MODRICS
CHARTERED SURVEYORS

BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

OF

Example Report
Ealing
W13

AS INSPECTED BY MODRICS (SURVEYORS) LIMITED

On: 7th June 2021

For:
Example Report

CONTENTS

8th June 2021

Dear Example

RE: EALING, W13

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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In accordance with your instructions, we inspected the above property on 7th June 2021 to advise you as to the structural condition and state of repair. Our report which follows is divided into sections, in the interest of clarity, followed by a brief summary of our advice. We have added a glossary describing a number of building terms and defects to be read in conjunction with the report.

We have not investigated any legal matters such as Planning, Building Control or Highways. Your legal advisors will need to advise further on these matters.

We have not carried out any investigation to determine if high alumina cement concrete, calcium chloride additive, asbestos or other deleterious material has been used in the construction of this property, and we are unable to report that the property is free from risk. Similarly, we have not carried out any investigations or enquiries regarding possible contamination of the site, and for the purpose of this report we have assumed that it is free from all contaminants. If it is subsequently established that the site is contaminated, the marketability and value of the property could be reduced.

The perceived nature of the sub-soil, where possible, is described below, but can only be confirmed by digging trial holes. The possibility that the property is built on made-up ground has not been investigated nor has the likelihood that the site may be affected by ground water of any kind. Enquiries of this nature form part of an environmental search and we would recommend that you commission such a report.

SCOPE OF SURVEY

The inspection, at which the Vendor was present, was undertaken during dry, clear weather, which followed a period of similar weather conditions. At the time of inspection the property was occupied and fully furnished with fully fitted and fixed floor coverings throughout. We were only able to gain a limited view of the roof coverings to the rear slopes because of the height and configuration of these roofs.

We were only able to inspect those parts of the structure which were accessible without removing furniture and fittings. The loft has been converted into habitable

accommodation currently occupying Bedroom 5 and the en-suite. We inspected those parts of the property which could be seen from either ground level externally, or from within the property. We did not disturb any parts of the structure which were concealed during the course of construction for example foundations were not exposed; floorboards were not lifted and plaster was not removed from the wall surfaces. It follows that for practical reasons we have not inspected all the brickwork, timber, or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and are unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect. Whilst we saw no evidence of woodworm infestation, we would point out that the absence of characteristic flight holes is no guarantee that larvae are not already tunnelling within timbers. No timber can be confidently stated to be free from infestation unless it is properly chemically treated.

This report is confined to material defects only and we have not noted any minor items such as cracked panes of glass or loose door and window fittings, which are not urgent or of structural significance. However, such other matters may be reported where the surveyor judges this may be helpful and constructive.

2.0 SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

The property is situated within a residential area with local shopping and transport facilities to be found nearby.

The property benefits from gardens to the front and rear. There is no provision for off-road parking with permit holder parking afforded within the locality between 9am/10am and 3pm/4pm Monday to Friday. There is a slope to the ground falling from left to right with a more gradual slope from back to front.

To the left hand side of the property on the one way system there is a church building. Again with restricted kerb side parking/double yellow lines afforded in the area.

The property is a three storey link detached house with two storey bay window to the front right and a single storey bay window to the front left. The property has been extended to provide a full width rear, single storey extension with part two storey extension to the rear left hand side. The loft has also been converted into habitable accommodation.

3.0 ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation comprises as follows:

Ground Floor: Entrance Hallway, Reception Room 1 leading through into TV/Open-Plan Living Area, Utility (centre left), Reception Room 2 (front left), accessed via the utility there is a small lean-to structure to the left hand side. Staircase to:

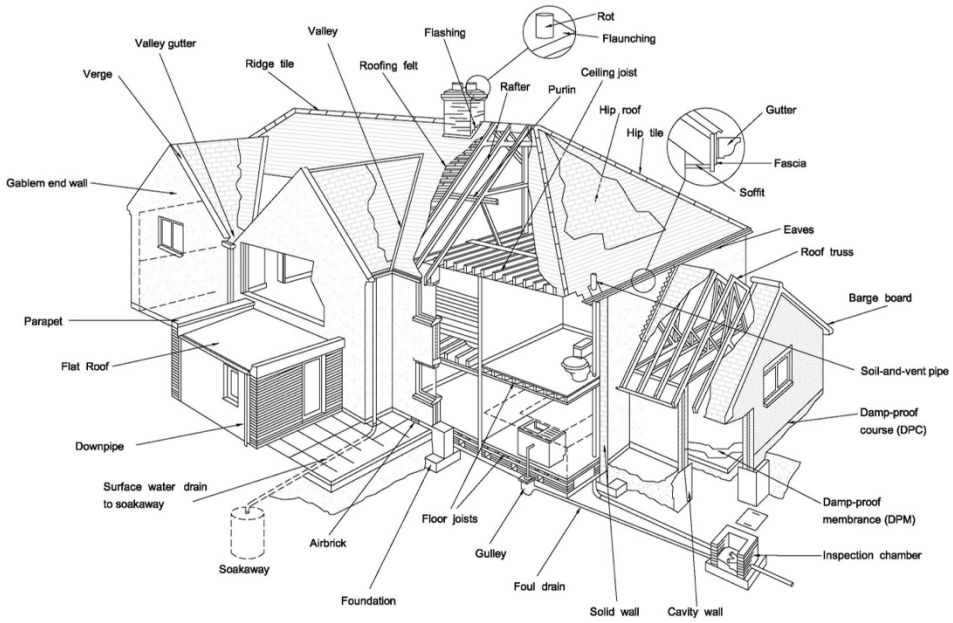
First Floor: Bedroom 1 with En-Suite and Dressing Room (front right), Bedroom 2 (rear centre), Bedroom 3 currently used as a gym (rear left), Family Bathroom/Shower Room (rear centre), Bedroom 4 (front left) and Staircase to;

Second Floor: Bedroom 5 with En-Suite

Directions 'left' and 'right' used throughout this report are always taken as if viewing the property from the public high road at the front.

