster its thatch deteriorates due to the wetter climate. The quality of the thatching material and the slope of the roof also affect the life of a thatch.

The steeper the roof slope, the longer the thatch is likely to last. Thatched roofs should never be less than 45º and sometimes can be steeper. It is common for thatched roofs to need patching or replacement of the ridge which is likely to be needed every 10-15 years.

Fire is a well known risk with thatch. Electrical wiring needs to be checked regularly and ideally a spark arrestor should be fitted to the top of the chimney to prevent sparks and materials falling onto the thatch. It is always good practice to have the chimney lined. Smoke detectors and fire extinguishers are essential additions within the property.

Slate Coverings

Slate can last anything up to 100 years or more depending on quality, source, thickness, and the skill with which it was cut.

Natural slates are formed by very thin layers of rock being bonded together. Poorer quality slates may contain impurities which react with water and force the layers apart. This "delaminating" is common on the underside of the slates.

Slates are held by nails fixed via holes drilled either close to one end or at the centre. It is quite common for slates to split when being fixed but then be left in place, only to slip later. Nails inevitably corrode in time and slates start to slip. This is known as "nail fatigue". Take not of this if it is listed in Section 3 Roof, as it will mean that you face ongoing maintenance. You can identify where slates have already been re-set as they are usually held in place by lead or copper clips, known as tingles. Old slates often shale to a degree whereby their effectiveness is very limited.

Problems with slate roofs have led some owners to apply a coating over the whole of the covering. This should never be considered an appropriate repair. It can make the roof watertight for a few years. It will certainly mean that complete renewal of the roof will be necessary, as good slates when over-coated cannot be reused. It is also likely to cause condensation problems as the roof stops breathing.

Traditionally, slate roofs were not underfelted and, this allows the slates to breathe. This practice still has its supporters, but generally, underfelting is considered as important with a slate roof as with a tiled roof. The underfelt provides a secondary protection against leaks if the slates are breached.

There are various proprietary coatings available which are applied to the underside of old slate roofs. Whilst these do undoubtedly provide a short term repair, the medium or long term merits of such a system are untested and a lot of surveyors believe these under spraying systems to have a very limited life and should not be used.

Clay Tiles

Clay tiles come in all shapes and sizes ranging from flat (plain) tiles to those which overlap at the edges and form vertical rolls on the roof slope. Clay Tiles have been used widely for many years, although since the post-second world war period, concrete tiles have tended to have been used as an alternative.

By nature a clay tile is not impervious to moisture and, as it ages, some water enters into the tile. This can lead to damage of the tile surface (lamination) when the moisture freezes and breaks off the face of the tile itself, both internally and externally. Where this is visible, beware – ongoing maintenance is needed.

Tiles are either nailed onto roofing battens or hung onto the battens by means of nibs which are formed in their upper edge. Most manufacturers recommend that even tiles with nibs are nailed at regular intervals to prevent them being lifted by the wind. Corrosion of nail fixings is commonplace (known as nail sickness) and will mean ongoing maintenance. Due to the method of manufacture, tiles are often not flat, which allows water to be blown or drawn up between them and can cause dampness inside, especially if the roof is an unlined one. In time the nibs can shale away.

Occasionally old wood pegs or aged random nails are found on very elderly roofs.

If you are considering recovering a roof, do take advice before changing the covering material.

There are various proprietary coatings available which are applied to the underside of old clay tiled roofs. Whilst these do undoubtedly provide a short term repair, the medium or long term merits of such a system are untested and most surveyors believe these under spraying systems to have a limited life.

Concrete Tiles

Concrete tiles are reckoned to last at least 50 years. The general performance of concrete tiles is impressive, though they can be prone to lose surface colour which shows up replacement tiles.

Sometimes a powdery "efflorescence" can be seen under the tiles. This is simply salts contained in some earlier concrete tiles emerging due to heat and dampness over a period of years. Eventually the tiles' nibs can be eroded away, though this is likely to take many years.

