

# Buying a Period property as a family home

## Independent Building Surveyors

Buying a family home can be a difficult process as the property has to suit the needs of a number of people. Things such as a good location and accessibility to suitable schools and shops can also be a factor. Other factors that need to be taken into consideration are whether the property is structurally sound or if there are problems within the property that will be expensive to resolve.

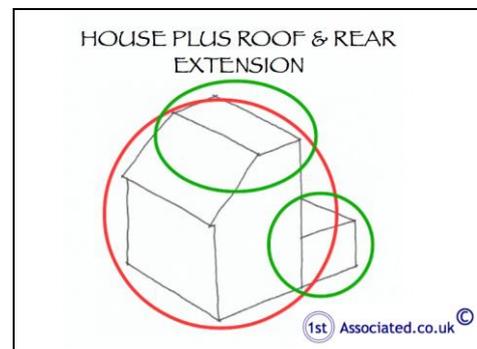


Street view of  
Georgian properties

As Independent Building Surveyors we can provide you with help and advice. We carry out structural surveys, home buyers reports, independent valuations, property surveys, engineers reports, structural reports, defects report so please call us on 0800 298 5424 for a friendly chat.

## How a Building Survey can help you find your ideal family home

We have recently carried out a survey for a young couple with a young child who were looking to buy a period property as a family home. They have been looking for the perfect family home for many years but it also needed to be a property that is large enough so that they can also work from home.



Older properties often have  
newer extensions added

## Buying a property from the Georgian or Victorian era

The house that we surveyed was built during the end of the Georgian era and has the benefit of large rooms and large bay windows that let in a lot of natural light.

In this case it also had the slightly more pointed architecture associated more with a Victorian property. The property has been



Bay windows let in a lot of  
natural light

amended with a further living space to the rear in a very modern, cotemporary style that certainly gives the wow factor to the house.

As mentioned earlier although the house will be enjoyed as a family home for many years to come it also needed to be a suitable place to work from.



More pointed architecture of a Victorian property

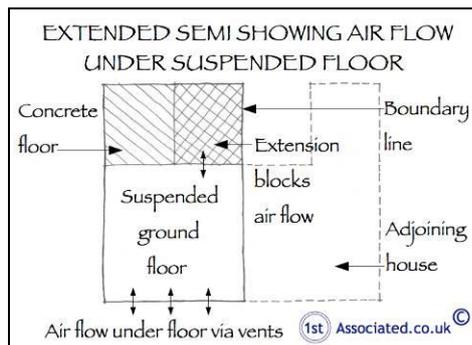
## Movement and dampness in the property

As our clients were able to meet us at the property we were able to identify and show them the problems within the property. During our survey we noted some structural movement in the property and we were able to explain to the clients how to resolve this.

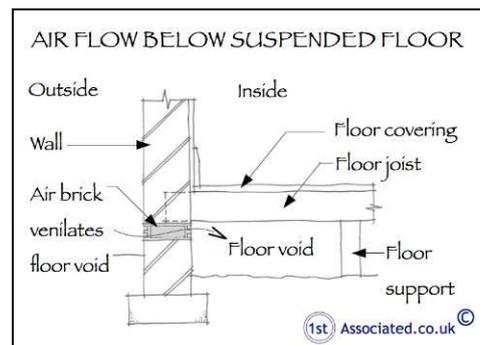


Movement causing cracks in the brickwork

We also found some dampness in the property and although this dampness is a problem it was the impact that it could have on the suspended timber floor construction that was the main issue. A suspended timber floor needs airflow underneath it to prevent wet rot.



Airflow below extended property



Suspended timber floor

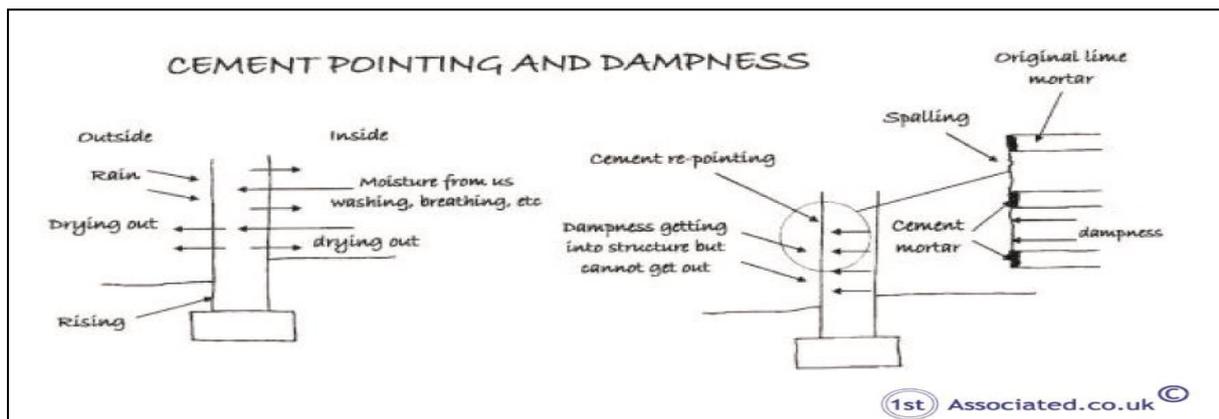
## The builders were not familiar with older, period properties

The dampness also showed how the builders were not familiar or experienced with working with older, period properties. It may be more accurate for us to say that some of the tradespeople that the builder used for various projects in the house were not used to dealing with older properties.



