

Building Survey Report
on
23 Ingersoll Road, London W2 7BE
for
Ms V Davison
as at
11 November 2015



James Ross & Co Chartered Surveyors

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1. PRELIMINARIES

1.1. Instructions

You instructed us by telephone to carry out a full building survey on 23 Ingersoll Road, London W2 7BE. Those instructions were confirmed to you in our letter dated 09 November 2015, which laid down the terms and conditions under which our survey report would be compiled. This report must be read in conjunction with those terms and conditions.

1.2. Weather

The weather was warm, dry and clear at the time of our inspection.

1.3. Limitations

The property was occupied at the time of our inspection, with the vendor present for part of the time.

The property was lightly furnished to several rooms, with other rooms having no furniture at all, and was significantly carpeted throughout to both upper floors.

Further specific limitations relating to the subject property are found towards the end of this report under the heading of 'Specific Limitations.'

1.4. Information Relied Upon in this Report

Prior to our inspection we were provided with no documentation or information that related to the history of the property, confirmation of Statutory Approvals/Permissions or gave information about previous works undertaken.

1.5. Type

The property is a three-storey terraced house.

1.6. Construction

The external walls are of solid brickwork, under pitched timber roofs covered with slates.

The floors are a mixture of solid slab concrete and suspended timber.

The single-storey extension to the rear is of unknown construction, with the walls covered with render, but we assume that they are of cavity work.

The property is of traditional type with its structural arrangement and materials, contemporaneous with its age and the methods of building that were current at the time of its construction.

1.7. Age

The exact year that the property was built is unknown but we would estimate that the property was constructed in or around 1900.

1.8. Tenure and Occupation

The tenure is understood to be freehold with no known tenancies. The vendor was in residence at the time of the inspection and vacant possession is assumed to be given upon completion.

1.9. Location, Local Environment and Facilities

The property is located on a mainly residential road, with properties of broadly similar type, convenient for local amenities, a number of which are within easy walking distance. There is a range of more extensive shopping facilities and other amenities within easy driving distance.

1.10. Orientation

The front of the property faces onto Ingersoll Road. All directions given in this report assume the reader is standing on Ingersoll Road facing the front of the property.

1.11. The Site

The boundaries are defined by a mixture of brick walls (some rendered), timber fences and metal railings.

1.12. Accommodation

The accommodation comprises five bedrooms, two bathrooms, utility room, double reception room, kitchen/dining room and cellar.

1.13. Overall Opinion

Our inspection of the property revealed no matters that we would classify as significant structural defects. The principal structural elements, comprising the external walls, the main roof and the floors, interact together in such a way as to provide an intact structural framework, the integrity of which has not been compromised.

The items that we will draw to your attention in the body of our report appear consistent with its age and type of construction. Some works of routine repair and maintenance, which we would regard as being normal, are therefore required. However, the amount of items that do need attention is below that which one would normally find, due to the extensive refurbishment works that have taken place to the property in the relatively recent past.

A summary of those matters deemed to be repairs needing attention either now or possibly during the course of your occupation, is covered under 'Conclusion – A Summary of Repairs' towards the end of this report.

2. EXTERIOR

2.1. Chimney Stacks and Parapet Walls

Main Roof

The chimney stack to the right side of the main roof is of traditional brick construction. No significant lean or distortion from the vertical upright profile was observed.

There are the first signs of spalling to a number of the faces to the red bricks that form the horizontal ornamental band. Although, the point has not yet been reached at which the bricks need to be cut out and replaced to preserve the structural integrity of the stack, they will continue to weather at the same incremental rate as has taken place in the past.

The stack has no capping or high level oversailing courses, which does mean that it is more vulnerable to damp penetration during periods of very heavy rain, when water simply runs off the flaunching, the cement that holds the chimney pots, down onto the brickwork beneath.

Whilst we had no clear view of the flaunching to the stack, the cement that holds the chimney pots, it does appear that all of the chimney pots have been replaced, as they are modern in appearance and in good condition.

To either side of the main roof there are dwarf parapet walls of solid brickwork over-coated with render.

The condition of the parapet walls forms one of the few disappointing features of the property. Parapet walls of this type rely on the integrity of the render, plus the provision of good quality capping stones on top, in order to adequately resist water penetration.

To the parapet wall to the right side of the main roof, the cappings are in poor condition and finished flush with the render. This means that any water landing on top of the existing capping stones will simply wash down the render, posing a potential theoretical risk of water penetrating internally.

To the left side parapet wall to the main roof, capping stones are again in position, but they are not wide enough and do not appear to be seated on a damp-proof course.

There is also one crack passing through the render forming an isolated weak spot.

The parapet walls towards the rear of the main roof, past the point of the side-to-side mid-roof ridge, could not be fully viewed, and only several isolated areas could be seen, where it appears that the brickwork has been extended. In this case, the parapet walls on either side of the rear of the main roof appear to be finished with a brick on edge coping, which again is unlikely to have satisfactory waterproofing qualities, and there is again a theoretical risk of water penetration in the future.

Whilst moisture meter readings taken internally at high level at the time of our inspection revealed no areas of significant penetrating dampness as a result of the poor condition of the cappings on top of the parapet walls, these details remain vulnerable and it may be necessary to carry out some improvement works at some unspecified point in the future.

The abutment detail between the slates to the main roof and the adjacent chimney stacks/parapet walls are sealed with sheet metal flashings, which is good building practice, with the flashings and corresponding soakers in satisfactory condition.