Certain tile shapes (especially pantiles) have an open void in them which needs sealing at gutter/base level mainly to prevent birds nesting under tiling and causing damage. It is often difficult to tell from ground level whether these seals are in place and it is always sensible to carry out a check whenever a property is being maintained or painted. Modern patent eaves level seals also allow important ventilation.

In the course of time concrete tiles can become brittle.

RAINWATER GOODS

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

Gutters and downpipes are traditionally made in cast iron but with modern property, plastic is generally used. In addition, however, we frequently survey properties with asbestos, lead, tin or aluminium as alternatives. All gutters need to be laid to a slope in order to enable rainwater to run to a downpipe outlet.

Guttering should always be fixed so that it catches as much water flow as possible from the roof above.

Guttering systems frequently run on an inter-neighbour basis with semi-detached or terraced homes.

Metal fittings are particularly prone to corrode and joints often fail. They need regular checks and maintenance if they are to be preserved.

Traditionally downpipes discharge over open gulleys but today many downpipes are taken directly into the underground drainage system without an access gulley. This can cause problems for cleaning.

CHIMNEYS

Chimney stacks can be built in a variety of shapes heights and sizes, often elaborate for architectural purposes. However, the flues within the stacks are formed in one of two ways. Older houses have flues with a rendered internal face that can often fail and erode, causing smoke and fumes to escape and also causing general inefficiency. More modern properties have continuous liners that are effective for solid fuel and other fuels. Some old properties have flues which are just not adequate for modern use.

Flue soundness and efficiency in older homes must never be assumed. Proper smoke tests are normally required to check flue soundness. If necessary old flues can be lined in order to bring them up to modern standards.

EXTERNAL WALLS

Stone Walls

Stone is described according to the manner in which it is prepared and laid. The two main categories are known as ashlar and rubble. When stones are squared to a regular size and have smooth faces, they are known as ashlar. Rubble comprises stones of differing sizes which are either laid at random (a crazy paving appearance) or they can be laid roughly in courses.

Many of our stone buildings are made of stone which is very aged and may have been re-cycled from previous buildings. Some types of stone are harder and more durable than others

Frost is a major problem with some stones softening as water penetrates the surface and freezes, causing the surface to break off and at the same time allowing more water to penetrate into the core of the wall causing more damage.

Poor repairs to stone work and the pointing between the stones can cause ongoing problems and it is always sensible to take the advice of a stone mason to ensure that repairs are appropriate.

Because stone walls are generally thick, there is a popular conception that they are solid from inside to out. This is not always the case and the core of the wall is often filled with rubble and general debris.

Solid Brickwork

Until the mid-1930's most domestic property in this country was built in solid construction. This means that the bricks are laid in such a way that they run through the depth of the wall from inside to out and as a consequence this can permit damp to travel through the wall onto the internal surfaces. Generally a wall which is exposed to heavy driving rain will be more susceptible to damage than one which is sheltered. Areas under window sills tend to be more susceptible to water damage than other wall areas.

In order to minimise the risk of damp penetration, the outside pointing and brickwork should be kept in as good a state as possible. Modern coatings are available to apply to solid brickwork to help weatherproof them but these do not always look attractive. They can cause problems if damp breaks through the coating and gets behind the weatherproofing.

Heat loss tends to be greater through solid wall construction than it is through a cavity wall. A solid wall with a rendered finish can perform well if the render is maintained in a sound state.

It tends to be inevitable that houses with solid wall detail suffer on occasions from condensation problems.

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

Cavity Walls

This is the normal form of construction found on houses from the mid-1930's to the present day, although many older houses have a variation of the same form of wall detail.

As the name implies, cavity walls are constructed with two leaves of brick or block work – with a cavity between. The benefits of the cavity are that the wall cannot let water through its depth whilst the air in the cavity offers improved insulation standards.

