

# RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY

XXXXXXXXXXXXX,  
XXXXXXXXXXXXX,  
xxxxx Somerset  
BA5 xxx



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FOR

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Prepared by:

XXXXXXXXXXXXX

INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for your instructions of xxxxxxxx; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on xxxxxxxx.

The Building Survey takes the following format; there is an introductory section (which you are currently reading), which includes a synopsis of the building, and a summary of our findings.

We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some general information on the property market.

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a property is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

We recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas which you wish to discuss further and phone us.

We obviously expect you to read the entire report but we would suggest that you initially look at the summary, which refers to various sections in the report, which we recommend you read first so that you get a general feel for the way the report is written.

As part of our service we are more than happy to talk through the survey as many times as you wish until you are completely happy to make a decision. Ultimately, the decision to purchase the property is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

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# REPORT FORMAT

To help you understand our Report we utilise various techniques and different styles and types of text, these are as follows:

## **GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" typeface for clarity.

## **A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS**



We utilise photographs and sketches to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area. The sketches are not 100% technically accurate; we certainly would not expect you to carry out work based upon the sketches alone.

## **ORIENTATION**

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear, which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

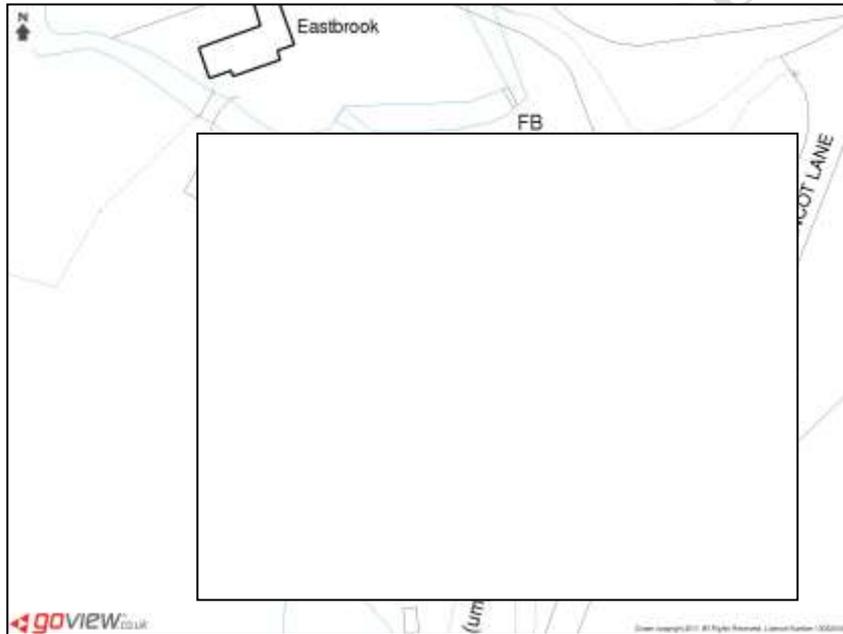
Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

# SYNOPSIS

## SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

This is large detached four storey stone built property including rooms in the roof and in the lower ground floor. It currently operates as a hotel, with 15 letting rooms. The property sits on a sloping site.

We are advised there are 17 acres (not measured) included with the  
xx  
xxxx.



The building is Grade II Listed. A copy of the Listed Building text that can be viewed on [BritishListedBuildings.co.uk](http://BritishListedBuildings.co.uk) and in xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx section of the website. It refers to the hopper heads on the rainwater system as being dated 1887, which means it was built in the Victorian era, albeit it is in a Jacobean style. Please see the Appendices at the back of the report.



Hopper head showing date 1887

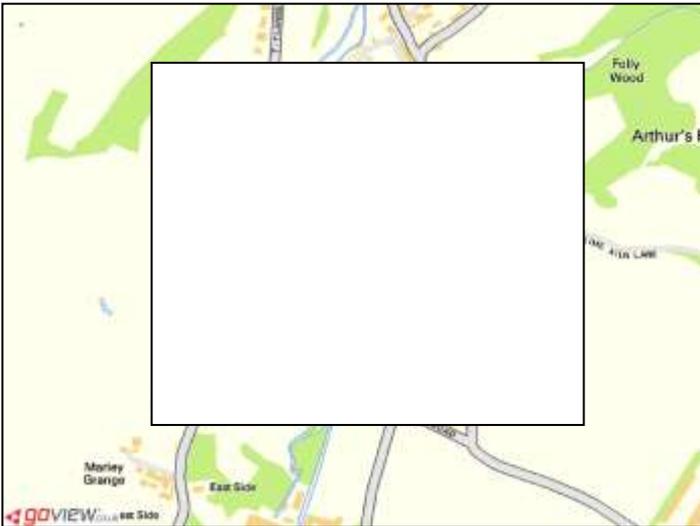
Over time this property has ranged from being a private dwelling, to a school (until 1973), to the hotel it presently is, as well as, we believe, it being left empty for some time.

If the age of the property interests you your Legal Advisor may be able to find out more information from the Deeds.

### Putting Life into Perspective!

*Some of the things that were happening around the time the property was built:*

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| 1872      | Voting by secret ballot is introduced                                  |
| 1878      | Electric Street Lights are installed in London                         |
| 1886/7    | Trafalgar Square became a rallying point for the poor against hardship |
| 1896      | First modern Olympic Games (Athens)                                    |
| 1899-1902 | Boer War between Britain and Boers in Southern Africa                  |
| 1900      | Max Planck formulates the Quantum Theory                               |
| 1901      | First Nobel Prizes awarded   |
| 1901      | Queen Victoria Died  |



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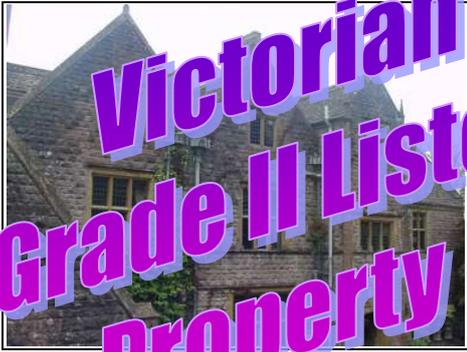
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# EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front elevation



Riverside view



Rear view



Rear terrace



Entrance road



River



Rear Terrace



Curiosities

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## ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

### Basement

- 1) Store facilities running under the main building, at head height and lower. Protected bats live within them.



Bats in basement

### Lower Ground Floor

- 2) Cinema (Minima)
- 3) Snooker room
- 4) Library
- 5) Sauna
- 6) Separate male and female toilets
- 7) Function room
- 8) Preparation area
- 9) Store room off Preparation area
- 10) Wine cellar (old swimming pool)
- 11) Room 5 (riverside view)  
Access to Patio area  
There is a basement underneath this access via the cinema or as it is known as a Minima



Library



Snooker room

### Upper Ground Floor

- 12) Reception office
- 13) Drawing room
- 14) Music room (Right hand side)
- 15) Riverview restaurant (River Axe)
- 16) Courtyard restaurant
- 17) Reception area
- 18) Kitchen
- 19) Prep room and associated store
- 20) Admin office



Drawing room

## **First Floor**

The first floor consists of:

- 1) Large landing, corridors and main staircase to right hand side
- 3) Courtyard View Bedrooms (10, 14, 15 and 8)
- 4) Riverside View Bedrooms (11, 12, 16 and 9)

## **Top Floor**

The floor consists of:

- 1) Large landing, corridors and main staircase to right hand side
- 2) Courtyard View Bedrooms (1, 2, 3 and 4)
- 3) Riverside View Bedrooms (6 and 7)

There are two staircases; the main staircase is located on the right side and the back staircase is located to the rear left hand side.

## **Outside Areas**

There is a driveway coming up to the rear courtyard area which was once the rear of the property that we have now classified as the front of the property. There is parking, a walled area and garage. We did not walk the acreage and had a brief view of the river, the pond, the waterfall, the writer's retreat and the therapy room, and we viewed the cricket ground and pavilion from a distance.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to take legal advice with regard to any leases and tenancies that you have on the ground as a whole and any responsibilities and rights that your have or the tenants have. We would be more than happy to advise you on these once you have been provided with this information.

## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

The following photos are of the internal of the property to help you recall what it looked like and the general ambience (or lack of). We have not necessarily taken photographs of each and every room.

### Lower Ground Floor



Cinema known as the Minima



Snooker Room currently has a silver plate collection used by Buckingham Palace between the wars



Bedroom 5 with en suite bathroom (the one we are advised Martin Miller used to use)



Wine cellar in old swimming pool



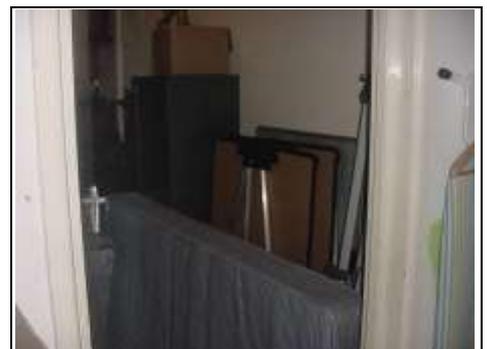
Function Room



Library



Prep room



Store off prep room

Upper Ground Floor (front of house)



Reception office



Reception area



Drawing Room



Courtyard restaurant



Riverside restaurant

Upper Ground Floor (back of house)



Staff office



Catering kitchen



Staff toilets

**First Floor**

**A selection of the rooms that we viewed. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms**

**Bedrooms with courtyard view**

Rooms, 10, 14, 15, 8



Room 15



Room 14



Room 8

**Bedrooms with river view**

Rooms 11, 12, 16, 9



Room 9



Room 16



Room 12

**Second Floor**

**A selection of the rooms that we viewed. All rooms have en-suite bathrooms**



Room 1



Room 6



Room 7

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## **SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION**

### **External**

Chimneys:	Stone chimneys
Main Roof:	Pitched stone slate roof with associated valley gutters
Sub Roofs:	Various sub roofs using stone slate and felt
Gutters and Downpipes:	Lead and hopper heads
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Plastic
Walls:	Coursed squared stonework (assumed)
Windows and Doors:	Metal framed single glazed windows set within stone mullion windows Some internal secondary double glazing.

### **Internal**

Ceilings:	Lath and plaster and plasterboard (assumed)
Walls:	Mixture of solid and hollow (assumed)
Floors:	Joist and floorboards, likely to be embedded(assumed). In some areas the joists are exposed together with the spine beams

### **Services**

We are advised (by Sid the maintenance man) that the property has a mains water supply, mains drainage, electricity and gas (assumed). The boiler is located on the left hand side in the basement area. The drains run out of the property to the rear left hand side. There are various electric panels throughout the property, we are advised these are three phased, we have not carried an Institute of Electrical Engineers test.

The above terms are explained in full in the main body of the Report.

We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Summaries are not ideal as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full.

It is inevitable with a report on a building of this nature that some of the issues we have focussed in on you may dismiss as irrelevant and some of the areas that we have decided are part of the 'character' of this property you may think are very important. We have taken in the region of 1,000 photographs during the course of this survey and many pages of notes, so if an issue has not been discussed that you are interested in or concerned about, please phone and talk to us before you purchase the property (or indeed commit to purchasing the property), as we will more than likely have noted it and be able to comment upon it; if we have not we will happily go back.

We have divided the Executive Summary into 'The Good', 'The Bad' and 'The Ugly', to help distinguish what in our mind are the main issues. We would comment that this is a large and complex property and our comments are often of a general nature. A full report on this property would require a survey taking several days. Obviously within the limited time available this has not been possible.

A full report on this property would require approximately one week's work; obviously within the limited time available this has not been possible.

### **The Good**

*Survey reports often are full of only the faults and general 'doom and gloom', so we thought we would start with some positive comments on the property!*

- 1) The property is in a great setting.
- 2) The property is set within 17 acres (not measured).
- 3) The property has a unique style inside and out.

We are sure you can think of other things to add to this list.

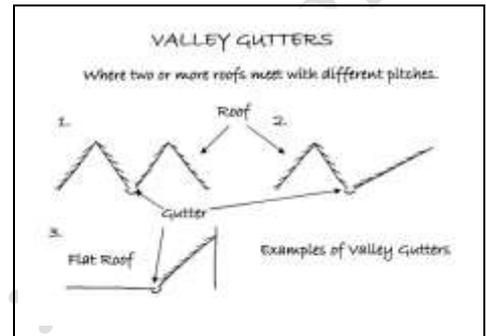
## The Bad

Problems / issues raised in the 'bad' section are usually solvable, but often need negotiation upon. However, a large number of them may sometimes put us off the property.

### 1) High Level Work to the chimneys, roofs and gutter areas

#### Roofs and valley gutters

Generally we would comment that the roof is in better condition than we were expecting for this age, type and style and height of property particularly due to the many valley gutters which can often be problematic and the flat roof area which can also be a problem. However, this type of roof does need constant maintenance.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend that lead repairs are carried out to the roof and valley gutters, where currently Flashband has been used, which we consider a temporary repair product.

#### Flashband Defined

Flashband is a sticky backed felt which is best used for temporary repairs only.



Valley gutter that is becoming blocked next to a lead guttering

### Trees and chimney stonework

We would also recommend cutting back the trees particularly to the right hand side to enable better sunlight and also some repointing work to the stonework. We would specifically draw your attention to the chimneys on the left and right side which look to be in need of some work although they will be difficult to access other than by scaffold. Scaffold costs on this height of property alone can run into many thousands of pounds due to its height which is why no doubt one of the reasons in the past this work has not been carried out and work has only been carried out on a limited nature to the areas that are easy to reach.