Upper Back Addition Roof

The chimney stack to the left side of the upper back addition roof has brickwork that is untidy in appearance, although it is not specifically defective.

There are a few spots of missing pointing to the front face of the stack, but this isolated lack of pointing has not invalidated the overall stability.

The chimney pots are in good condition.

To the left side of the roof, there is a further rendered solid brick wall, again with a capping detail on top.

Viewed from the window of the first floor centre bedroom, the parapet wall is not fundamentally defective, but again the capping detail appears inadequate, and comments made previously in respect of possible damp penetration in the future, also apply here.

The abutment detail between the head of the slates and the parapet wall/chimney stack is formed with lead flashings, in satisfactory condition, as viewed from the first floor centre bedroom window.

2.2. Main Roof Structure

The main roof is of pitched timber construction covered with slates to the front slope, with the rear slope terminating in a near-vertical slope known as a mansard, also covered with slates.

Our inspection of the various roof slopes that could be seen from ground level and from the upper windows, revealed that they are generally true in profile, with no significant distortion or unevenness noted. The absence of any marked distress to the profile of the roof slopes suggests strongly, from an external viewing, that there are no significant structural defects.

2.3. Main Roof Covering

The slates to the main roof slopes, including the rear mansard, are in satisfactory condition, as viewed from ground level, and all that should be required in the foreseeable future is the replacement of the odd slipped or missing slate as part of normal maintenance works.

The mortar into which the various hip/ridge tiles are bedded is new and in satisfactory condition.

At the abutment where the front slope meets the various slated slopes to the front bay, constructional details known as valley gutters are in position, which to the subject property are covered with sheet lead. As viewed from the two skylights to the second floor bedroom, the leadwork is in satisfactory condition.

2.4. Ancillary Roof Structure

Above the two-storey back addition there is a lean-to timber roof covered with slates, whilst to the ground floor single-storey extension there is a further lean-to timber roof also covered with slates, running round the rear of the property in an 'L' shape.

Our inspection of the roof above the two-storey back addition from the first floor centre bedroom did reveal an amount of unevenness to the roof slope. The distortion is almost certainly caused by unevenness in the rafters beneath. On a property of this age and type, this is not an unusual phenomenon, and certainly we do not recommend that any significant works are required at the present time. However, the situation should be monitored, and if there is any further distortion from the existing profile, it might be necessary to carry out some works to strengthen the roof timbers beneath.

No significant distortion or unevenness was noted to the profile of the roof above the single-storey extension, from an external viewing only.

2.5. Ancillary Roof Covering

The slates to both rear subsidiary roofs are in satisfactory condition, subject to routine maintenance.

It appears that one slate is missing to the front left corner of the roof above the single-storey extension, adjacent to the soil pipe. It needs to be replaced.

To the right side of the roof above the single-storey extension, there is a box gutter on the party line shared with the single-storey extension to the right side adjacent property. The box gutter is lined with lead. Our inspection of the box gutter was limited, but from our restricted view, no significant defects were noted to the lead, and there is no evidence of any significant damp penetrating at high level to the right side of the dining area to the kitchen/ dining room.

2.6. Roof Lights

There are five roof lights of a Velux double-glazed type passing through the main roof and the roof above the single-storey extension. The roof lights were in satisfactory condition at the time of our inspection, with all five tested, and the handles opening and closing the roof lights securely into position.

2.7. Dormer Windows

There are no dormer constructions passing through the various roof slopes/surfaces.

2.8. Rainwater Gutters and Downpipes

The gutters and downpipes to the property are all of modern PVC.

On this dry day, it was not possible to detect specific leaks, but no area of significant mechanical damage was noted to either gutters or downpipes.

The downpipe to the right side of the front elevation needs an additional bracket at low level.

This particular downpipe discharges onto the pavement, after running through the front garden to the right side adjacent property. The main bend to the downpipe adjacent to ground level in the neighbouring garden appears to be wrapped with a waterproof bandage. This is probably in position to deal with a leak but in a temporary and unsatisfactory manner. We assume that this would be the adopted repairing responsibility of the right side adjacent property, but even if they do ask for 50% of the cost of repair, this would be an insignificant sum.

At high level to the front elevation there are signs of previous leakage, in the form of dark/light stains to the brickwork, but there appears to be no active damp to either area.

To the rear of the property, the joint between the hopper draining the box gutter to the subsidiary roof and the associated downpipe beneath has come loose, and the downpipe/hopper need to be re-connected.

There was evidence of slight weeping to several of the gutter/downpipe joints and you should anticipate having to carry out the re-sealing of individual, defective joints in the interests of routine maintenance.

2.9. Foundations

Sub-soil investigations and opening-up works to the foundations were not undertaken during our inspection. In consequence, we are unable to comment specifically on the type and extent of any foundations provided or any sub-soil conditions that may exist. However, from the information gathered at the time of our inspection, we do not feel that any opening-up works to check on the foundations are required.

2.10. Main walls

The external walls are all of traditional solid brickwork.

Our inspection of the external elevations revealed no matters that we would classify as significant structural defects, with no severe cracking, distortion or unevenness observed. The individual bricks and the pointing between are also in satisfactory condition.

One individual brick is spalled to the right side of the window sill to the first floor left window, but this is an insignificant matter.

To the front elevation, the brickwork incorporates an amount of ornamental render detailing as part of the bay construction and over the door/window heads. The ornamental render is in surprisingly good condition, and has retained much of its crisp, original profile, which is a positive factor.

