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Address Example House

Prepared for Example Clients

Survey Date 24th October 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James Brook'.

Prepared by James Brook BA(Hons), MSc, FRICS

Date of issue 24th October 2023

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## 1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this inspection is to provide you with a detailed 'plain English' report to highlight any major issues which may cost you money and impact upon the enjoyment and security of your new home.

We offer a premium and detailed service and our aim is to hold your hand through the whole process. Following the report, we will be on hand to explain the findings and answer any questions you may have.

We work closely with architects, solicitors, electricians, plumbers and other contractors and if you need any further help, we are more than happy to point you in the right direction.

### 1.1 Date of Inspection

9th March 2023

### 1.2 Related Party Disclosure

We are not aware of any conflicts of interest relating to this instruction.

### 1.3 Property Status at the Time

The property was vacant and furnished during our inspection. Most of the floors had fitted floor coverings which restricted our investigations.

### 1.4 Weather Conditions

The weather during our inspection was cold and dry. The weather during the period leading up to our inspection was dry.

### 1.5 Scope of Instruction

The scope of the instruction is to inspect the subject property and provide a Building Survey Report in accordance with the Terms of Engagement received and signed by yourselves.

This service is delivered in accordance with the Home survey standard (1st edition) RICS professional statement and is equivalent to a level 3 survey. This level of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion based on a detailed assessment of the property.

Unfortunately, we are unable to inspect any hidden or unexposed areas in the property such as covered timbers, hidden pipework/wiring or inaccessible voids.

We will undertake a visual inspection of the accessible services and comment on any obvious defects, but as you will hopefully understand, we are not qualified electricians, gas engineers or drainage contractors and are therefore not qualified to test or comment in detail upon the services within the building. We will not lift up any fixed floor coverings, move heavy furniture, remove secured panels. We will also not remove any stored goods or

the contents of cupboards.

The surveyor will use a variety of equipment such as an electronic moisture meter, binoculars and torch. The surveyor may use a ladder to access any areas such as roof spaces, lower roofs, etc. But only where safe to do so at the discretion of the surveyor and not above 3 metres.

The surveyor and their assistants also carry out a desk-top study and make oral enquiries for information about matters affecting the property.

We will not include any budget costs unless otherwise agreed as an additional service. You should obtain quotes for any repair advice recommended in this report.

The report is for your private and confidential use. You must not reproduce it completely or in part. Third parties (with the exception of your professional advisers) cannot use it without our express written authority. Any other persons rely on the report at their own risk.

## 1.6 Limitations of the Survey

Large elements of the property were not visible and as this is not an intrusive survey, we are unable to confirm the presence or satisfactory condition of such elements without further intrusive investigations. This includes: the damp-proof courses, the damp-proofing or tanking system, structural supports, roof structures, foundations and drainage system. This list is not exhaustive. To undertake such intrusive investigations may be disruptive and the vendor's may be unlikely to allow this pre-purchase. You should therefore be mindful of such hidden risks.

During our inspection the weather was dry and as such we were not able to observe or comment upon the working order of the rainwater goods.

There are no accessible parts of the roof space. As such we are unable to comment upon the construction or condition of these unseen areas.

Our inspection was limited by the vendors' stored items, personal effects and furniture spread throughout the property.

Given the vendors' fitted floor coverings we were unable to inspect the floor structure and cannot comment on any hidden defects. It is outside the scope of our instructions to lift such fitted floor coverings as it is likely that damage would be caused and the condition in which the floor would be left might be hazardous. It is possible that there may be some hidden defects beneath the floor coverings, we would therefore advise that these are inspected when the structures are next exposed.

## 1.7 Terminology

The Building Survey Report is laid out in an easy to understand 'traffic light' rated format. To avoid confusion these classifications are explained in more detail below:



### Condition Rating 3- Serious/Urgent Repairs

Serious defects noted that require urgent repair, replacement, overhaul or further investigations or tests by an appropriate contractor, specialist or engineer.



## Condition Rating 2- Repairs/Improvements

Less serious defects that are not considered to be as urgent, but nevertheless will require attention, repair, overhaul or replacement in the medium and longer term, or in some cases the short term.



