

# HOME BUYERS REPORT

OF

## **Example Report Ealing, London, W13**



AS INSPECTED BY MODRICS (SURVEYORS) LIMITED

On: 21st February 2021

For: Example Report

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## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

We inspect the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings, but we do not force or open up the fabric. We also inspect the parts of the electricity, gas/oil, water, heating and drainage services that can be seen, but we do not test them.

To help describe the condition of the home, we give condition ratings to the main parts (the 'elements') of the building, garage and some parts outside. Some elements can be made up of several different parts.

The condition ratings are described as follows.

<b>3</b>	Defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced or investigated urgently.
<b>2</b>	Defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered to be either serious or urgent. The property must be maintained in the normal way.
<b>1</b>	No repair is currently needed. The property must be maintained in the normal way.
<b>NI</b>	Not inspected (see 'Important note' below).

The report covers matters that, in the surveyor's opinion, need to be dealt with or may affect the value of the property.

**Important note:** We carry out only a visual inspection. This means that we do not take up carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, move furniture or remove the contents of cupboards. Also, we do not remove secured panels or undo electrical fittings.

We inspect roofs, chimneys and other surfaces on the outside of the building from ground level and, if necessary, from neighbouring public property and with the help of binoculars.

We inspect the roof structure from inside the roof space if there is access (although we do not move or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents). We examine floor surfaces and underfloor spaces so far as there is safe access to these (although we do not move or lift furniture, floor coverings or other contents). We are not able to assess the condition of the inside of any chimney, boiler or other flues.

We note in our report if we are not able to check any parts of the property that the inspection would normally cover. If we are concerned about these parts, the report will tell you about any further investigations that are needed.

We do not report on the cost of any work to put right defects or make recommendations on how these repairs should be carried out. Some maintenance and repairs we suggest may be expensive.

<b>3</b>	Section of Report	Element Name
		Roof
		Gutters, Downpipes & Gullies
		Main Walls
		Joinery
		Ceiling
		Windows and doors
<b>2</b>	Section of Report	Element Name
		Chimneys
		Gates, Fences and Paths
		Internal Walls
		Fireplaces. Flues & Chimney Breasts
		Stairs
		Hot Water & Central Heating
<b>1</b>	Section of Report	Element Name
		Plinth & DPC
		Sub Floor Ventilation
		Paintwork
		Floors
		Electricity
		Gas
		Plumbing & Sanitary Fittings
NI		Outbuildings
NI		Drainage

To make sure you get a balanced impression of the property, we strongly recommend that you read all sections of the report.

## Example Report

25<sup>th</sup> February 2021

Dear Example

**Re: Ealing, London, W13**

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report is for the private and confidential use of the client(s) Example Report for whom the report is undertaken. It should not be reproduced in whole or in part, or relied upon by third parties for any use, without the express written authority of Modrics (Surveyors) Limited.

In accordance with your instructions, we inspected the above property on 21<sup>st</sup> February 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 madeup 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 not present, was undertaken during dry clear weather, which followed a period of similar weather. At the time of inspection the property was unfurnished / unoccupied on the date of inspection 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 configuration of these roofs.

We were only able to inspect those parts of the structure which were accessible without removing furniture and fittings. The subject flat forms part of the roof space with no separate loft access areas possible within the subject demise, or within the common parts. 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.

We confirm that the subject flat only was inspected, although comments on parts of the remainder of the building where seen, are included for completeness, particularly having regard to the fact that the Lease may set out a proportionate liability for the remainder of the structure.



## 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 communal gardens around the subject property with hard standing for off road parking to the front right hand side and rear, the subject property is located on a corner plot comprising of a substantial detached building constructed over four floors incorporating a lower ground floor and three upper floors.



The subject flat no 7 is located within the roof void, access via the main entrance and central stairwell in which the flat horse shoes around the central stairwell to the front portion of the loft area with flat 6 located the mirror image opposite.

The property has a number of bay window projections to the front, side and rear with step access to the main entrance door. There is a slope to the ground from the front to rear and we also note there is permit holder parking / restricted parking afforded curb side.