The outer and inner leaves of a cavity wall are usually stabilised with ties made of galvanised steel or plastic.

In some cases, the ties which hold the outer and inner leaves together begin to rust. At first, they expand causing the outer leaf to bow and eventually may collapse. Cavity wall tie failure is more common in older houses (prior to 1980) and is often known to be a problem in particular areas. We will alert you to potential maintenance regarding cavity wall ties if there are visible signs of problems or if we are aware of previous problems in nearby properties.

Even though cavity construction is effective, water can sometimes penetrate the outer skin of the wall. Cavity trays should be inserted over window and door openings to catch this water. There should be drainage channels left through the mortar joints from these trays although they are frequently omitted.

Brick is the most common form of outside finish on a cavity wall. Frost often attacks older bricks causing the surface to break off. This is known as "spalling". Repair work is possible but costly if the job is to be done properly and the best approach is to cut out the failed bricks and replace them.

It is common to see salty stains, particularly on new brickwork. They are of no structural significance and can be brushed off or left to be dispersed by weather action over a period of time.

A rendered finish or some form of cladding applied to the outside of a modern cavity wall often indicates that both leaves of the wall are of block without any brick content.

Rendering

Modern cement render can be inappropriate for old buildings because it is incompatible with the construction of most old buildings and can cause or accelerate serious decay. Modern buildings generally depend on an impervious outer layer and cavities to keep out moisture. By contrast, old buildings tend to rely on their porous nature ('breathability') to allow water absorbed by the fabric to evaporate back out

The use of an impervious Portland cement render in place of a traditional lime-based covering restricts evaporation. Hairline cracks form due to the mortar being more rigid than the wall. These then draw in water that becomes trapped in the fabric. Timber-framed and earth-constructed buildings in particular can suffer major structural damage if moisture builds up behind a cement rendering.

It is generally a mistake not to replace render. There is a good chance that the building was rendered originally. Even if it was not, the rendering may have been applied at a later date as necessary protection against the weather.

When a cement render has been removed, re-rendering should be delayed for a short period to allow drying out if the underlying fabric is saturated. Additionally, any areas of decayed backing must be made sound before the new render is applied to prevent its early failure.

WINDOWS, DOORS AND EXTERNAL JOINERY

Windows

Traditionally windows were constructed in wood and generally old timber tends to be better than new timber and hardwood is more long lived than softwood.

Increasingly wooden windows are being replaced with man-made materials. During the 1970's and early 1980's aluminium units set in hardwood frames were very popular. Many of these windows, however, have become temperamental in the way they open and close. These days uPVC is the most commonly used material for replacement units and if looked after and if of a good standard these windows perform well. With PVC windows it is important to keep the material as clean and dry as possible and to maintain the mastic seals around the frames in a good state to help prevent any damp penetration. Regular maintenance of the window mechanisms tends to be necessary. Failure of the rubber seals and bushes tends to occur. It is vital to check whether any current guarantees are in force.

With increased importance being paid within the building industry to insulation standards the quality of glazing has improved over the years, but many houses still have comparatively "ordinary" single glazed windows whilst some high quality triple glazed units are sometimes found.

Unfortunately many double glazed windows suffer from failure causing the glass to mist over and the only solution is to replace the glazing. This type of failure can occur without warning. There are some indications that the average life of a sealed double glazing unit is some ten years only.

Some houses built between 1920 and 1960 had steel framed windows. These are prone to rusting and as the metal corrodes and expands, the windows can become twisted or buckled and panes crack or break. This type of material also creates a cold surface which can lead to a high level of condensation.

Lead light windows may look pretty, but they are troublesome to clean and do weaken with age.

Doors

External softwood doors are the cheapest to fit, but the least durable. Unless very regularly decorated they will decay. Hardwood doors are better. Aluminium or uPVC replacement units are claimed to be the most efficient of all.

The raised sill sections used with uPVC doors are vulnerable to foot damage.

