London Building Surveyors

Example Building Condition Survey Report

on

Address
Address
Address
London

Date 2016 Ref. no.

London Building Surveyors Ltd, 20 Stanmore Road, London. E11 3BU
Tel: 020 8257 5766 Mob: 07854 755 295
Vat Registration Number: 219 2418 17

Client:	Mrs E Xample
Site address:	London
Date of survey:	11th October 2016
Surveyors:	Ronnie Campbell BSc MRICS
Weather:	Dry and Mild

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF SURVEY

AIMS OF THE SURVEY

We will report on the general condition and state of repair of the property, based on a thorough visual inspection. Minor matters such as loose door handles and specific details on decorative condition will not normally be recorded in detail.

HIDDEN AREAS

Our visual inspection will include all parts of the property, which are reasonably accessible and exposed.

Heavy furniture will not be moved, fixtures and fittings will not be disturbed and fitted carpets will not be lifted.

Floorboards will not be taken up unless the carpet has been removed and boards are already loose. No part of the structure will be opened up unless specifically instructed in writing by the Client. This is to prevent damage to the property of the current owner.

EXTENT OF THE SURVEY

Roofs

These will be inspected from ground level, from a surveyor's 3m ladder and where practicable from above. A full inspection will be made inside the roof void where there is a reasonably accessible hatchway. No structural calculations will be provided.

Roof coverings will be inspected from ground level only unless there is a permanent means of access to the roof covering.

Chimneys and Flues

Stacks will be inspected from ground level only unless there is a permanent and safe means of access to them. Flues and chimney pots will not normally be accessible and will not be tested.

Rainwater Goods

These will be inspected from the ground. We do not test the guttering and downpipes.

Walls, Foundations and Partitions

All external parts of the building will be inspected from ground level and from a Surveyors 3 metre ladder. Significant cracks and distortions will be reported on. Foundations will not be exposed nor sub-soil tested. Structural calculations will not be provided.

Damp Proofing

Surface tests will be taken internally at random and at vulnerable locations, where practicably accessible.

Floors

Furniture and furnishings usually limit the inspection however we will endeavour to inspect as much of the floor as possible. Floor voids will only be inspected where there is a reasonably accessible hatchway and access is physically possible within the void.

Windows, Doors, Joinery, Internal Finishes and Fittings

These will be discussed in general terms. No tests will be carried out. Kitchen appliances etc. will not be moved or tested.

Services

These will be subject to a visual inspection only. We will advise if further specialist investigation appears necessary. Specialist testing can be provided for additional charge. We will visually inspect and discuss the following:

- Hot & Cold Water & Heating Installations
- Electrical system & Gas Installation
- Sanitary Appliances
- Above ground and underground drainage (note camera surveys of underground drainage can be provided for an additional charge).

Incoming mains will not be inspected.

External Areas

We will inspect attached buildings, garages, car parking areas, boundaries, and paved areas in outline only. Other specialist installations will not be inspected. More detailed inspections can be arranged for an additional charge.

ENVIRONMENTAL TESTING

No testing for the presence of pollutants or products likely to be hazardous to health will be undertaken as part of this survey inspection. In particular we are unable to confirm that the property is free from asbestos containing materials which could only be done using a specialist company carrying out a disruptive survey.

REPAIR COSTINGS

We recommend that competitive quotations be obtained from reputable builders for all proposed works and recommended repairs.

LEGAL & OTHER MATTERS

Your Legal Advisers are responsible for checking relevant documents relating to the Property (these might include servicing records and any guarantees, reports, Local Authority approvals, and specifications for previous repair works) as well as carrying out all the standard searches and inquiries. However, if any specific matters are identified within this report where specific Legal Advise should be sought then we have identified these items specifically.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The report will be for the private and confidential use of the Client for whom it is undertaken. It should not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by third parties for any purpose without the express written agreement of London Building Surveyors Limited. The report may be shown to other professional advisers who are retained by the Client.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Scope of Instructions

Written instructions were received from Mrs E Xample to prepare a Building Condition Survey on address, address, London.

This report is for the private and confidential use of Mrs E Ample for whom the report is undertaken and it should not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by third parties for any use without the express written authority of London Building Surveyors Limited.

1.2 Property Address

London

1.3 Clients name and address

Mrs X Ample
London

1.4 Date of Survey

The property was inspected on day month 2016.

2.0 CIRCUMSTANCES OF INSPECTION

2.1 Weather

The weather at the time of inspection was dry and mild.

The preceding twenty four hours were of similar weather conditions.

2.2 Limitations of the Inspection

At the time of inspection, the property was fully furnished.

The inspection was limited because some of the floors were covered with fitted floor coverings.

As it was not raining during the inspection it was not possible to check the rainwater fittings for leaks.

There were no drain covers located within the boundaries of the property and therefore the underground drainage system could not be inspected.

Some of the internal faces of external walls have been lined which has concealed the structure behind.

2.3 Information relied upon in this report

We understand from your email of xx xxxxxxx 2016 that the house suffered from subsidence in 2013 which was the subject of an insurance claim. The insurance claim also related to an escape of water due to a leak from the bathroom.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

3.1 Type and Age

The property comprises a semi-detached house over ground and first floors with a cellar and is believed to have been built circa 1910.

The property is not believed to have been altered substantially since construction.

3.2 Accommodation

The accommodation comprises:-

Cellar
Ground floor entrance hall
Living Room
Reception Room
Kitchen
Reception/Dining Room
Rear Conservatory

Stairs to First Floor

4 Bedrooms
Family Bathroom

The property benefits from a single garage attached to the right hand side of the property (any reference to the right or left hand side of the property should be taken as if standing in Street Road facing the front elevation of the property).

3.3 Tenure and Occupation

We have presumed that the property is freehold although this should be confirmed by your legal advisors.

3.4 Location

The property is situated within a good sized plot within a town location and benefits from convenient access to nearby shops and transportation routes.

The property fronts a built up asphalt road of an adoptable standard.

Any references to the right or left hand side of the property made within this report have been taken as if standing in front of the property on Empress Avenue facing the front elevation.