4.0 EXTERNAL CONDITION

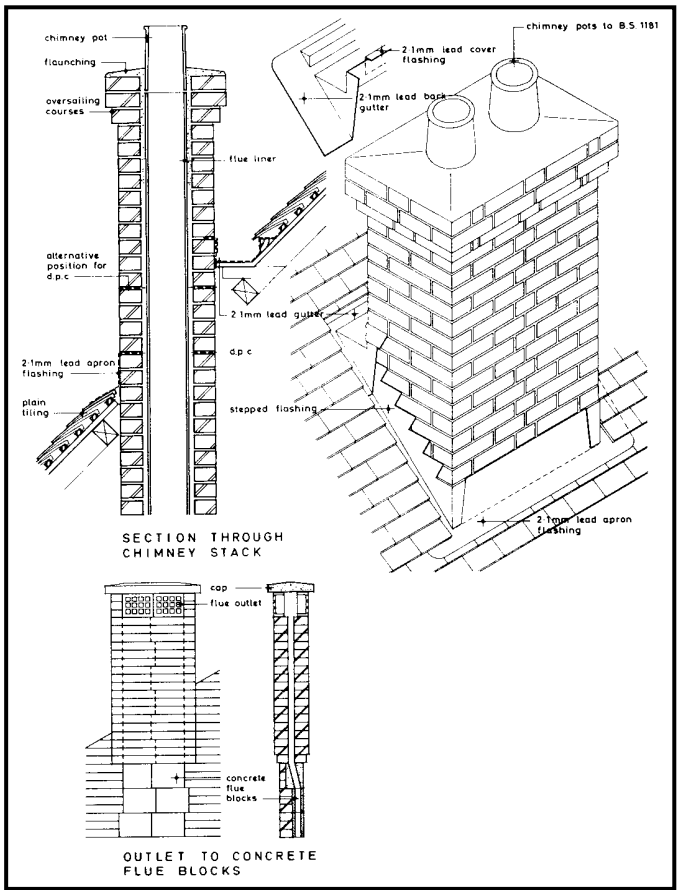
Although the majority of the exterior was examined from ground level, random inspections were undertaken from a 3 metre (10 foot) ladder.



CHIMNEYS

There are four brick built chimney stacks serving the subject property positioned to the left and right hand side gable elevations.

The sketch below illustrates the technology used when referring to chimney stack design. It may be seen from the sketch that a damp proof course is now incorporated within chimneys in order to prevent the downward penetration of rainwater.



Slight leaning is evident to the chimney stacks, but otherwise no obvious signs of any significant cracking where possible to view. We note some minor hairline cracking to the pointing which will need repair.

A chimney stack built during this era would not necessarily have incorporated a damp proof course and it is therefore essential to maintain the condition of the brickwork in

order to prevent such dampness occurring. In this regard, some local deterioration and weathering is noted to the surface brickwork and pointing and this requires repair. When any pointing is carried out it is essential that the joints are raked out sufficiently, usually to a depth not less than 12mm so that the new pointing is given sufficient key. Failure to do this can result in the new pointing simply cracking and falling out over a relatively short timescale. The pointing itself should not be stronger than the bricks to which it is applied. Too high a cement content can allow shrinkage cracking.

Spalling occurs when brickwork becomes wet due to rain and if freezing conditions occur before the bricks dry out, the entrapped moisture expands and forces off the hard face of the brick, thus exposing the softer inner face.

In order to slow down future deterioration of the brickwork, it is recommended that the brick surfaces be treated with a microporous transparent water-proofing solution. These solutions have the ability to prevent rain penetration while at the same time allowing trapped moisture to dry out. They are not long lasting and will require re-treatment in conjunction with future external redecoration programmes.

(A number of spalled bricks have been patched with mortar. This is a temporary repair and proper cutting out and replacement, with new bricks, will be required in due course).

Aerials fixed to the chimney stack can cause damage to brickwork and these should be periodically examined.

All chimney pots above redundant flues should be removed and the latter capped off and ventilated in order to minimise the risk of condensation from occurring within the flues. Ventilation is essential to capped off flues as weather penetration downwards, coupled with the effects of condensation within, will often result in deterioration to the materials within the structure and brown damp stains could occur on chimney breasts inside.

This flue would not appear to have been provided with an impervious lining, with the result that the products of combustion from the boiler/gas fire will condense on the interior of the flue. The acids in the condensation will attack the brickwork and repairs will be necessary.

Lead flashings are featured at the base of the chimney stack. Where visible these appear to be in serviceable condition.

ROOF

The main roof to the property is of timber pitch construction covered with a small unit clay tile with three box dormer roof projections to the rear slope of the main roof. A dual pitched roof is featured above the two storey rear extension, with mono-pitched roofs featured above the single storey front bay.

A flat roof is featured above the extension to the rear.

In relation to the pitched roofs, these are covered with a small unit clay tile. The average life of such tiles ranges from between forty to sixty years and it therefore follows that the existing roof coverings are now reaching a point where regular maintenance will be necessary.

We noted some evidence of lichenous deposits to the surface of the roof tiles and, ideally, these should be brushed off as these can cause deterioration of roof coverings and if they become dislodged in gutters they can cause blockages and damp penetration problems to the structure beneath.

We note some slight deterioration evident to the mortar pointing to the hip tiles which will need local repair.

The general condition of the roof tiles were found to be in serviceable condition, despite the effects of weathering. It is important to maintain the condition of these tiles, not only to secure them but to render these parts of the roof weathertight.

In summary the roof is approaching an age where regular maintenance will be necessary together with the eventual replacement. Overhauling of the roof can be undertaken in the short term and this will include replacing any cracked, soft or slipped tiles and a general check made around the detailing of the chimney stacks and ridges to ensure the structure remains generally weathertight.
We found no obvious signs of any significant distortion or deflection to the pitched roofs to suggest any structural failures within the roof frame. We would stress to you, however, that the condition of the roof coverings are likely to continue to deteriorate in

the longer term and the question of their condition may well arise again upon the future re-sale of the house.

All roofs should be adequately ventilated to the outside air and ideally ventilation openings to the roof void at eaves level, representing a continuous 25mm (1") slot along the full length of the eaves is recommended. Ventilation openings at high (ridge) level are also recommended. This can be in the form of proprietary vented ridge tiles. Plastic ventilators can also be inserted into the sloping surfaces of the roof covering.

The costs may also be increased because of the possible need to provide scaffolding to undertake work to the roof, etc., under health and safety legislation.

A flat roof is featured above the rear single storey extension covered in what appears to be a liquid applied roof covering with a sedum natural roof surface laid thereon.

Glazed rooflights have been installed at the junction of the rear of the main building and aligning with the position of the two storey rear extension.

Regarding the flat roof coverings, it should be noted that compared with traditional coverings depending upon exposure, quality of felt and workmanship, flat roofs have a typical life span of 10 to 15 years. They are also prone to sudden failure and leakage. Continual maintenance and periodic re-covering will therefore be necessary. When the roofs are re-covered they should be insulated and ventilated in accordance with current Building Regulations.

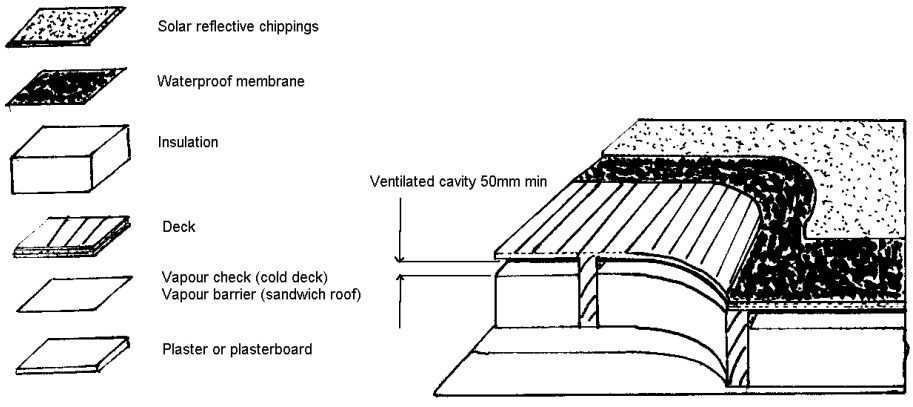


Fig 1. Cold-deck construction

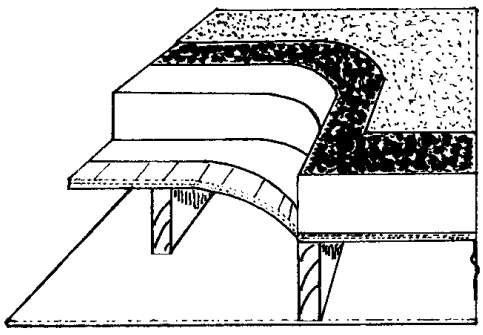


Fig 2. Warm-deck (sandwich roof)

Figs 1 and 2 - Warm and Cold Deck Flat Roofs

Liquid applied roof coverings may have a longer life expectancy with warranties and guarantees provided in relation to the same and your legal adviser should check and confirm the appropriate paperwork has been provided in relation to the same.