DAMP PROOF COURSES

A damp-proof course (DPC) is a waterproof layer built into, or formed within, the walls to prevent ground dampness from rising.

Virtually every urban property built in the last 120 years or so will have some sort of damp proof course in its wall. Many materials are in use, some being better and longer lived than others. The majority of the houses built in the last 60 years or so has a felt or pick based damp proof course along with blue brickwork. Before then slate or bitumen were frequently used. Many older houses have no built in anti-damp protection.

In order that a DPC can perform properly its line ought always to be at least two clear courses of brick above paths or garden surfaces. Whenever a lesser distance exists, the DPC can become ineffective and internal dampness can occur.

Many older buildings suffer dampness due to inadequate damp proofing measures. The installation of a modern injection system (often identified by a series of drill holes in the brickwork) together with associated internal replastering can remedy such dampness. All damp proofing work ought to be dealt with by a competent and recognized specialist firm who can issue a valid guarantee. Internal replastering is an essential part of most damp proofing schemes.

INTERNAL WALLS AND PARTITIONS

Traditional, internal walls have always been built in solid materials (brick or block), or timber. Contrary to popular belief, timber walls can be load bearing.

Modern houses often have lightweight non-load bearing thin partition walls especially at first floor level. All these different wall types give differing standards of noise and thermal insulation.

Many wooden or partition walls are difficult to use to support heavy fixings or pictures. Special fixings are generally available for most wall types.

Many modern homes have a dry lined (plasterboard type) finish to walls which may not easily accept heavy fixtures, but the system is effective and plaster shrinkage problems are minimised.

In older properties, the walls are often lined with board to disguise or overcome problems of poor plaster, damp and insulation. This can be effective but long term problems can still arise.

FLOORS

Solid Floors

Solid floors are normally made up with a concrete slab laid on a hardcore base. The hardcore helps spread the load evenly over the soil beneath and protects the concrete from chemicals in the soil. To achieve a floor that does not settle, hardcore needs to be well compacted. If the floors should subside, repair work is possible but can be costly.

Concrete slabs are typically around 150mm thick and have a thin top layer (screed) which gives a level base for the floor finish (tile, carpet etc). Sometimes the slab is just smoothed off to provide a finishing surface without a screed.

Solid floors should include a damp proof membrane (dpm). This is usually either a liquid bitumen coat or a layer of polythene or bitumen sheet. The dpm reduces moisture coming up through the floor by capillary action, though it does not resist direct water pressure. Poor workmanship on site often means that a dpm is torn or laid with gaps or laid with gaps which become damp spots later.

In older properties original floors tend not to have a dpm and often suffer from dampness. These floors are often an important feature of the property and if the level of dampness is felt not sufficient to warrant lifting and re-laying the floor surface to include a dpm, these floors tend to be left and the damp lived with. However these floors should not be surfaced with any impermeable covering such as vinyl or rubber-backed carpet (and ideally should be left exposed).

Timber Floors

Suspended timber floors have been used for many years without great design changes. Most problems result from under-sizing of the joists or poor conditions at the end support (bearing), or poor sub-ground ventilation.

Joists bearing into solid walls (usually pre-World War II) can rot, particularly if the wall is exposed to prevailing winds and rain soaks through the brick or stonework.

Very often, joists are cut or notched, to allow pipes and wiring to run under floorboards. There are clear regulations which now restrict what can be done, but all too often mistakes are made, sometimes resulting in the floor becoming springy. If the surveyor suspects this fault we will suggest further investigation is made.

To prevent joists twisting, strutting is inserted usually some halfway along its length. Strutting is usually made with pieces of timber which are nailed between two joists at right angles to their length. When they are omitted the floor can become uneven or springy.

When surveying a building it is rarely possible to carry out a full level of sub-floor checks and the surveyor will base their view on such inspection as is readily possible.