### 3.0 ACCOMMODATION

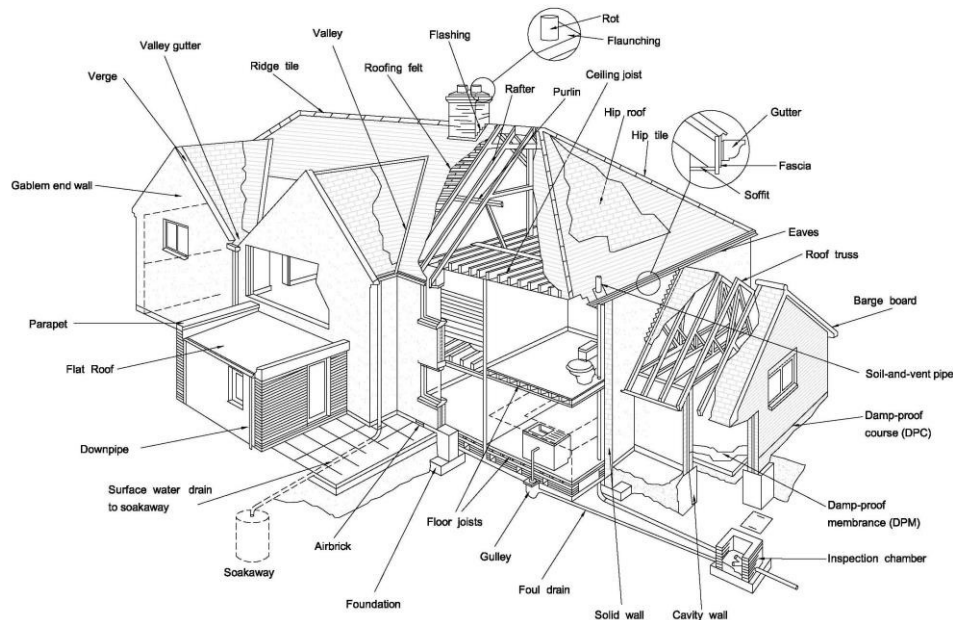
The accommodation comprises as follows:

Entrance, hallway, reception room (front left), kitchen (front centre), reception room (front left), kitchen (front centre), separate WC, bedroom one with en suite bathroom (right).

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.

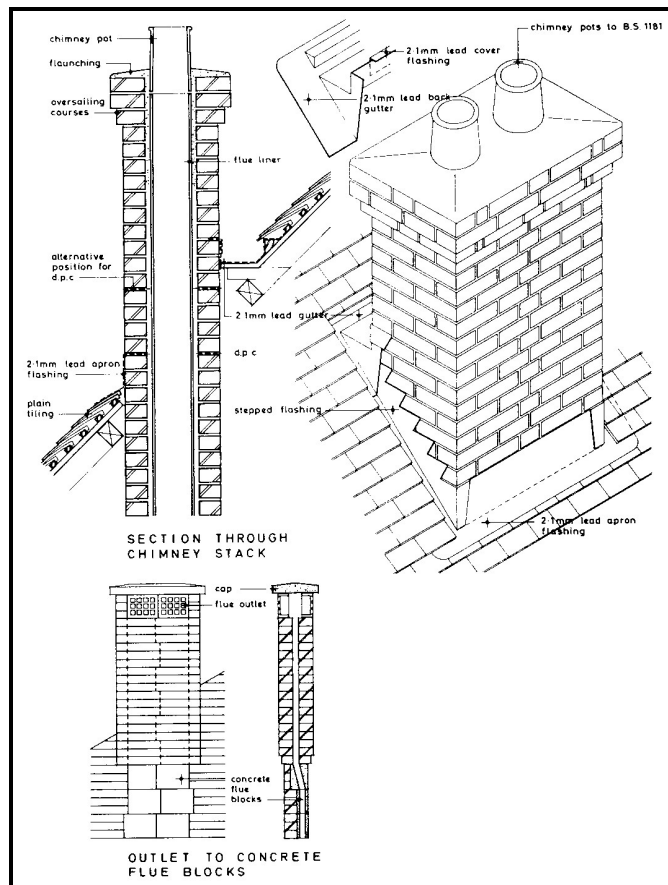


### CHIMNEYS

There are three brick built chimney stacks serving the subject property, these all appear to be shared with the individual flat.



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.





We saw no visible signs of significant cracking or leaning where possible to view.

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 retreatment in conjunction with future external redecoration programmes.