The roof valleys are probably not designed to cope adequately with heavy volumes of rainwater generated during storm conditions. In such circumstances rainwater may well fill up the valleys and cause damage to the adjacent accommodation and roof timbers.

No conditions of dampness were detected on the ceilings themselves however we stress that it is possible for slight leakages to occur around external joints giving rise to rotting of timberwork without immediate evidence becoming visible on the surfaces of the ceilings themselves.

Flat roofs should be insulated. Experience indicates that flat roofs tend to suffer greater heat loss in winter and heat gains in summer. This may be reduced by the provision of ceiling insulation and should be laid over the vapour barrier or vapour check, but in the case of cold deck designs, with an adequate ventilation gap to permit free circulation of air directly under the decking.

There is no provision for ventilation to the flat roof. Ventilation of flat roofs is important to reduce the risk of condensation forming within the roof void that could otherwise give rise to conditions favourable for fungal infestations such as dry rot to occur. There are principally two types of flat roof construction that can be provided. Warm deck roofs are provided with the insulation placed over the roof deck and as there is no cold air within the roof void, the risk of condensation is eliminated and there is therefore no need to provide any form of ventilation to the roof. Given the age of the roof and the deep fascia boards provided, we believe that a warm deck roof is provided, although we are unable to confirm this with any certainty without opening the roof up for further inspection. Warm deck roofs rely on a suitable vapour barrier beneath the insulation and we are unable to confirm that this has been provided from a visual inspection alone.

It would be wise to keep an eye on the ceilings below the flat roof areas and take prompt action as and when any stains arise, given their inherent unreliability.

GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES AND GULLIES

The rainwater goods are formed in a mixture of modern plastic and cast iron sections. Generally the gutters and rainwater goods were found to be free from obvious signs of leakages however we note some staining, possible leakage, to the uPVC soil stack to the rear left hand side. This will need investigation and repair.

However, as it was not raining at the time of the inspection we cannot state whether the fittings are totally watertight.

The gutters and gullies should be cleared on a regular basis of leaves and other debris. Blocked gutters and gullies can result in serious rainwater penetration problems and consequential rot to the adjacent timbers.

The older cast iron sections are revealing indications of corrosion, particularly to their rear surfaces where the application of paintwork has been thinnest. All cast iron rainwater goods should be overhauled, including the removal of rust, and sections primed and painted.

The remaining cast iron rainwater sections should be replaced as soon as practicable in modern plastic material.

It is likely that the cast iron soil vent pipe has been continued in this material beneath ground level, although this cannot be confirmed without undertaking excavations. Should the original cast iron joint remain, there is more likelihood of corrosion to this and a problem of leakage in the future.

We confirm that in undertaking our inspection of the property that none of these gullies were placed on test.

DRAINAGE

Within the curtilage of the property, we note 1No. inspection chamber/rodding eye to the rear left hand side passageway. The precise condition of the drains can only be verified by testing which is beyond the scope of a building survey.

Your legal advisor should ascertain as to whether the below ground drainage is classified as a separate or combined system and whether these are in joint ownership and what, if any, joint financial responsibility is afforded for the upkeep and maintenance of the same.

It is unreasonable to expect that a drainage installation of this age is free from cracked joints and pipes. You should therefore anticipate that some maintenance will be necessary in the near future. The standard and adequacy of the drainage system can only be ascertained as a result of a test by an appropriate specialist.

It was not possible to decide whether a separate surface water system or soakaway arrangement is provided for the disposal of rainwater below ground.

It is not good practice to locate drains below a building as if they leak this can cause serious damage as well as a health hazard. Also, if the building undergoes movement this could cause the drains to rupture.

The plot drains towards the rear of the building and as a consequence there is the risk of a heavy run-off of rainwater in storm conditions which could give rise to flooding. Although there is no obvious sign of flooding at the property to date, it is important to ensure that all gullies are kept clear of blockages. It is questionable whether the gullies at the property could cope with storm conditions. You may wish to enquire whether there is a history of flooding at the house.

MAIN WALLS

The main walls to the property appear to be solid brick construction with rendered painted elevation to the first floor front elevation with timber painted detailing. Ashlar/stone detailing is featured around the ground floor front bays and around the entrance leading to the main entrance door.

The rear extension is formed in yellow stock brickwork with stretcher and header formations. It is possible that this may be snapped headers with a cavity construction, but the external appearance appears to be of a solid brick construction consistent with the main building which may have been a planning condition.

A pigmented render had been used on the external rear elevation of the single storey extension.

As a matter of information we would note that solid walls of this type are no longer permitted for residential construction, having been superseded in this locality after about 1938 by cavity walls, and nowadays cavity walls with an inner skin of insulation block would be used, as these provide better thermal insulation and resistance against weather penetration. If you buy an older property with solid walls, you should appreciate that its performance in these respects will not be as good as modern cavity construction.

In this regard, it is important with solid wall construction especially to ensure that the exterior elevations are maintained in good condition as a first barrier against weather and that particular care is taken to avoid leaks or spillages from gutters, downpipes and overflows, as dampness can penetrate directly to the inside.

We stress that in a property of this age it is quite likely that the support across the openings to the windows and external doors is performed by timber lintels as opposed to a material such as pre-cast concrete or steel as used nowadays. All such supports are at the present time covered by brickwork, mortar and plaster and accordingly, as no access to them is possible, no assurance as to their condition is provided.

Taking into account the above factors it is important that you appreciate, however, that in the past there may have been conditions of dampness either penetrating from the exterior or internally through a plumbing defect, which could have given rise to a condition of prolonged dampness to the lintel supports and brought about their deterioration by way of wet and/or dry rot.

We note some general spalling and weathering to the stone/ashlar detailing around the front window bays and entrance area. This will need local repair/restoration to maintain its condition. There is some evidence of pointing repairs to the front bays to the left and right hand side returns where the bays meet the main building.

We have not seen the foundations, but bearing in mind the age of the property it is likely that these would not be to a sufficient depth to satisfy present day standards. Requirements in more recent years have become more stringent, partly the consequence of the drought in 1976 which resulted in failure to many buildings from excessive clay soil shrinkage.