Middle rear chimney



Rear right hand chimney which is starting to deteriorate

### Stone Slate Roofs

We note that some of the roof stone slates have deteriorated and have been fixed with a lead tingle, which indicates the nails are rusting. Ideally these should be replaced properly. There is also an outside chance the roof has nail sickness, which is where the fixing nails have rusted away and as such then sections of the roof will need to be replaced. This can only really be ascertained by removing sections of the roof and having a close look. It is this risk that we are concerned about with the high level work areas.



Lead tingles



If you look closely you can see that lead tingles have been used in the centre of this roof.

Nail Sickness Defined

The weakening of the fixing nails to slates or tiles due to the nails which fix them to the battens rusting. This is normally attributed to problems with slate roofs.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would set aside the sum of £20,000 to £40,000 for high level work as you are likely to need a scaffold access in some areas and also there may be problems with the nail fixings deteriorating to the slates. Having said that good maintenance will keep this roof going for many years to come and you may wish to wait until there are major roof leaks before commencing work. Quotations required.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

2) **Gutters, Downpipes and Constant Maintenance**

With this type of property and these surroundings, which is surrounded with trees, you will have a constant battle against leaves filing the gutters, you need to have a good maintenance regime which from what we can see has been put in place by Sid Hodges the maintenance man. Sid is working to a budget and has come up with some practical ways of maintaining the property. He uses a weed killer to kill the weeds in the gutters (via a water pistol!) and then clears these using long ladders. This is not ideal and we would recommend that you buy a tower scaffold and make the maintenance easier and safer (see adjacent photo).



Guttering left hand side of property



Example of tower scaffold

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You will need to constantly clean the gutters and hopper heads and downpipes. We recommend you buy a tower scaffold as blocked gutters, valley gutter or hopper head would very quickly cause major problems.



Looking up at a lead hopper head and downpipe and surrounding trees

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £3,000 to £5,000 for a good quality tower scaffold, which can reach the heights of the gutters, valley gutters, hopper heads, etc; quotations required.

Please see the Gutters and Downpipes Section of this Report.

### 3) Metal Windows

We would group this work together as we feel it can be carried out together.

Metal windows require regular maintenance to ensure that you can open and close them fairly easily. We noticed that some of them were unopenable during the course of our survey.



Windows need regular maintenance

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a programme of maintenance where you work on each elevation and improve the windows year by year together with removing the moss from any stonework such as the stone window sills and ad hoc repointing, removing any cement mortar and replacing with a lime mortar



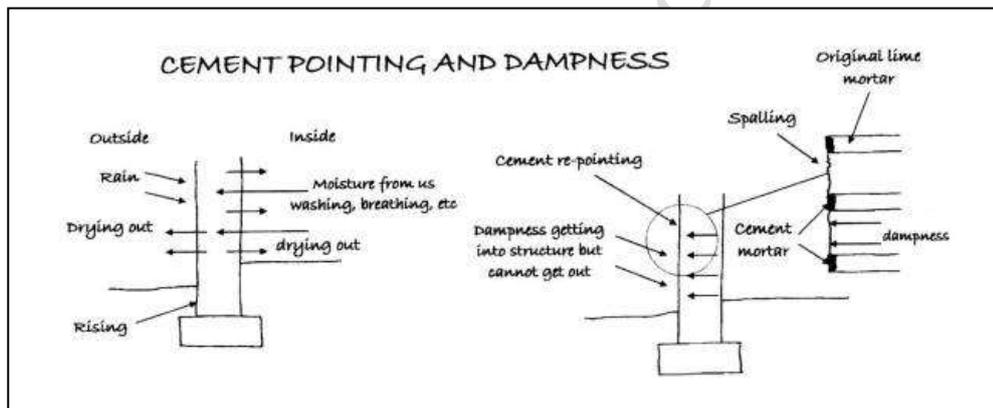
In this window you can see previous repairs

which will allow the property to breathe better and dissipate the dampness. We noticed that there was Lime Kiln Lane close by so there may be a ready source of local lime.



Moss on the window sill – this will need clearing

**ANTICIPATED COST:** We would consider this work as part of the general maintenance package. If you want to carry out one off repairs to the windows and cleaning the stonework we would expect costs in the region of £10,000 to £15,000. This will be changed considerably depending upon the access available; quotations required.



Please see the Walls and Windows and Doors Section of this Report.

#### 4) Foundations

We have carried out a visual inspection of the foundations and viewed the vaulted basement with the bats! We cannot see any unexpected cracks within the external walls. Our view within the vault was very limited. We believe there may be metal (likely to be cast iron), used as part of a reinforcement of the structure, as this was something used in this era, although we have not specifically seen it in the property and more investigation will be required.



Bats in the basement

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a detailed inspection of the basement focusing on the condition of any structural steel members and associated repair.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** In the region of £3,000 - £5,000; quotations required.

5) **Flooding**

You are located close to the river and the pond. Anyone living this close to a river needs to be aware with our unpredictable weather patterns there is always a possibility of flooding. We have spoken to Sid, the maintenance manager, who advises that it has risen quite high over the years during the wetter months and it runs relatively fast.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to check insurance policies before you commit to purchase to see what premiums are attached to the insurance, if indeed the property is insurable.

Please see the Foundations Section of this Report.

6) **Drainage**

We are advised by Sid the maintenance manager that the property is on main drains, although there are problems with the terylene pipework which is now out of shape and means that rodding has to take place, which is a two man operation involving lifting a man down a deep manhole.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend a close circuit TV report of the drains and also a logging of their location and condition. You may wish to consider replacing the terylene out of shape section; it just depends upon the demands you are going to put on the drainage system.

Please see the Main Drains Section of this report.

## 7) Services

### Plumbing and Heating

Plumbing and heating in a property of this age will never be ideal as it is always being added to and amended over the years and fitted around the property. From our discussions with regard to the plumbing and what we saw, some of the property suffers from low pressure, particularly where the showers are gravity fed, i.e. water coming directly from the mains which can cause problems (rooms 8, 9, 12 and 14).

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend you add scald controls to the shower units to limit the liability of people being burnt. From the ones that we turned on and our general discussion we would comment that these showers are less than impressive but to improve things would need a complete re-think of the mains water system and associated tanks, etc. Depending upon how you use the building you may wish to reallocate the water supply and tanks. It is the gravity fed showers that have the lack of pressure from the immersion heater warmed hot water coming out at constant pressure which lead to the poor shower conditions.

Sid the maintenance man advises there are a system of removable panels to the bathrooms where he can adjust the pressure of water coming in and out of the property to ensure the showers work better, which is not an ideal situation. It is unlikely you can add pumps to the water to improve the power of the showers without improving the cold water pressure, which would mean building both additional hot and cold water tanks.

### Heating of water

Whilst you do have relatively modern immersion heaters, there are better now available that you may wish to consider. You may wish to carry out a planned replacement.

### Electrics and other test reports

It would be fairly common to have up to date test reports on electrics and boiler installations. Sid, the maintenance man advised us during our question and answer session that the boiler is serviced annually but he is unaware of any electrical testing that has taken place other than the PAT testing (portable appliance test) in the three years he has been at the property.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend:

1. An Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) report by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor
2. A Gas Safe report by an approved heating engineer and commentary on the heating system.
3. An asbestos register
4. And, if you intend to keep the property open to the public, a Disability Discrimination Act Report (DDA).

Please see the Services Section of this Report.

8) **Water tanks in the roof causing condensation**

From what we can see water tanks in the flat roof are causing condensation and in turn wet rot to the timber roof above, which has the lead flat roof over this.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend lids for the water tanks and venting of the area, although we would add that it is very constricted in these areas and you may wish to look at relocating the water tanks.

Looking at dampness beneath flat roof that has condensation from the water tanks

We believe that the condensation needs to be stopped otherwise severe damage will be caused to the flat roof above. You can do this by adding vents which will be relatively cheap as well as putting lids on the tanks and reducing the insulation, but we would say there are too many tanks in too small a space which becomes a warm area and causes condensation.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

9) **Asbestos going to the boiler**

There are various asbestos flues externally and we also expect there to be a flue into the boiler internally. The immersion heater service cupboard on the first floor looks also to have some asbestos.



Asbestos flue



Asbestos going down to boiler in handyman's room and boiler room

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to get a Local Authority approved asbestos contractor to carry out tests and a report and ideally remove. The problem with having asbestos on the property is anticipated problems for any future purchasers. Please note we are not asbestos surveyors.

Please see the Roof Section of this Report.

10) **Dampness**

As we would expect in a property of this age, type and style and in this location, we found dampness, both in the form of rising damp and in the form of lateral damp. We would comment that we feel that dampness has been blown out of all proportion by damp proof companies, however in some areas plaster is deteriorating from the dampness coming through. If the property was left unheated we feel this would deteriorate rapidly.



Finding lateral dampness

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We have already mentioned that repointing externally would help the dampness problem, and also the cutting back of the trees and removal of vegetation to allow sunlight and drying of the property as well as making sure the gutters and downpipes are cleared and working properly and are regularly cleared. This would all help towards having a drier building.

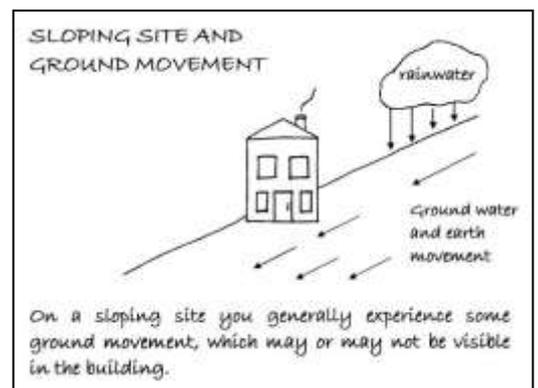
We would recommend a constant background heat is maintained in the property. You may wish to look towards some sort of green energy solution such as solar panels to reduce/off-set your bill, however this is a long term commitment in our experience.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** This is ongoing maintenance work, as mentioned earlier, together with upgrading with regard to heating of the property and if decoration is carried out you need to take care and possibly use a lining paper rather than removing existing paper as it will take the plaster with it.

Please see the Dampness Section of this Report.

11) **Rainwater and surface water management**

The property is on a sloping site; the adjacent road is considerably higher (approximately two to three metres) than the car park area. As such we feel that you will have problems with rainwater and surface water when it rains heavily and whilst this property is being sold in the summer we feel it will be a very different place in the winter and therefore we would look at managing how the rain travels around the building.



Currently you have one main drain in the centre of the car park and a running gully.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend increasing this to take the rainwater away and around the property and therefore minimise the unseen damage that can occur to the timber floors that are adjacent to the front and side walls.



Tarmac passing surface water towards the property

12) **Going green**

We think some thought should be taken with regard to going green, as in the long term this would help reduce energy costs (although be aware this is in the long, long term). At the moment Sid the maintenance man has taken a few measures, such as watering the garden via a pump from the river but it may also be of benefit to install large water tanks, possibly underground ones, which further compliment this. Also you may have the option of putting solar units on the top flat roof area which would be of out sight. Sid has started to look at ways to reduce the costs, such as putting low energy lights in but you want to look at a total energy management system which we will be happy to help you with if you so wish.

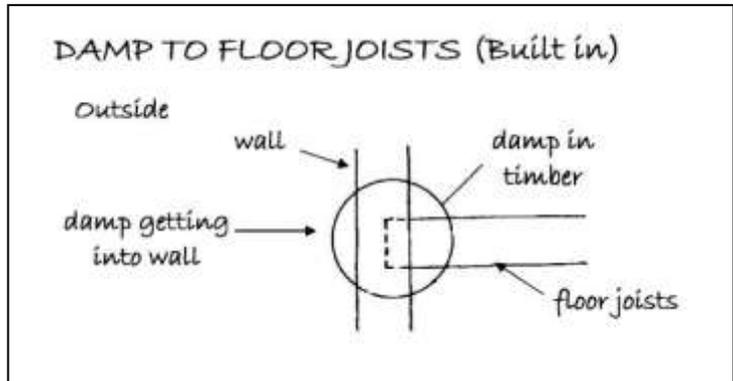
Please see the Outside areas Section of this Report.

13) **What will it look like in the cold light of day?**

We have seen this property very much at the best time of year on a warm sunny day in good conditions. However, what will it look like in the cold light of day? In the winter months when the bric a brac, etc, is removed/moved we feel that no doubt things will become visible that are currently hidden. For example, there is a lot of timber in the property and we would expect there to have been some woodworm in the past and possibly some presently that is active and hidden. Certainly there are damp conditions available that woodworm like (although it is perhaps not as warm as they prefer).

Woodworm and possible wet rot to embedded timbers

We would also expect the timbers in the floor joists to be embedded into the walls and therefore to be suffering to some extent from wet rot. These things considering the property's age, type and style, we feel have to be considered as an acceptable risk of taking on this type of property. We can see for example, within the basement area that some of the floor timbers have had additional support added to them and we would expect the timbers to the front of the property, where the water can drain in, to be affected more badly than those to the rear.



**ACTION REQUIRED:** We have mentioned earlier that a close detailed examination of the basement is required. This would also pick up looking at the timber ends. We feel that you need to fit semi-permanent lighting in the area to allow good visibility and also open up the structure slightly.

Please see our comments on rainwater and surface water management.