## Condition Rating 1- Ok/General maintenance

Elements where no major repairs are considered to be required currently. However, ongoing maintenance and some repairs/upkeep will be required to ensure defects do not develop.

Where the phrases immediate, short term, medium term, long term and very long term are used they generally mean the following:

Immediate:	As soon as possible
Short term:	Within 1 – 3 years
Medium term:	Within 3 – 5 years
Long term:	Within 5 – 10 years
Very long term:	Within 10-20 years

## 2.0 Overall Summary of the Property

During our inspection of the property, in our opinion, we identified a number of shortcomings and defects. We have only summarised the main issues here and you should consider the report in its entirety:

Significant dampness and evidence of staining was noted to the lower ground walls, most notably to the front living room area but this may also be present behind the kitchen fittings. This is likely due to the failure of the previous cement tanking system. You have instructed a Damp Specialist who has reported back with a quote for remedial works to re-tank the area with a cement slurry system. There are two main types of waterproofing for basements and lower grounds: application of a cement slurry or the use of cavity membranes combined with drainage channels and a sump pump. A cavity membrane system is far superior to cement slurry and typically lasts a lot longer. Such cement systems can fail after a number of years, and you may find that some damp start to present itself, requiring damp-proofing works once again. Condition Rating 3

The internal undercroft storage vault was also found to be damp, especially where the render finishes have cracked. This area has been waterproofed with a cement tanking system but this is starting to fail now. Given the vibration of the road above, these areas often suffer cracking and failure and therefore you may wish to install a membrane tanking system. Condition Rating 3

Significant dampness and staining was noted to the utility room- we suspect that this is a condensation issue as noted below. However, the roof above the utility room does not have any coping stones to project water away from the walls and prevent it soaking the brickwork below. This may be contributing to the issues of dampness and conditions to the utility room below. Condition Rating 3

There is significant staining to the ceiling below the kitchen rooflight and this indicates the area is leaking. This could be due to the flashings or the seals, but without stripping back the area it is not possible to confirm the cause. We would recommend that the decking is stripped and the unit inspected - it is likely the glazed unit will need to be replaced and a new flashing installed, some works to the roof coverings may also be required when exposed. This should be done in the immediate term. Condition Rating 3.

There is evidence of dampness and leaks to the cloakroom below the two storey extension roof. Externally, the asphalt coverings to the roof are rather weathered and cracked in areas. The roof should be re-covered and the flashings replaced in the short term to prevent further issues of water ingress. Condition Rating 3.

There is significant staining and blistering of the masonry and paintwork beneath the portico and balcony structures. We suspect that this is a result of the coverings being defective, as the asphalt here is rather weathered, and slightly cracked in areas. We would recommend the areas are re-covered with a deck waterproofing system and new flashing installed, with a lead drip along the edge of the balcony and portico in the short term. The area is beneath will need to be redecorated, however you may find the render and paint is now contaminated with salts which might mean the staining and blistering re-occurs- if this is the case the render will need to be hacked back and re-rendered using a breathable lime render and breathable paint.

The skylight which serves the rear ensuite bathroom on the right hand side has been sealed with silicon sealant. There is also evidence of water staining beneath both of the skylights here. This indicates that past leaks have occurred. Without opening the unit we cannot confirm the cause, however, it could be that the seals around the frame are defective. However, it could also require more cost of the replacement of the whole unit. We would recommend that a contractor is instructed to open up the unit and inspect and undertake the necessary repairs or replacement. Temporary repairs may be possible, but we suspect the units will need replacing in the short term.



The soil pipe to the rear of the building has a split in it, and it's leaks when operated on to the living room terrace. This section requires replacement immediately.

## Risks to Occupants

Internal Joinery- there is a lack of safety glass to lower ground door.

Electrics- we are not aware of a current test certificate for the electrical services.

Gas- we are not aware of a current test certificate for the gas services.

Heating and Hot Water- we are unaware of when the heating system was last tested.

## 3.0 General Description

### 3.1 Description of the Property

To avoid confusion all further reference throughout this report to left- or right-hand sides assumes the reader is standing facing the front elevation of the subject property.