In a property of this age it is probable that the foundations of the bay are shallow by modern standards, and by the standards of the main structure. In shrinkable soils, such as are found in this area, the risk of structural movement is greater when the foundations are shallow. The risk increases as soils shrink in hot, dry summers. Roots from trees and shrubs can also have a significant contributory affect.

The slender and probably poorly bonded construction of the first floor of the bay is likely to be prone to movement. If any serious cracks or distortions arise it may be necessary to stabilise this area, possibly by improved mullion support and the provision of lateral restraint measures.

Some local hairline cracking is noted to individual bricks however we presume this is more likely to be caused from the drying/shrinking process during manufacture.

The rendering may be concealing defects to the main walls, although internally there were no obvious signs of serious problems.

Cement rendering is prone to fracturing over the years due to normal shrinkage, frost action and ageing processes and some cracking is evident. Any areas of hollow rendering should be hacked off and renewed.

To the rendered surfaces to the first floor front elevation, the external surfaces of the walls have been painted. Painting of external wall surfaces can increase the risk of dampness and frost damage. This is because rainwater can find its way through minute cracks in the paint to saturate the wall, but it is then prevented from freely evaporating into the atmosphere by the paint film which acts as a cloak to entrapped moisture. High levels of internal humidity can also lead to a build up of entrapped moisture in painted external walls. This can lead to accelerated spalling in the brickwork.

The pigmented render to the rear all appears to be in good condition with no obvious signs of damage.

There are a number of mature trees to the front public footpath and also around the boundaries to the rear which will need to be managed.

We confirm that we have not undertaken any form of excavation to determine the sub soil type nor indeed to expose the foundations. The leeching effects of tree roots can hasten and exacerbate the drying out of shrinkable sub soils during periods of hot, dry weather, thus resulting in shrinkage at foundation depths and below, causing damage to foundations. Risk of movement can also be reduced by maintaining the drainage in good condition and controlling the growth of vegetation, including trees and hedges.

Clay sub soils normally provide a reasonable base for foundations, but suffer the disadvantage of excessive shrinkage during hot dry summers which brings about an irregular reduction in their volume and ability to support structures. In extreme circumstances this will lead to subsidence. Planting a tree closer than the recommendations made above to an existing building entails some risk of damage when the tree reaches full size and in the event of long dry periods. The risk will decrease with periodic pruning of the tree to ensure that it does not reach full height.

The complete removal of trees is not recommended as this could cause the sub-soil to swell and lead to foundation heave; this might produce worse damage than would be encountered through subsidence.

The structural condition of the property is otherwise satisfactory. We found no evidence of any significant cracking or current settlement/subsidence or structural movement and no indication to suggest that the foundations are defective or inadequate.

JOINERY

Timber facias and soffits are featured to the property and, where visible, these appeared to be in fair condition.

We stress to you that having regard to the age of the property that some rotting to the upper sections of the supporting gutter boards is now inevitable. The gutters themselves may be hiding areas of decay.

Timber painted double glazed sash windows are featured to the property with more modern casement uPVC/metal sliding doors and windows to the rear of the building.

The keys to all windows and doors should be made available on completion of the sale. Any guarantees for the double-glazing should be checked and retained for future reference. The double-glazed units should help reduce the amount of repainting required over the years. The vacuum seals to the double-glazing are prone to failure, and are particularly unreliable in older double-glazed units. If the vacuum seals fail the affected glazing will need to be replaced, which could prove problematic unless there is an easy means of removing the affected glazing. Following amendments to the Building Regulations all window installations after April 2002 are subject to approval under the Regulations and therefore it is important to ensure that any recent window replacement has the necessary approval or has been undertaken by an authorised installer (FENSA).

We note some loss of texture to the timberwork/detailing to the first floor front elevation, with some loss of texture noted to the previously painted timber window sub-frames to the front bay windows and also to Bedroom 2 to the rear.

Prior to any repainting, any sections of decayed joinery should be cut out and replaced. It is possible that areas of rotted joinery have been painted over and therefore concealed.

It is important to ensure that the sealants around the frames are maintained in a satisfactory condition. In time these are likely to harden and crack and provide ingress points for rainwater.

The junctions of the roof with the roof lights are areas where, in time, leakages may occur as the flashings are prone to failure. Although there is no obvious sign of any leakages at present, it would be wise to monitor the condition of these areas and take action if any water stains arise at adjacent areas below.

PLINTH and DAMP PROOF COURSE (DPC)

A cement plinth has been laid to the base of the front of the property. The purpose of the plinth is to provide some protection to the brickwork to the base of the walls which

are in constant contact with ground water. Generally this plinth was found to be in fair condition and we found no obvious signs of any significant problems. To the rear, the pigmented rendered surfaces have been taken down to ground level. The purpose of this plinth is to provide some protection to the brickwork to the base of the walls which are in constant contact with ground water. Generally the lower section of the render/plinth was found to be in fair condition and we found no obvious signs of any significant problems.

The cement rendering should be cut away to break the joint with the ground. The render should be finished with a physical projection, which will allow the water clear of the wall. This will reduce the likelihood of damp penetration by moisture creeping up the back of the render.

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

SUB FLOOR VENTILATION

Adequate sub floor ventilation, ideally air vents or air bricks provided at every 1.2 – 1.5 metre (four to five foot) centres, with particular attention paid to corners of buildings, should be provided to opposite ends of the building in order to minimise the risk of dry rot developing within ground floor timbers.

In this regard we note air bricks to the front of the property. There is one air brick to the rear left hand side of the property which is open-ended. Ideally this should be fitted with a cover to minimise rodent or similar infestation. It is important that the air bricks are kept unobstructed for the reasons articulated above.

We note a number of stored items to the left hand side within the lean-to and it is important that these do not obstruct any air bricks.

GATES, FEN`CES and PATHS

A brick wall is featured to the front and rear boundaries. The brickwork to the front all appears to be in good condition. Metal painted railings and a metal gate is installed. These appear to be in good condition with slight signs of rusting noted. Rust will need to be sanded down, primed and painted to maintain its condition.

Brick walls are featured to the rear. These are largely obscured/covered with established vegetation. We note the rear boundary has suffered movement and is partly laterally supported by the boundary wall with a number of brick buttresses installed to the boundary wall within No.6 North Avenue.

Your legal advisor should ascertain ownership of the boundaries, particularly in view of maintenance which is required, but also to ensure that no boundary disputes exist.

A clay tiled path is featured to the front with paving slabs laid to the rear.

We note the upstand tiles to the rear step are coming away from the step and these will need to be re-fixed.

We would point out that driveways and pathways are generally constructed on minimal foundations and are susceptible to movement, particularly in shrinkable clay sub-soils and, therefore, periodic inspections and patch repairs will be required.

You should ensure that the growth of all trees and shrubs in the vicinity of the property is carefully controlled so as to reduce the risk of root damage to both foundations and drains. This is subject to any Preservation Order that may affect the trees. As a rule of thumb a tree should be no closer to a building than its mature height.