**The Ugly**

*We normally put here things that we feel will be difficult to resolve and will need serious consideration.*

We would not name anything specifically as ugly within this property, however many people would be put off by the sheer amount of maintenance that is required, and this is constant maintenance not one off maintenance. With a property of this size, as well as always having ongoing maintenance, to some extent it will also have minor repair projects always taking place. This is simply part of owning a property of this type.

## **Other Items**

Moving on to more general information.

## **Maintenance**

Sorry to talk about maintenance again, but it is a key item. It should be appreciated that defects which would normally be highlighted in a modern property, effectively form part of the property's overall character and style. Such defects are considered acceptable and may not have been specifically referred to as defects within the context of this Report.

This type of property will require ongoing maintenance and repair and a budget for such work must be allowed to ensure it is maintained in good condition. This will prevent undue and unnecessary deterioration.

## **Handyman/Maintenance management**

There are many issues that would quickly appear with this property if you didn't have a maintenance man on hand. These may be things that you are happy to deal with if you have knowledge and experience of this type of property and a head for heights and are happy to scale onto the roofs! We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

## **Purchase Price**

Please see our comments at the end of the report in the Appendices.

## **Every Business Transaction has a Risk**

Every business transaction has a risk, only you can assess whether that risk is acceptable to you and your circumstances. You should now read the main body of the Report paying particular attention to any "ACTION REQUIRED" points.

**Estimates of Costs**

Where we have offered an estimate of building costs please remember we are not experts in this area. We always recommend you obtain quotations for the large jobs before purchasing the property (preferably three quotes). The cost of building work has many variables such as the cost of labour and estimates can of course vary from area to area when giving a general indication of costs. For unskilled labour we currently use between £75 and £100 per day (the higher costs in the city areas) and for tradesmen we use between £100 and £200 per day for an accredited, qualified, skilled tradesman. Other variations include the quality of materials used and how the work is carried out, for example off ladders or from scaffold.

If you obtain builders estimates that vary widely, we would advise the work is probably difficult or open to various interpretations and we would recommend a specification is prepared. It would usually be best to have work supervised if it is complex, both of which we can do if so required.

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## SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION



The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are doing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

It is very difficult to capture all the items on a property of this size and we therefore have a general approach in many areas whilst focusing on the weak areas that we have found at this property. With the constraints of time that we had when looking at this size of property particularly with the amount of brickwork and hidden areas, we focus mainly at the characteristics and typical problem areas. We have identified a number of areas where further investigation is required. We have also highlighted that you do need to have some sort of regular maintenance scheme together with a planned maintenance scheme (larger repairs).

We feel that if you are used to more modern buildings you will feel the cold during the winter months and also the services will not be up to the standard you would normally expect, for example with a warm up time on the hot water pipe.

We would strongly recommend that you go on a SPAB Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings course on looking after older properties. They are based in London but there may be more local courses. If you contact Douglas Kent we have a good working relationship with him and they may even be prepared to come and visit you at the property.

We would refer you to our comments in the Executive Summary, 'Good', 'Bad' and 'Ugly' Section and ask that you re-read these.

As a general comment for any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion.

We would ask that you read the Report and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

Just a few more comments about the Report format before you read the actual main body of the Report.

### **TENURE – FREEHOLD (OR AS GOOD AS)**

We have assumed that the property is to be sold Freehold or Long leasehold, with no unusual or onerous clauses and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

### **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and are therefore eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

### **SOLICITOR/LEGAL ADVISOR**

To carry out your legal work you can use a solicitor or a legal advisor. We have used both terms within the report.

### **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys, as agreed to and signed by yourselves. If you have not seen and signed a copy of our terms of engagement please phone immediately.

### **OUR AIM IS ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SATISFACTION**

Our aim is for you to be completely happy with the service we provide, and we will try and help you in whatever way possible with your property purchase - just phone us.

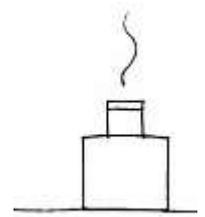
# THE DETAILED PART OF THE REPORT FOLLOWS, WORKING FROM THE TOP OF THE PROPERTY DOWNWARDS

We believe the property may be Grade II Listed  
(your Legal Advisor should confirm this and make their own enquiries)  
and as such it will require various permissions  
to be obtained before work is carried out, over and above that  
normally required and possibly the use of appropriate materials  
for the age, type and style of property.



## EXTERNAL

### CHIMNEY STACKS, FLUES, PARAPET WALLS ROOF WINDOWS



#### Chimney Stacks

*Chimneys developed originally from open fires placed within buildings. From this, the chimney has developed to its present day format where it is used as an aesthetic feature and focal point rather than purely just to heat the room.*

This property has six main chimneys; three to the front and three to the rear. On the visible sides they were all in reasonable condition. We would, however wish to have a closer look at the front left hand chimney and the two chimneys to the right hand side. The front left hand chimney seems to be coming away from the property slightly. This looks to be a historic problem as we can see repairs have been carried out. To the right hand side the chimneys are suffering due to the trees blocking the sunlight and lack of air movement in the area, as is the right hand elevation in general.

We would make the general comment that repairs in the past have been basic and look to be in cement mortar rather than a lime mortar and on the flashings a cement mortar has been used when we feel mastic, such as Plumbers Mate, would be a better solution.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend the trees are cut back to allow light to get to the chimneys and stonework generally and allow air circulation around the building. We recommend ad hoc repairs are carried out to the chimneys. We note no specific major issues; we feel they have suffered from wear and tear over the years.

We would also recommend that you have a maintenance man who has experience with stone and lead work (or you put Sid the existing maintenance man on a course).

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The two front left hand side chimneys



Middle rear chimney



Two right hand chimneys

## **Parapet Walls**

*Parapet walls are usually walls that are above roof level and often sit on the boundary of the property.*

There are stone parapet walls formed to the gable of the roofs. We were pleased to see that these had lead flashings and stone cappings. Whilst it should be appreciated we were viewing them from a distance, what we could see looked in average condition. We noted in the roof damp staining. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Parapet wall

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to closely check the lead flashings around the parapet walls as part of a maintenance programme.

Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

## Roof Windows

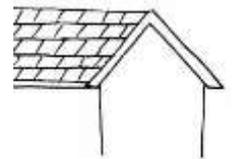
There is a plastic roof window on top of the main roof. It would be worth replacing with a more appropriate roof light that can also give access to the main roof from the corridor below. Consideration should also be given to putting some water tanks actually on the roof.



Roof light

It seems inevitable with roof windows that they will sooner or later leak. If this doesn't occur then they seem prone to condensation. Keep a cloth handy!

## ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERLAYERS



*The Roof Coverings and Underlayers section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.*

*The underlayer's function is to minimise wind and water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:*

We will consider the roofs in two areas; the high level flat roof and the high level pitched roofs.



An old aerial photo we found looking down onto the property showing the many roofs and valley gutters

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## **Main Pitched Roof**

The roof is pitched and clad with a stone slate, which has numerous valley gutters. We can see areas of the roof, approximately twenty percent, which are starting to deteriorate.

### **Repairs to the slates using lead tingles**

The fixings have deteriorated as they are held in place using lead strips, known as lead tingles. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary with regard to the possibility of nail sickness.

In other areas there is some deterioration to the surface of the stone slates and moss coverings particularly to the left hand side (see below section).

Having said that, visually internally there are no signs of major leaks and due to the cost of scaffolding to gain access to any areas to carry out repairs we recommend a good maintenance programme rather than replacement.



Main roof



Close up of slates

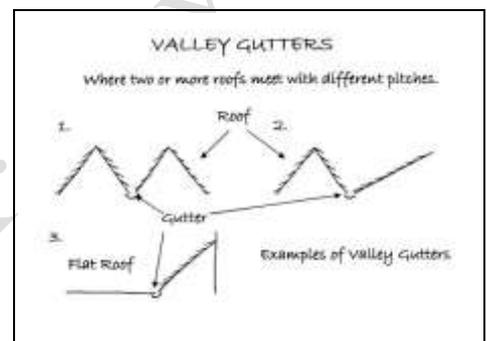
## Lead Valley Gutters

There are numerous lead valleys to the property. First of all, we were pleased to see that they were lead, although we can see that some of them have had Flashband repairs (sticky backed lead) which we consider a temporary repair. It really was in a far better condition than we would expect.



Valley gutter

We have been able to examine two of the bases of the valley gutters from within the property (our view has been very limited, as you can imagine, due to the mass of stored items in the cupboards and general configuration of the property not allowing us access), but the two areas that we were able to examine we could see there had been minor leaking but nothing unacceptable.



## Low level left hand side of roof

The worst area of roof that we can see is at low level to the left hand side where the kitchen and store area is. There is no obvious reason for its poor condition. It may have been covered with a tree or bush for some time and had water sitting on it.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would clear this roof of moss and of vegetation and then check the condition. In addition at the same time there is a hidden valley gutter, investigation should be carried out here to check for excessive dampness.



Low level left hand side of roof



Close up showing excessive moss

## Rolled Lead Flat Roofs

The property has a large flat roof area which sits on a timber decking. On the day of the survey there were areas where there was water ponding, which is not ideal. The lead flat roof looks in average to below average condition due to the water sitting on it, but having said that we could see from within the roof below there is some wet rot to the timber decking. This we believe is more likely to be from the water tanks that were situated in this area causing condensation, it could also be roof leaks or it could be a combination of both.

### LEAD GENERAL INFORMTION

Lead has been used for both pitched and flat roofs over many hundreds of years. Lead sheeting will be either cast or provided in a milled sheet, the latter being the most common. The two main characteristics of lead sheeting are that it is very pliable.



Rolled lead flat roof



Water ponding

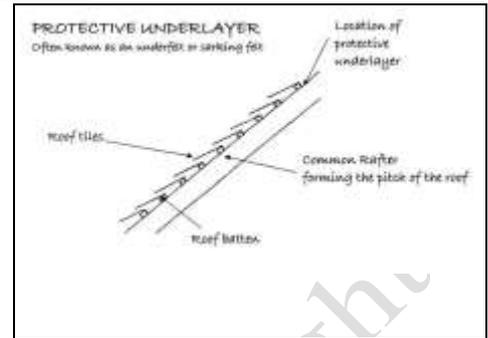


Water ponding

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## Protective Underlayer for pitched roof and flat roof

*From the 1940s onwards felts were used underneath tiles/slates to stop wind damage and water penetration, which, in more recent years, have been replaced with plastic equivalents. These are commonly known as underfelts, although the name is no longer really appropriate, as felt is not the only material used.*



We were looking under the roof to see the decking and would normally expect to see a protective underlayer of Hessian. We have not seen that in this instance and believe that the majority of the stone slates may be very old, and possibly had major repairs since the 1970's.



We have spoken about problems with condensation occurring over the water tank areas which has the lead flat roof above it and we have spoken of areas of the valley gutters where dampness is getting in.

Dampness coming through the flat roof below the lead work

The greatest difficulty with this property is actually viewing these areas and as such there will be a difficulty in repairing them.



Dampness directly above the water tank

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to carry out a programme of maintenance, which not only looks at repairs necessary but also ensures there is a means to access the roofs in various areas. We very rarely come across roofs such as this, where we literally cannot see any of them. We would estimate we have seen about five, possibly ten per cent at the very most of the underside of the roofs in this survey. Typically we are looking at ninety to one hundred per cent of roofs.

We had great difficulty viewing any of the pitched roof. We were able to get to the valleys in two areas as below. We have not been able to view the actual underside of the stone slate roofs.



Far left hand side – here you can see a timber decking has been used to support the valley gutter which looks in reasonable condition



Far right hand side – we could see some water staining indicating that dampness was getting through

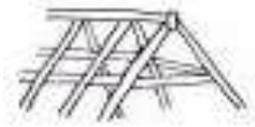
### **Ventilation and condensation within roofs**

We are finding within older properties where they have now had modern levels of insulation in them together with the general rising of temperatures within properties, condensation is occurring more and more. Therefore it is getting more important to ensure that there adequate ventilation within the roof voids. We would recommend that you carry out this work when the opportunity arises.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

Unfortunately we were only able to see approximately eighty percent of the main roof from ground level or via standing on the lead flat roof. We have made our best conclusions based upon what we could see, however a closer inspection may reveal other defects.

For further comments with regard to ventilation please see the Roof Structure and Loft Section.



## ROOF STRUCTURE AND LOFT

### (ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)

*The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.*

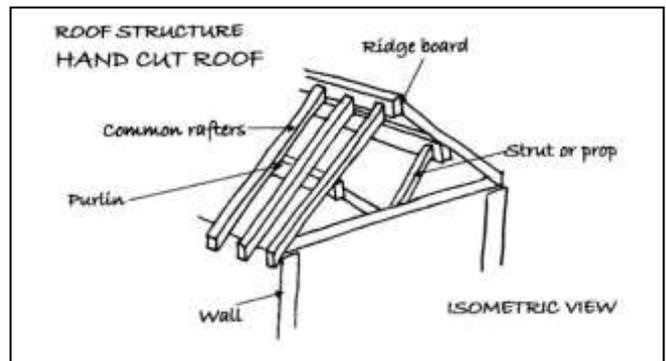
#### Loft Access

The main roof has no single access point but has lots of loft hatches and openings throughout the property, although you can see next to nothing through most of them.

The lead covered flat roof area has one access point however due to the water tanks it is very difficult but for the smallest, thinnest and most agile of person to get down this roof. Thought and consideration needs to be given as to how to get better access to the roof points.