More recent properties often have sheet chipboard/man-made board flooring in place of more traditional floorboards. Because these materials can be laid in large panels, removal to access services can result in a very squeaky floor developing since the sheets are rarely properly re-fixed. The material tends to disintegrate on prolonged exposure to moisture and problems often occur near showers or washing machines in particular.

CEILINGS

Lath and Plaster Ceilings

Most modern ceilings are made of plasterboard, but up to World War II a plaster mix was applied onto thin strips of wood called laths. (In very old properties reeds or straw were often used to strengthen to material). The strength of this type of ceiling depends on how well the plaster keys into the laths. When the plaster starts to pull loose from the laths, it often becomes widespread and repair of a small crack can soon become a large repair. Vibration and noise can often be a cause of a lath and plaster ceiling to fail. The installation of central heating can also cause old plaster to simply dry out so much that it cracks and fails.

It is not uncommon for old lathed ceilings to be covered over with a variety of materials and finishes. Over boarding in modern plasterboard is a common solution to a troublesome ceiling.

Lathed ceilings are heavy and can fall unexpectedly if damaged!

Plasterboard Ceilings

For nearly 50 years now plasterboard has replaced the use of lath and plaster in most ceiling construction. Boards come in a variety of thickness and in general are relatively maintenance free.

Joints between boards are most commonly covered by tape. Hairline cracking along the joints, however, is not uncommon though relatively simple to fill and redecorate or lining paper can be applied prior to a decorative finish.

Dampness is a problem for plasterboard which is made up of a plaster centre covered by heavy paper on both sides. When moist, the paper covering deteriorates and the plaster content generally swells and crumbles. Replacement is then normally necessary.

Artex or similar textured finishes are popular but these are not easy to repair to a good standard and may contain Asbestos (depending on age).

DAMPNESS

Damp & Timber Treatment – Guarantees

Very often in older properties we find that previous damp and timber treatments have been carried out and are subject to guarantees.

Particular care needs to be exercised in respect of wood-rot, woodworm/beetle and damp guarantees.

A guarantee will normally only cover those areas specifically treated, and this is normally identified in the original report, specification and plan.

It is important that such documents are made available to you and your Legal Adviser.

Insurance protection is sometimes available for un-treated areas.

TIMBER DEFECTS

Timber Defects

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

GAS

As with electricity, defects can be life-threatening and are even harder to detect. We can form some impression of the attention given to the gas installation by the appearance of the fittings and will note our concerns. That apart, it is essential that every property which is provided with gas has a test and service every year. If a test is overdue, arrange one immediately. Make sure that the contractor you instruct on any gas matters has a current registration with Gas Safe. If the surveyor considers that further investigations are needed he will say so.

All gas appliances and flues must be subject to an annual check and test.

Surface run gas pipes both inside and out must be treated with care to avoid damage.

WATER SUPPLY AND PLUMBING

Pipework & Tanks

Most pipework in a building is concealed within the structure and fabric and we can only form an opinion based on the exposed parts of the installation.

Copper tube is the most popular material used but in many new installations plastic is becoming increasingly popular as a cost effective alternative.

In many older houses we still find old lead or galvanised piping, especially on the underground supply pipe. Some homeowners consider lead pipes to be a health risk. Old underground pipes can leak for many years undetected or suddenly burst unexpectedly. Replacing underground/floor pipes can be costly and disruptive.

Water tanks come in a variety of shapes and sizes but plastic is the preferred modern material. In older properties we find older galvanised steel or cement asbestos tanks and ideally these should now be replaced.