The gardens are in a seasonal condition, and there are some cracked, weathered and uneven paved areas.

OUTBUILDINGS

There are no outbuildings to the property. There is a small lightweight timber lean-to to the left hand side. Where visible this appears to be in serviceable condition. You should anticipate that some local repairs will be required to maintain its condition.

PAINTWORK

The reapplication of paintwork will be required to the external joinery sections to preserve the existing wood and also as and when any repairs are completed.

Before reapplication of paintwork is undertaken we would stress the thorough preparation of all surfaces concerned. Reapplication of paintwork will include two undercoats and a finishing coat of hard gloss paint.

5.0 INTERNAL CONDITION

The interior has been inspected from floor level only, unless otherwise stated. We have not attempted to remove any fixtures, wall hangings nor heavy furniture.

LOFT SPACE

The loft has been converted into habitable accommodation with restricted eaves access afforded. Otherwise, see comments below under the internal sections of the report.

CEILINGS

The ceilings are a mixture of plasterboard with lath and plaster ceilings. The life of lath and plaster ceilings depends upon the quality of the original workmanship and the degree of exposure to dampness from roof and plumbing leaks and the amount of stress from flexing and so forth. Generally a life span of between 50 and 100 years is typical and it therefore follows that the existing ceilings will reach a point where problems may be experienced.

We would point out that this type of plasterwork over the years is susceptible to vibration, disturbance and shrinkage which can (and often does) result in loss of adhesion and sudden failure. Continual repair and re-plastering must therefore be anticipated.

Minor hairline cracking was noted at various locations, predominantly at junctions of walls and ceilings, but this was generally minor in nature and capable of being filled prior to the next phase of redecoration.

We note some minor damage around window reveals to Bedroom 3 where the window or the roller blinds are catching on the plastered reveal. This will need repair.

In parts of the house the ceilings are punctuated with spotlights. You should ensure that the spotlights are kept clear of insulation material so as to avoid excessive heat build-up.

Otherwise, the ceilings all appear to be in good condition.

INTERNAL WALLS and PARTITIONS

The internal walls are a mixture of masonry and timber stud partition which has been plastered and decorated.

Some internal walls have been lined with plasterboard which limited the scope of our inspection. This is often referred to as “dry lining” and is a popular method of finishing off the internal surfaces of walls as it saves on costs and reduces the drying out period when construction took place. Dry lining is where plasterboard sheets are fixed to either timber battens or dabs of plaster and then decorated over. This means that there is a gap between the plasterboard and the walls. Because of the gap, it is difficult to screw directly into the walls, although a range of proprietary fixing products can be found in DIY stores.

We stress to you that we are unable to gain access to all internal surfaces of walls and partitions, due to fitted furniture and machinery. Should there be conditions of dampness either penetrating or rising through defects in the damp proof course then this could give rise to a condition of wet or dry rot in the adjoining timber work

We note some minor damage around window reveals to Bedroom 3 where the window or the roller blinds are catching on the plastered reveal. This will need repair.

We have not seen the nature of support over the openings formed when the internal alterations were carried out. At each opening a beam (usually of steel or reinforced concrete) is normally required with suitable end bearings. Although these could not be seen, there were no indications of movement or significant deflections to these areas.

Slight movements are likely to occur to the timber-framed internal walls, which probably will give rise to various cracks arising over the years, and possibly the lifting of any tiling.

The internal partition walls are of timber studwork construction and prone to movement.

None of the cracks observed appears to be of such a size or severity as to suggest significant foundation movement. Some of the cracking could be related to the fact that a number of the first floor walls are offset in relation to the ground floor walls, and possibly rest on doubled-up floor joists. Over time these may well have deflected, giving rise to some of the cracks observed.

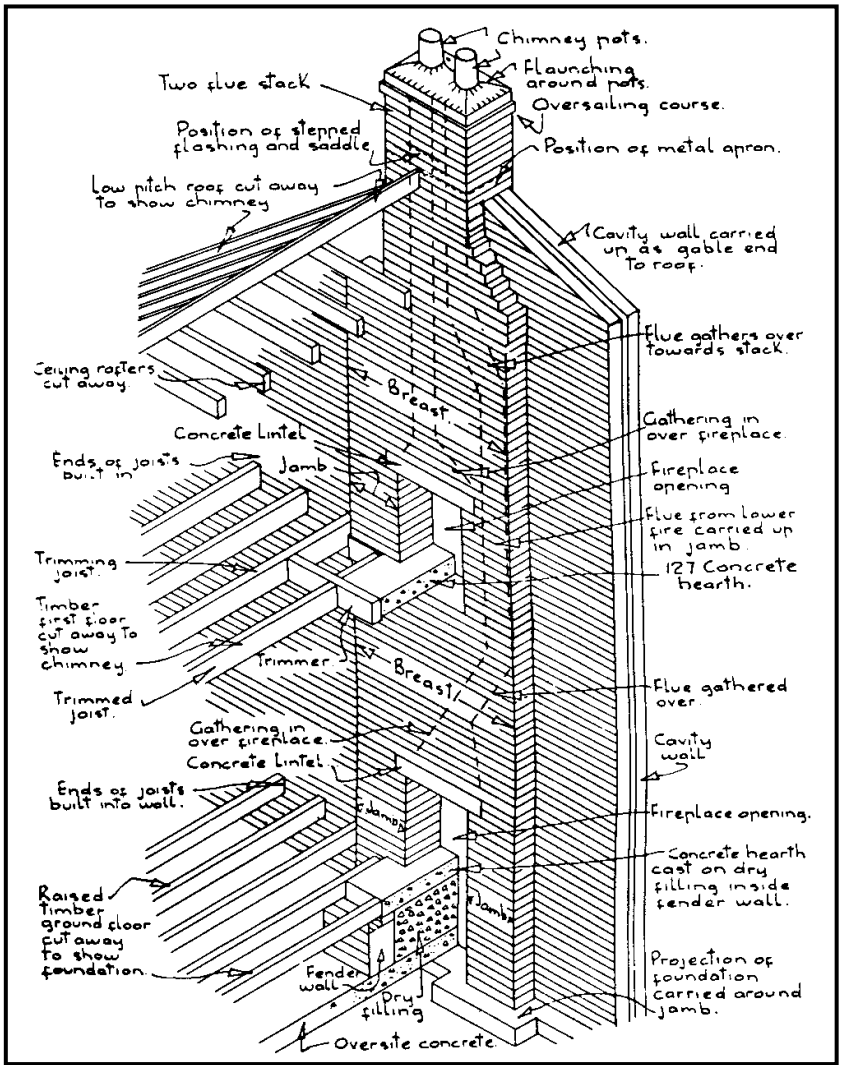
FIREPLACES, FLUES and CHIMNEY BREASTS

A gas fireplace has been installed within the ground and first floor rooms. These were turned on during the inspection and all appeared to be in working condition.

It is not possible to indicate the condition of the flues or the presence of any flue liners and no assumption has been given as to the practicality of using these chimneys in the future.