#### Roof Structure

The top floor rooms are effectively formed within the roof structure while hiding the structure itself. It looks to have been an original design feature and does make good use of the available space. However from a surveying point of view it limits our access and view of the roof. To the right is a sketch that without the struts or props follows the basic configuration we would expect within the current guest bedrooms.



## **Roof Timbers**

As mentioned we can see very few roof timbers other than the ones beneath the lead flat roof; probably between five and ten per cent of the whole roof. However we would comment we have looked for the following and have found none of these issues:

- Serious active woodworm
- Structurally significant defects to the timbers
- Structurally significant dry rot
- Structurally significant wet rot

Our examination was limited, as we have mentioned several times, by the general configuration of the roof, the insulation, the stored items and the lack of access. What we could see was generally found to be in average condition considering its age (although we were looking at five to ten percent of the roof only). It is, however, feasible that there are problems in the roof that are hidden.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The only way to get a better view of the roof structure is to have panels cut open in selective areas. We are more than happy to come back and supervise, however we would comment that we could see no specific reason to indicate that the timbers are failing as the roofs are running reasonably level and true. Normally the weight of the stone slate roof would cause sagging if there was a major problem with the timber. Having said that, from what we have seen there has been a limited budget in recent years and there may have been some leaks in the valley gutters which we have noted in the earlier section. We would recommend additional access hatches are added to the roof spaces and ventilation.

## **Water Tanks**

We could see two water tanks in the main lead covered flat roof void, we are advised there are four and we are also advised there are three further tanks in the left hand roof over the kitchen area. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary with regard to water pressure problems. It really does depend upon how much you intend to use the property and in what way as to the ideal solution with regard to water in the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We noted that some of the tanks didn't have lids; we would recommend that they are drained down and lids fitted. We would always recommend that water tanks be drained down and cleared of any debris etc. (we have seen dead birds and other unmentionable things in these tanks). As you are cleaning your teeth with this water it is best that it is as clean as possible!

**Insulation**

In the few areas of the roof that we could get to there seemed to be a mass of insulation without any real overall thought being given to the condensation problems that could occur, but please see our Thermal Efficiency Section of this Report.

**Electrical Cables**

We can often identify the age of an electrical installation by the age of wiring found in the roof. In this case there was insufficient quantity to comment.

Please see our further comments in the Services Section of this Report.

Finally, we would ask you to note that this is a general inspection of the roof, i.e. we have not examined every single piece of timber. We have offered a general overview of the condition and structural integrity of the area.

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# GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES



*The function of the gutters and downpipes is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.*

*Defective gutters and downpipes are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.*

## Gutters, Downpipes and Hopper Heads

You have an extensive and ornamental set of lead gutters, downpipes and hopper heads, which add character to the property. Due to the surrounding trees and the associated leaves there will need to be a great deal of regular cleaning:

- 1) Valley gutters
- 2) Hopper heads
- 3) Guttering
- 4) Downpipes



Unusual hopper head detail

Sid the maintenance man has kept the gutters generally in a cleanish state at present (we are looking at it during the easiest time of year to keep clean). We spoke to him during our question and answer session and he explained how he had devised different methods to clean the various gutters around the property in a very practical manner.



Lead gutter on left hand side of building

We do however think you need to carry out proper repairs to the gutters and we noted that in the gutters and valley gutters some of them had Flashband repairs and we would also suggest that you review the various methods that Sid uses to get to the roofs to ensure you are happy with them on a health and safety point of view. Please note our earlier comments about buying a tower scaffold.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** A system of regular maintenance of the gutters, hopper heads and valley gutters needs to be carried out to ensure you do not have major water leak problems with this property.

### Soil and Vent Pipes

The property has had plastic soil and vent pipes added over the years as requirements to have wash hand basins, showers and bathrooms in the property has increased. Whilst we do not feel the plastic soil and vent pipes are appropriate for this age, type and style of building, they serve a practical purpose.



Plastic soil and vent pipe

**ACTION REQUIRED:** You may wish to look at replacing these. In some areas plants have grown over the soil and vent pipes and drain pipes, which is not ideal as it can in time damage the stonework. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



Plants growing over soil and vent pipes and also the downpipes

Finally, gutters and downpipes and soil and vent pipes have been inspected from ground level. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

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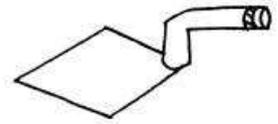
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# WALLS

*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

## Stone Walls

The walls are finished in a squared coursed stone. This is in average condition for its age, type and style. It has had some repair work carried out to the mortar using cement rather than the original lime mortar. This is what we generally come across. There will always be maintenance work to be carried out on stonework such as ad hoc repointing and also in this case general clearing of the moss.



Trees need cutting back

## Stone Mullion Windows (and in some cases Transoms)

### Stone Windows Defined

Stone mullion windows are stone windows with a vertical stonework and stone mullion and transom windows have vertical and horizontal stonework.

We can see the stone mullion windows have been repaired many times over the years and some would benefit from repair. Some of the stone is suffering from moss sitting on the ledges particularly the window sills.



Moss on ledges of window sills

There is much debate in the stone masonry world whether defective stone should be cut out and replaced with new units completely or alternatively there is stone indenting also known as piecing in which relates to replacing the decayed section only.

For less significant stone repairs there is stone surface repair using a repair mortar. This can take the form of a natural stone repair mortar which is a lime based mix blended with sand and aggregates or a synthetic stone repair mortar using polymers as an aggregate which are fast drying.

Another question in the masonry world is whether to make the stone repairs match in and noticeable or whether they wish them to be noted as with some historic buildings this is classed as an honest repair and shows how the property has developed over the years. The feeling seems to be very much that repairs should be unnoticeable, however most historic building work now has noticeable repairs and these are classed as “honest” repairs and show that the property has developed and been repaired over the years rather than trying to - hide repair work.

To some extent the choice is yours, to some extent you do need to consult the local conservation officer as this is a Listed building.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Initially we recommend cutting back of trees around the property to allow sunlight and air circulation. We also recommend the purchase of a good quality tower scaffold (see earlier photo) to first of all aid investigation and then maintenance of the property with a safe access.



Internal stone repairs to the windows

The tower scaffold of course can be used for stonework repairs, window stonework repairs together with painting of the windows and clearing of the gutters and hopper heads. This can be used for repairs to the stonework, windows sills and windows and accessing some of the guttering.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

STONE GENERAL INFORMATION

Stone has been used for many years, particularly where it's a local material. However the preparation is relatively expensive when compared with other building materials and, as such, was used initially for the most prestigious buildings. The use of stone in domestic structures became more general from the 15th Century and increased towards the end of the 16th century as timber became scarce but brick had not yet become established. By the end of the 17th century stone was very much the accepted building material, especially where it was a natural resource.

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and/or randomly via a ladder. Where the window and door lintels are concealed by stonework / plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age stone lintels or metal lintels are common, which can be susceptible to deterioration that is unseen, particularly if in contact with dampness.

Our comments have been based upon how the stonework / plaster has been finished. We have made various assumptions based upon what we could see and how we think the stonework / plaster would be if it were opened up for this age, style and type of construction. We are however aware that all is not always as it seems in the building industry and often short cuts are taken. Without opening up the structure we have no way of establishing this.

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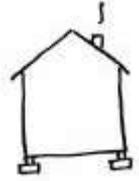
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## FOUNDATIONS

*The foundations function is, if suitably designed and constructed, to transfer the weight of the property through the soil. As a general comment, many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we think of them today, and typically a two-storey property would have one metre deep foundations.*

### Foundation Material

Typically, with a property of this period and size, we would expect to find a stone foundation onto a bedrock. In this case we could see that there is a vaulted basement which has been set on stone (the vaults look to be formed in brickwork with a slurry mortar over them). There may well also have been a metal structural frame in the property, we simply don't know without opening the structure up.

The foundations have stood the test of time, with very little movement visible to the stone walls. We have been in the vaulted basement (with the bats) and have not seen any excessive cracking, although due to the bats our viewing was restricted to the right hand side area and we have not gone into the sections that are lower than two foot and full of bats.



Vaulted basement



Bats



We didn't disturb the many bats in the lower sections

We feel this vaulted foundation design will accommodate any flooding. Living so close to the River Axe, you do need to accept there is an element of risk. We are advised during the winter wetter months the river can fill up quite rapidly and become quite fast flowing. It has not flooded in recent years. Of course this isn't a reason why it won't flood in years to come.

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**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to check your insurance policy as they will have a view on the risks in this situation. Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

**Building Insurance Policy**

You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc. You must keep with the existing insurance policy particularly during the earlier years in case there are any issues with the property.

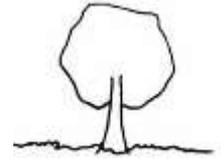
**ACTION REQUIRED:** Your solicitor needs to make specific enquiries with the vendor's solicitor that no claims have been made with regard to structural movement within the property.

Finally, we have not excavated the foundations but we have drawn conclusions from our inspection and our general knowledge of this type, age and style of property.

As no excavation has been carried out we cannot be 100 percent certain as to how the foundation has been constructed and we can only offer our best assumptions and an educated guess, which we have duly done.

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**TREES**



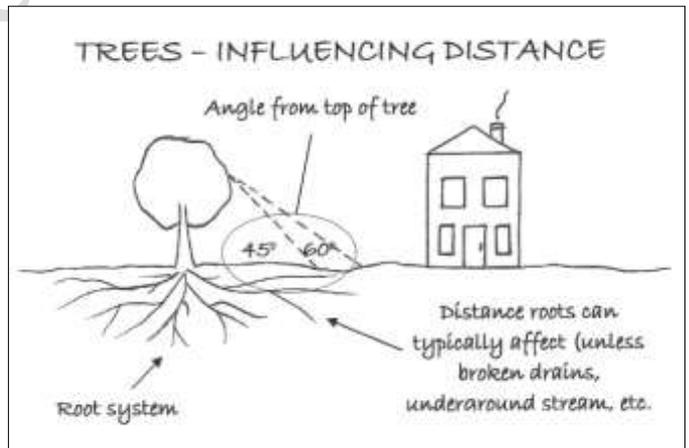
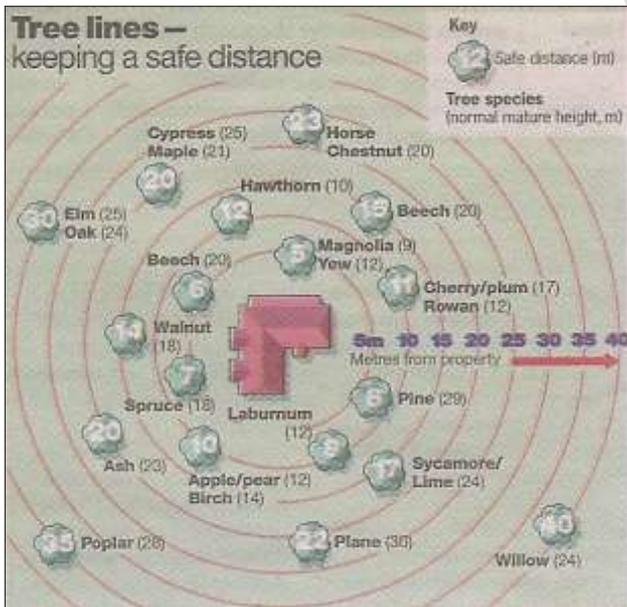
*Trees within influencing distance of a property can affect the foundations by affecting the moisture content of the soil.*

Part of the feature of this property are the surrounding trees. However we do feel that you need to seek professional advice as the trees are relatively close in what we would term as influencing distance of the property, which means that they can affect the foundations and underground services. We would add that properties with trees nearby will always be susceptible to movement.



Trees growing close to left hand elevation

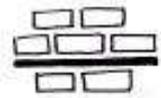
**ACTION REQUIRED:** You need to obtain advice from an arboriculturist (not a tree surgeon). We would suggest that they do a five or ten year plan of maintenance on the trees in the nearby vicinity to help you manage the area. Please see our comments within the Executive Summary.



Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property. It is not quite as simple as our sketch; it depends on the tree, its maturity, the soil type etc., etc.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.



## DAMP PROOF COURSE

*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required various other basic standards. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout London and then the country as a whole, although this took many years for it to become standard practice.*

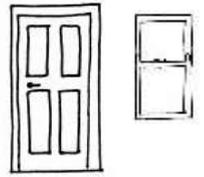
In properties a damp proof course may have been built in as the Public Health Act of 1875/77 did require a damp proof course, although we have been unable to find one and there may well be one hidden. We would comment that we found dampness.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Your attention is drawn to the section of the report specifically dealing with dampness.

Finally, sometimes it is difficult for us to identify if there is a damp proof course in a property. We have made our best assumptions based upon our general knowledge of the age, type and style of this property.

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# FASCIAS AND WINDOWS AND DOORS

*This section covers fascias, soffits and bargeboards and windows and doors, and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc. Fascias and soffits offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of the guttering. Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property.*

## Fascias

The property has a stone fascia behind the lead guttering. This can of course deteriorate if the lead gutters are leaking. As mentioned we noticed Flashband repairs which may well have been leaking for some time before they were repaired. These areas need to have repair as you go around each elevation. Please see our recommendations in the Executive Summary.



Stone fascia

## Windows and Doors

The property has singled glazed metal windows with leaded lights in some cases. Internally there are secondary glazing, this ranges from double glazed units to what look like DIY secondary units all set within stone windows.