Properties of this type and age in the area, can sometimes suffer from a structural issue where the bay to the front elevation starts to separate away from the main body of the building. In the case of the subject property, the bay was tight against the front elevation brickwork, which is also a positive factor.

The render covering to both sides of the recessed porch is hollow, with the render having detached itself slightly from the brickwork behind, but not to the point where the render currently needs to be replaced.

To the rear of the property, there is some slight distortion of the brickwork around the head of the window to the first floor main bathroom, with further slight disturbance above the window arches to the second floor rear bedroom and the first floor rear bedroom. Any movement that has caused the distortion appears to have stabilised, and there is no current need for any repair works to take place. Should the distortion adjacent to the arches start to develop again in the future, it might be necessary to carry out some limited repair works to the arches and associated brickwork, but on current evidence this is unlikely.

2.11. Extension Walls

The only part of the single-storey extension that could be seen is the rear elevation, which is covered with render. The render is in satisfactory condition, with no defects observed.

Whenever an extension is constructed against the main original body of the building, there is the possibility that differential foundation movement between two structures built at different times may cause cracking at vulnerable abutments or alternatively shrinkage may develop where the two structures of dissimilar age abut. There were no signs of any such cracking or shrinkage at the time of our inspection.

2.12. Damp-Proof Course

We are unable to confirm as to whether a damp-proof course is provided at low level to the external walls.

2.13. Windows

The windows to the property are of a replacement double-glazed timber type. It appears that the windows are from slightly different time periods, as there is a difference to a number in respect of the double-glazing gap between both panes of glass.

As a general comment, the windows are in satisfactory condition, and form one of the most positive features of the property, as often windows on properties of this age, are replaced with modern double-glazed UPVC, which is aesthetically inappropriate.

Several of the windows are not running up and down within the box frames as smoothly as we would wish, and to the second floor rear bedroom window, the sash cord creases when the window is moved upwards. We would not classify this lack of ease of movement as being a significant defect, but minor easing works to facilitate freer travel of the casements within the box frames would be beneficial.

To the first floor rear bedroom, one of the panes of glass is cracked and the double-glazed hermetically sealed unit should be replaced.

Your legal adviser should check that either approval from the local authority for the double-glazing installation has been obtained or that the double-glazing has been installed by a member registered with FENSA, (a government approved trade association). Your legal adviser should also investigate with the present owner whether any valid guarantees are available for this work.

The only double-glazed UPVC window is to the second floor en-suite bathroom, with the window in satisfactory condition, although the handles are stiff in operation and need minor easing and adjusting.

2.14. External Doors

The front external door is of a traditional glazed timber type, in satisfactory condition, with no obvious material defects.

The external doors to the rear of the dining area are of a double-glazed metal folding type. The doors were fully opened/closed at the time of our inspection, with the doors moving correctly into position and sliding smoothly within the frame.

2.15. Other External Joinery

The roof slopes oversail the external walls, creating a small, projecting eaves detail around the perimeter, which is finished in the traditional manner with softwood fascia boards. No significant areas of timber decay were noted from ground level but as part of an external redecoration programme, it is likely that some limited joinery repairs will be required to these vulnerable elements.

2.16. External Decorations

The property appears to have been recently redecorated externally, to a good standard. However, we are unable to comment concerning the quality of preparation that will determine the longevity of the paint finish.

2.17. Conservatory

There is no conservatory to the subject property.

2.18. Porch

There is no porch to the subject property.

2.19. Other Structures

There are no other structures that have not been covered elsewhere in this report.

3. INTERIOR

3.1. Roof Spaces

The roof space has been converted into habitable use by the construction of the second floor bedroom/en-suite bathroom.

The only area of original roof space that could be seen is the eaves storage area to the front of the second floor bedroom. Within, no specific defects were noted in respect of the roof construction.

The ceiling to this area has been constructed with plasterboard, which is functional, but we would like to have seen the plasterboard finished with a skim coat of plaster, in order to complete this area to a higher standard.

3.2. Ceilings

The ceilings throughout the property appear to be of modern plasterboard with a skim plaster finish.

No significant defects were noted in respect of the ceilings.

With modern plasterboard ceilings, the sheets of plasterboard need to be covered with an adhesive material, known as scrim tape, before the finishing skim coat of plaster is applied. In some cases, where the tape was of insufficient strength, or was incorrectly applied when the ceilings were constructed, straight hairline cracks can open up, causing a considerable degree of disfigurement. We are able to report that no such cracking was observed to the ceilings of the subject property at the time of our inspection.

As part of the ceiling construction, there are a number of areas where there is an amount of ornamental fibrous plaster forming the cornice/ceiling roses. From floor level, the fibrous plasterwork was seen to be in good condition, with no obvious or clear defects apparent.

3.3. Walls and Partitions Structure

Internal walls and partitions are a mixture of solid construction and timber stud.

No significant defects were noted during the course of our inspection.

The binding of the doors to the second floor rear bedroom and the first floor rear bedroom suggests that there might have been some slight distortion of the partitioning surrounding both door openings, with this partitioning not having any corresponding partitions beneath at ground floor level, with the kitchen/dining area being completely open. There is therefore the possibility that the partitions have settled slightly vertically downwards. We are unable to confirm the support arrangement that should be stabilising these partitions and giving structural support in the construction of the ceiling void above the kitchen/dining area, but there is the very remote possibility that some strengthening works in this area might conceivably be required if the doors are eased and then start binding again, which could only be the result of further distortion in the partitioning.