3.5 Site and Surrounding Area

The property is situated on a level site which is maintained in good condition.

The property is located within an established private residential area.

3.6 Local Factors

No adverse environmental factors are known. .

We would recommend that you carry out your own investigations with regards to flood risk in the immediate area using organisations such as the environment agency and the Association of British Insurers as well as the local authority, in order to form your own opinion of the likelihood of flooding in the area.

3.7 Trees and Hedges

Trees located close to the property will have an effect on the ground, especially if the soil is clay based. The problem occurs as the tree roots extract moisture from the ground causing the soil to shrink.

At the time of inspection there were no trees considered to be influencing the main house.

4.0 OVERALL OPINION

4.1 Areas of concern

Generally, the results of the inspection were satisfactory although it is clear that extensive works will be required to the property, both in terms of some catch up routine maintenance and repair works and in terms of internal decorative upgrading works to bring the property up to a standard expected of the modern market.

When reporting on a property of this age it is not possible to apply the same level of stringent criteria as one would do on a modern dwelling. For example, the majority of the component parts of the property are old and over the life of the building they have suffered from some deformation. This report tries not to concentrate on such shrinkage and misalignment of the fabric but has endeavoured to highlight items both of current importance and items which may incur significant future expenditure which are of relevance today

You should be aware that the age of the property means that it is likely to require ongoing maintenance at a greater rate than would a more modern property. Whilst a number of these maintenance issues have been highlighted within this report, you should be aware of the likely requirement for ongoing routine maintenance and make provisions within your budgeting accordingly.

4.2 Summary of Repairs/Maintenance Items

1. We are aware that the property has suffered from some movement in the past which we understand was associated with problems with the below ground drainage. We understand that extensive remedial works were carried out to the external walls and below ground drainage. Some cracking and evidence of movement was noted on site.

   There is also no inspection chamber cover within the confines of the site to allow access to the below ground drainage. In the event of an emergency it would appear that access may be required through a neighbouring property. You should make enquiries through your solicitor to understand the below ground drainage arrangements and if indeed access is required to a neighbouring property, the arrangements in this regard. It would have been beneficial when drainage works were being carried out that a manhole access point was constructed within the confines of the property to allow access to the drainage so that essential repairs and maintenance can be carried out and given that this was not carried out at that time it may be prudent to consider constructing a manhole inspection chamber at some point. We did note that the WC within the external housing backs up and causes the adjacent gully to overflow.

   You should also make enquiries through your solicitor to ensure you are in receipt of the documentation in relation to the extent of superstructure and drainage works carried out previously to the property as works are now concealed.

2. Externally various cracks were noted indicating as above, that some movement of the property has occurred in the past. Externally the brickwork elevations have received a paint finish. You should ensure that any cracks externally are fully sealed to avoid damp ingress occurring. Internally given that the property requires full refurbishment throughout it may be necessary to consider hacking off the plaster in areas immediately adjacent to corresponding cracking externally and for some element of

minor structural repairs, such as stitching and bonding to be carried out to these if this has not already been carried out.

3. You should be aware that the roof covering of concrete tiles has not been mechanically fixed. This means that the covering is more prone to slippage, although there were none noted at the present time. The roof also benefits from cement mortar flashings to the perimeter junctions, rather than leadwork which is considered to be a superior material. The mortar flashings can break and allow damp ingress to occur. Some evidence of damp ingress was noted within the roof space timbers which will require addressing. Some tears were also noted to the underfelt. Given all of the above it may be prudent to consider stripping and recovering the roof in the short term to ensure that the tiles are mechanically fixed, the underfelt can be replaced completely and externally the cement mortar flashings could be replaced with leadwork to provide a long term solution to the problem. You should therefore budget accordingly.

4. To the rear of the property the conservatory arrangement was considered to be of a very basic standard and most purchasers would consider removal and replacement, otherwise extensive upgrading works would be required.

5. Internally evidence of damp ingress was noted immediately above ground level to ground bearing walls indicating that the damp proof arrangements have failed. You should instruct a damp proofing company to carry out an inspection of the property and provide a quotation for the necessary remedial works which are likely to include the injection of a DPC together with repairs and replacement of plaster at low level to ground bearing walls internally.

6. Some additional airbricks would be beneficial to the rear elevation.

7. Some gaps were noted around the perimeter of the bay window. These should be sealed to avoid damp ingress. Internally during the refurbishment, you should arrange for the plaster to be hacked off in this area and potentially for some additional minor structural repairs such as stitching and bonding to be carried out in this area.

8. The gutters and downpipes to the property are of some age. The gutters are suspected to leak and corrosion was noted to cast iron rainwater fittings, some of which have split. You should budget for complete replacement throughout.

9. Timber fascias and soffits have suffered as a lack of routine maintenance. These should be subject to minor repair and replacement, but together with redecoration throughout within the short term to avoid more rapid deterioration of the timbers.

10. You should be aware that the garage is of a material which is likely to contain asbestos. Although intact and fit for purpose at the present time, any repairs to the garage should be carried out by a specialist which will make these more expensive.

11. Within the roof space it was noted that underfelt has been torn in a number of places and should ideally be replaced.

12. Within the roof space it was noted that there are gaps to the perimeter edge which will have allowed birds and wasps into the roof space. The perimeter gaps should be sealed.

13. 1 no. large wasps' nest was noted within the roof space and a number of smaller wasps' nests were also noted. Two birds' nests were noted within the roof space. These should ideally be removed and the perimeter gaps sealed.

14. Damp and decay was noted to the front timber valley lining and to the timbers to the perimeter of the chimney breasts. These should be cut out and replaced.

15. Within the roof space it was noted that the UPVC tank has no lid and the base is an unsatisfactory arrangement. Some upgrading works are necessary.

16. Some condensation spots were noted to timbers within the roof space. Ideally some additional ventilation should be provided in the form of ventilation tiles.

17. The ceilings throughout the property are original lathe and plaster ceilings which are now of some age. Some hairline cracks and unevenness generally was noted. Some additional repairs may be required to the ceilings at your next round of redecoration.