Leaded light window – the large windows give in a lot of light

We would refer you to the walls section where we have talked more about the stone windows but we would comment that the stone window sills and some of the detailing around them are suffering from deterioration, in some areas with moss sitting on them. We would recommend this is removed, this together with allowing more sunlight and air circulation around the building and sensible repairs are recommended within the next few years.



Close up of leaded light windows 53

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The metal windows themselves in many cases have suffered from rusting and warping and we can't open them. You will need to diligently work around the property making good the windows and redecoration. As mentioned in the Executive Summary we would recommend that you work elevation by elevation to achieve this task.



Windows deteriorating

Finally, we have carried out a general and random inspection of the external detailing. In the case of the fascias and soffits it is typically a visual inspection from ground level. With the windows and doors we have usually opened a random selection of these during the course of the survey. In this section we are aiming to give a general overview of the condition of the external joinery. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.



Secondary glazing and stone repairs if you look closely

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## EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

*The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.*

### Paint When?

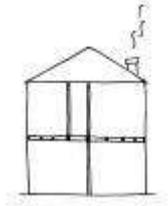
In an ideal world redecoration is needed as soon as possible however we would recommend the idea of working elevation by elevation in the form of planned maintenance work. In addition to this, there will need to be day to day maintenance work and of course availability of rooms to gain access to the windows which could also affect the programme of work. Basically we feel that if you work elevation by elevation this would be the best way of bringing the maintenance and decoration requirements up to standard.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** In summary, the sooner redecoration is carried out the better. If the budget is not available we would recommend working elevation by elevation.

Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

## INTERNAL



# CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions.*

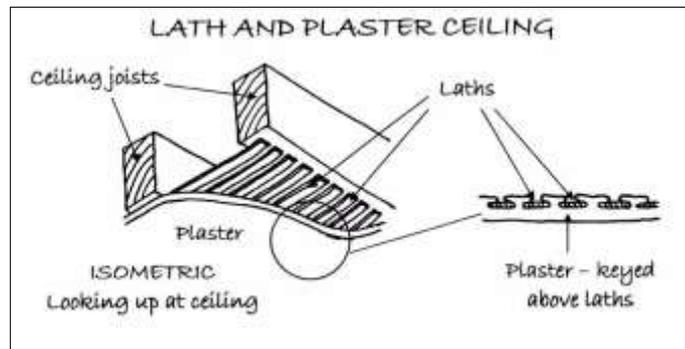
### Ceiling Material

As should be expected with a building of this age, the ceilings have been finished in a variety of ways, from the original lath and plaster to more modern plasterboard. We noted and spoke with Sid the maintenance man about some ceiling areas that have suffered from water leaks, etc, over the years. We consider this to be normal in an operational hotel, although not ideal, tends to be the case in older hotels from what we have seen.

Generally in this age of property the ceilings are formed as a separate entity from the floor above. We have not opened up the floors or the ceilings to check or confirm this. If this is the case it does give a good opportunity for having services between the two.

#### Lath and Plaster Defined

Laths are thin strips of timbers which are fixed to the structure. Wet plaster is applied to the laths, usually in several layers. The plaster forms a key as it is forced between the laths. This plaster, once dry, is given further coats and often a decorative finish.



#### Plasterboard Defined

The usual name for Gypsum plasterboard which is building board with a core of aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, used as a dry lining.

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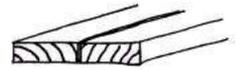
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# FLOORS



Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

## Basement

The floor is formed of earth.

## Lower Ground Floor, Upper Ground Floor, First Floor and Second Floor

We have assumed that the construction is joist and floorboards as this is typical in this age of property. Given the age of the property the timbers are likely to be embedded in the walls, which means wet rot is likely without opening the floors up we cannot comment further. The floorboards run a variety of ways.

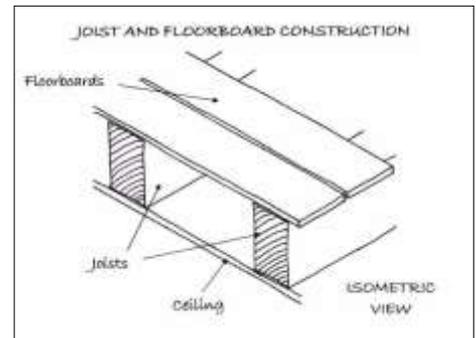


Spine beams

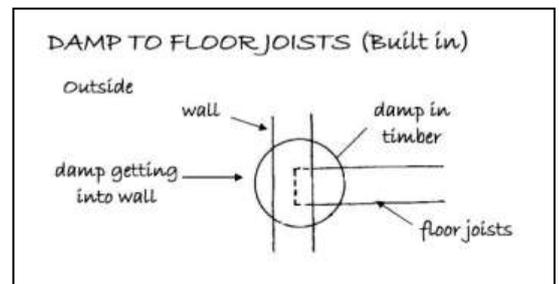
In some rooms we can see spine beams and the floor boards have been used horizontally rather than vertically, as this is typical in this age of property.

### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

These are usually at first floor level consisting of a joist supported from the external walls, either built in or, in more modern times, sitting upon joist hangers, sometimes taking additional support from internal walls, with floorboards fixed down upon it.



Finally, we have not been able to view the actual floors themselves due to them being covered with fitted carpets and floor coverings etc. The comments we have made are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction. We would emphasise that we have not opened up the floors in any way or lifted any floorboards.



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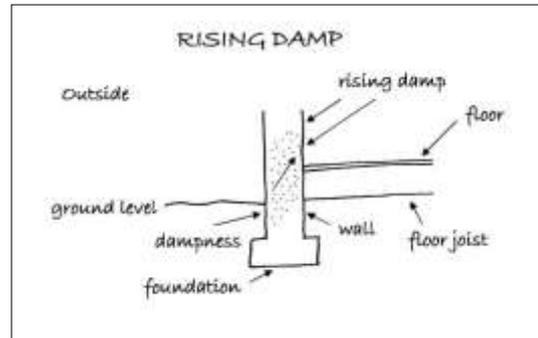


# DAMPNESS

*In this section we look at any problems that are being caused by dampness. It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause and not the effect of the dampness.*

## Rising Damp

*Rising damp depends upon various components including the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation of the material, amongst other things. Rising damp can come from the ground, drawn by capillary action, to varying degrees of intensity and height into the materials above.*



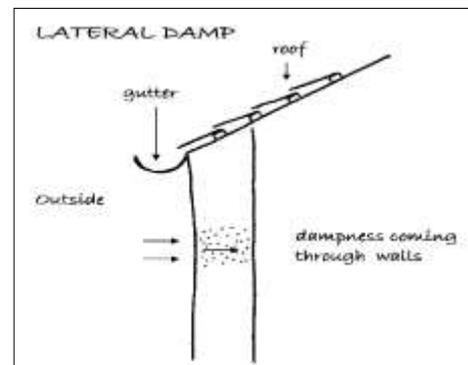
A random visual inspection and tests with a moisture meter have been taken to the perimeter walls and some internal walls. The readings we obtained indicated that there is dampness in the property which we were not surprised at, particularly the front wall which from what we can see has all the rainwater discharging on it from the adjoining car park. We will not be at all surprised if there is damage and deterioration to the timbers to this elevation.

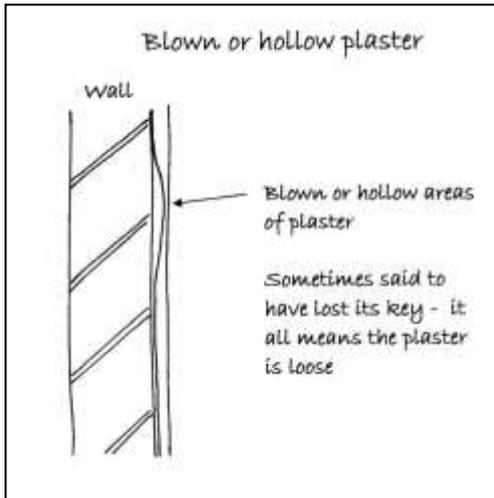
**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend some sort of drainage system in the car park to move the water away from the property and around it. Remember this property is on a sloping site and the water needs to get from the top of the site to the bottom and will do so whether it is through the property or around it! Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

*This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall materials or inadequate gutters and downpipes, such as poorly jointed gutters.*

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to the perimeter walls and we did get damage readings. We also noted above average amount of blown plaster, indicating dampness is coming in the walls.





Testing for and finding lateral dampness!

Please see our comments with regard to repointing externally and also checking and keeping the gutters, downpipes and hopper heads, etc, in good condition.

We also noted dampness coming in from the car park into the basement area through to the Prep Room.



Dampness in Prep Room coming from car park area

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## Condensation

*This is where the humidity held within the air meets a cold surface causing condensation.*

The property has many internal bathrooms and shower units. We generally find that condensation can occur in these. During the course of our survey we could see only one room where condensation was occurring. This does depend upon how you utilise the property. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues and good extraction in the humidity creating areas, such as the bathrooms/shower rooms and kitchen areas.



Dampness coming in through the flat roof

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling. We have not carried out tests to BRE Digest 245, but only carried out a visual inspection.

## INTERNAL JOINERY



*This section looks at the doors, the stairway, the skirting boards and the kitchen to give a general overview of the internal joinery's condition.*

### Doors

The property has painted timber panel doors and, all things considered, they are in reasonable condition and fit acceptably.

### Staircase

There are two major staircases to the property; the original main staircase and the back staircase (servants staircase as was).

The main staircase is formed in timber and is a substantial structure. The rear staircase looks to have been added to with a metal staircase to give access to the top floor, which we assume also is considered a fire escape.

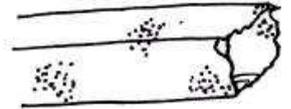
## Kitchen

The property has both commercial kitchens on the upper ground floor. It also has a prep area within the basement. You may need to amend the kitchen depending upon your requirements. We have not tested any of the kitchen appliances.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you are carrying out public functions you will need to comply with Environmental Health regulations..

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have viewed a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

## TIMBER DEFECTS



*This section considers dry rot, wet rot and woodworm. Wet and Dry rot are species of fungi, both need moisture to develop and both can be very expensive to correct. We would also add that in our experience they are also often wrongly diagnosed.*

### Dry Rot

*Dry rot is also sometimes known by its Latin name *Serpula lacrymans*. Dry rot requires constant dampness together with a warmish atmosphere and can lead to extensive decay in timber.*

In the areas inspected no evidence was found of any significant dry rot but we would comment that we have not opened up the floors and have not had access to the majority of the roof; we believe we have seen about five to ten per cent of it. In this age of property there is always a chance of dry rot.

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## Wet Rot

*Wet rot, also known by its Latin name Contiphora puteana, is far more common than dry rot. Wet rot darkens and softens the wood and is most commonly seen in window and doorframes, where it can relatively easily be remedied. Where wet rot affects the structural timbers in a property, which are those in the roof and the floor areas, it is more serious.*

We would expect there to be some wet rot within the floor joists, particularly the joist ends where they embed into the walls as we have found dampness, and also we would expect some wet rot within the valley gutters; please see our photos in the roof section.



Dampness in timbers to valley gutters

A problem with this property is condensation as well with regard to the flat roof, where again there is some wet rot. We believe that all these problems are solvable but you do need to work diligently through the property.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** In the areas where there is condensation you need to add ventilation and move any humidity generating items in the areas where there is wet rot, such as the floors, and you need to remove the source of it. In this case we think it is likely to be the rainwater coming from the car park, as well as the cement pointing that has occurred over the years not allowing the property to breathe properly and dissipate the dampness getting into it.

With regard to the roof area we believe it is likely to be a constant battle against cleaning the valley gutters, downpipes and hopper heads.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.



## Woodworm

*Active woodworm can cause significant damage to timber. There are a variety of woodworm that cause different levels of damage with probably the worst of the most well known being the Death Watch Beetle. Many older properties have woodworm that is no longer active, this can often be considered as part of the overall character of the property.*

In many properties of this age, there is an element of woodworm that is not active. Our inspection was severely restricted mainly to looking at the underside of the timber below the lead flat roof and also to looking at two areas of valley gutters. We have estimated previously we saw only between five and ten per cent of the roofs. In these areas we could not see any woodworm but would not rule out the chances of woodworm in a property of this age.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 percent certain there is no woodworm you will need to have sections of the walls opened up and check the roof areas and also sections of the floor opened up to check these areas.

Finally, when you move into the property, floor surfaces should be carefully examined for any signs of insect infestation when furniture and floor coverings are removed together with stored goods. Any signs that are found should be treated to prevent it spreading. However, you need to be aware that many damp and woodworm treatment companies have a vested interest in selling their products and therefore have fairly cleverly worded quotations where they do not state if the woodworm they have found is 'active'. You should ask them specifically if the woodworm is active or not.

We would also comment that any work carried out should have an insurance backed guarantee to ensure that if the company does not exist, or for whatever reason, the guarantee is still valid. More importantly it is essential to ensure that any work carried out is carried out correctly.

## INTERNAL DECORATIONS



*With paints it should be remembered that up to 1992 lead could be used within paint and prior to this most textured paints (commonly known as Artex) contained an element of asbestos up to 1984, so care should be taken if the paintwork looks old and dated.*

### Decoration condition

The decoration uses bright pinks in the corridors and lime green in the staff toilets and various bright yellows and mustards, as well as more traditional colours and this may not be to your own personal taste and you may wish to redecorate?

### Hairline cracks

As with any property of this age we found hairline cracking. Some of it relates to general seasonable movement in the property, some of it relates to dampness that has occurred. You need a constant programme of redecoration in a property such as this.