3.4. Walls and Partitions Finishes

There is a small amount of uneven and hollow plaster found in various areas throughout the property. Certainly, if all of the hollow and potentially loose areas were renewed, there would be a need for a limited amount of re-plastering internally now. However, the hollow areas are generally supported by surrounding areas where the plaster is still firm and attached to the structure behind, which maintains the overall integrity of the plaster finish. We are simply alerting you to the fact that not all of the internal plaster is now fully adhering to the masonry backing material behind.

3.5. Fireplaces

There are four open metal fireplaces throughout the property. The fireplaces are in visually satisfactory condition, but you will appreciate that we were unable to test either the fireplaces or the associated flues.

3.6. Floors

The upper floors are of suspended timber, whilst the ground floor appears to be a mixture of solid slab concrete and suspended timber.

Whilst the presence of fitted floor coverings throughout greatly limited our inspection, we are of the overall opinion that the floor constructions are sound, as far as can be ascertained by walking upon the same.

There is some vibration to the first floors when walked upon, and also to the front of the reception room floor. This is the result of the original floor timbers being slightly undersized by modern-day standards but, under conditions of normal residential loading, we do not see this as a significant issue.

There is some loose boarding detected underfoot beneath the carpet to the second floor bedroom, but we do not consider this to be a significant matter.

There is also some unevenness to the profile of the boarding beneath the carpeted finish to the bay area to the first floor front bedroom. Again, this is not a cause for significant concern, but some levelling of the boards should have taken place before the carpet was laid.

To the reception room floor there is an amount of sagging to the strip timber flooring, particularly noticeable towards the centre of the room. Whilst we would not regard the floor as being unstable to this area, the degree of deflection of the boarding is past an acceptable level, and some limited strengthening work, requiring the boarding to be taken up and re-laid, is required.

There is also a little more play underfoot to the boarding to the kitchen/dining area than we would wish to see, as in our opinion, the boards should be fully rigid, but in places they have a soft feel, with areas of the floorboarding depressing slightly underfoot when walked upon.

3.7. Sub-Floor Ventilation

The ground floor throughout appears to be of solid slab concrete and therefore sub-floor ventilation is not required.

3.8. Internal Joinery Generally

The internal doors are of a timber-panelled type, in generally satisfactory condition, but the doors to the second floor rear bedroom and the first floor rear bedroom are not opening/closing smoothly and minor easing/adjusting works are required.

The cupboard doors to the eaves area to the second floor bedroom have no handles.

The catches to the built-in cupboards to the reception room need overhaul.

3.9. Staircase

There are flights of traditional timber stairs running up through the property.

Both flights are in satisfactory condition, with the treads solid underfoot and the associated handrails/balustradings stable.

There is a timber set of stairs leading from ground floor to cellar level. There is some squeaking of the treads when walked upon, and they would benefit from being tightened up.

3.10. Kitchen and Fitted Cupboards

A range of fitted units is provided to the kitchen, of above average quality and in good condition.

3.11. Internal Decorations

The property is decorated internally to a good standard and there is no need for mandatory redecoration work.

3.12. Cellar/Basement

There is a small cellar area running beneath the ground floor entrance hall.

The cellar construction appears to comprise solid brick walls, with a solid concrete floor and traditional timber joists above.

Whilst no major defects were observed, there is a considerable amount of false boarding to the walls, which is almost certainly covering dampness behind, as opposed to eradicating it. There is a small spot of rising dampness to the left side wall of the cellar adjacent to the foot of the stairs.

The presence of timber boarding on the floor prevented us from viewing the concrete beneath, but again, such cellar areas traditionally have a poor quality concrete floor, often suffering from rising dampness beneath.

There may therefore be some deterioration to the cellar area in respect of rising dampness becoming apparent to both walls and floor, which may need treatment as time passes. We would regard this area as being suitable for non-perishable storage, but in no way is it to be regarded as a habitable room.

3.13. Thermal insulation

We are unable to comment as to whether thermal insulation has been incorporated within the main roof construction, as all roof timbers have been covered with a plasterboard finish. The presence of a piece of rigid insulation board to the right side of the front eaves storage area to the second floor bedroom suggests that some might have been incorporated, but we cannot confirm this. Possibly the vendor can provide additional information.

We are unable to confirm, or otherwise, as to whether insulation quilt has been laid between the ceiling joists beneath the chipboard floor finish to the eaves storage area.

The vertical studwork between the eaves storage area and the main body of the second floor bedroom should be infilled with insulation, but there is no such insulation present.

The windows and the external doors are double-glazed, which increases the level of thermal insulation.

The external walls to the main body of the building were not built with any thermal insulation incorporated within the external wall construction and we saw no evidence that any provision for additional thermal insulation to the external walls has subsequently been actioned.

We assume that the external walls to the rear single-storey extension were constructed in accordance with the thermal requirements of the Building Regulations that were in force at the time the property was constructed.

3.14. Other

There are no additional matters to detail under this heading.

3.15. Structural Movement

There were no signs of significant ongoing structural movement affecting any of the principal structural elements such as the roof, the walls and the floor.

3.16. Rot

Our inspection of the visible and accessible timbers revealed no significant deterioration of the timbers due to active fungal decay.

3.17. Beetle Infestation

Our inspection of the visible and accessible timbers revealed no live woodworm infestation. However, the age of the property and the nature of its construction mean that it is likely that some signs of woodworm infestation might be found if concealed timbers were exposed.