The property is a mid-terraced house constructed over lower ground, ground, first, second and third floors.

There is an original three storey rear addition located on the left hand side of the property.

There is the benefit of a single and two storey rear extension.

### 3.2 Approximate Age

We believe that the property was built between 1850-1875.

We understand the rear extension and refurbishment works were completed around 2011.

### 3.3 Location

The property is in a sub-urban area, surrounded by similar residential properties.

Local amenities including shops, restaurants, schools, and transport links are within reasonable proximity of the subject property.

### 3.4 Accommodation

<b>Lower Ground Floor-:</b>	Kitchen/Living Room/Dining Room, Undercroft Vault
<b>Ground Floor-:</b>	Living Room, Cloakroom
<b>First Floor-:</b>	Bedroom 1, Walk-in Wardrobe, Ensuite Bathroom
<b>Second Floor-:</b>	Bedroom 2, Ensuite Bathroom Bedroom 3, Ensuite Shower Room
<b>Third Floor-:</b>	Bedroom 4, Ensuite Bathroom, Bedroom 5, Ensuite Shower Room

### 3.5 Outside Areas, Outbuildings and Parking

The property has the benefit of a front and rear garden.

There does not appear to be any off-street parking. We noted that parking in the surrounding roads is restricted with a permit system in effect. You should confirm the cost of these, both for the first and subsequent permits. You should also confirm that permits are available for the subject property.

The property does not have the benefit of any substantial outbuildings or garages. There are vaults to the front which house the boiler and hot water cylinders.

## 3.6 Tenure

We believe the property is a freehold. Your solicitor should explain the implications of this.

## 4.0 Exterior

### 4.1 Roofs - Condition Rating 2

The main roof is an arched/barrelled type roof, which we understand was originally was likely formed of terracotta tiles. These have since been overlaid with traditional bitumen felt.

The skylight which serves the rear ensuite bathroom on the right hand side has been sealed with silicon sealant. There is also evidence of water staining beneath both of the skylights here. This indicates that past leaks have occurred. Without opening the unit we cannot confirm the cause, however, it could be that the seals around the frame are defective. However, it could also require more cost of the replacement of the whole unit. We would recommend that a contractor is instructed to open up the unit and inspect and undertake the necessary repairs or replacement. Temporary repairs may be possible, but we suspect the units will need replacing in the short term.

There is standing water and a build-up of moss and debris to the right and left hand side valley gutters at the junction with the parapet walls. This could indicate that there is an insufficient drainage slope leading to the outlets at the rear of the building. It had rained recently and there was not a significant amount of standing water, so this may not be a major issue. Nevertheless, these areas should be regularly cleared of moss and debris to ensure water run-off is uninhibited.

There are a few areas of weathered and untidy felt, with some small air pockets present, which could allow moisture to be trapped beneath overtime.

Overall, the roof coverings are slightly aged and weathered, but generally appears to be in a satisfactory condition.

Bituminous felt roofs have much shorter life spans than traditional roofing materials, such as clay tiles or lead work, typically lasting between 10-20 years. Felt roofs can fail quickly especially if areas of damage are left unrepaired. Such roofs are deteriorated by UV light and as such normally have a layer of gravel protection, this should be maintained to prolong the life of the roof. The roof should be monitored and repaired as required. In the longer term it will be necessary to replace the roof covering.

Valley gutters are often a point of neglect when it comes to the property's maintenance, this allows them to become blocked which may result in internal dampness. The valley gutters should therefore be periodically inspected and maintained so they remain watertight.



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4 - Moss buildup and standing water



Photo 5 - Moss buildup and standing water



Photo 6 - Skylight has been sealed internally with silicon



Photo 7 - Skylight potentially leaking requiring repair/ replacement



Photo 8 - Air pockets and untidy felt

## 4.2 Other Roofs - Condition Rating 3

Rear single storey extension roof –

The rear single storey extension roof is flat with a covering of asphalt. This contains a large flat rooflight and has been laid with timber decking. The balcony is enclosed by metal railings. The timber decking obscured our view of the roof coverings and therefore we cannot comment upon their condition.