18. Some of the walls, particularly within the kitchen and bathroom have had a lining finish applied. Once this has been removed defects to the underlying plaster may be discovered. It is likely that repairs will be required.

19. Timber floorboards were noted to be squeaky underfoot and evidence of historic woodworm infestation was noted to first floors in particular. You should arrange for the timbers to be inspected by a timber preservation company who may recommend some treatment to ensure that any future outbreaks of infestation are eradicated.

20. The windows to the property are older style UPVC double glazed units. These appear generally to be in reasonable condition although more efficient modern alternatives are available. Timber single glazed windows were also noted to the first floor hallway with leaded lights. These will require regular ongoing maintenance. External previously decorated surfaces generally will require redecoration throughout.

21. It was noted that brick surfaces externally have been painted. This is generally not recommended as it can cause dampness to be trapped within the brick and cause premature failing. Consideration should be given to stripping the paintwork.

22. Timber glazed doors were not considered to be of safety glazing and should be upgraded.

23. Older style steel panel radiators were noted which may not be as efficient as modern alternatives and should ideally be upgraded.

24. The gas fire noted was of some age and likely to be considered a safety hazard, although it was not tested. Most purchasers would consider upgrading.

25. The property would benefit from internal decoration and upgrading works throughout which may include the provision of a new kitchen, bathroom facilities, redecoration together with new floor, wall and ceiling finishes throughout.

4.3 Further investigations

You should make enquiries through your solicitor to obtain copies and details of any work carried out to the property in the past, particularly correspondence with the loss adjusters in relation to the insurance claims and details of the specification and extent of works carried out.

The damp proofing should be inspected by a specialist company and a quotation provided for the necessary repairs.

The electrical installation should be tested by an NICEIC approved Electrician and a quotation provided for the necessary upgrading works.

The Gas and Central heating installation should be tested by a Gas Safe Registered engineer and a quotation provided for the necessary works.

5.0 CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION – STRUCTURAL FRAME EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR

5.1 Construction Principles

The property is of solid masonry construction, braced with internal masonry partitioning.

The main roof over the property is of pitched roof construction formed of cut timbers which rest on the external walls and internal load bearing partitions beneath. The roof has been covered with concrete tiles.

The ground floor is a combination of both solid concrete construction and timber suspended construction. The upper floors are of timber suspended construction.

Generally, there are no concerns in respect of the structural integrity of this property although the properties previous subsidence and drainage issues should be considered carefully.

5.2 The Main Roof

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 and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

The main roof space was accessed from a hatch within the first floor hallway.

The roof comprises a conventional pitched structure of cut timbers comprising rafters spanning from the ridge to the eaves, supported at their mid-point by purlins which in turn are supported by struts bearing onto load bearing internal partitions.

Overall the size, condition and arrangement of the timbers was seen to be good.

Inevitably over the life of the building, some distortion and warping of the timbers has occurred. This is however to be expected in a property of this age and there are no indications of any significant deficiencies in the structural rigidity of the roof frame.

Where seen, the foot of the rafters appears to be adequately fixed to the ends of the joists. This helps to triangulate the structure, providing lateral restraint, which in turn helps to minimize the risk of roof spread from occurring.

No evidence of roof spread was seen during the course of the inspection and therefore we do not consider that remedial or additional strengthening works are required at the current time.

The roof has been covered with concrete interlocking tiles which now appear to be of some age. A covering of moss growth was noted externally which should ideally be removed. It was also noted that the perimeter edges of the roof have been formed in cement mortar.

Flashings are provided at junctions between roof coverings and other materials such as chimneys, Velux or dormer windows or brick parapets. They are also provided at roof projections such as vent pipes or flue terminals to provide a watertight seal. Lead work is the most commonly used material which is long lasting, is able to withstand variations in temperature without cracking and provides an attractive finish.

An alternative means of providing a water tight junction is the use of cement mortar. The mortar is prone to cracking caused by differential movement between the different materials, which results in leaks internally. This form of weather proofing is generally considered to be of poor quality and should ideally by upgraded to lead work.

The roof covering when viewed from the ground was seen to be in a weathered condition and should be subject to a comprehensive overhaul within the short term. You should budget accordingly.

The roof covering has been placed over Sarking felt. Sarking felt is an impervious membrane which acts as a second line of defence to prevent wind driven rain from penetrating under the roof covering. The Sarking felt, at the time of our inspection was seen to be in poor condition within areas, with rips and holes evident. It is virtually impossible to replace the Sarking felt without removing the external roof covering and it is therefore not something we would recommend you undertake. You should however be aware that the risk of wind driven rain entering the roof space is increased.

A firewall is a barrier provided within the roof void to separate two adjoining properties, so that in the event of a fire, the fire is not able to spread from one property to the next. The barrier is also important for security purposes as without the barrier, access to your property can be gained via neighbouring properties.

This property benefits from a brickwork firewall which was seen to be in good condition with no obvious defects.

5.3 Rainwater Goods (Gutters and Downpipes)

Inadequate disposal of rainwater can cause serious defects within a building, including damp, timber decay and structural movement. It is therefore important that gutters are kept in a well maintained condition. In particular it is recommended that gutters are kept clear and cleaned of any leaves, silt and rubbish on a regular basis. In addition, joints and brackets should be checked periodically.

As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it was not possible to confirm that the rainwater installations are free from blockages, leakage or that they are capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall.

The property has a mix of upvc and Cast Iron rainwater fittings. These are generally of some age and the gutters are suspected to leak.

Cast iron rainwater fittings can be affected by corrosion if they are not properly and regularly maintained. They should be regularly inspected for early signs of corrosion, treated with a rust inhibitor at the first sign of deterioration and repainted regularly.

The cast iron rainwater fittings were seen to be corroded through lack of maintenance. Damaged sections should therefore be replaced. Although it is still possible to buy metal rainwater fittings, replacement with plastic fittings is considerably cheaper.