3.18. Rising Dampness

Regular moisture meter readings were taken throughout the ground floor of the property at approximately two metre intervals, furniture and stored items permitting. The following areas of rising dampness were discovered:

- a) To the left side of the cellar adjacent to the foot of the stairs, as previously mentioned, with further dampness almost certain to be present behind the false-boarded finish to the walls and the timber finish to the floor.
- b) To the front left corner of the reception room.

We recommend that the situation be monitored. If the dampness we have mentioned exacerbates in any way above its current level to the point where it visibly affects plaster and decorative finishes, then some limited damp-proofing works might be required.

3.19. Penetrating Dampness

Moisture meter readings were taken at those points throughout the property generally regarded as being vulnerable to water penetration.

No significant readings were recorded, but we have alerted you to the potential for dampness to work its way through to the interior via the external parapet walls.

3.20. Other Dampness

No active internal dampness caused by defects to the plumbing system or other internal causes was detected at the time of our inspection.

3.21. Condensation

There were no signs of active condensation within the property at the time of our inspection.

4. SERVICES

4.1. Gas

Mains gas is supplied to the property and is used for central heating, hot water and cooking purposes, with the gas meter located in the cellar.

No defects were noted from a visual inspection.

We recommend that both gas fires incorporated within the fireplaces to the reception room be tested before use, unless there is documentary evidence available from the vendor's solicitor to confirm that these fires have recently been the subject of a satisfactory test.

4.2. Electricity – Mains

Mains electricity is supplied to the property and is distributed via a network of traditional power and lighting circuits. The electric meter and the associated consumer unit are located in the cellar.

The installation appears to have been renewed, and the property gives the appearance of having been fully re-wired.

The extract fans to the interior of the property were all functioning at the time of our inspection.

A label on top of the consumer unit within the cellar confirms that the installation was the subject of a satisfactory test in April 2014, with the next test due in 2024. Assuming that there is a certificate available, produced by an NICEIC registered contractor, then this should be sufficient, with no further tests required.

4.3. Security Alarm

There are no specific issues to detail under this heading.

4.4. Water – mains

No cold water storage tank was readily visible within the curtilage of the property and therefore we assume that cold water is supplied direct from the mains.

Water is distributed throughout by a network of copper pipes.

There was an adequate supply of water at the draw-off points when tested individually.

4.5. Space and Water Heating – Main Source

Both central heating and hot water are provided by a gas-fired, wall-mounted Heat Line boiler located in the utility room.

The boiler is new/relatively new and, with regular servicing, should provide satisfactory service for a period of time to come.

Central heating is emitted via a system of cast column radiators. There is no radiator to the utility room.

There is no hot water cylinder, as hot water is supplied to the sanitary fittings direct from the boiler on demand.

The thermostat controlling the overall temperature is located on the first floor landing.

The overall system is operated by the controls on the face of the boiler.

Space heating at ground floor level to the reception room and kitchen/dining area is provided by an electrical under-floor system.

4.6. Space Heating – Ancillary Source

There is no other source of heating to the subject property.

4.7. Sanitary Fittings

The sanitary fittings are serviceable, of good quality and all were operating satisfactorily at the time of our inspection.

The wash hand basin to the second floor en-suite bathroom is limescaled around the outlet, and the shower unit is slightly loose on the wall.

At the time of our inspection, the WC pan to the first floor main bathroom backed up with water nearing the top of the pan before suddenly discharging itself. Presumably, this was the result of a one-off isolated blockage.

4.8. Drains – Below Ground Surface Water

The downpipe to the right side of the front elevation discharges through the right side adjacent property's garden, out onto the pavement.

The rainwater downpipe to the rear of the property discharges into an open gully, and it is likely that rainwater thereafter enters a separate system, or alternatively a purpose-built soakaway, but we are unable to provide additional information on this matter.

There is a side-to-side channel covered with a metal grille adjacent to the rear external doors, which will take rainwater drainage landing on the pavings to the rear garden, which rainwater runs back towards the property.

4.9. Drains – Below Ground Foul Drainage

Soil and waste water almost certainly enter the mains drain but the inspection chamber located to the rear of the property could not be lifted, as we were unable to turn the plastic screws with a metal screwdriver, with the slots in the head of the screws damaging easily as we tried to turn them. We are therefore unable to comment under this heading.

The above observations do not in any way constitute a full drains test and, should you require specific confirmation that the drains are in satisfactory condition, with no significant deterioration, particularly drainage runs that could not be viewed, you will need to commission a full drains test.

5. THE SITE

5.1. Garages – Main

There is no garage to the subject property.

5.2. Substantial Outbuildings

There are no substantial outbuildings to the subject property.

5.3. Garden Features

The underside of the bottom rail to the metal railings to the front of the property is not painted, and this has led to rust staining developing on the front boundary wall.

The timber fence to the left side of the front garden is badly decayed and needs to be replaced, although we cannot confirm as to whether the repairing responsibility lies with the subject property or the left side adjacent property.

When the timber fence is renewed, the left side of the rendered pier to the left side of the garden gate will not have a render finish.

The brick walls surrounding the rear garden are in fair condition only. They are untidy, but generally sound, apart from the rear boundary wall, where there is a vertical crack on the left side and also an area of untidy brickwork in one isolated spot at high level. Limited repairs to the brickwork to these areas should be anticipated.

5.4. Trees

There are no trees, either within the curtilage of the subject property or adjacent thereto, that we feel pose any threat to the fabric of the subject property due to the deleterious effects of their root systems.