Lateral dampness coming through the walls

Finally, we would draw your attention to the fact that removal of existing decorative finishes may cause damage to the underlying plasterwork necessitating repairs and making good prior to redecoration.

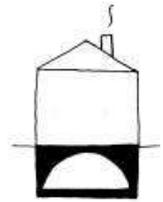
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## **BASEMENT**

*Basements, cellars and vaults tend to be found in older properties and offer a useful space, although usually they are damp, unless some treatment has taken place such as the tanking of the walls, which is a lining process, or an external damp proofing membrane of some type has been added, or if internally the walls have been lined, therefore hiding the damp. Cellars are often susceptible to flooding from excessive rain, rising water table levels or even blocked drains.*

In this case your basement is a home to a number of bats and these will be protected. We mentioned in our Executive Summary that to truly do this justice you will need to spend some more time investigating the foundations in this lower, having the whole area properly lit. We really were limited and constricted by time.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

Finally, we have made a visual inspection of the cellar/vault only and have no way of knowing what the construction is without opening up the structure.

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## THERMAL EFFICIENCY



*Up until the mid 1940s we did not really consider insulation in properties, for example it was only in the 1960s that we started putting insulation in the roof and then it was about 50mm, in the 1970s this was upgraded to 100mm. Then we started to think about double glazing and cavity wall insulation. Since then insulation standards have increased considerably and today we are looking at typically using insulation not only in the roof but also in the walls, floors and windows and more recently considerable work has been carried out on how efficient boilers are within properties. Care has to be taken that properties are not insulated disproportionately to the ventilation as this can cause condensation and you should be aware that you need to ventilate any property that is insulated.*

### HIPs

We understand that HIPs were suspended from 20th May 2010. Energy Performance Certificates are required before a sale completes.

### Roofs

The roof area cannot be viewed as rooms have been formed in the roof area and in this age of conversion we would not expect insulation to have been added. Therefore in the summer months you may get solar gain and suffer cold in the winter months when the rooms will get noticeably colder.

### Walls

The walls to this property are solid. It is very difficult to improve thermal efficiency in solid wall construction without major alterations. These will usually affect the external appearance or reduce the internal space – best left alone.

### Windows

The windows are single glazed and metal, so they often do not shut properly, thermal properties will not be that good.

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## Services

Typically we are finding with older properties that they do not heat up as quickly as newer properties, however once warmed the walls tend to keep the heat. Therefore you need to keep a constant heat temperature throughout the building. We have seen the boilers and are advised by Sid the maintenance man that they are regularly serviced and running well at present.

Having said that, we are not heating engineers and would recommend a qualified heating engineer is employed to look at the services.

## Summary

Assuming the above is correct, for this age, type and style of property it is average to below average compared with what we typically see.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We believe that you need to look at the energy management of the property as a whole and may be able to make some good savings with a review of this. We would be more than happy to help you with this.

Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

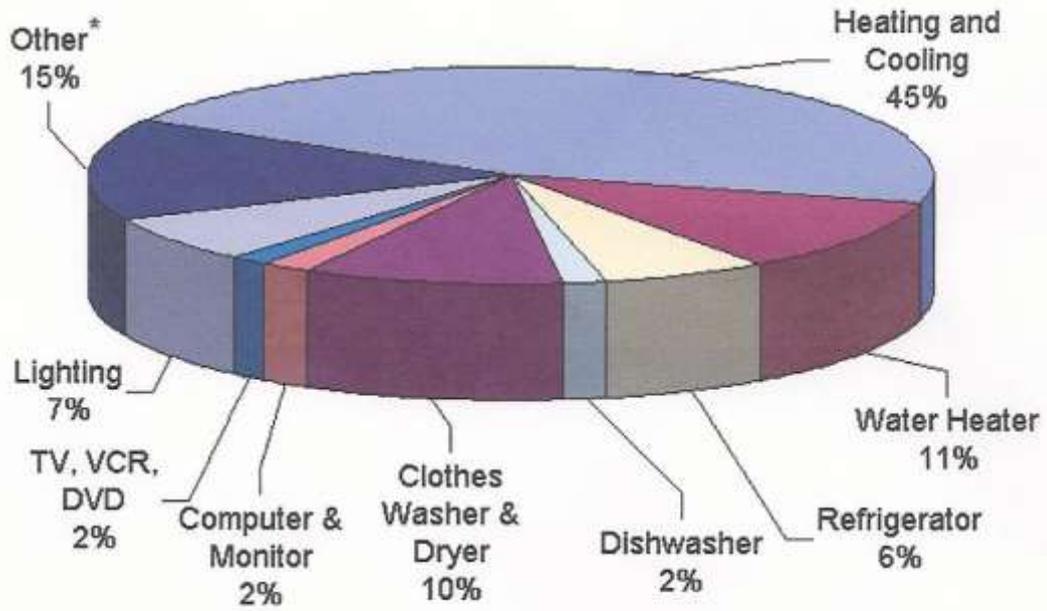
*HTTP//www.est.org.uk, which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*or alternatively www.cat.org.uk*

*or www.ecocentre.org.uk for an alternative technological view.*

Finally, we would advise that an energy rating is likely to be required for future house sales.

### What does my energy bill pay for?



\* "Other" represents an array of household products, including stoves, ovens, microwaves, and small appliances. Individually, these products account for no more than about 2% of a household's energy bills.

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## OTHER MATTERS

*In this section we put any other matters that do not fit under our usual headings.*

### Security

We were advised there was no security system. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. We are not experts in this field and therefore cannot comment further. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services), obtainable through directory enquiries, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### Fire / Smoke Alarms

Some smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age this is difficult, as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety, that smoke detectors be installed.

We have seen recently a smoke detector that fits within a light fitting (although we have not used these personally), which is charged when the light is switched on, providing it is switched on a certain number of times a year. We feel this is an excellent idea as it alleviates the problems of batteries running out. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local Fire Authority are usually happy to help.

### Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company, and then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

## Asbestos

We have noted some areas of asbestos, such as the flues. A full asbestos report is needed. Asbestos was commonly used post war until it was banned only in the last ten or so years, although it is rumoured that it was still used after this point in time. We are not asbestos surveyors.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to confirm you are 100 percent free of asbestos you need to have an asbestos survey carried out.

Please see our comments in the Executive Summary.

## SERVICES

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating or drainage, as they were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey.

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied. Conclusive tests can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors. The vendor/seller should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** This property would benefit from a review of the entirety of the services system, incorporating this with insulation and heat reduction measures. The property has been altered and amended over the years and as such now needs amending into your specific requirements.

# ELECTRICITY



*It is strange to think that electricity only started to be used in domestic properties at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century with gas lighting still being the norm for a good many years after.*

Periodic inspections and testing of electrical installations is important to protect your property from damage and to ensure the safety of the occupants. Guidance published by the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) recommends that inspections and testing are undertaken at least every 10 years (we recommend every five years) and on change of occupancy. All electrical installation works undertaken after 1st January 2005 should be identified by an Electrical Installation Certificate.

## Fuse Board

There are various fuse boards throughout the property. The ones we saw looked relatively new. By this we mean in the last 20 years. Even so, the system would not meet current Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) standards as these are generally reviewed every few years so any older installation dose not meet this.

## Earth Test

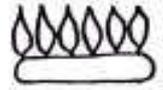
We have not carried out an earth test..

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend either the existing owners provide you with an Institute of Electrical Engineers test and report or that you have one carried out by an NICEIC registered and approved electrical contractor or equivalent.

In addition to this your Legal Advisor is required to make full enquires with the owners to establish if any electrical installation work has been carried out and to provide suitable certification for any works carried out after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2005. Any comments made within this report or verbally do not change this requirement.

For basic general information on this matter please see the appendices at the end of this report.

## GAS



*There is very little we can check for in a gas installation, we do inspect to make sure there is one and that it has a consumer unit and that the boilers are vented. Ideally you should have a service inspection carried out by an independent Gas Safe registered plumber.*

From our discussions with Sid the maintenance man we believe you are on mains gas. This gives heating to the lower ground floor, upper ground floor and first floor. You have storage heaters to the second floor. You need to check and confirm this is correct.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of Gas Safe; works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation

**ACTION REQUIRED:** As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a Gas Safe registered contractor. Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

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## PLUMBING AND HEATING

*In this section we do our best from a visual inspection to look at how the water is supplied to the property, how the supply is distributed around the property, how it is used to heat the property and how it is discharged from the property.*

Generally, again the plumbing and heating has developed over the years. We can particularly see this with the drainage system on the outside of the property and think now would be a good time to have a general review of the entire system.

### Water Supply

The controlling stopcock was not located. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

### Water Pressure

We were advised by Sid the maintenance man that the water pressure varies and when it does this considerably affects the shower system. When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed average. The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

### Cold Water Cistern

We found several water tanks throughout our survey, including approximately four in the main roof underneath the flat roof and we were advised by Sid, following discussions and him carrying out investigations, that there are a further three within the left hand low level roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** The cold water supply seems to be a problem with regard to showers and additional water tanks or appropriate water tanks would help this situation. It is very much a case of looking at your future needs.

### Hot Water Cylinder

There are relatively modern factory insulated hot water cylinders, otherwise known as immersion heaters, that have been installed in the property. Sid the maintenance man made a specific point of showing us all four of these as he feels they have helped considerably with the problems with regard to warm water for the showers.

### Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper pipework. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors.

### Heating

The boiler was located on the left hand side within the maintenance room. For us to comment further we need to have discussions with the people that carry out the maintenance work.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We always recommend a test and overhaul before exchange of contracts by the existing owner and ultimately that a regular maintenance contract is put in place.

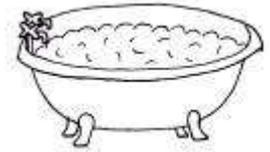
### Ten Minute Heating Test

We would carry out a heating test in a smaller property, however in this case it is not practical. We did note that the property was relatively warm during the course of our survey, however we would expect in a property of this size there to be glitches in the way the heating works. We noted that some radiators are internal which is not ideal and some radiators are the older style. Again, it comes back to how you intend to use the property in the future. You may wish to isolate an area to ensure that you have increased heating standards in this section, whilst ensuring there is background heat throughout the property.

Finally, it should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

## **BATHROOMS**



*In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.*

The property has various internal shower rooms and bathrooms with various different standards of fittings. We noted in some areas that the tiles that have been put directly onto the wooden floors need re-grouting. This commonly occurs where there is no mastic joints. This needs to be carried out to ensure there is no water damage to the ceilings below. Generally we would say that shower rooms would benefit from larger extract fans to reduce the chances of condensation.

Finally, although we may have already mentioned it above we would reiterate that it is important to ensure that seals are properly made and maintained at the junctions between wall surfaces and baths and showers etc. We normally recommend that it is one of the first jobs that you carry out as part of your DIY on the property, as water getting behind sanitary fittings can lead to unseen deterioration that can be costly, inconvenient and difficult to repair.

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## MAIN DRAINS

*The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the Victorian era and works so successfully today it is often taken for granted. It is only in recent years that re-investment has taken place to upgrade the original drainage systems.*

From our discussions with Sid the maintenance man we believe the property has the benefit of mains drainage. Please see our specific comments within the Executive Summary.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We recommend that a CCTV report is carried out as soon as possible by a specialist contractor. This is particularly important on commercially used drains.

### Inspection Chambers / Manholes

*For your information, inspection chambers / manholes are required to be provided in the current Building Regulations at each change of direction or where drainage runs join the main run.*

We have not lifted any manholes. There is no grease trap present.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Instructed tests on the underground drains and to implement all necessary repairs and replacements.

**ANTICIPATED COST:** For a CCTV cameral report in the region of £300 to £500. Please obtain quotations.

Finally, it must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the building's foundations. Drainage repairs are inevitably costly and may result in damage being caused to those areas of the property beneath, or adjacent to, which the drains have been run.

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## Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

*Whilst very innocent looking rainwater downpipes can cause lots of problems. If they discharge directly onto the ground they can affect the foundations and even if they are taken away to soak-aways they can attract nearby tree roots or again affect foundations.*

*Some rainwater drains are taken into the main drainage system, which is now illegal (as we simply do not have the capacity to cope with it), and can cause blockages to the main drains! Here we have done our best from a visual inspection to advise of any particular problems.*

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of rain/surface water disposal. In this age of property it is likely to be into shared drains. These can be a problem during heavy rainfall and peak periods, such as the 9 o'clock rush.

Finally, rain/surface water drains have not been tested and their condition or effectiveness is not known. Similarly, the adequacy of soak-aways has not been established although you are advised that they tend to silt up and become less effective with time.

Please also see our comments within the Gutters and Downpipes section.

## OUTSIDE AREAS

### GARAGES/OUTBUILDINGS/ PARKING



The property has a double garage. It has a flat roof with a central drainage point, which is liable to blockage from leaves etc, and the tree that overhangs it. It is built in coursed stonework, with timber doors and stone mullion windows with metal casements and leaded lights. We can see it has been repointed in a cement mortar and there is cracking to the rear left hand side. There is also rubble stone walling to the bottom left hand corner.

We can see internally that there is a metal beam present that has had some rusting. This indicates that repair work is needed to the roof.



Garage



Central drain to flat roof



Inside the garage

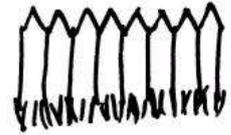
### Changing Ground Level

We noted that when we were on the roof of the garage we could see the adjoining road over the boundary wall. This shows just how considerable the change in levels are and how important it is to have a good drainage system in front of the house. We imagine there would have been a great deal of water that has travelled across the car park over the years causing dampness into the front of the property. Please see our comments on this.