We did note some intermittent cracking to the central left hand side chimney extending through approximately three / four brick courses, this will need repair.

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

We note internally within the subject flat that evidence of dampness is noted to the chimney breast and this will need further investigation access onto the main roof to check the weather tight condition of the chimney prior to making good any damage so caused.

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 feature at the base of the chimneys where this adjoins the sloping roof surfaces, where visible these appear to be in serviceable condition, although showing signs of wear and tear, these however could be allowing moisture to penetrate the structure and this will need investigation as part of any remedial works to remove dampness to the chimney and party wall within the reception room.

## ROOF

The main roof to the property is presumably of timber pitched construction covered with a plain slate tile with a central timber painted glazed sky light atrium over the main stairwell, rolled lead detailing is feature at the hip and ridge lines.

The average life of such slates ranges from between 70-100 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 slates 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.



The general condition of the roof slates 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 weather-tight.

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.

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.

Adequate cross ventilation has not been achieved in the roof void and persistent condensation may drip onto the ceilings and may reduce insulation effectiveness and promote wet and/or dry rot and corrosion to nails and the like.

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.

We note evidence of water damage around the central sky light area at various locations with similar water staining and damage evident around the roof windows within the reception room, these areas of water ingress will need further investigation and urgent repair. From our limited inspection of the roof the flashings appear to be heavily stained, possibly allowing moisture to penetrate through causing leakages around the glazed atrium.





When repairing the roof the contractor will need to be careful to avoid damaging adjoining slates.

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.

Although the maintenance arrangements may not involve liabilities for repair to the roof, etc., the condition of such areas is important as far as the structural integrity of the building as a whole is concerned. The future maintenance of the component parts of the building is therefore a relevant consideration.

## GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES AND GULLIES

The gutters appear to be formed in an aluminium profile, but this could be PVC with UPVC waste and downpipes with a UPVC soil pipe to the side elevation.

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.

Heavy water staining at the junction of the collar of the soil vent pipe to the right hand side, this has caused saturation to the brickwork and requires urgent investigation and repair.

If there is a plastic soil and vent pipe but possible cast iron beneath ground level It is possible that the soil and vent pipe has been continued beneath ground level in a cast iron material, 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.

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.

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

## DRAINAGE

**NI**

Within the curtilage of the property, inspection chambers provide access to the underground drainage system, sited to the side and to the lightwell to the rear, no access was afforded to these on the date of survey. Furthermore the precise condition of the drains can only be verified by testing which is beyond the scope of a home buyers report to do.

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.

The plot drains towards the front 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 are a solid brick construction with rendered painted detailing to the window and door openings around the central pillared entrance and to the corners / coins of the building.

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.

There is evidence of water damage around the front bay and also to the right hand side and we would refer to our comments in relation to possible leakages from the external plumbing and the requirement for urgent repair.

To the right hand side elevation at first floor level there is a vertical crack extending through a number of mortar joints approximately 10 brick courses, 1-2mm in thickness. We note some evidence of general repointing also on this elevation and the very close proximity of the tree and a tree that has been removed adjacent to the neighbouring property to the rear right hand corner. We also note that the brick bonding has not been staggered therefore the mortar joints run one above the other, which provides a weak point in the brickwork, so when movement occurs these areas are more likely to suffer movement related damage. In any event this will need stitch brick repairs and repointing to minimise the potential for further cracking and to maintain the structures weather proofing qualities. We consider this to be urgent.



In a property of this age and type of construction there may not be sufficient restraint between the main walls and the internal elements. There is therefore the risk of bulging

and other movements over the years unless restraint measures are installed. To date there is no obvious indication of serious lateral movement.

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 building benefits from basement accommodation, which effectively takes the foundations down to a rather deeper level than would otherwise be the case.

It is difficult to maintain a permanent watertight seal at basement level accommodation due to inevitable ground water pressures and rainwater run-off from adjacent paving etc.

This is remote from the subject flat located on the top floor.

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 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

Extended soffits are featured around the property with timber painted windows and doors, we note some general wear and tear loss of texture to the timberwork.

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.

There is some evidence of rot located around the main entrance door to the frame at low level this will need repair.

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.

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).

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.