There is significant staining to the ceiling below the kitchen rooflight and this indicates the area is leaking. This could be due to the flashings or the seals, but without stripping back the area it is not possible to confirm the cause. We would recommend that the decking is stripped and the unit inspected - it is likely the glazed unit will need to be replaced and a new flashing installed, some works to the roof coverings may also be required when exposed. This should be done in the immediate term. Condition Rating 3.

## Rear two storey extension roof-

The rear two storey extension roof is flat and covered with asphalt. This forms a small balcony enclosed by metal railings.

There is evidence of dampness and leaks to the cloakroom below the two storey extension roof. Externally, the asphalt coverings to the roof are rather weathered and cracked in areas. The roof should be re-covered and the flashings replaced in the short term to prevent further issues of water ingress. Condition Rating 3.

## Four storey rear addition roof-

The four storey rear addition roof is of flat roof construction. This has been covered over with timber decking. We cannot therefore comment upon the condition of the coverings beneath. This forms a balcony area which is enclosed by metal balustrades. There is a small protruding flat roof below this balcony, and this is covered with asphalt which is weathered but generally in a satisfactory condition.

There was evidence of condensation and potential dampness to utility room below, we would recommend that the decking is lifted and the roof inspected below. You may wish to consider re-covering this area in the short term, whilst you are doing the other roofs.

## Front balcony and portico-

The front balcony and portico roof is flat and covered with asphalt. This is enclosed by metal railings.

There is significant staining and blistering of the masonry and paintwork beneath the portico and balcony structures. We suspect that this is a result of the coverings being defective, as the asphalt here is rather weathered, and slightly cracked in areas. We would recommend the areas are re-covered with a deck waterproofing system and new flashing installed, with a lead drip along the edge of the balcony and portico in the short term. The area is beneath will need to be redecorated, however you may find the render and paint is now contaminated with salts which might mean the staining and blistering re-occurs- if this is the case the render will need to be hacked back and re-rendered using a breathable lime render and breathable paint.

The railings to the front balcony area are original and would not meet modern building regulation standards. This is a safety issue and care should be taken when using the area. The railings are also weathered, slightly loose and fragile in areas and would benefit from some maintenance in the short term.



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11 - Water staining and blistering beneath the balcony and portico



Photo 12



Photo 13 - Rooflight leaking



Photo 14 - Cracking to asphalt roof



Photo 15 - Front balcony roof



Photo 16 - Front portico roof

## 4.3 Chimney Stacks - Condition Rating 2

The main roof is served by three chimney stacks to the right-hand side, shared with the neighbouring property. These are formed from rendered brickwork, with a number of clay pots. The junctions between the roof and chimneys have been sealed with felt flashings and upstands.

Some of chimney pots have been removed and the flues capped off with cement to prevent rain penetration, however there does not appear to be any ventilation to the covered flues. This can result in condensation and dampness and to the chimney breasts internally. The flues which are redundant should be ventilated at the top, either with air bricks or with cowls which allow ventilation and at the same time prevent rain penetration.

The render to the chimney stacks is cracked, blown and weathered, and this may allow dampness to penetrate through capillary action, resulting in possible internal dampness and further damage to the masonry. The cracked and damaged render should be raked out and filled in the medium term. In the medium to longer term some complete re-rendering may be necessary.

The chimney pots are open to the elements and this may result in water ingress and dampness during rainfall. The pots should be fitted with ventilated cowls in the medium term.

The felt flashing junction detail around the stacks is substandard when compared to a lead flashing. As such the junction may be a weakness for damp to penetrate. The junction should be stripped, and a lead flashing installed in the medium term. Until the replacement works are carried out you should monitor the internal areas for any signs of leaks.

Overall, the chimney stacks are rather weathered and will require some works of repair and maintenance in the medium term.

The hidden parts of the chimneys should be inspected when repairs or annual maintenance is carried out. Any wants of repair noted should be carried out. As a matter of course you should monitor the internal parts of the chimney breasts for any defects or signs or dampness.