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

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

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

GLOSSARY

Aggregate	Pebbles, shingle, gravel, etc used in the manufacture of concrete, and in the construction of "soakaways".
Air Brick	Perforated brick or metal/plastic grille used for ventilation, especially to floor voids (beneath timber floors) and roof spaces.
Architrave	Joinery moulding around window or doorway.
Asbestos	Fibrous mineral used in the past for insulation. Can be a health hazard - specialist advice should be sought if asbestos is found.
Asbestos Cement	Cement with 10-15% asbestos fibre as reinforcement. Fragile - will not bear heavy weights. Hazardous fibres may be released if cut or drilled.
Ashlar	Finely dressed natural stone: the best grade of masonry
Asphalt	Black, tar-like substance, strongly adhesive and impervious to moisture. Used on flat roofs and floors.
Barge Board	See "Verge Board".
Balanced Flue	Common metal device normally serving gas appliances which allows air to be drawn to the appliance whilst also allowing fumes to escape (see also "Fan Assisted Flues").
Batten	Thin lengths of timber used in the fixing of roof tiles or slates.
Beetle Infestation	(Wood boring insects: eg woodworm) Larvae of various species of beetle which tunnel into timber causing damage. Specialist treatment normally required. Can also affect furniture.
Benching	Smoothly contoured concrete slope beside drainage channel within an inspection chamber. Also known as "Haunching".
Bitumen	Black, sticky substance, related to asphalt. Used in sealants, mineral felts and damp proof courses.
Breeze Block	Originally made from cinders ("breeze") - the term now commonly used to refer to various types of concrete and cement building blocks.

Carbonation — A natural process affecting the outer layer of concrete. Metal reinforcement within that layer is liable to early corrosion, with consequent fracturing of the concrete.

Cavity Wall — Standard modern method of building external walls of houses comprising two leaves of brick or blockwork separated by a gap ("cavity") of about 50mm (2 inches).

Cavity Wall Insulation — Filling of wall cavities by one of various forms of insulation material:

Beads: Polystyrene beads pumped into the cavities. Will easily fall out if the wall is broken open for any reason.
Fibreglass: Can lead to problems if becomes damp.
Foam: Urea formaldehyde form, mixed on site, and pumped into the cavities where it sets. Can lead to problems of dampness and make investigation/replacement of wall ties more difficult.
Rockwool: Inert mineral fibre pumped into the cavity.

Cavity Wall Tie — Metal device bedded into the inner and outer leaves of cavity wall. Failure by corrosion can result in the wall becoming unstable – specialist replacement ties are then required.

Cesspool — A simple method of drainage comprising a holding tank which needs frequent emptying. Not to be confused with "Septic Tank".

Chipboard — Also referred to as "Particle Board". Chips of wood compressed and glued into sheet form. Cheap method of decking to flat roofs and (with formica or melamine surface) furniture, especially kitchen units. Also commonly used on floors. Tends to swell if moisture content increased.

Collar — Horizontal timber member intended to restrain opposing roof slopes. Absence, removal or weakening can lead to roof spread.

Combination Boiler — Modern form of gas boiler which activates on demand. With this form of boiler there is no need for water storage tanks, hot water cylinders, etc but are complex and more expensive to repair. Water supply rate can be slow.

Coping/Coping Stone — Usually stone or concrete, laid on top of a wall as a decorative finish and to stop rainwater soaking into the wall.

Corbel — Projection of stone, brick, timber or metal jutting out from a wall to support a weight.

Cornice — Ornamental moulded projection around the top of a building or around the wall of a room just below the ceiling.

Coving — Curved junction piece to cover the join between wall and ceiling surfaces.

Dado Rail — Wooden moulding fixed horizontally to a wall, about 1 metre (3ft 4in) above the floor, originally intended to protect the wall against damage by chair backs.

DPC - Damp Proof Course — Layer of impervious material (mineral felt, PVC, etc) incorporated into a wall to prevent dampness around windows, doors, etc. Various proprietary methods are available for damp proofing existing walls including "electro-osmosis" and chemical injection.

DPM - Damp Proof Membrane — Usually polythene, incorporated within ground floor slabs to prevent rising dampness.

Deathwatch Beetle — Serious insect pest in structural timbers, usually affects old hardwoods with fungal decay already present.