All blocked up flues should be provided with ventilation grills in order to minimise the risk of condensation from occurring within the flues.

The gas fires should be tested before use by a Gas Safe registered engineer unless there is evidence of a recent gas safety check.



Nevertheless, if these fireplaces were to come back into use they should be swept and checked by an engineer specialising in such flues.

WINDOWS and DOORS

The windows and doors were found to be in serviceable condition on the date of inspection. We would refer to our comments under the Joinery section of the report in regards to local repairs prior to redecoration.

The casements to the windows serving Bedroom 2 and Bedroom 3/currently used as a gym open fully and as the window boards are low relative to the internal floor levels there is a potential for access out the windows on to the roof. Strictly speaking, the lower opening casements should have suitable child locks provided, so as to provide as escape route also in the event of fire. Alternatively, some form of Juliette balcony installed as a matter of health and safety to minimise access/possible falls or injury.

Your legal advisor should ascertain as to whether there are any guarantees or warranties provided for the window replacement works and if these were installed after April 2002 then FENSA certification/Building Regulation approval is required.

In a property of this age and type it was common practice to install timber lintels over window and door openings, with a brickwork facing to the external walls. Such lintels are vulnerable to penetrating dampness and consequential decay. The condition of any timber lintels at the property cannot be assessed without further exposure of the structure.

Internal doors were generally found to function satisfactorily, fitting within the frames provided. Fire doors are required in such properties to reduce the risk of fire/smoke spread and provide a protected escape route.

FLOORS

The majority of floors throughout the property would appear to be of suspended timber floor construction with a solid concrete floor within the single storey rear extension. The concrete floor has a polished concrete finish applied thereto.

The floors were found to be reasonably firm and flat and capable of bearing normal domestic loads. It should be noted that floors are one of the hardest areas to pass comment on due to the presence of furniture and fitted carpets. The risk must therefore be accepted that defects may exist beneath the carpets/floor coverings that are hidden from view.

The floor structures were designed to the standards of the time, which are inferior to present day requirements in terms of joist size and spacing. Therefore a degree of springiness can be expected to some of the floor areas.

All surfaces are even and free from evidence of sub soil settling and where access to the concrete floor surfaces is possible, there is no indication of deterioration to suggest any unwanted problems of rising dampness beneath. Nevertheless, we stress to you that in the laying of a solid concrete floor of this type it is essential that a waterproof membrane has been incorporated to prevent conditions of dampness rising from the sub soil. Although in those areas accessible for inspection there is no indication of deterioration of this type, we stress that we can provide no assurance in this respect as to the floorings as a whole, without complete removal of all floor coverings.

We note some slight chip marks to the polished concrete edges where the bays have been cast. This will need local repair. It is important that differential movement/expansion joints are installed and maintained in good condition particularly on concrete floors as there is a potential for thermal expansion and contraction particularly as the underfloor heating is turned on and off.

In a property of this age and type of construction a degree of woodworm infestation can normally be expected. If there has not already been treatment we would recommend a precautionary spraying of the timbers by a member firm of the Property Care Association (PCA) or equivalent, to include the treatment/replacement as necessary of affected timbers. The PCA website is www.property-care.org.

STAIRS

The timber framed staircase was found to be sound underfoot and manageable. Our inspection to the upper surfaces of the treads and risers was limited due to floor coverings but within the limitation imposed, however, we found no obvious signs of any woodworm infestation or rot.

6.0 SERVICES

These have been inspected visually only, where accessible, and no tests have been applied. Standards and adequacy of installations can only be ascertained as a result of a test by an appropriate specialist. A general comment only is included under the following sections:

ELECTRICITY

Electricity is connected to the mains supply; the mains consumer unit and 3No. meters are located in the cupboard accessed via the utility area.

It is impossible to guarantee the condition of an electrical installation on the basis of a visual inspection only. There are many aspects relating to the physics of electricity which can only be identified by the application of test instruments which cover matters

relating to resistance, impedance and current etc. Only proper testing of the installation will provide a true picture.

We would recommend that the system be inspected and tested by a qualified electrician and a report obtained. Pending receipt of an electrician's report we suggest you allow for the possibility that some expenditure on the electrical installation will be necessary.

Smoke detectors have been installed in the property. We advise that smoke detectors are tested and maintained on a regular basis to ensure they function correctly.

The property is fitted with a burglar alarm, which was not tested. We therefore recommend that maintenance/servicing records should be acquired. If the system has not received any maintenance within the last 12 months, then servicing should be undertaken. It should be noted that an automatic cut-out device should be in place.

You should arrange for a qualified electrician to test the installation and quote for any necessary remedial work prior to legal commitment to purchase. The electrician should be registered with the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contractors (NICEIC).

GAS

Gas is connected to the mains supply; the gas meter is positioned externally to the left hand side of the property in a wall mounted box.

As a normal safety precaution we would recommend that the gas service, together with any fitted gas appliances included in the sale, be inspected and tested for safety by a qualified gas engineer before the property changes hands.

PLUMBING and SANITARY FITTINGS

The property is connected to the mains. The stop cock is located below the utility cupboard. The stop cock and valves have not been tested and we cannot state whether the overflow pipes are continuous to the exterior of the building.

The plumbing to the property is of copper and plastic. There is some reliance on plastic pipes within the plumbing system. Whilst these are quite durable, they may be more prone to impact damage than conventional copper pipes.

Without exposing the rising main running beneath ground and floor structures, we cannot confirm the material used here. For health reasons, lead pipes are no longer recommended. Lead pipes can develop leaks, especially if run in sub soils subject to movement, and nowadays polythene pipes are used below ground for this purpose. If you are concerned about the fact that a lead pipe is used, replacement with a new polythene main would be the best solution.

The water pressure to the taps at each level was found to be adequate and there were no obvious signs of any leakages to the underside of taps or waste pipes.

It is preferable for there to be an external overflow pipe as a failed float valve can be spotted quickly, and furthermore any surplus water is drained to a harmless exterior

point. The fittings appear to be working, although detailed tests have not been carried out. We are unable to confirm that the plumbing installation is completely free of leakages, bearing in mind the limitation of the inspection and the fact that much of the pipework is in concealed locations.

We emphasise that we have not inspected any of the hidden pipework, either under floors or boxed in, so are unable to comment upon this.

Underfloor heating manifold is located in the utility area

HOT WATER and CENTRAL HEATING

A wall mounted combination boiler is located within the cupboard accessed via Bedroom 5 with Megaflo cylinder adjoining.

We stress to you that where copper pipes are buried in solid concrete floors these should be afforded some protection by way of a bitumen wrap material or equivalent. It is also essential that lagging be properly provided to permit thermal expansion and contraction. Even well made joints can fail if the pipework is screeded in solidly and unable to respond to thermal movements. Without the benefit of exposing these

concrete floor structures, we cannot confirm that any of the above provisions have been allowed for and we would therefore recommend that the central heating system be placed on test. The ball valve to the separate header tank should be temporarily tied up to prevent any further water entering the system whilst the pipework is placed on test under pressure. Any significant drop in water level in the header tank will confirm leakages. Such leakages are likely to be undetected until consequential damage has been incurred, with resulting costly and disruptive repairs.