Photo 17



Photo 18





Photo 19



Photo 20 - Cracked render and no ventilation to the covered chimney flues



Photo 21 - Cracked render and no ventilation to the covered chimney flues



Photo 22 - Open pots



Photo 23 - Open pots



Photo 24 - Felt flashings, not as good as lead flashings

## 4.4 Parapet Walls - Condition Rating 2

### Main Roof-

The parapet walls to the main roof are constructed of rendered brickwork. The parapet walls are capped with copings to help shelter the wall from the damaging effects of weathering. The junction between the parapet wall and roofs is detailed with felt flashings and coatings to the inside.

There is no coping stones or capping to the front parapet wall, and this could result in water running down the face of the parapet walls. You may wish to consider installing a lead capping, much like the neighbouring properties have done.

Otherwise, the parapet walls are slightly weathered with some minor cracking to the render, but, in our opinion, they generally appear to be in a reasonable condition.

### Other Roofs-

There are small brick parapet walls to the rear extensions and additions.

The roof above the utility room does not have any coping stones to project water away from the walls and prevent it soaking the brickwork below. This may be contributing to the issues of dampness and conditions to the utility room below. We would recommend that either copings or a lead capping is installed here in the short term. The other lower roof parapets do not have copings which sufficient project and these should be monitored for issues, again you may wish to replace the copings or install a lead capping.

As the parapet walls are rather exposed to the elements, they will require periodic maintenance and repairs to prevent their deterioration.



Photo 25



Photo 26



Photo 27



Photo 28



Photo 29



Photo 30 - No lead capping



Photo 31



Photo 32 - No coping stones



Photo 33 - Insufficient copings



Photo 34 - Copings do not project sufficiently

## 4.5 Rainwater Goods - Condition Rating 2

The main roof runs into felt lined valley gutters to the right and left hand side, which discharge into outlets to the rear of the building, which run into UPVC gutters and downpipes.

As mentioned previously, there is a buildup of moss and debris and some standing water, we should be cleared in the short term.

There is some white staining to some of the joints to the gutters and downpipes, suggesting that these may leak. We also note that the joints to the rear appear to have been repaired with some form of sealant. We suggest you observe the rainwater goods in action when it rains next. Any areas which are seen to leak should be repaired in the short term.

Otherwise, in our opinion, we noted no significant signs of defects to the rainwater goods and they generally appeared in satisfactory order and condition. However, it was not raining during our inspection and therefore we cannot comment fully upon the working order and water-tightness of the rainwater goods.

The rainwater goods take many thousands of litres of water each year. Overtime the joints and stop ends of the system can fail and leak. The gutters can also become blocked with leaves and other debris causing them to overflow. Leaking and overflowing rainwater goods can result in penetrating dampness. The system should be carefully maintained to ensure that rainwater does not leak down the face of the building or pool around the base of the walls, both of which will increase the chances of penetrating dampness. The joints in the system should be checked regularly for leaks and the gutters and gullies should be inspected for any blockages. You should therefore monitor the gutters and downpipes during periods of rain, any issues noted should be resolved as a matter of urgency.

Valley gutters are often a point of neglect when it comes to the property's maintenance, this allows them to become blocked which may result in internal dampness. The valley gutters should therefore be periodically inspected and maintained so they remain watertight.



Photo 35



Photo 36



Photo 37



Photo 38



Photo 39



Photo 40



Photo 41 - Stained joints, repaired



Photo 42 - Stained joints

## 4.6 External Walls - Condition Rating 2

The main walls and original rear addition walls appear to be formed from solid brickwork. This is typically two bricks wide, with each row of bricks interlocking to form a completely solid brick wall. There is no gap or cavity between the bricks to provide insulation. There is painted stone/stucco rendered masonry to the portico, above the window openings and to the window sills. There is stucco render to the lower ground walls and smooth render to the rear ground and lower ground walls.

The rear lower ground and ground in-fill extension walls appear to be formed from cavity brickwork. A cavity wall has two layers of brick, with a gap (cavity) in between. The skins are tied connected with wall ties to prevent the skins moving independently. The outer skin is formed of rendered masonry and the inner skin is likely to be formed of blockwork. Given the property's age the cavity is likely to have been insulated during construction.