5.5. Boundaries

The boundaries to the overall site of the subject property are clearly defined. The materials used to define the boundaries comprise brick walls (some rendered), timber fences and metal railings.

5.6. Rights of Way

There are no obvious rights-of-way issues affecting the property.

5.7. Communal Areas

There are no communal areas relating to the subject property.

5.8. Flooding

According to the Environment Agency, (the government organisation responsible for flood control), the property is not in an area that is vulnerable to flooding but your solicitor should confirm this via an environmental search.

6. LEGAL MATTERS

6.1. Planning and environment

In respect of the property itself and the various extensions that have taken place, your legal adviser should check as to whether Planning Permission should have been required and whether it was obtained prior to the works being carried out.

6.2. Fire Safety and Means of Escape

Means of escape is via the windows and the external doors.

At second floor level, the logical escape route would be through the bathroom window, but without some form of fire escape ladder stored at second floor level, it would be impossible to safely escape the building unless there was external assistance available.

6.3. Hazardous Materials

There are no issues to consider under this heading.

6.4. Legal – Regulations

Building regulations approval is required to convert a loft or attic into a liveable space and there are legal requirements for making alterations to the loft space of an existing house that is no more than two storeys high. (Requirements for alterations to an apartment or other dwellings like maisonettes, or houses over three storeys, will be similar but may be more extensive and possibly extend to other parts of the building.)

The regulations will be applied to ensure that, for example:

- the structural strength of the new floor is sufficient.
- the stability of the structure (including the existing roof) is not endangered.
- there is safe escape from fire.
- there are safely designed stairs to the new floor.
- there is reasonable sound insulation between the conversion/the rooms below.

Your legal advisers should provide you with written confirmation, via the appropriate Certificate, that the relevant Building Regulations approval was obtained.

6.5 Legal – Guarantees

We are not aware of any guarantees that are available in respect of the property.

6.5. Legal – Rights of Way

There are no obvious rights of way issues that we need to pass comment on.

6.6. Legal – Boundaries

There are no obvious boundary matters with legal implications that we need to pass comment on.

6.7. Legal – Other Matters

There are no additional matters to detail under this heading.

7. LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1. Limitations

Our inspection of this property covered all those parts of the building that could be seen either from ground level externally or from the interior including accessible floor spaces.

Binoculars were used to inspect roof slopes, chimney stacks, etc. externally. No ladders were raised for close inspection of the upper parts of the building. Our inspection was made entirely from ground level or from upper windows where available. An electronic damp meter was used internally where possible.

Many parts of the building such as foundations and sub-floor areas are concealed during construction and we do not disturb these. It follows, for practical reasons, that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and therefore we are not able to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

Where a house is occupied and fully furnished and has extensive floor coverings this again limits the inspection possible, particularly of floor surfaces. We did take random check readings with a damp meter through the fitted carpets but they were not lifted.

As far as the service installations (gas, electricity, hot and cold water, space heating and drainage, ground heat source pumps, solar panels, wind turbines, etc.) are concerned, our inspection was a limited superficial one and in the absence of specific tests, we cannot give warranty as to their condition, design or efficiency.

The suitability of the main supplies and acceptability of the installations connected to them is something on which the gas, water and electricity companies have the final word. Underground pipes from rainwater downpipes or gullies were not traced or tested.

In drafting this report we have limited comment to the more material matters and, in particular, we have not listed individually such minor items as slightly loose door or window fittings or minor decorative blemishes which have no structural significance.

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The perimeter joinery elements to the main and subsidiary roofs, comprising fascia boards, are predominantly painted black, which always makes it much more difficult to identify timber decay from ground level.

We had a limited view of the rear half of the main roof, together with the parapet walls on either side, from the level of the side-to-side ridge back as far as the head of the mansard slope.

We had no external view of the left side wall to the rear single-storey extension.

To the right side of the second floor bedroom, a gap has been created between the brick parapet wall and the internal plastered wall, which could not be clearly viewed, even from within the eaves cupboard.

We were unable to test the second floor en-suite shower, due to the difficulties of discharge getting us wet if we had tried to operate it in a normal manner.

As previously mentioned, the walls and the floor to the cellar were covered with false boarding/strip timber flooring respectively, which significantly restricted our inspection.

We did not test the intercom system, which is beyond the scope of this report.

7.2. Conclusion – Summary of Repairs

The most important items requiring immediate remedial attention or further investigation can be summarised as follows:

- a) The ornamental red brick band to the chimney stack to the right side of the main roof is spalling.
- b) The capping detail on top of the parapet walls to both side of the main roof is lacking.
- c) The capping detail on top of the left side parapet wall to the roof above the two-storey back addition is also sub-standard.
- d) It appears that a single slate needs to be replaced to the low-level subsidiary roof above the single-storey extension.
- e) Ideally, some of the internal windows need easing and adjusting to move more smoothly within the box frames.
- f) The timber fence to the left side of the front garden should be replaced.
- g) The underside of the metal railings to the front of the property should be painted.
- h) Minor repair works are required to the rainwater goods as detailed.
- i) Some limited repairs are required to the brickwork to the rear wall to the rear garden.
- j) We recommend that the screws holding the plastic inspection chamber cover down be replaced with metal, so that they can be unscrewed in a traditional manner.
- k) Several of the internal doors need easing and adjusting.
- l) We recommend that insulation quilt be provided to the vertical studwork between the eaves storage area and the second floor bedroom.
- m) Minor joinery repairs are required to other built-in cupboard doors, as detailed.
- n) Areas of the strip timber flooring at ground floor level, particularly to the main reception room, are deflecting underfoot and need to be stabilised.
- o) It may be necessary to treat the limited rising dampness to the front left corner of the reception room and the cellar at some unspecified point in the future.
- p) The stairs between the ground floor and the cellar should be strengthened.
- q) Some limited rising damp works may be required to the cellar/front reception room in the future.