Following the amendment to the Building Regulations in 1985, scope was provided for a new mode of hot water supply to be introduced in this country. The new Water By-laws also permitted alterations in terms of plumbing. These two factors have made it possible to provide a domestic hot water system directly connected to the water mains and to be unvented. To install such a system, however, still requires consent from two separate Statutory Authorities.

The first consent is from the Water Authority under the Water By-laws and the other is Building Regulation approval.

The advantages of a system directly fed from the mains and unvented is generally greater efficiency, improved overall performance and the virtual elimination of frost problems, ie cold water storage tanks and associated pipework freezing over.

Important design considerations are, however, necessary for unvented hot water systems. Systems of this type are totally enclosed and have to be released from any undue pressure by the provision of an expansion vessel working in conjunction with a series of pressure reducing and pressure relieving valves. Whilst the supply can now be taken directly off the main supply, the need to guard against any back syphonage continues and it is essential that a specially designed check valve is installed, which operates in association with the pressure relieving valves. The matter of safety depends chiefly on the quality and the reliability of the mechanical components and controls. The possibility of individual failure of any of the above mentioned fittings is more likely to be the result of wrong adjustment, the effects of scale, sludge, corrosion or blockage through gritty deposits. To ensure that safety standards are maintained at all times and the possibility of explosion is reduced to the lowest possible factor, the Authorities do insist that a three-line level of protection is provided and is designed to become activated in a pre-determined sequence.

Any danger of the temperature of the water rising above boiling point is to be overcome by the installation of thermostat, a temperature operated cut-out acting on the boiler or immersion heater, and a temperature controlled relief valve, which ensures that the water can only reach boiling point in the unlikely event of all three devices failing at the same time.

Due to the specialist nature of such a system, we would recommend that a heating engineer be commissioned to inspect the system to ensure that it complies with the above-mentioned standards. Such an inspection will need to be undertaken by a British Board of Agreement (BBA) Approved Installer. Obligatory safeguards also cover the need for any replacement or removal of components undertaken by a BBA Approved Installer only and it is now an offence to supply or install unvented systems without the stipulated registration, certification and approvals. Copies of such documents should, therefore, be obtained also.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although this section provides a summary of our findings, it is important that the report is read as a whole.

LEGAL MATTERS

Your legal advisor's attention is drawn to the following:

- Your legal advisor should check whether there are any rights of way that exist over the property boundaries and if so, what the terms of ownership and repair and responsibilities are in this regard.

- Your legal advisor should confirm as to what rights of way/repair and responsibilities are afforded over the common parts of the property

- Your legal advisor should confirm which of the subject boundaries are your responsibility, in respect to future maintenance and also where boundaries have not been properly demarcated. Also whether there are/have been any boundary disputes or similar.

- Your legal advisor should ascertain as to whether the below ground drainage is classified as a separate or combined system. It may be that the below ground drainage system is shared and, as such, there may be joint financial responsibilities.

- Your legal advisor should ascertain as to whether there has been any structural movement or claims related to the property.

- Your legal advisor should ascertain as to whether Building Control/Planning permission or other statutory consents, Party Wall approval, where applicable, were obtained for any alterations or additions to the property.

- Your legal advisor should enquire on your behalf as to the history of the property with regard to flooding.

- Your solicitor will check that the town planning and Building Regulations history of the property is in order. Appropriate local authority and other enquiries will reveal whether there are any planning proposals, etc. likely to adversely affect the property.

- It is important to check that all alterations to the property have the benefit of all necessary local authority consents, and were supervised by the Building Inspector under the Building Regulations.

- You should confirm that all the alterations were undertaken in accordance with a scheme drawn up and supervised by a qualified architect/structural engineer.

- All additional investigation and enquiries referred to in this report should be undertaken prior to exchange of contracts. Such investigation should include obtaining quotations for the various building works referred to in this report. Such enquiries should also include checking whether there has been a history

of underpinning at the property or whether there has been any claim under a buildings insurance policy in respect of structural movement. The enquiries should also include asking about the history of any alterations carried out to the property over the years.

- Any guarantees in respect of previous building works should be checked.

URGENT REPAIRS

A number of repair items have been raised which will require attention either at the present time or in the future and you will no doubt bear the latter in mind. You will also no doubt wish to make alterations to both the external and internal decorative surfaces to suit your own particular tastes, although in addition to this, we draw your attention to the relatively urgent matters below:

1. Undertake local brickwork/pointing repairs.
2. Undertake local mortar pointing repairs to the chimneys and also to the hip tiles to maintain their condition.
3. Consider installing restrictors to lower opening casements.
4. Repair possible leak to soil and vent pipe to rear left hand side.
5. Re-fix tiles to step to rear patio to minimise trip hazards.
6. Cut out and replace any rotten and defective areas of timberwork and replace with new.

In view of our findings therefore, as to the property as a whole, we strongly recommend that estimates for the above mentioned urgent repairs are obtained before the exchange of Contracts. Only when you have all this information will you be fully equipped to make a reasoned and informed judgement on whether or not to proceed with the purchase. We must advise you, however, that if you should decide to exchange contracts without obtaining this information, you would have to accept the risk that adverse factors might come to light in the future.

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

The following should also be dealt with before exchange of contracts:

- Obtain gas safety certification.
- Obtain electrical safety certification.
- Undertake a CCTV survey of the drainage system to ensure that is it fit for purpose.

MAINTENANCE

We have highlighted throughout this report the need for areas of maintenance or items that will require your attention. Estimates for these should be obtained **prior to exchange of contracts** so that you are sure that the Property falls within your budget.

STRUCTURAL MOVEMENT

The structural condition of the property is otherwise satisfactory. We found no evidence of any significant cracking or current settlement/subsidence or structural movement and no indication to suggest that the foundations are defective or inadequate.

OVERALL OPINION

Within the context of a building survey we found this property to be a reasonable proposition for purchase, provided that you are prepared to accept the costs and inconvenience of dealing with the various repair works reported. These defects are not inconsistent with a property of this age and type.

We trust that our report provides the information and advice you require. If we can be of any further assistance, please let us know. We mention that our report has been prepared for you as our client in connection with the respected purchase of the property and we cannot accept responsibility for it to any third party who may become acquainted with its contents, without our prior knowledge and consent in writing. An electronic pdf copy of the report can be sent to your legal advisors if requested.

Yours sincerely

Peter Modrekelidze MRICS
Modrics (Surveyors) Limited

8.0 GLOSSARY

Brief explanation of some of the technical words and terms that may be found in our report

Air brick Perforated brick or grating set into wall to provide ventilation. Most frequently used at the base of walls to ventilate timber ground floors. Insufficient ventilation can result in dry rot to floor timbers.

Barge Board Wide board fitted below tiles of overhanging verge to gable.

Binder Horizontal timber placed at right-angles to and above ceiling joists to stiffen ceiling and provide additional support.

Bressummer Beam supporting walls and floor joists over openings in main walls by bay windows.