The DPC was not visible but given the age and type of the property the main walls are likely to contain a slate damp-proof course and the rear extensions a plastic DPC. This could not be confirmed and there is a risk that the

walls do not contain any DPC. The only way to establish if there is a DPC present would be through further investigation to expose the mortar joint where the DPC should be. A damp-proof course acts as a waterproof membrane or barrier laid across the main walls during the property's construction. This prevents water rising up through the walls by capillary action, which would otherwise result in internal dampness.

The render to the rear ground and lower ground walls is weathered, stained and blistering in areas. The sections of the render above the rear lower ground sliding doors appear to be raised, cracked and slightly hollow. These cracks could lead to issues of penetrating dampness over time, and we would recommend that any cracks are scraped out, filled and the walls redecorated to maintain their condition.

The copings to the rear first floor balcony area do not protrude sufficiently, and there are no sufficient drip grooves. I would recommend that a lead capping is installed to the copings here to prevent water running down the face of the render beneath.

There is an untidy area of re-pointing to the rear walls next to the top balcony. The mortar to the corner junction where the main walls meets the rear additions is also cracked in areas with some plant growth. This will require raking out and adequately re-pointing in the medium to long-term.

The windowsill to the rear ground floor extension window does not protrude sufficiently, and therefore water is running down the face of the brickwork and render. You may wish to consider either replacing this windowsill, or you could consider a lead capping to extend the sill.

There is some minor cracking and peeling paint to some of the masonry windowsills and rendered window reveals, these will be a weakness for dampness to penetrate and should be filled and redecorated in the short term.

There appears to be in adequate drip grooves to most of the window sills and other areas of masonry such as the front portico and balcony. The drip grooves prevent water running over the window sill to run back along the underside of the sill which would otherwise soak the walls below. Over years the drip grooves can become blocked with layers of paint and moss allowing water to run back and soak the below walls. This has resulted in water staining in areas. We would recommend that drip grooves are cut into to the underside of the window sills and masonry to prevent water running down.

There is some minor cracking to the brickwork externally. This is likely to be as a result of historic settlement and minor differential thermal expansion of the various building materials making up the walls and wall openings. Although we do not believe this to be serious, the cracks may be vulnerable to damp penetration and further damage and should be repaired and re-pointed in the short term. The walls should then be monitored and repaired as part of the periodic maintenance of the property going forward.

The neighbouring building to the rear has water staining to the walls, below the balconies, which appears to be due to a defective rainwater downpipe. This has resulted in water staining to the walls at the junction with your property and this could result in damp ingress. We would recommend that the neighbours are contacted to resolve this issue.

There is some minor cracking to the rendered finishes to the front lower ground area. This will require filling in and redecoration. They may re-occur overtime due to normal movement.

The exterior cement render continues down to ground level without interruption. As such if it becomes cracked and porous it would bridge the damp-proof course and could result in internal damp penetration. The cement

render should have a bell drip cut in just above the damp-proof course to divert rainwater away.

Otherwise, we noted that the walls are slightly weathered, in keeping with their age and exposure but, in our opinion, were generally in a satisfactory condition with no significant defects or structural movement visible.

It would appear that the upper section of the rear walls have been rebuilt at some point in the past. We cannot confirm the reason for this, however amongst the possible reasons are bomb damage during the war or past defects. All we can say is that the area appears to be generally satisfactory now.

The solid masonry walls will have very poor insulation when compared with a modern cavity wall, insulated to current Building Regulations. As such the external walls will be prone to condensation forming on the internal surfaces. If this is to be managed the heating and ventilation may require increasing.

With properties of this age it was fairly common for the brickwork above door and window openings to be supported by the substantial timber frames rather than a lintel. If the windows and doors are replaced with modern materials such as UPVC a proper lintel should be installed to support the above load.