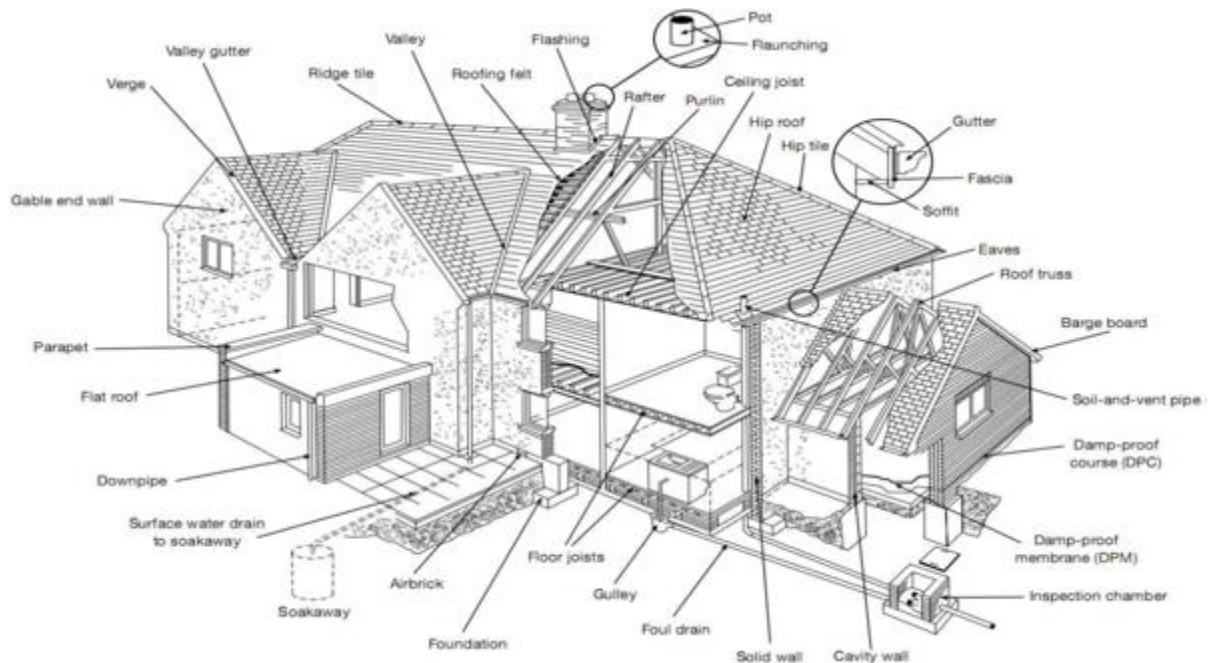
7.3. Conclusion – Further Investigations

There are no matters causing concern where there is sufficient evidence to recommend any further investigation.

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STEPHEN B. HOWES BSc DipBldgCons MRICS

8. DIAGRAM OF BUILDING ELEMENTS

This diagram illustrates where you may find the building elements referred to in this report.



9. PHOTOGRAPHS



Front elevation.



Rear elevation.



Chimney stack to main roof with bricks to ornamental red band starting to spall (1).



Chimney stack to main roof with bricks to ornamental red band starting to spall (2).



Parapet wall to right side of main roof with no oversailing capping detail.



Correct flashing detail between slates and stack/parapet wall to right side of main roof.



Crack through render to parapet wall to left side of main roof.



New section of parapet wall to rear left corner of main roof.



Parapet wall to rear left corner of main roof with good lead flashing protection.



Untidy brickwork to chimney stack to left side of upper back addition roof.



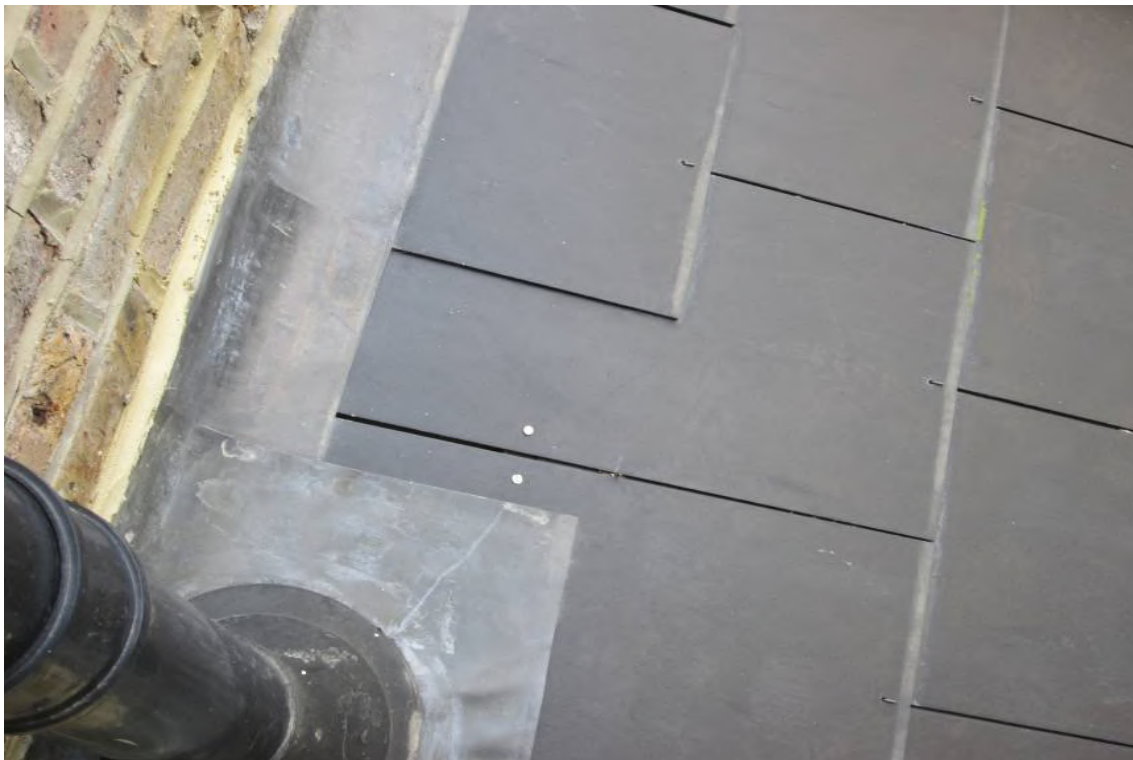
Parapet wall to upper back addition roof with poor capping detail but correct flashing detail.