Differing ground levels

## EXTERNAL AREAS



### Gardens

The gardens are considerable. We had the briefest walk in about one acre of them, whilst being shown some of the outbuildings. Given the extent of the main building this is where we focused our report.



Garden



River



Cricket pitch and pavilion

**Boundaries:** These should be identified on the plans. We have not walked the boundary of the property.

Finally, whilst we note the boundaries, these may not be the legal boundaries. Your Legal Advisor should make further enquiries on this point and advise you of your potential liability with regard to any shared structures, boundary walls and fences.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property a copy of this report should be forwarded to your Legal Advisor and the following points should be checked by him/her:

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - ii) Rising damp treatments.
  - iii) Roof and similar renewals.
  - iv) Central heating installation.
  - v) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vi) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.

- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) Most Legal advisors will recommend an Envirosearch or a similar product is used by you to establish whether the area falls within a flood plain, old landfill site, radon area etc. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of Envirosearch or similar please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them of it. Any general findings should be brought to their logical conclusion by using appropriate specialist advisers.

However, with regard to Envirosearch or similar general reports please see our article link on the [www.1stAssociated.co.uk](http://www.1stAssociated.co.uk) Home Page.

- o) Any other matters brought to your attention within this report.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY ENQUIRIES**

Your Legal Advisor should carry out Local Authority searches to ascertain whether the property is a Listed Building and whether it is situated in a Conservation Area. They should also find out any information available with regard to Planning Applications and Building Control. We have not made any formal or informal Local Authority enquiries.

Finally, your Legal Advisor should carry out any additional enquiries they feel necessary and if they find anything unusual or onerous then we ask that they contact us immediately for our further comments.

It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed (or indeed any that have not been discussed!) then please do not hesitate to contact us on **0800 298 5424**.

For and on Behalf of  
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx  
Independent Chartered Surveyors

**This Report is dated: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**

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## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses  
*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

Life expectancies of building components  
*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and  
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings  
*By Malcolm Hollis published by Royal Institution of  
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible  
*By Mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

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# APPENDICES

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## **LIMITATIONS**

Our limitations are as the agreed Terms and Conditions of Engagement.

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement dated xxxxxx and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

## **ENGLISH LAW**

We would remind you that this report should not be published or reproduced in any way without the surveyor's expressed permission and is governed by English Law and any dispute arising there from shall be adjudicated upon only by the English Courts.

## **SOLE USE**

This report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his professional advisors. Any other persons rely on the Report at their own risk.

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

Although we are pointing out the obvious, our Surveyors obviously can't see through walls, floors, heavy furniture, fixed kitchen units etc. they have therefore made their best assumptions in these areas.

As this is a one off inspection, we cannot guarantee that there are no other defects than those mentioned in the report and also that defects can subsequently develop.

## WEATHER

It was a mild, summer's day at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

Our weather seems to be moving towards the extremities from relatively mid range. A few interesting facts in Britain over the years have been:

2000	Wettest year on record at the time
2003	Driest year on record at the time
2004	Wettest August on record at the time
2004	Boscastle was the worst flash flood on record at the time
2005	Third driest year on record at the time
2006	Warmest year recorded on record at the time
July 2006	Hottest July on record at the time
2006	Hottest autumn on record at the time
2007	Warmest spring on record at the time
2007	Wettest June on record at the time
April '06-April '07	Hottest 12 months on record at the time
2008	
2009	Third wettest August since 1956
2010	Heaviest snowfall in march since 1991
	Britain faces one of the coldest winters for 100 years

References                      BBC News [www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## NOT LOCAL

It should be noted that we are not local surveyors to this area and are carrying out the work without the benefits of local knowledge on such things as soil conditions, aeroplane flight paths, and common defects in materials used in the area etc.

## OCCUPIED PROPERTY

The property was occupied at the time of our survey, which meant that there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the loft space and obviously day-to-day household goods throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

## **INSPECTION LIMITED**

Unfortunately in this instance our inspection has been very limited due to us not being able to view the roof properly, floors properly, basement properly and having time lime on the return of the report. We feel that to do this property justice there is approximately one week's worth of surveying work and we have therefore given you general guidance in many areas. We would be more than happy to return when the property is opened up to give further comments.

## **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

Our computer system sends two copies of our Terms and Conditions to the email address given to us when booking the survey; one has the terms attached and the other has links to the Terms and Conditions on our website (for a limited time). If you have not received these please phone your contact immediately.

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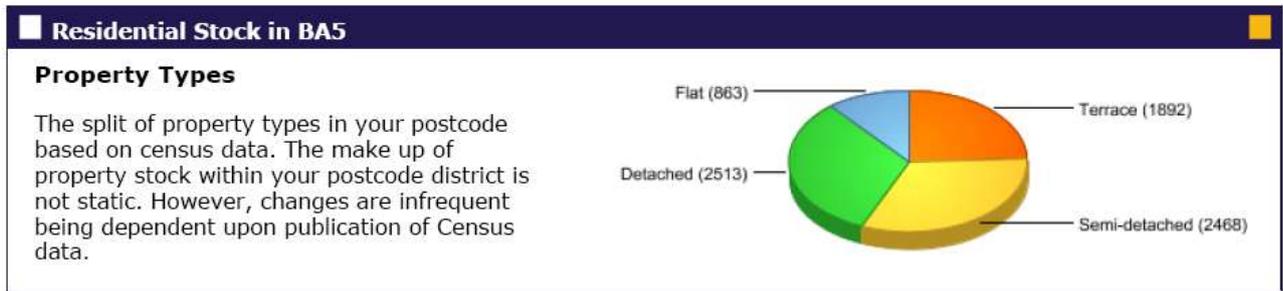
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# Valuation Data

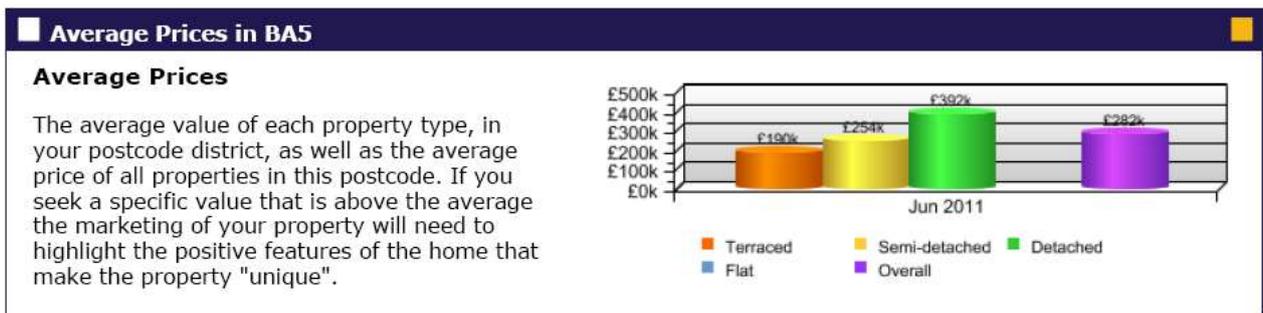
## Property Types

This shows a good mix of different property types in the area. We have looked at the search area of BA5 post code form the year 1999.



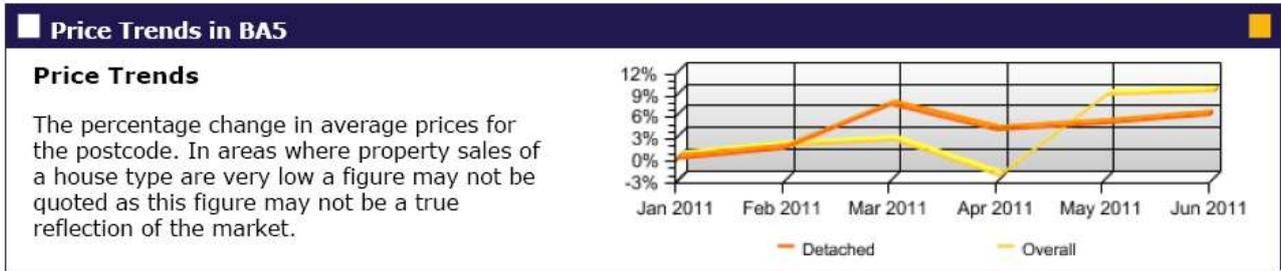
## Average Prices, BA5

This shows a detached house with an average price of £392,000 (three hundred and ninety two thousand pounds).



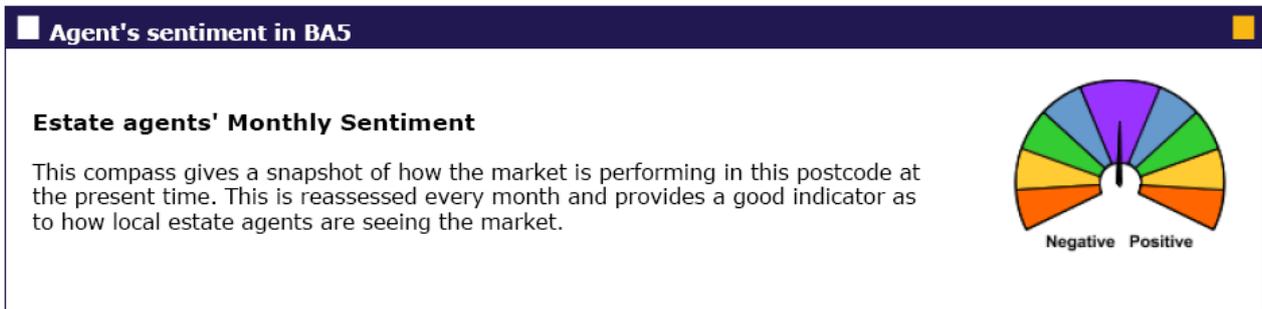
**Price Trends**

We can see the usual seasonal pick up in prices during the spring months into summer, albeit that it is compressed by general difficulties in the property/housing market.



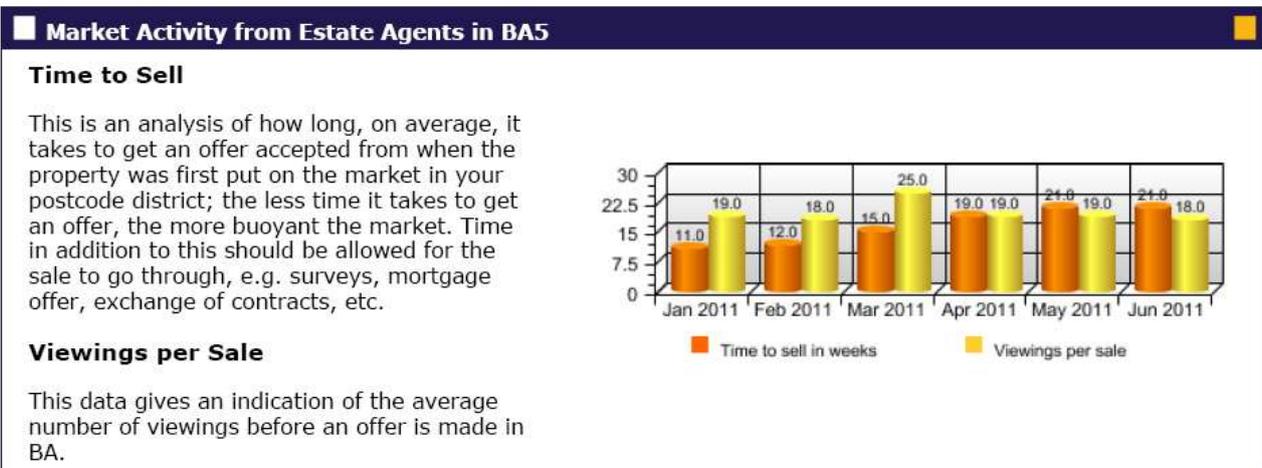
**Estate Agents Monthly Sentiment**

This is sitting on the fence and is typically what we have found for the past year.



**Time to Sell**

At 21 weeks it is much higher than we typically find. It shows to us the areas having difficulty in sales and we would expect something in the region of 8 to 12 weeks with viewings of a similar level.



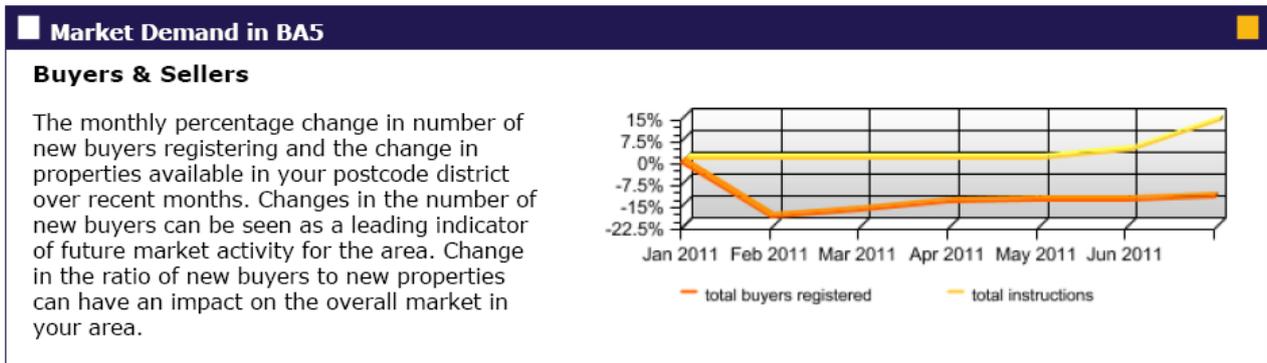
**Price Achieved as a Percentage of Asking Price**

At 84% shows there is still an unrealistic expectation by the house sellers/vendors and estate agents and as you can see we are below the bench mark of 95%, which indicates there could be a further dip in the market.