Photo 43



Photo 44



Photo 45 - Weathered and crack to paint with poor seals to window sill  
Photo 46 - Weathered and crack to paint with poor seals to window sill



Photo 47 - Lack of drip grooves below windowsill



Photo 48



Photo 49 - Water staining as no drip grooves or cappings



Photo 50 - Render continues to the ground



Photo 51 - Minor cracking to render



Photo 52 - Minor cracking to render



Photo 53



Photo 54 - Areas of cracking and blistering to the rear render





Photo 55 - Copings do not project sufficiently



Photo 56 - Windowsill does not project sufficiently



Photo 57 - Upper section of the walls rebuilt



Photo 58 - Water staining to walls caused by neighbours downpipe



Photo 59 - Staining to wall caused by neighbours



Photo 60 - Cracking and blistering to render



Photo 61 - Cracking to rendered window reveals and sills



Photo 62 - Untidy pointing



Photo 63 - Minor cracking to walls

## 4.7 Sub Floor Ventilation

The lower ground floor is formed of solid concrete and there is therefore no requirement for sub-floor ventilation.

## 4.8 Windows - Condition Rating 2

The subject property has timber framed double-glazed vertical sliding sash windows.

The seals around the window frames at their junction with the masonry walls and sills are missing in places. This will increase the risk of dampness penetrating around the window openings. The seals should be replaced with silicone sealant in the short term and there after maintained in good condition.

Otherwise, we noted some signs of wear and weathering to the windows, but, in our opinion, they generally appeared to be in a serviceable condition.

Any windows installed since April 2002 should have either been carried out either by a contractor registered under the Government's Competent Person Scheme (such as FENSA), or alternatively had Building Regulation approval. Your solicitor should confirm these requirements have been satisfied and if there are any valid guarantees in place.

The external seals around window frames and the frame joints will be a weak point for dampness to penetrate. The same is true for the junction between the door frame and wall junction. These areas should be maintained in good order and condition to avoid this. Should you notice any cracking to the seals or defects to the joints, these should be repaired as a matter of urgency to avoid penetrating damp.

The decorations to the windows help to protect the timbers and prolong their life. If the decorations are cracked or weathered the timber will deteriorate needing costly repair works. To avoid this the joinery should be rubbed down and decorated periodically, depending on the exposure of the joinery it will require redecorating every 2-5 years.



Photo 64



Photo 65



Photo 66



Photo 67



Photo 68



Photo 69

## 4.9 External Doors - Condition Rating 2

The front door is formed from a substantial timber unit with single glazed panels. This is served by Banham locks. The front door is slightly weathered, but overall in a satisfactory condition.

The front lower ground door is again formed from a timber unit with single glazed panels and Banham locks. The front lower ground door is weathered, but in a satisfactory condition.

There are large metal framed double-glazed sliding doors to the rear lower ground floor.

The sill to the rear lower ground floor doors is level with external paving, and this could result in water ingress, especially if the seals to the door frame become defective. This area should be monitored.

Otherwise, the rear sliding doors appeared slightly weathered, but generally in a satisfactory condition.

There are timber framed double-glazed doors leading out onto the rear ground floor terrace. The rear terrace doors are weathered with some slight cracking to the joinery. This will require localised repairs and redecoration in the short term.

There are timber framed double-glazed doors leading out onto the first floor rear balcony. These are slightly weathered, but generally in a satisfactory condition.

The front balcony is served by two sets of timber framed double-glazed doors. The front balcony doors are weathered but generally in a satisfactory condition.

The decorations to the doors help to protect the timbers and prolong their life. If the decorations are cracked or weathered the timber will deteriorate needing costly repair works. To avoid this the joinery should be rubbed down and decorated periodically, depending on the exposure of the joinery it will require redecorating every 2-5 years.

The seals between door frames and the surrounding masonry should be monitored and maintained regularly. If the seals are damaged, they can allow water penetration.

The seals around double glazing can deteriorate as the glazing ages, and this can lead to moisture and condensation forming between the glazing. As the condensation can come and go depending on the temperature and weather it is not always apparent that the seals have failed. If misting is noted to the glazing it is possible to extend the life of the unit by having warm air injected, this is a short-term fix and ultimately the glazing will require replacement.



Photo 70 - Balcony door



Photo 71



Photo 72



Photo 73



Photo 74



Photo 75 - Weathering and cracking to joinery



Photo 76



Photo 77



Photo 78

## 4.10 Other Joinery (Fascias, Soffits, etc.)

There is no other external joinery to report upon in this section.