Double Glazing — A method of thermal insulation usually either:

Sealed unit: Two panes of glass fixed and hermetically sealed together; or
Secondary: In effect a second "window" placed inside the original window.

Dry Rot — A fungus which attacks structural and joinery timbers, often with devastating results. Can flourish in moist, unventilated areas.

Eaves — The overhanging edge of a roof at gutter level.

Efflorescence — Salts crystallised on the surface of a wall as a result of moisture evaporation.

Engineering Brick	Particularly strong and dense type of brick, sometimes used as a damp proof course. Usually blue or red in colour.
Fan Assisted Flues	Similar to "Balanced Flue" but with fan assistance to move air or gases.
Fibreboard	Cheap, lightweight board material of little strength, used in ceilings or as insulation to attics.
Fillet	Mortar used to seal the junction between two surfaces, ie between a slate roof and a brick chimney stack.
Flashing	Thin sheet material used to prevent leakage at a roof joint. Normally metal (lead, zinc or copper).
Flaunching	Contoured cement around the base of chimney pots, to secure the pot and to throw off rain.
Flue	A smoke duct in a chimney, or a proprietary pipe serving a heat producing appliance such as a central heating boiler.
Flue Lining	Metal (usually stainless steel) tube within a flue – essential for high output gas appliances such as boilers. May also be manufactured from clay and built into the flue.
Foundations	Normally concrete, laid underground as a structural base to a wall; in older buildings may be brick or stone.
Frog	A depression imprinted in the upper surface of a brick, to save clay, reduce weight and increase the strength of the wall.
Gable	Usually side wall with an apex (triangular in shape at the top). Can also be on the front of a roof (again, triangular).
Ground Heave	Swelling of clay subsoil due to absorption of moisture; can cause an upward movement in foundations.
Gulley	An opening into a drain, normally at ground level, placed to receive water, etc from downpipes and waste pipes.

Haunching	See "Benching". Also term used to describe the support to an underground drain.
Hip	The external junction between two intersecting roof slopes.
Inspection Chamber	Commonly called "manhole"; provides access to a drain comprising a chamber (of brick, concrete or plastic) with the drainage channel at its base and a removable cover at ground level.
Jamb	Side part of a doorway or window (see also "reveals").
Joist	Horizontal structural timber used in flat roof, ceiling and floor construction. Occasionally also metal.
Landslip	Downhill movement of unstable earth, clay, rock, etc often following prolonged heavy rain or coastal erosion, but sometimes due entirely to subsoil having little cohesive integrity.
Lath	Thin strip of wood used as a backing to plaster.
Lintel	Horizontal structural beam of timber, stone, steel or concrete placed over window or door openings.
Longhorn Beetle	A serious insect pest mainly confined to the extreme south east of England, which can totally destroy the structural strength of wood.
LPG	Liquid Petroleum Gas (or Propane). Available to serve gas appliances in areas without mains gas. Requires a storage tank.
Mortar	Traditionally a mixture of lime and sand. Modern mortar is a mixture of cement and sand. Used for bonding brickwork, etc.
Mullion	Vertical bar dividing individual lights in a window.
Newel	Stout post supporting a staircase handrail at top and bottom. Also, the central pillar of a winding or spiral staircase.

Oversite	Rough concrete below timber ground floors.
Parapet	Low wall along the edge of a flat roof, balcony, etc.
Pier	A vertical column of brickwork or other material used to strengthen the wall or to support a weight.
Plasterboard	Stiff "sandwich" of plaster between coarse paper. Now in widespread use for ceilings and walls.
Pointing	Smooth outer edge of mortar joint between bricks, stones, etc.
Powder Post Beetle	A relatively uncommon pest which can, if untreated, cause widespread damage to structural timbers.
Purlin	Horizontal beam in a roof upon which rafters rest.
Quoin	The external angle of a building, or, specifically, bricks or stone blocks forming that angle.
Rafter	A sloping roof beam, usually timber, forming the carcass of a roof.
Random Rubble	Primitive method of stone wall construction with no attempt at bonding or coursing.
Rendering	Vertical covering of a wall either plaster (internally) or cement based (externally), sometimes with pebbledash, stucco or Tyrolean textured finishes.
Reveals	The side faces of a window or door opening (see also "jambs").
Ridge	The apex of a roof.
Riser	The vertical part of a step or stair.
Rising Damp	Moisture soaking up a wall from below ground, by capillary action causing rot in timbers, plaster decay, decoration failure, etc.