At the junction of the roof light within the subject property we note evidence of leakage and staining to the ceiling surfaces, this will need further investigation and action taken to minimise the potential for further damage prior to making good all damage so caused.

You should ensure that there is a regular maintenance programme for external decorations as neglect to this item can spoil the presentation of the block as a whole and therefore possibly depress the value of the individual units.

## **PLINTH and DAMP PROOF COURSE (DPC)**

A cement plinth has been laid to the base of the elevations. 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.

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 numerous airbricks around the perimeter of the property and these will need to be kept unobstructed for the reasons articulated above.

## **GATES, FENCES and PATHS**

Stock brick walls are feature around the perimeters of the property boundaries, these are generally in fair condition with no significant signs of damage, however there are local areas of cracks and slight leaning to the wall with spalling noted to the brickwork.

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 retreatment in conjunction with future external redecoration programmes.

Crack repairs will need to be undertaken to minimise the potential for further possible damage.

Brick pavers are laid to the front and rear, these are generally uneven due to vehicle access / weight and will need to be lifted and re-laid with lichenous deposits removed as part of the general maintenance of the hardstanding's.

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.

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**

**NI**

There are none.

## **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

NI

The loft forms part of the habitable accommodation and forms part of the subject flat within the top of the building, see comments below.

### CEILINGS

The ceilings are constructed of plasterboard throughout. There are some classic differential/movement cracking noted to the joints of the plasterboard and also at junctions of walls and ceilings.

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.

General cracking is noted to the junctions of the boards as noted above, this will need repair and filling prior to the next phase of redecoration. We note evidence of water staining around the VLUX windows within the reception room, see comments under roof section of the report, This require urgent investigation and repair.

### INTERNAL WALLS and PARTITIONS

The internal walls were a mixture of masonry and timber stud partitioning and dry lining 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 note some general hairline cracking at junctions of boards with some cracking noted behind the radiator within the bedroom.

Evidence of high moisture meter readings / dampness is noted to the chimney breast and party wall within the reception room. See comments under external sections of the report in regards to remedial works.

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

Those areas of wall plaster affected by dampness are likely to need replacement.

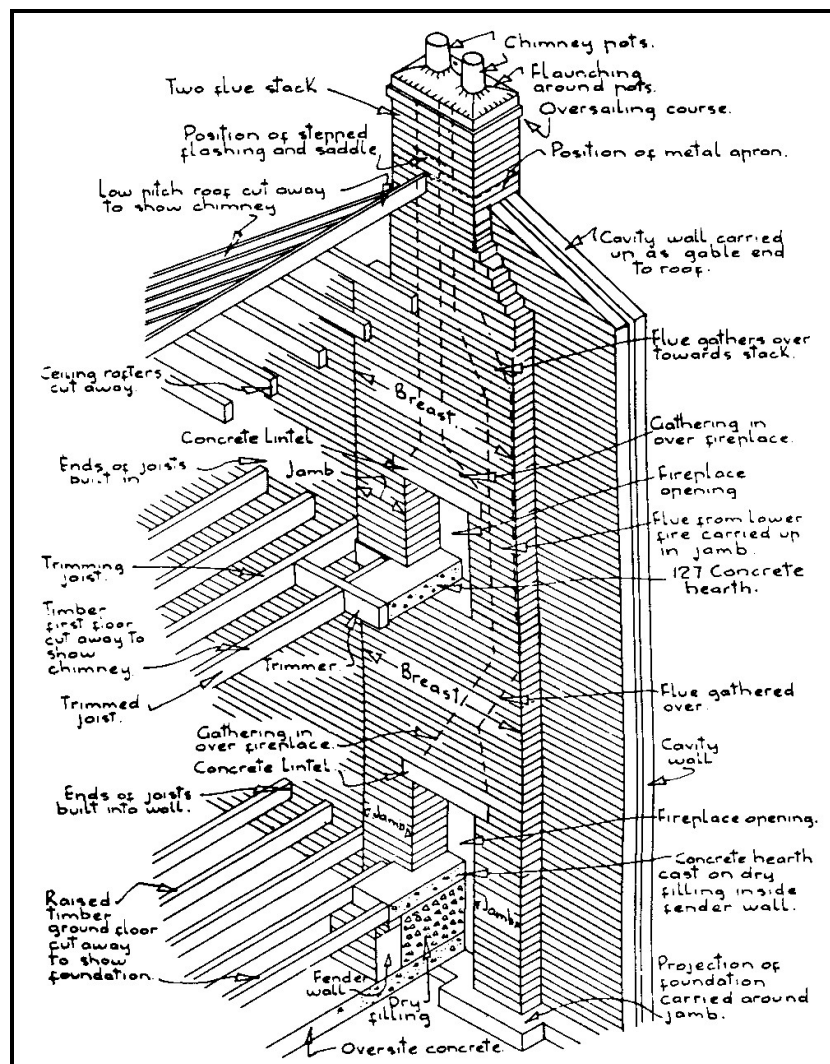
Tiled surfaces are featured in the bathroom and are in fair condition, although a little dated and a mastic seal is starting to deteriorate, this will need repair.