The property has valley gutters, i.e. a gutter which is formed when two sloping roofs meet. You should be aware that these types of gutter have the potential for problems with water penetration due either to defective design or blockages. As a result it is recommended that regular inspections of the gutters are carried out and that they are regularly cleared of any leaves and blockages.

The timber valley lining visible within the roof space was however seen to be in a deteriorating condition and staining to the timbers which form the valley was seen when carrying out the inspection in the roof space. It is suspected that the gutter leaks and re-lining the valley is therefore advisable as failure to carry out repairs may lead to further, more serious damage.

5.4 Insulation

Providing insulation within the roof void is an effective means of increasing the property's thermal efficiency which in turn will reduce the fuel costs associated with heating.

Whilst in the pitched roof void it was noted that the first floor ceilings were insulated with approx. 200/250mm of fibre glass blanket insulation which is in accordance with current Building Regulations.

Currently the property does not appear to benefit from any roof void ventilation. We would strongly suggest you provide ventilation. This could be achieved by ventilator tiles being installed on the roof slopes.

5.5 Chimneys

There are a number of chimney stacks above roof level which are constructed of brick.

The condition of the chimney stacks was seen to be good with no signs of any obvious defects although some routine repairs are required to the chimney on the Party Wall. Otherwise the brickwork forming the stack was seen to be in a good condition as were the mortar joints (pointing) between the brickwork layers.

Sand and cement fillets have been provided as a weatherproof junction between the junction of the roof covering and the chimney stack. This detail, known as 'cement flaunching' is not recommended as the fillets tend to crack with age, allowing rainwater penetration and giving rise to conditions where rot might develop in roof timbers. Lead soakers and flashings are preferable at these junctions but, in their absence, care should be taken to ensure that the fillets are maintained. We would recommend that they are upgraded.

Internally there was evidence of leaking as noted previously and therefore it should be replaced as a matter of urgency.

5.6 External Walls

External walls provide, in most cases, the structural support to the building and the principal means of weather proofing and insulation to the structure. The walls should therefore be maintained in a good and stable condition. Neglect of the walls can give rise to other significant defects such as damp, rot etc.

The external walls to the property are of solid masonry and they were seen to be in a condition typical of a property of this type and age other than some minor cracking noted which is consistent with the previous subsidence issue.

Structural cracking was noted and the previous subsidence issue is discussed further under section 5.18 Structural Movement.

Solid masonry construction has relatively poor thermal qualities particularly when compared with more modern forms of construction such as cavity wall construction. There is also an increased risk that dampness can penetrate through the brick work into the interior of the property. The problem is exacerbated in exposed locations or if there are brick or masonry defects externally. This is because the rainwater that strikes the brickwork outside the building can easily soak through the solid brickwork to the interior. Evidence of such a problem is normally visible through staining and discoloration of the internal plaster and finishes.

There is a school of thought which suggests that allowing creeper to grow up a property constructed with solid walls could allow the walls themselves to become damp. This is because during the summer months when the creeper is in leaf it tends to shield the walls from the sunshine which inevitably does not allow the walls to dry out. This is far from proven and no evidence of internal dampness was seen. However the presence of the creeper growing up the walls will make general maintenance and redecoration very difficult, if not in some places impossible.

The brickwork has been painted. Brickwork is not intended to be painted as the paint can prevent the natural drying out process after the bricks have been exposed to rainwater. Moisture can become trapped behind the paint and frost action may then cause additional damage to the bricks and the joints as well as causing deterioration to the paint finish.

Once painted it can be difficult and costly to remove the paint finish and this is usually considered uneconomical. Loose paint should therefore be brushed off, the bricks made good as necessary and redecorated with a good quality micro-porous paint which will allow the brickwork to breathe.

Lintels are structural support provided over openings to carry the structure from above. The current Building Regulations state that a minimum 150mm bearing should be provided at either end of a supporting lintel in order to disperse the load from above.

Any lintels provided over the various openings are hidden within the structure and therefore no comment upon their type and condition can be given. Evidence of a possible failure or absence of supporting lintels is shown though deflection and cracking to the brickwork above the opening. No evidence of cracking above the openings was seen which suggests that the load above the openings is being adequately supported at the current time.

5.7 Damp Proof Courses

A damp proof course (DPC) is a horizontal layer of impervious material built into the base of the main walls. The purpose of a DPC is to prevent ground moisture rising up through ground bearing walls and damaging internal finishes such as plaster walls and timber skirting.

During the course of the inspection no damp proof course was seen. This was however as a result of the decoration being present. Any property built after circa 1880 is likely to have been built with a damp proof course which was simply not visible during our inspection.

Electrical moisture meter readings were taken around the base of the internal walls and load bearing walls internally using a Protimeter. The results of these tests revealed high readings particularly to the rear areas.

You should now ask a specialist damp proofing contractor (preferably one issuing a long term insurance backed guarantee which is transferrable between owners) to carry out a more detailed inspection of the property to recommend a remedy and carry out the necessary repairs.

5.8 Internal Walls and Partitions

The majority of internal partition walls are believed to consist of brickwork which has been covered with a plaster to provide a smooth finish for decoration

General cracks were evident to the stud partitions although these simply depict where the plasterboard joints have opened slightly. This is usually as a result of the joints not being adequately skimmed when jointed and by no means are these structural or significant. If filled these are unlikely to reopen.

The inside face of external walls within the kitchen and bathroom in particular have been lined. You should be aware that the presence of lining such as this means that it is difficult to assess the condition of the wall structure behind to ascertain for example whether rising or penetrating damp is occurring. When the lining is removed some repairs may become evident.

Otherwise, at the time of inspection, the internal partitions were seen to be in a good condition with no signs of obvious defects.

5.9 Fireplaces and Chimney Breasts

There are fireplaces within the ground floor living room, reception room and dining room with associated chimney breasts above.

No fires were lit at the time of inspection and as a result it is not possible to confirm that the chimneys draw the smoke appropriately. However, no signs of any significant defect were seen to the fireplace or chimney breast during our inspection.

It is recommended that chimneys are swept annually and it is recommended you have the chimney inspected and swept before lighting a fire for the first time.