Roof Spread	The thrust of a badly restrained roof structure (see "Collar") causing outward bowing of a wall.
Screed	Final, smooth finish of a solid floor; usually mortar, concrete or asphalt.
Septic Tank	Drain installation whereby sewage decomposes through bacteriological action, which can be slowed down or stopped altogether by the use of chemicals such as bleach, biological washing powders, etc.
Settlement	Movement in a structure showing as distortion in walls, etc, can be as the result of the initial compacting of the ground due to the loading of the building or by unsupported elements of the building.
Shakes	Naturally occurring cracks in timber; in building timbers, shakes can appear quite dramatic, but strength is not always impaired.
Shingles	Small rectangular pieces of wood used on roofs instead of tiles, slates, etc.
Soaker	Sheet metal (usually lead, zinc or copper) at the junction of a roof with a vertical surface of a chimney stack, adjoining wall, etc. Associated with flashings which should overlay soakers.
Soffit	The under surface of eaves, balcony, arch, etc.
Solid Fuel	Heating fuel, normally coal, coke or one of a variety of proprietary fuels.
Spandrel	Space above and to the sides of an arch.
Stud Partition	Lightweight, sometimes non-loadbearing wall construction comprising a framework of timber faced with plaster, plasterboard or other finish.
Subsidence	Ground movement possibly as a result of mining activities, clay shrinkage or drainage problems.
Subsoil	Soil lying immediately below the top soil, upon which foundations usually bear.

Sulphate Attack	Chemical reaction, activated by water, between tricalcium aluminate and soluble sulphates. Can cause deterioration in brick walls, concrete floors and external rendering.
Tie Bar	Heavy metal bar passing through a wall, or walls, to brace a structure suffering from structural instability.
Torching	Mortar applied on the underside of roof tiles or slates to help prevent moisture penetration. Not necessary when a roof is underdrawn with felt.
Transom	Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or top of door.
Tread	The horizontal part of a step or stair.
Trussed Rafters	Method of roof construction utilising prefabricated triangular framework of timbers. Now widely used in domestic construction.
Underpinning	Methods of strengthening weak foundations whereby a new, stronger foundation is placed beneath the original.
Valley Gutter	Horizontal or sloping gutter, usually lead or tile lined, at the internal intersection between two roof slopes.
Ventilation	Necessary in all buildings to disperse moisture resulting from bathing, cooking, breathing, etc, and to assist in prevention of condensation.

Floors: Necessary to avoid rot, especially dry rot, achieved by air bricks near to ground level.

Roofs: Necessary to disperse condensation within roof spaces; achieved either by air bricks in gables, ducts at the eaves or vents in the roof finish.

Verge	The edge of a roof, especially over a gable.
Verge Board	Timber, sometimes decorative, placed at the verge of a roof; also known as a "Barge Board".
Wainscot	Wood panelling or boarding on the lower part of an internal wall.

~~Wallplate~~	~~Timber placed at the eaves of a roof to take the weight of the roof timbers.~~
~~Wet Rot~~	~~Decay of timber due to damp conditions. Not to be confused with the more serious "Dry Rot".~~
~~Woodworm~~	~~Colloquial term for beetle infestation; usually intended to mean Common Furniture Beetle, by far the most frequently encountered insect attack in structural and joinery timbers.~~