Valley gutter to front of main roof covered with leadwork.



Uneven profile to slating to upper back addition roof.



Missing slate to lower rear subsidiary roof.



Correct flashing detail to lower rear subsidiary roof.



Rear end of box gutter draining lower rear subsidiary roof.



Bandaged joint at low level to downpipe to right side of front elevation.



Weeping rear downpipe joint.



Separated joint between rear hopper and downpipe beneath.



Ornamental render to front bay retaining its sharp detailing (1).



Ornamental render to front bay retaining its sharp detailing (2).



No separation between bay and front elevation.



Vent at low level to front elevation.



Single spalled brick at first floor level to front elevation.



Brickwork slightly twisted over first floor bathroom window.



Rust staining to front boundary wall, due to bottom rail to front railings being unpainted.



Render to garden gate pier will be unfinished behind timber post.



Timber fence to left side of front garden in poor condition.



Rainwater downpipe discharging onto pavement.



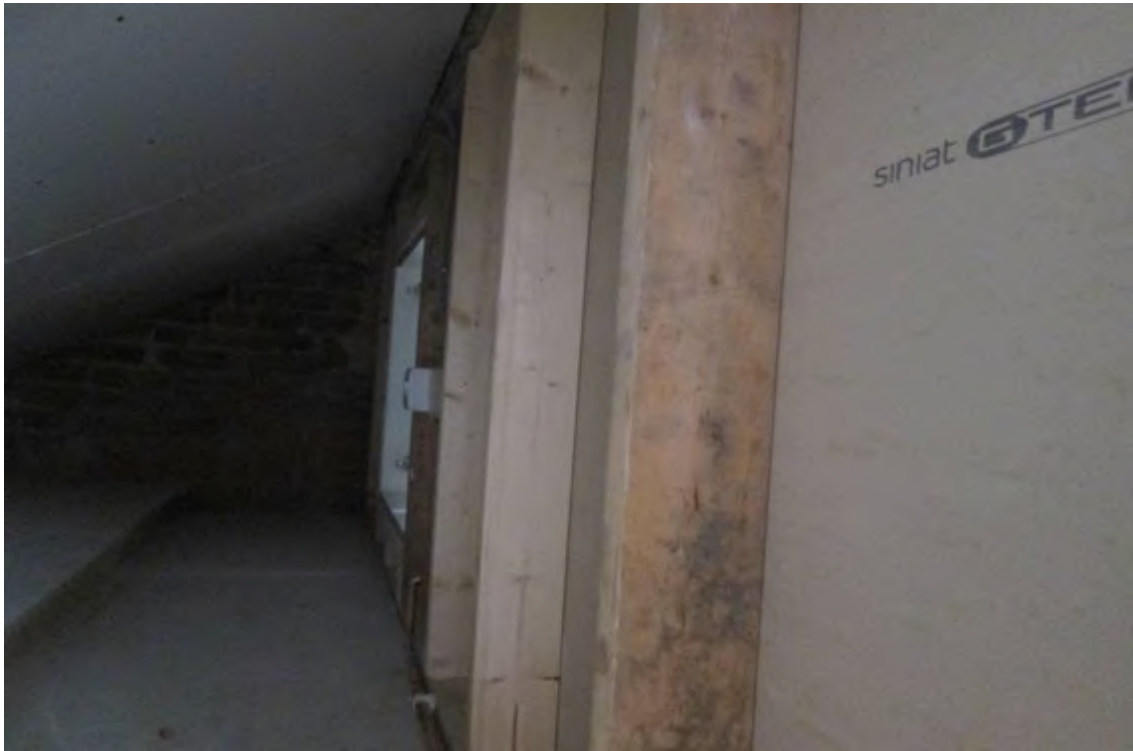
Crack to rear boundary wall.



Incomplete high-level brickwork to rear boundary wall.



Open gap to right side of second floor bedroom.



No insulation in stud wall to front of second floor bedroom.



Water at top of bowl to first floor WC pan.



Extension cords to first floor centre bedroom suggesting inadequate power supply.