Where the fireplaces have been fitted with gas fires, the flue should ideally be lined although it was impossible to confirm this during our inspection and the fire was not tested. Ideally the fire and associated flue should be checked and tested by a Gas Safe registered engineer upon occupation. You may also wish to ask, via your solicitor, whether the fire has been regularly serviced. Ideally fires of this nature should be serviced annually.

It is not possible to confirm whether purpose made flue liners have been provided where gas appliances are fitted into open flues. The seller may be able to provide this information or, alternatively, a specialist heating engineer could be asked to check that the installation complies with current regulations in this respect.

5.10 Basement / Cellars

The property has a cellar which is accessed via a basic timber staircase from below the main stairs. The stairs are unsafe and missing treads should be upgraded. The basement is currently being used as a storage area.

The cellar is damp and of very limited use. There was evidence that the area may flood and there was no evidence of any means to drain water or limit the flooding. Eradication of dampness will involve expensive remedial works and is unlikely to be cost effective. You will need to monitor this area particularly during periods of heavy rainfall to see the extent of flooding and consider remedial action. You should budget accordingly.

5.11 Floors

The ground floor is of timber suspended construction which incorporates main structural floor joists which are either supported on or built into the external walls. The floor joists then support an internal floor finish of floorboards**.**

Suspended timber floors traditionally have a space between the supporting timbers and the sub floor. To prevent rot this space should be permanently ventilated and airbricks or grilles need to be fixed into the main outside walls to provide permanent ventilation. Where provided these should be kept clear of obstructions.

At the time of the inspection an insufficient number of air-bricks were seen to the rear.

You should be aware that the condition of the structural floor timbers can only be determined by taking up a section of floor and carrying out a sub-floor inspection. Whilst this was not possible moisture meter readings were taken through the floor coverings and whilst this is not one hundred percent accurate the readings given through the floor coverings can often give a good indication as to whether there is a potential problem or not and whether further investigations are required.

The ground floor within the rear conservatory is of solid concrete construction.

The construction here is of a poor standard. The floor was generally uneven. We would recommend that this conservatory arrangement is removed and reconstructed if required.

5.12 Ceilings

Ceilings throughout are of lathe and plaster construction. Lathe and plaster construction comprises laths, which are thin strips of wood, nailed to the underside of the floor or ceiling joists on to which the plaster is applied. The plaster squeezes between the individual wooden strips to make a secure key or hold. Often with this type of ceiling, large areas of plaster break away from the laths due to age and the effects of drying out particularly after central heating is installed. It is rarely possible to successfully patch repair this type of ceiling and complete replacement is normally recommended. Major repairs are disruptive and messy.

The condition of the lathe and plaster ceilings was seen to be reasonable and consistent with their age. Some repairs are considered likely during redecoration.

5.13 Windows, Doors and Joinery

The property benefits from plastic double glazed window frames and doors. These appear to be of some age.

Building Regulation rules were introduced on 1st April 2002 to control window replacement work. The conveyancer should be asked to ensure that building regulation approval was obtained for the installation and that a certification of approval is available.

After about 10 years the sealed unit within a double glazed window can fail causing misting of the void between the two panes of glass (interstitial condensation).

During the inspection no seals were seen to have failed at the current time although you should expect this to happen in due course.

Although in relatively good condition at the present time the windows are of some age and more efficient modern alternatives are available. Most purchasers would consider a programme of upgrading or replacement of windows and you should budget accordingly.

Mastic sealants are commonly used at the junction of the frame and brick reveal to provide a waterproof joint. The mastic was seen to have become brittle and defective. It should be removed and replaced with a good quality flexible mastic, with the colour to match the framework.

Eaves level fascia (gutter) and soffit boards are of timber construction and have been painted to finish. At the time of inspection, they were seen to be in a deteriorating condition with areas of developing wet rot seen within some areas. The repairs will involve removing the gutters and brackets, cutting away and removing the rotted sections of boarding and replacing them with new timber boards to match.

At the time of the inspection external paint finishes generally were seen to be deteriorating and where the paint is flaking and loose it should be thoroughly sanded or rubbed down and the joinery or brickwork made good as necessary, prior to repainting. Failure to do this could result in the timber or brickwork beneath decaying.

5.14 Stairs

The main staircase is of timber construction and was seen to be in a reasonable condition.

The staircase comprises a series of flat horizontal boards (treads) fixed to a series of similar boards laid on edge (risers). The boards are supported at their edges by long diagonal boards (stringers) often fixed to a wall on one side. The boards are secured in the stringers with wedges. The boards to the staircase have worked loose, resulting in loose creaky treads. Repair includes re-gluing and re-fixing of the timber wedges under the stairs and screwing the horizontal treads to the vertical risers.

The current Building Regulations recommend that voids no larger than a 100mm sphere be provided between the balustrading to a staircase. A void in excess of this is deemed to be a risk to the young, who could either fall thorough the void or trap their heads etc.

5.15 Internal Joinery, Finishes and Decorations

Internal decorations are always a matter of personal choice but at the time of the inspection the overall internal decorative condition was seen to be poor**.** You will have formed your own opinion as to what redecoration works will be required.

When tapped, areas of plaster in isolated areas made a slightly hollow sound. This suggests that the plaster may have lost its bond with the wall surface behind. Whilst this does not necessarily indicate a significant defect you should be aware that it will be likely that a degree of re-plastering will be necessary when redecorating.

Kitchen cupboards, worktops and fittings were seen to be fairly worn and dated in appearance. Many purchasers would no doubt wish to replace the kitchen in its entirety upon taking occupation.

The internal doors are timber panel doors with standard ironmongery. They are in a satisfactory condition. Glazed doors to the rear at ground floor are not fitted with safety glazing (the lack of safety glazing is considered to be a health & safety risk and a glazing contractor should be consulted regarding the installation of safety glazing in these areas.)

5.16 Dampness

Rising damp was noted within the property and this has already been covered under section 5.7.

Penetrating damp was noted within the property and this has already been covered under section 5.2 (Main Roof).