**Buyers and Instructions**

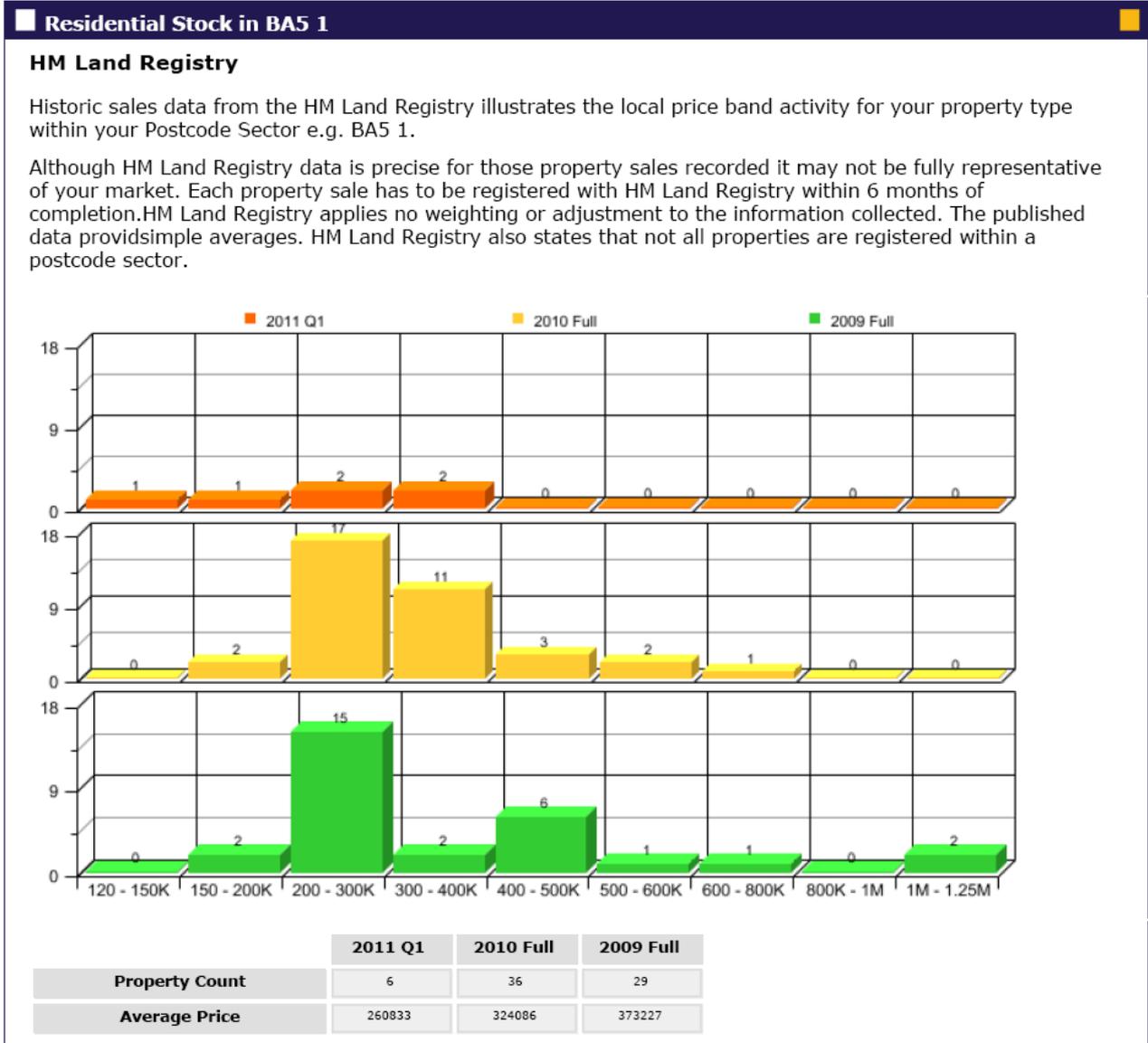
We can see there is far more sellers/vendors in the market than there are buyers which means it becomes a buyers market.



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## HM Land Registry - Actual Sales

The 2011 data is for the first quarter only. This quarter tends to be the least active quarter, over the past three years you can see the lack of activity in the plus £1 million market.



**PROPERTY COMPARABLES**

We have access to all Land Registry sales since 1999 (properties that have actually been sold), which has been adjusted with a Historic Price Index (HPI) (we believe this has been developed from Halifax data), this is applied to bring the valuation to present market values, we adjust these, based upon our knowledge and experience of the valuation market, to achieve our market valuation. Below is a précis of the information that we have worked on.

The research yielded 13 comparables. Apologies we were unable to get the map of sales viewable due to a glitch in the computer data base, however you can see we gained comparables of the closest properties since 1999. There has been very little activity over the £1 million mark and no activity in the £2 million mark, even allowing for a house price index adjustment to today’s valuation levels.

Please phone to discuss the value of the property with us when you receive this report.

13 comparables selected for the property							
Address	Dist.	Sq Ft	£ per Sq Ft	Status	Price	Date	Notes
6 Bed Detached House EBBOR HOUSE WOOKEY HOLE BA5 1AY <a href="#">1</a>	784m	4489	£234	Sold (HMLR Data)	£1,050K	14/08/09	<b>Year Built:</b> 1800 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House EBBOR HOUSE WOOKEY HOLE BA5 1AY <a href="#">1</a>	784m	4489	£234	Mortgage Valuation	£1,050K	25/06/09	<b>Year Built:</b> 1800 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House EBBOR HOUSE WOOKEY HOLE BA5 1AY <a href="#">1</a>	784m	4489	£223	Mortgage Valuation	£1,000K	24/01/07	<b>Year Built:</b> 1800 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House EBBOR HOUSE WOOKEY HOLE BA5 1AY <a href="#">1</a>	784m	4489	£189	Mortgage Valuation	£850K	05/12/03	<b>Year Built:</b> 1800 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No

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13 comparables selected for the property							
Address	Dist.	Sq Ft	£ per Sq Ft	Status	Price	Date	Notes
Detached HENLEY LANE WELLS BA5 1AP <b>2</b>	1226m	N/A	N/A	Sold (HMLR Data)	£980K	25/09/01	<b>Year Built:</b> N/A <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
Detached ROSE COTTAGE NORTH ROAD WOOKEY BA5 1LA <b>3</b>	1831m	N/A	N/A	Sold (HMLR Data)	£1,100K	10/07/09	<b>Year Built:</b> N/A <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House WALCOMBE FARM HOUSE WALCOMBE LANE WELLS BA5 3AG <b>4</b>	1944m	2691	£465	Mortgage Valuation	£1,250K	31/03/10	<b>Year Built:</b> 1800 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House WALCOMBE LANE WELLS BA5 3AG <b>5</b>	1946m	4478	£279	Mortgage Valuation	£1,250K	31/03/10	<b>Year Built:</b> 1800 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
Detached STOBERRY PARK WELLS BA5 3LD <b>6</b>	2226m	N/A	N/A	Sold (HMLR Data)	£500K	14/07/00	<b>Year Built:</b> N/A <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House OLD MILL HOUSE DULCOTE BA5 3NU <b>7</b>	3875m	5274	£190	Mortgage Valuation	£1,000K	01/10/09	<b>Year Built:</b> 1690 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House OLD MILL HOUSE DULCOTE BA5 3NU <b>7</b>	3875m	5274	£237	Mortgage Valuation	£1,250K	30/09/09	<b>Year Built:</b> 1690 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No

13 comparables selected for the property							
Address	Dist.	Sq Ft	£ per Sq Ft	Status	Price	Date	Notes
6 Bed Detached House SPRINGFIELD EAST HORRINGTON BA5 3EA <b>8</b>	4754m	4553	£213	Sold (HMLR Data)	£970K	18/12/09	<b>Year Built:</b> 1750 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No
6 Bed Detached House SPRINGFIELD EAST HORRINGTON BA5 3EA <b>8</b>	4754m	4553	£109	Sold (HMLR Data)	£495K	21/01/00	<b>Year Built:</b> 1750 <b>Tenure:</b> Freehold <b>New Build:</b> No



■ About The Data

This report provides you with an in-depth analysis of price trends in your area. The report is based upon information provided by Hometrack, the only independent property research and database company in the UK.

The report contains independent, up-to-date information that gives a clear picture of price trends for each type of property in your area. The report also gives information on how many viewings each type of property will typically get before it sells, how quickly properties are selling in the area and how many local buyers and sellers are entering the market at that time.

Conflicting reports about whether national and regional house prices are going up or down are creating confusion and uncertainty amongst home owners and making the choice of whether to buy, sell or rent property even more difficult than it needs to be. By offering this report we hope to remove some of this confusion, let you know what is really going on in your area and give you enough information to make an informed choice.

As a House Price Index Contributor for Hometrack we are licensed to use the latest available data collected from authorised agents up and down the country. According to Hometrack House Price Index Contributors are amongst the top 30% in the UK, as assessed by a team of mystery shoppers. The mystery shopping approach encourages House Price Index Contributors to strive to maintain the highest standards within the industry. In the assessment, we were judged against various standards of service that included: quality of customer care, our depth of local market knowledge, how we market properties and how we advertise them in print and on the web.

In choosing a Hometrack House Price Index Contributor we believe you will get more informed and better-qualified advice and you will be presented with personalised reports on the market place and the property being bought or sold. This is designed to provide you with a more secure and less stressful way of buying or selling your home. Further details are available at [www.hometrack.co.uk](http://www.hometrack.co.uk).

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Data within this report is provided to you for information purposes. You assume total responsibility and risk for subsequent use of any information contained within this report. It is your sole responsibility to evaluate the accuracy, completeness, usefulness and suitability of all information provided within the report. If you are selling a property you are advised to make your own independent enquiries before entering into any agreements with third parties in connection therewith.

All data and information within this report are provided on an 'as is' basis. To the fullest extent permissible by applicable law, Hometrack and, or the agent presenting you with this report do not make any express or implied warranties, representations or endorsements whatsoever with regard to the data or any information provided. In no event will Hometrack and, or the agent be liable to you or any other party using this report for any loss or damage of any nature whatsoever and howsoever arising (including due to our negligence) out of or in connection with this report or its contents, whether due to inaccuracy, error, omission or any other cause and whether on the part of Hometrack and, or the agent, or any other person. Nothing within this report shall exclude or restrict Hometrack's or the agent's liabilities for death or personal injury caused by its negligence.

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## THE ELECTRICAL REGULATIONS – PART P OF THE BUILDING REGULATIONS

Here is our quick guide to the Regulations, but please take further advice from a qualified and experienced electrician.

From 1st January 2005, people carrying out electrical work in homes and gardens in England and Wales must follow new rules in the building regulations. All significant electrical work carried out in the home will have to be undertaken by a registered installer or be approved and certified by the local authority's building control department. Failure to do so will be a legal offence and could result in a fine. Non-certified work could also put your household insurance policy at risk.

If you can't provide evidence that any electrical installation work complies with the new regulations, you could have problems when it comes to selling the property.

There will be two ways in which to prove compliance:

1. A certificate showing the work has been done by a Government-approved electrical installer - British Gas or NICEIC Electrical Contractor.
2. A certificate from the local authority saying that the installation has approval under the building regulations.

Homeowners will still be able to do some minor electrical jobs themselves. To help you, we've put together this brief list of dos and don'ts.

### **Work You Cannot do Yourself**

- Complete new or rewiring jobs.
- Fuse box changes.
- Adding lighting points to an existing circuit in a 'special location' like the kitchen, bathroom or garden.
- Installing electrical earth connections to pipework and metalwork.
- Adding a new circuit.

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

We used to include within our reports articles on the property market that we thought would be of interest and informative to you, however we were concerned that in some cases these did not offer the latest information. We have therefore decided to recommend various websites to you, however it is important to realise the vested interest the parties may have and the limits to the information.

[www.landreg.org.uk](http://www.landreg.org.uk)

This records the ownership of interests in registered land in England and Wales and issues a residential property price report quarterly, which is free of charge. The Land Registry is a Government body and records all transactions as far as we are aware, although critics of it would argue that the information is often many months out of date.

[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors offer quarterly reports via their members. Although this has been criticised as being subjective and also limited, historically their predictions have been found to be reasonably accurate.

[www.halifax.co.uk](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://www.nationwide.co.uk)

Surveys have been carried out by these two companies, one now a bank and the other a building society for many years. Information from these surveys is often carried in the national press. It should be remembered that the surveys only relate to mortgaged properties, of which it is generally considered represents only 75% of the market. It should also be remembered that the national coverage of the two companies differs and that they may be offering various incentives on different mortgages, which may taint the quality of information offered. That said they do try to adjust for this, the success or otherwise of this is hard to establish.

[www.hometrack.co.uk](http://www.hometrack.co.uk)

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

[Motleyfool.co.uk](http://Motleyfool.co.uk)

We also like the Motley Fool website which is a general financial site and although it is selling financial services and other services they do tend to give a very readable view of the housing market.

<http://www.nethouseprices.com/>

This website offers information on land registry recorded property sales, by postcode or address.

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

This is a very good website for seeing the prices of properties for sale in a certain postcode area.