## FIREPLACES, FLUES and CHIMNEY BREASTS

There is a chimney breast projection within the reception room, some evidence of dampness is noted to the chimney, this will need remedial repair.

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.





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 throughout the property are formed in VLUX or similar roof windows positioned within the sloping roof surfaces. These were generally in dated condition showing weathering and loss of texture. More over we note all of the glazed panes have misted over. These will need to be replaced.

It should be noted, however, that double-glazing can vary in quality, particularly in respect of the seals around the edges of the glass. These will deteriorate over time allowing moisture to penetrate between the panes of glass, resulting in misting as can be seen here.

Further we would note for information that there is no secondary means of escape from the building and while this may not be a legal requirement based on the age and date of conversion, see comments below.

It is important you appreciate that under Part G of the Building Regulations, certain walls and floors are required to provide adequate resistance to the transmission of sound. This applies to 'new work' only and does not cover conversion of a private house into flats. Although remedies are possible to improve the sound insulation of existing walls and floors within flat conversions, this problem can never be totally satisfactorily resolved and the remedial works often require the disturbance to internal decorative surfaces and floors.

Fireproofing between flats and the means of escape in the event of a fire are vital matters. The standards which apply are those of the current Building Regulations. If an existing building should fail to meet such standards, it is often found to be impossible to meet modern requirements in an older building without the full cooperation of all flat owners and this would be unrealistic. In circumstances such as these, we can only warn you as to the fact that the property does fall below the required Fire Regulations and to confirm that the local Fire Regulation Authority has little power to enforce improvements of such standards. This is obviously a matter you must consider should you decide to proceed with the purchase of the property.

We would draw to your attention that the only secondary means of escape would be via the roof windows which are above 1 meter from the internal floor levels and difficult to access / potentially hazardous. Furthermore we note due to the exposed condition of the roof the roof lights when left open are exposed to window up lift and ideally restrictors should be installed which can be easily operated in the event of child safety / health and safety.



Fire doors have been installed to the habitable rooms and to the main flat door, we note that the fire self closers to the reception room and bedroom have been removed, these will need to be reinstated as a matter of urgency. Fire doors and self closers are now days required in such properties to reduce the risk of fire / smoke spread and provide a protected escape route. We consider the reinstatement to be urgent, including the replacement of the kitchen door as this also should be fire rated.

The kitchen units are generally dated and basic and we presume an incoming purchaser would be looking to replace these, therefore our comments are limited in this regard.

## FLOORS

The floor construction is of suspended timber floor construction.

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.

Some of the floorboards were found to creak a little when walking upon them and this is usually the result of a loss of natural moisture which often occurs soon after construction. However, this defect is exaggerated where floorboards are in close proximity to heating pipes or receive a fair degree of traffic, such as upon landings. Nevertheless individual unsecured floorboards can be attended to the next time floor coverings are replaced.

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.

There is the risk of rot to timbers adjacent to any present or previous damp problems. By its very nature dry rot fungus usually grows in unexposed areas and although fungal attack was not evident in the areas that were readily accessible, we cannot state categorically that the property is completely free of such problems.

In the circumstances we would recommend that you employ a member firm of the Property Care Association (PCA) or equivalent to inspect further and report on the extent of damp proofing and timber treatment required, and undertake work as necessary. Such estimates are normally free of charge. If such works have previously been undertaken, you may wish to call the same firm back, provided any guarantees are still valid and the areas presently affected were treated.