5.17 Timber Defects

Wet rot, also known by its Latin name Contiophora Puteana, is most commonly seen in external joinery, for example windows and doorframes. It is far more common than dry rot and causes the timber to darken and soften. Wet rot is normally localized and unlike dry rot does not have the ability to spread to other timbers. It is therefore comparably minor in nature and it can relatively easily be remedied.

Evidence of wet rot was seen to the timbers forming the roof valley timber lining and the chimney breasts within the roof space. The areas of wet rot are currently minor and localised to small areas. Repair as the preferable solution as opposed to replacement is recommended. This will involve cutting out any areas of affected timber and scarfing in new timber.

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.

During the course of the inspection no evidence of dry rot was seen.

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.

'Flight holes' were seen to the timbers within the floorboards. These flight holes suggest that the property has in the past suffered from a form of wood boring beetle infestation. Active infestation is usually visible through what is known as 'fras'. This is a fine dust usually evident at the mouth of each hole and is the waste material dispersed as the beetle burrows and eats out of the timber. No evidence of 'fras' or current infestation was seen during our inspection although obviously there were areas of timber which were inaccessible. In the first instance it is recommended that you ask the vendor whether they are aware of any treatment having been carried out and if so whether there is a guarantee for the treatment works. If treatment is not thought to have been carried out you may, as a precautionary measure, want to employ a specialist to investigate further.

It is possible with a property of this age that there may be some hidden infestation and decay. Woodworm may be present in timbers for a considerable period of time before becoming apparent.

5.18 Structural Movement

Foundations cannot be inspected without considerable excavation and possible damage to the property and therefore it is not possible to comment upon their construction or condition. You should therefore ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip or heave.

As a result of the foundations not being inspected conclusions have been drawn as to their effectiveness from surface evidence available at the time of the inspection. Much time was spent examining the main walls and structure above ground level for any indications and signs of structural settlement / movement that might cause trouble or expense in future years.

We understand that the property was the subject of a subsidence claim circa 2013/2014 as a consequence of a failure of the below ground drainage. The paperwork provided indicates that the issue was resolved at the time as part of an insurance claim. There is no evidence of any ongoing problem.

All buildings are affected to a certain degree by movement, which may be due to a number of factors including different rates of expansion and contraction of the materials from which the building is constructed, seasonal movement of the ground or initial settling in of the structure. This may result in cracking which can be made good during routine maintenance and which should not be a cause for concern. Cracking seen to the external brickwork on the front bay and rear elevation is believed to have been caused as a result of this and the historic subsidence issues and is not believed to be of structural significance or progressive in nature. The cracking should be considered further during external or internal redecoration works when further minor repairs may be appropriate.

You should also be aware that in a property of this age it is likely that the foundations are relatively shallow, certainly by today's standards. As a result some seasonal movement in the structure is to be expected which can lead to some cracks being apparent to the exterior surfaces and also sometimes through the plasterwork internally. These often occur at points of weakness in the structure, for example above the window openings. These are not considered to be of any structural significance or likely to be progressive. As a result no repairs are deemed to be necessary other than on a cosmetic level. Sealing any external cracks is recommended to prevent the risk of water penetration tracking through to the interior and causing problems.

6.00 SERVICES

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating, hot or cold water or drainage installations, as these were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been carried out. 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.

6.1 Electrics

The consumer unit (fuse box) and meter were situated within the basement.

The electrical system is clearly of some age and incorporates old re-wireable fuses. It is as a result strongly recommended that the whole installation is tested and checked prior to purchase. The system should be upgraded in line with current NICEIC regulations and some re-wiring works maybe required.

For your information the electrical systems should be tested at approximately five yearly intervals. You should make enquiries with the Vendor regarding the date of and documentation for the most recent electrical test certificate. If this is greater than 5 years then you should arrange for the installation to be tested prior to exchange of contracts.

6.2 Gas

Mains gas is provided and the meter and emergency shut off valve is located in the basement.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service and this should be carried out by a Gas Safe Registered engineer. There is no evidence that the gas installation has recently been serviced and you should have the installation inspected as a precautionary measure if the most recent test documentation is not available.

6.3 Water Supply and Plumbing

The water supply to the property is mains supplied. The property benefits from a cold water storage tank located in the roof space.

The pipework throughout the property is of modern copper type. Where possible the joints, valves and drain cocks were inspected for leaks and the results were satisfactory.

The cold water storage tank and central heating header tanks within the roof space are of modern PVC construction. This material has the advantage of being immune to corrosion and is relatively light in weight, thus having the advantage of being easy to move and reducing the amount of ‘dead weight’ imposed on the structure. The tanks at the time of inspection were seen to be in a satisfactory condition.

It is important that water storage / header tanks are easily accessible and well supported. It is important that the deck, upon which the tank is located is sturdy. Preferably the base should not be of a standard grade chipboard as there is a risk that

this may deteriorate over time especially if a small leak occurs or condensation from the outside of the tank wets the material. The base could not be inspected properly but is considered likely to be inadequate and should be upgraded. The tank also requires a lid.

Some of the pipework within the property noted within the basement is of old lead. Lead pipes have a tendency to become very brittle with age and they are susceptible to leaks. In addition lead pipes are considered to be a health risk. As a result it would be advisable to remove all old lead pipes and replace them with modern copper.

6.4 Hot Water Installation / Boiler

Hot water and space heating are provided by means of a gas fired floor mounted boiler located within the rear conservatory.

The boiler has a balanced flue venting through an external wall. It is important that the flue outlet is maintained in good condition and kept unobstructed to ensure safe and efficient operation of the boiler.

Space heating is provided by a system of pressed steel panel radiators positioned throughout the property. These are supplied from the main boiler and were seen to be in a good condition with no signs of any obvious defects.

Some radiators have not been fitted with individual thermostatic valves which may make the system more expensive to run.

Domestic hot water is stored within a factory lagged copper cylinder located within the first floor bathroom. The lagging will provide good resistance to heat loss and generally the tank was seen to be in a sound condition.