For example, we found the lead work to be of above average quality but the cement re-pointing that had taken place was completely inappropriate for a building of this age. The cement mortar used is simply too hard and a softer, less rigid mortar should have been used. Ideally this re-pointing should have been carried out in a lime mortar as older properties need to be allowed to breathe.

Cement pointing is too hard and will often fall out. A Lime mortar should have been used



Older or period properties need to be able to breathe

Here are some links to some surveying articles that may be of help to you.

<http://1stassociated.co.uk/listed-buildings.asp>

[http://www.1stassociated.co.uk/wideshut\\_2.asp](http://www.1stassociated.co.uk/wideshut_2.asp)

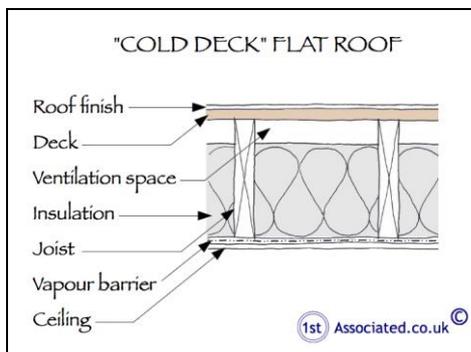
<http://www.1stassociated.co.uk/damp-proof-course-older-property.asp>

## Flat, flat roofs!

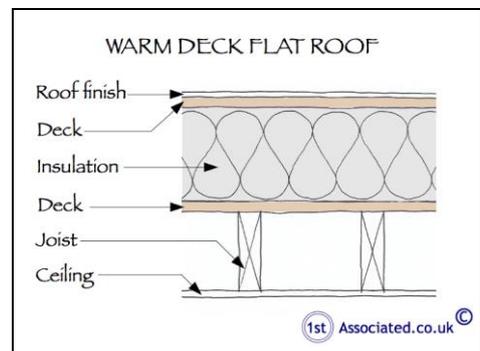
We also found what we would consider to be the curse of modern extensions, a large flat, flat roof! We use this term to show that the flat roof is absolutely flat with no pitch meaning that water is unable to run off of it. We always prefer to see a pitch of at least fifteen degrees even on a flat roof. When water is unable to run off the roof ponding can occur and this can cause all sorts of damage.



Ponding on a flat roof



Cold flat roof



Warm flat roof

### Ponding defined

This is where a pool or pond of water sits on a flat roof and the weight of it builds up and starts to depress the roof which then deteriorates the felt on it.

## Caveat Emptor or buyer beware!

Caveat emptor means Buyer Beware and this is why, if you are considering buying a property, you need to have a building survey carried out to find out if there are any problems within the property that you need to be aware of such as leaking flat roofs. Often estate agents will not advise you of these problems.

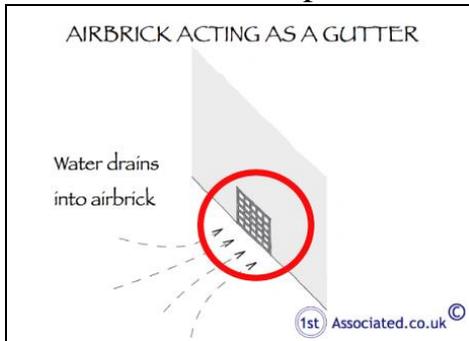


Leaks can be caused by ponding on a flat roof

## What do the circles and ovals mean in our reports?

We always include many photos within our reports. Sometimes where there is a problem in the property that we wish to emphasize or highlight we will use

circles or ovals to identify this. If the report, along with our photos, does not explain the problem or characteristics of a property enough then we also have a vast range of sketches that we have had commissioned exclusively for us that we can use in our reports.



Air brick acting as gutter



Air brick acting as gutter causing dampness internally

## Independent Building Surveyors

We are experienced independent building Surveyors who are knowledgeable in carrying out structural surveys on all types, styles and eras of buildings. If you are looking to buy a period property it makes sense to have a structural survey carried out by an Independent Surveyor. Phone us for a friendly chat on 0800 298 5424.

## Compare our Building Surveys but don't compare Apples with Thursdays



If you require a Building Survey or a Structural Survey on a home, house or commercial property we believe as Building Surveyors we have a wealth of experience and expertise that we can utilise to help you.

We are more than happy to email you examples of our Surveys that we have carried out on similar properties to the one that you are looking to buy although we do appreciate that all properties are unique.



We really believe that you should see what you are getting in the form of an example Survey before you purchase a property. What's more we are so confident with our higher than average standards that we believe that there is no other comparable survey available in the UK property and surveying market.

## **We have many other articles on our website for you to read**

Please have a good look around our website to see how much detail we go into regarding property and its associated problems in our articles. We go into this much depth and detail within our reports as well.

We trust you found the article of use and if you have any experiences that you believe should be added to this article that would benefit others, or you feel that some of the information that we have put is wrong then please do not pause to contact us (we are only human). Your comments will be appreciated.



The contents of the web site are for general information only and are not intended to be relied upon for specific or general decisions. Appropriate independent professional advice should be taken before making such a decision.

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