## STAIRS

There is no staircase within the subject property, the communal staircase provides access to all the internal flats with vertical circulation afforded.

There is evidence of water damage around the glazed atrium at the top of the staircase area, this requires urgent investigation and repair. Otherwise the communal pass appears to be generally free from major damage with general wear and tear noted to the surfaces which are expected.

Furthermore, we note whilst there are individual smoke detectors on ceilings there is no smoke detection system, signage or fire extinguisher / emergency lighting and as part of any improvement works planned to the property your legal advisor should check and confirm as to whether the authorities have inspected the building recently or whether there are any improvement works proposed.

## 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

The consumer unit and meter is located in the hallway.

There is no evidence of any recent test or inspections.

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.

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**

The gas meter is located externally to the right hand side of the property within a small brick enclosure.

There is no evidence of any recent test or inspections.

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 sited in a boxing access via the bedroom 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.

The sanitary fittings are somewhat dated and it is anticipated that most incoming purchasers would wish to renew throughout.

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.

## **HOT WATER and CENTRAL HEATING**

We note the boiler is located within a boiler cupboard within the en suite serving bedroom one.

There is no evidence of any recent test or inspections.

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 Bylaws 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 unventilated. 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 unventilated 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 be specifically asked to check all relevant documents, including the Lease and advise you of their terms. You may be particularly concerned with the following:

- a) That there is a Management Company correctly set up to deal with the running and maintenance of the building.
- b) That the management arrangements are such that they will satisfy the normal requirements of Building Societies or other lending institutions.
- c) That suitable annual maintenance and replacement funds exist with suitable reserves, to deal with general cleaning, maintenance and repair of common parts and repairs to the main structure, centralised heating installations and other services. Particular regard should be paid to the comments made in this report regarding the main structure and common parts.
- d) That the liability for repairs to the subject flat, common parts and the main structure are clearly set out as between the flat owners and the Management Company and that suitable procedures exist for settling disputes which may arise with regard to repairs.
- e) Whether the Management Company or individual flat occupiers are responsible for insurance of the building and where a block insurance policy is held.
- f) Your legal advisor should also ascertain from the Secretary of the Management Company whether there are any existing or foreseeable management problems or disputes or known outstanding repairs or programmed works which would affect the level of the service/maintenance charge payable.
- g) The precise repairing covenants and management arrangements under the lease are not known and these should be carefully checked through your solicitor. Previous maintenance costs should also be ascertained as a guideline to likely future costs, and enquiries should be made as to whether there are any impending major repair items. You should also check whether there is a sinking fund in existence for future building repairs.
- h) Although the maintenance arrangements may not involve liabilities for repair to the roof, etc, the condition of such areas is important as far as the structural integrity of the building as a whole is concerned. The future maintenance of the component parts of the building is therefore a relevant consideration.



Your legal advisor should check the Lease and confirm that there are suitable repairs and cross repairing covenants and adequate rights of way over common parts. It should also be established that the liability for repairs to the subject flat, common parts and the main structure are clearly set out as between the flat owners and the Freeholder, and that suitable procedures exist for settling disputes which may arise with regard to repairs. It should also be established as to whether individual flat owners or the Freeholder are responsible for the insurance of the building.

- 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. Trace and remedy cause of water damage to the subject property and make good damage so caused.
2. Investigate cause of saturation to the building externally to the right hand side and repair.
3. Undertake crack repairs to the building \* these matters are remote from the subject flat and may fall under the general maintenance and management of the building, see legal section of report.
4. Reinstate self closers to habitable room doors and replace fire door to kitchen.

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 it is 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 property is free from any major structural movement. Various hairline cracks have appeared externally, but this is largely the result of some differential movement/shrinkage cracking which may have occurred over a long period of time.

We emphasise that we cannot provide any assurances as to whether the structural movement has stabilised or not without the benefit of monitoring those areas affected over a period of time.

It is important that you appreciate that a survey is not a substitute for an insurance policy. We can only comment upon the degree of structural movement to date and the possible risks involved. All property owners are advised to ensure that their property is insured from the moment of exchange of Contracts for the usual perils in this case, subsidence, land slip and ground heave.

## OVERALL OPINION

The property requires some modernisation throughout and you should anticipate that some amount of expenditure will, therefore, be required in order to bring it up to modern day standards.