The installation should be tested on a regular basis, usually annually and you should request any documentation in this regard. If this is not available you should arrange for the installation to be tested and a quotation provided for any necessary upgrading works.

6.5 Drains

During the inspection of the property and its gardens it was not possible to locate any inspection chamber covers which would allow access to the below ground drainage. This means that the construction, condition and drainage route cannot be confirmed. It is very likely that the drains connect to the main sewer as opposed to the property having a private drainage system although this is something you should inquire about, via your legal advisor.

It is believed that the drainage system from the property is shared with the adjoining property and you should therefore seek confirmation from your legal advisors as to what the maintenance responsibilities and access rights for the drains are.

We have been provided with information indicating that Drainage works were carried out in 2013 as part of an insurance claim. All of these works are now concealed so it is not possible for us to comment on the adequacy of the work carried out or the condition of the drains generally. There is no inspection chamber within the confines of the site which means that access in the event of an emergency may be via a neighbouring property. Your solicitor will carry out the usual drainage searches and

should confirm the location of the nearest access point and any arrangements for access to a neighbouring property in the event of an emergency.

Given the previous problems it would have been sensible to construct a manhole and access point within the grounds of the subject property. This could still be considered in the future.

The wc pans etc were flushed however when the wc within the external housing to the rear was flushed it appeared to back up at the adjacent external gully. It may be prudent to arrange for a drainage contractor to inspect, flush through the drains to clear any residue and investigate further with regards to the rear gully backing up.

6.6 Other Services

There are no other services requiring comment.

7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER ISSUES

7.1 Orientation and Exposure

The property is positioned within a fairly sheltered location.

7.2 Thermal Insulation and Energy Efficiency

Whilst in the pitched roof void it was seen that the first floor ceilings were insulated with approx. 200/250mm of fibre glass blanket insulation which is in accordance with current Building Regulations.

The following improvements could be considered: -

a) the installation of more efficient modern double glazing
b) draught-proofing windows and doors as necessary
c) replacing the existing central heating boiler with a modern more efficient unit
d) providing modern heating controls to thermostats / radiators etc
e) providing thermostatic valves to radiators

Old properties with solid walls are generally less energy efficient than properties constructed with cavity walls. It is also more difficult to insulate solid walls, the only practical option being to line the walls internally with insulated plasterboard, which is clearly disruptive to fittings and decorative finishes.

Properties of this age with large rooms and high ceilings tend to be expensive to heat relative to more modern properties of smaller dimensions.

7.3 Ventilation

Condensation occurs when warm, moist air comes into contact with cold surfaces. Properties with poor levels of heating and inadequate ventilation are commonly affected. Human activities, including breathing, cooking, bathing, showering and the use of freestanding fuel burning heaters contribute to the amount of moisture in the atmosphere.

Natural ventilation is available throughout the property by means of opening windows.

No signs of significant problems with condensation were seen. However it should be realized that condensation may be a problem for one occupier where it was not for the previous one due to life styles. It can often be controlled by careful management of heating and ventilation.

Efficient Mechanical extraction should be provided to rooms which create high moisture levels, for example the bathroom as there is a higher risk of condensation forming within this area which will spoil internal decorations.

7.4 Noise and Disturbance

No factors relating to noise or disturbances were noted during the course of the inspection. However you may wish to carry out drive-past inspections of the property at various times during the day so that you can assess whether there are any factors which may affect the property.

7.5 Means of Escape

The means of escape in the event of a fire was seen to be satisfactory and no cause for concern.

The fitting of Smoke Detectors, a Heat Detector and a Carbon Monoxide alarm are strongly recommended and should be fitted in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

7.6 Other Health and Safety Concerns

No health and safety concerns were noted during the course of the inspection.

The glazing provided to the internal doors is not believed to be of safety type and therefore may pose a risk if broken. Replacing the glass with safety toughened glass would therefore be advisable.

7.7 Hazardous Materials

Lead pipework was noted within the property. Concern has been expressed about the health risks associated with lead pipework in drinking water supplies and it is recommended that the extent of lead pipework serving the property is investigated by a qualified plumber and replacement is undertaken with modern materials.

Due to the age of the property it is perfectly feasible that some asbestos containing materials may well have been used during construction or maintenance, although none was readily apparent at the time of inspection. Whilst there is not known to be a risk if it is left undisturbed, any work to this material (for example drilling, sawing or removal) can pose a hazard to heath. You should take specialist advice before undertaking any work to material potentially containing asbestos. If it is to be removed, it should be disposed of in accordance with current Regulations.

7.8 Security

Generally, the security of the property was considered to be poor.

You may wish to consider providing some of the following recommendations:

a) Locks to external doors should be checked and upgraded as necessary.
b) Consideration should be given to the fitting of a burglar alarm. The alarm should be fitted by a registered installer.
c) On occupation you should check the adequacy of external lighting as this can be a deterrent to someone wishing to break into the house. These should be fitted to both front and rear of the house.
d) It is not known whether there is a neighbourhood watch scheme in operation and this is something which you may want to inquire about.

8.0 OUTBUILDINGS, GROUNDS AND BOUNDARIES

8.1 Gardens and Grounds

The property benefits from a good sized garden mainly to the rear which appears to have been well maintained to date. Ongoing routine maintenance will be required and you should budget accordingly.

8.2 Garages

The property benefits from a single garage located to the right hand side which is attached to the side of the property.

The garage is of prefabricated construction comprising asbestos Cement panels and roof covering.

Whilst there is not known to be a risk if is left undisturbed, any work to this material (for example drilling, sawing or removal) can pose a hazard to heath. You should take specialist advice before undertaking any work to cement asbestos. If it is to be removed, it should be disposed of in accordance with current Regulations.

8.3 Boundaries

It is important you confirm with your legal advisors the locations of the boundaries and specifically what you are responsible for maintaining.

The boundaries provided to the property are predominantly of timber fencing panels. These were seen to be in a reasonable condition.

8.4 Conservatory

The property benefits from a conservatory to the rear which is generally of a poor standard and of some age. Most purchasers would consider complete removal and replacement.