Cavity Wall External wall, comprising inner and outer 'skin', brick or block with space between. Properly constructed it is more resistant to damp penetration than solid wall and improves thermal insulation.

Cesspool Watertight chamber in which sewage effluent is collected. Has to be emptied at intervals - a service usually provided by Local Authority for which a charge is made.

Collar (in roof) Timber that ties across between rafters on either side of a roof at some point above the feet of the rafters.

Collar (in drain) Wider end of pipe into which another pipe fits.

Damp Proof Course (dpc) Layer of some impervious material incorporated in the structure to prevent passage of dampness through porous materials. Older buildings often constructed without dpc. Chemical injected dpc often recommended as the cheapest method of damp proofing. This method not as effective as physical barrier and depends partly on replastering walls.

Damp Proof Membrane Similar to dpc but in solid ground floors to prevent damp rising up through floor. Should be connected to dpc in surrounding walls to be fully effective.

Dormer Window Window set into roof slope.

Dry Rot/Wet Rot Fungus growth which attacks timber. Conditions conducive to growth of dry rot are damp, coupled with stagnant air, e.g. if sub-floor ventilation is lacking. Wet rot thrives in similar conditions also in external joinery unless maintenance is meticulous. Does not worsen after damp source removed,

unlike dry rot which will continue to spread and affect new timber or adjoining areas if not properly treated.

Eaves Projecting edges of a roof.

Expansion Tank Small storage tank linked with the central heating system to top up water in that system independent of main cold water storage tank.

Fascia Vertical board at eaves level to which guttering often attached.

Fillet Method of weatherproofing joint between roof covering and brickwork, e.g. around the base of chimney. Most frequently in cement but sometimes of tiles set in cement. Less satisfactory than flashing (see below) because of inflexibility and liability to crack.

Flashing Method of weatherproofing joint between roof covering and brickwork using metal sheeting.

Floors Suspended timber - a system of joists covered with floorboards or chipboard at first floor level, suspended between walls and resting on them, at ground floor level, most often supported by small 'sleeper' walls on oversite concrete. Cavity beneath floorboarding should be ventilated by air bricks set into external walls to avoid conditions conducive to growth of dry rot. Solid floor usually formed of hardcore, surmounted by 4" to 6" concrete, then a damp proof membrane with final surfacing of cement screed and floor finish.

Foundations Firm base constructed beneath ground to spread loading from a building on to subsoil. Modern buildings normally have strong concrete foundations. Older buildings often have weaker, shallow foundations, more susceptible to failure and subsidence. Some older buildings are sometimes constructed direct onto compacted soil.

Gable Triangular part of an exterior wall beneath two roof slopes.

Gutters Normally formed in cast iron in older properties but in PVC in modern houses. 1) Half round semi-circular section fixed to fascia with brackets. 2) Ogee - a different pattern with vertical rear side screwed direct to fascia -disadvantage is that it restricts decoration of fascia and rear face of gutter; rusting and failure of gutter can result, and in extreme cases, rot in fascia and feet of rafters.

Hanger Vertical timber fixed between rafters and binder to provide additional support to ceilings.

Hip External angle formed by roof when end slopes backwards instead of ending in a gable. Usually protected by tiles even on slate roof.

Land Drain Method of disposal of water beneath ground. Usually comprises a drain laid down with open joints and surrounded by shingle or similar material through which water can disperse into surrounding soil. Drains will become blocked with silt in time.

Lath and Plaster Traditional way of forming plaster surface on ceilings or timber partitions. Comprising a number of horizontal battens or laths which form a key for the plaster. Now largely obsolete and replaced by plasterboard.

Lean-to Roof Roof constructed with single pitch leaning from eaves against another external wall.

Lintel Beam normally of concrete or metal - sometimes timber - spanning opening in a wall to support the wall above.

Purlin Horizontal timber in roof space which provides intermediate support to rafters.

Rafters Inclined timber immediately beneath the roof covering to which the tiling battens or boarding for sloping roofs are fixed.

Reveal Vertical side face of an opening for a window or doorway between the frame and outer face of wall.

Ridge The horizontal line at the apex of a roof. Usually has tile covering.

Roof Truss Triangular framework of structural members supporting a roof, carrying horizontal members (purlins) which in turn support common rafters. (See also 'Trussed Rafter').

R.S.J. Rolled steel joist - steel supporting beam.

Septic Tank Sewage disposal system normally comprising two or three linked chambers within which self-purifying (bacteria) process takes place, beyond which is al outfall to land drains or a soakaway (see below) for the purified liquid effluent. Occasional emptying may be need, but dependent upon soil conditions and method of use, septic tank can remain undisturbed for a number of years. New land drains or soakaways may also be required but on average probably at intervals of not less than ten years.

Soakaways Method of water disposal, usually for surface water, i.e. hole dug in the ground and then filled with brick, rubble or similar material and covered over. Disperses water from drains leading into it provided surrounding soil conditions are suitable.

Soffit The underside of overhanging eaves or an archway. Sometimes used to describe sloping sections inside a house beneath a roof or staircase.

Spall Process whereby the face of damp bricks or other building materials is blown off by frost action, leaving a soft porous surface. Affected bricks should best be cut out and renewed, although resurfacing with a coloured cement render is often acceptable.

Strut Load bearing timbers normally supporting purlins (see above) and fixed at an angle down to a wall or some other load bearing point.

Stud Partitions Wall formed of pieces of timber (stud) covered with plasterboard or lath and plaster in older property. Unless specially constructed, unlikely to give sound insulation or strength of brick or block partitions.

Throat Groove cut in the underside of external sills to throw rainwater away from walls. Where throats do not exist, rainwater can run back beneath the sill, soaking into the wall and causing dampness inside the building.

Tie Bar Metal bar inserted across building to tie outer walls together, i.e. to arrest movement in structure and improve stability.

Trussed Rafter Derivative of roof truss (see above). Factory made timber framework used instead of common rafters, joined together by metal connectors or adhesive.

Underpinning Construction of new foundations beneath existing walls to arrest uneven subsidence due to ground movement or foundation failure.

Valley Internal angle formed by the outside surfaces of two adjoining roof slopes. Can be tiled or formed in metal or, less durably, in felt. May be called 'valley gutter' particularly when horizontal, i.e. between two parallel adjacent sloping roofs.

Verge Edge of a roof which runs from eaves to ridge at a gable (usually cement pointed).

Wall Plate Horizontal timber at top of wall on which floor or roof timbers, rafters or joists rest.

Wall Tie Metal connector used to provide structural link between inner and outer skins of cavity wall.

Woodborer Infestation Insect that attacks timber. Eggs are laid by the insect. Resulting grub eats away within the timber before emerging as adult insects through distinctive and characteristic flight holes in spring/early summer. Serious infestation can ultimately result in breakdown of timber but is relatively slow process. Most usual attack is by common furniture beetle. Other species are more voracious such as Deathwatch Beetle and House Longhorn Beetle. Chemical treatment will eradicate

woodborers. Specialist companies offer a service with long term guarantees against re-infestation.