Within the context of a Home Buyers Report 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Modrekelidze', written in a cursive style.

**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

<b>Air brick</b>	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.
<b>Barge Board</b>	Wide board fitted below tiles of overhanging verge to gable.
<b>Binder</b>	Horizontal timber placed at right-angles to and above ceiling joists to stiffen ceiling and provide additional support.
<b>Bressummer</b>	Beam supporting walls and floor joists over openings in main walls by bay windows.
<b>Cavity Wall</b>	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.
<b>Cesspool</b>	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.
<b>Collar (in roof)</b>	Timber that ties across between rafters on either side of a roof at some point above the feet of the rafters.
<b>Collar (in drain)</b>	Wider end of pipe into which another pipe fits.
<b>Damp Proof Course (dpc)</b>	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.
<b>Damp Proof Membrane</b>	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.
<b>Dormer Window</b>	Window set into roof slope.
<b>Dry Rot/Wet Rot</b>	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.

<b>Eaves</b>	Projecting edges of a roof.
<b>Expansion Tank</b>	Small storage tank linked with the central heating system to top up water in that system independent of main cold water storage tank.
<b>Fascia</b>	Vertical board at eaves level to which guttering often attached.
<b>Fillet</b>	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.
<b>Flashing</b>	Method of weatherproofing joint between roof covering and brickwork using metal sheeting.
<b>Floors</b>	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.
<b>Foundations</b>	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.
<b>Gable</b>	Triangular part of an exterior wall beneath two roof slopes.
<b>Gutters</b>	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.
<b>Hanger</b>	Vertical timber fixed between rafters and binder to provide additional support to ceilings.
<b>Hip</b>	External angle formed by roof when end slopes backwards instead of ending in a gable. Usually protected by tiles even on slate roof.

<b>Land Drain</b>	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.
<b>Lath and Plaster</b>	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.
<b>Lean-to Roof</b>	Roof constructed with single pitch leaning from eaves against another external wall.
<b>Lintel</b>	Beam normally of concrete or metal - sometimes timber - spanning opening in a wall to support the wall above.
<b>Purlin</b>	Horizontal timber in roof space which provides intermediate support to rafters.
<b>Rafters</b>	Inclined timber immediately beneath the roof covering to which the tiling battens or boarding for sloping roofs are fixed.
<b>Reveal</b>	Vertical side face of an opening for a window or doorway between the frame and outer face of wall.
<b>Ridge</b>	The horizontal line at the apex of a roof. Usually has tile covering.
<b>Roof Truss</b>	Triangular framework of structural members supporting a roof, carrying horizontal members (purlins) which in turn support common rafters. (See also 'Trussed Rafter').
<b>R.S.J.</b>	Rolled steel joist - steel supporting beam.
<b>Septic Tank</b>	Sewage disposal system normally comprising two or three linked chambers within which self-purifying (bacteria) process takes place, beyond which is an outfall to land drains or a soakaway (see below) for the purified liquid effluent. Occasional emptying may be needed, 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.
<b>Soakaways</b>	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.
<b>Soffit</b>	The underside of overhanging eaves or an archway. Sometimes used to describe sloping sections inside a house beneath a roof or staircase.



<b>Spall</b>	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.
<b>Strut</b>	Load bearing timbers normally supporting purlins (see above) and fixed at an angle down to a wall or some other load bearing point.
<b>Stud Partitions</b>	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.
<b>Throat</b>	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.
<b>Tie Bar</b>	Metal bar inserted across building to tie outer walls together, i.e. to arrest movement in structure and improve stability.
<b>Trussed Rafter</b>	Derivative of roof truss (see above). Factory made timber framework used instead of common rafters, joined together by metal connectors or adhesive.
<b>Underpinning</b>	Construction of new foundations beneath existing walls to arrest uneven subsidence due to ground movement or foundation failure.
<b>Valley</b>	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.
<b>Verge</b>	Edge of a roof which runs from eaves to ridge at a gable (usually cement pointed).
<b>Wall Plate</b>	Horizontal timber at top of wall on which floor or roof timbers, rafters or joists rest.
<b>Wall Tie</b>	Metal connector used to provide structural link between inner and outer skins of cavity wall.
<b>Woodborer Infestation</b>	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.