8.5 Other Matters

No other external matters requiring comment were noted.

9.0 MATTERS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISERS ATTENTION

Your conveyancer should confirm that all available approvals and documentation were obtained for the insurance related subsidence and drainage works and that all available completion certificates / documentation etc from the Loss Adjuster or the engineer who supervised the works is available to you as this will be important information for any future purchaser of the property.

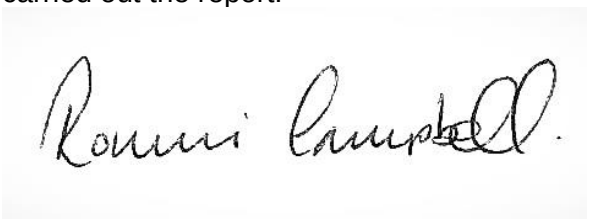
Your conveyancer should make enquiries concerning drainage records and access for maintenance.

Your conveyancer should make enquiries concerning boiler service records.

Your conveyancer should be asked to ensure that building regulation approval or FENSA certification has been obtained for the installation of double glazing carried out on or after 1 April 2002.

Your conveyancer should ensure that building regulation approval was undertaken for any electrical alteration or installation carried out after 1st January 2005, when new regulations came into force.

If you have any questions or queries with regards to the report please contact the surveyor who carried out the report.



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Signed for and on behalf of London Building Surveyors Ltd

Ronnie Campbell MRICS Chartered Surveyor
Tel: 0208 257 5766
Email: ronnie@londonbuildingsurveyors.com

Terms and Conditions

Method Statement

A detailed inspection of the property will be undertaken.

1. We will inspect all accessible parts of the structure. We will not carry out any exposure works or lift floor coverings etc. External Roof coverings will be inspected from ground floor level externally. Single storey extensions will be inspected using maximum 3m length ladders.

2. We will not undertake any testing of services such as Electrical or heating installations although a visual inspection will be carried out.

3. A detailed report will be prepared on the condition of the property on an element by element basis.

I can confirm that we are able to act on your behalf in this matter and have no existing or potential conflicts of interest in complying with this instruction.

In accordance with RICS regulations the Building Condition Survey and Report may be reviewed for the purposes of the administration of the Institution's Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations. In the unlikely event that you are not happy with the service provided I can confirm that London Building Surveyors has a complaints handling procedure and a copy is available upon request.

Photographs

General view of the rear elevation

The rear garden

Damp ingress around chimneybreasts in the roof space

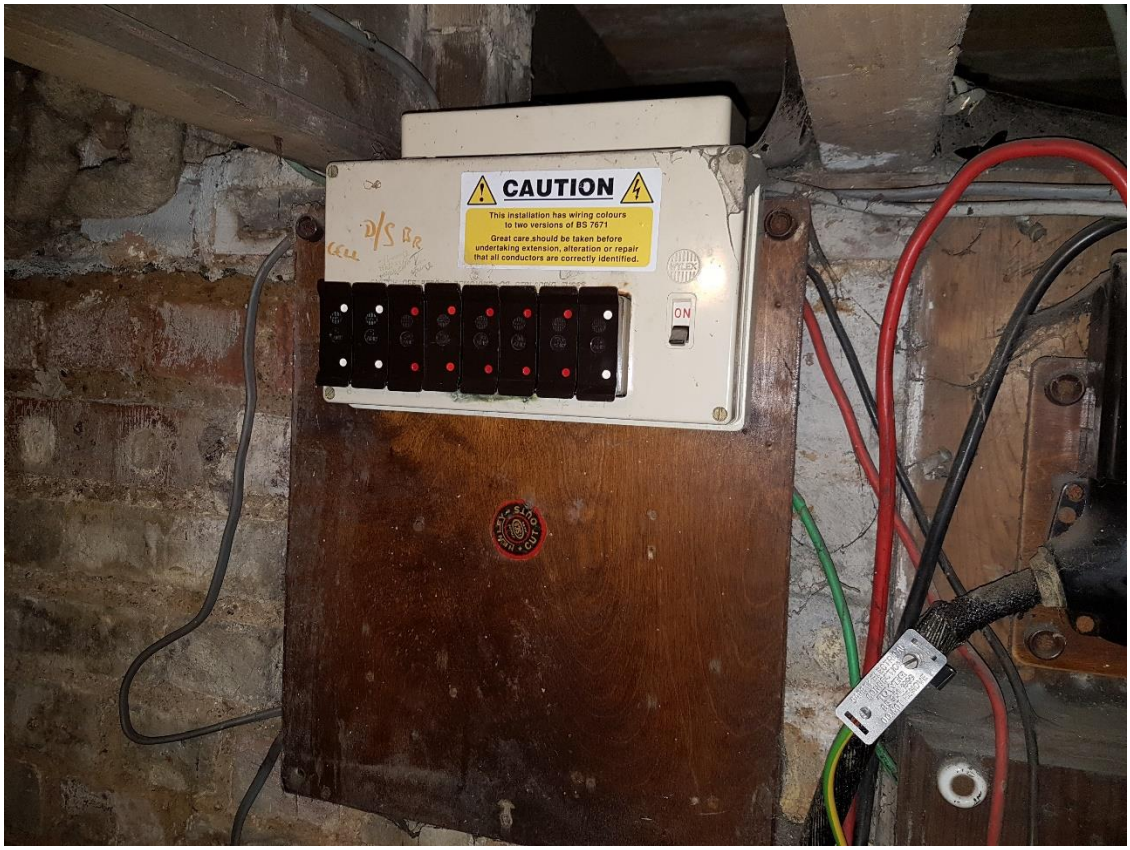
Evidence of historic woodworm infestation

Birds' nests in the loft

Missing underfelt in the loft space

Cracking to the bay window

Wall linings to the Bathroom



The Electrical fuse board is dated

Lead pipework was noted in the basement

General view of the basement

The Kitchen is dated

The rear external gully backs up

Damage to a Cast iron pipe

The garage wall and roof panels are likely to contain asbestos

The external paintwork requires attention

External cracking to walls

External cracking to walls