## 4.11 Gardens and Boundaries - Condition Rating 2

The front boundaries are defined by rendered walls with iron railings and gates. The front garden areas are laid with stone. The rear boundaries are defined by brick walls and timber fencing. The rear garden has been paved with stone.

There are various areas of water staining to the rear garden walls and some sections of minor cracking. Localised repairs and repointing will be necessary, and you should consider installing drainage vents to allow the water to escape in the short term.

The render to the front garden walls and steps are weathered and cracked in areas. This will require some localised filling and redecoration.

Otherwise, the garden and boundaries weathered but in a satisfactory condition.

The front and rear gardens around the base of the main walls has been covered in a concrete hardstanding. This will restrict the natural surface water drainage and may allow rainwater to pond around the base of the walls which could result in penetrating dampness. Best practice would be to ensure that the hard standing has an adequate drainage fall so that the rainwater runs away from the walls. You should monitor the area during rainfall. If any signs of water ponding are noted then remedial works should be carried out to improve the drainage, such as a soakaway or channel drain.



Photo 79



Photo 80



Photo 81



Photo 82 - Weathered and slightly cracked



Photo 83



Photo 84



Photo 85 - Water staining

## 4.12 Foundation and Trees - Condition Rating 1

As is the norm the foundations were beneath ground level and not visible during our inspection. We therefore cannot confirm their type, construction, depth or condition.

Bearing in mind the age of the property the foundations are likely much shallower than modern building regulations would require.

We have not carried out a soil sample, but by referring to the geological maps we are aware of the presence of London clay soils in the area. Clay soils have a tendency to swell as they take on more water and contract as they dry out. This process can cause some building movement, especially to older buildings with much shallower foundations. Clay is made up of tiny particles so it stores water well, but because of its tight grasp on water it expands greatly when moist and shrinks significantly when dry. When clay is moist, it is very pliable, and can easily be moved and manipulated. These extreme changes put a great deal of pressure on foundations, causing them to move up and down, and eventually crack, making clay a poor soil for support. The shrinkable clay is particularly vulnerable during dry hot summers or where large trees are present. Most properties in the area are built on shrinkable clay so this is not uncommon, but you should be aware of the risk of subsidence and ensure you are fully insured.

We noted trees within close proximity to the building. These may affect the foundations, drains, service ducts, boundary walls and paths.

Given the building's age and type it is likely that some settlement has occurred over the course of the building's life. This can cause distortion to walls and their openings and result in some cracking, however this is generally considered normal and in most instances not cause for concern.

During our inspection, in our opinion, we did not note any significant cracking or other signs that there is any progressive movement of the building caused by ground conditions. However, it is possible that some structural movement may occur in the future. To reduce the risk and severity of this movement we recommend the drains are kept in good working order and any trees nearby are maintained at a suitable height to restrict their rot growth from damaging the foundations.

You should of course ensure that all risks building insurance is held at all times for the property and this should include any damage caused as a result of building movement.

We did not note any signs during our inspection that the trees were in anyway undermining the foundations. Your solicitor should confirm with the vendors if there is a history of damage to the foundations or whether any

underpinning has been carried out. We would be happy to advise on any paperwork provided.

In the interest of best practice and the preservation of the foundations, we would suggest that an Arboriculturalist be instructed to advise on the maintenance of the trees.



Photo 86 - Large tree to the rear

## 4.13 Other Areas - Condition Rating 2

There is an undercroft vault to the front garden, which houses the boiler, hot water cylinders, gas meter and water meter.

The area is weathered with cracking and blistering to the render, however, this is not considered significant given its use as storage.

These areas are always susceptible to dampness, and there is evidence of damp penetration through the walls which have been cement rendered, as well as some standing water to the floors. This is considered normal, but given that it houses the services should be monitored for any significant dampness and water which may affect the services installed here. It is likely to require damp-proofing works in the future.

We noted that the flooring was loose and cracked in areas and you may wish to consider repairing this.

The door to the vault is weathered and slightly rotten in areas. This should be repaired and re-decorated in the short term.



Photo 87



Photo 88 - Minor cracking





Photo 89 - Dampness and water



Photo 90 - Loose and cracked flooring



Photo 91 - Dampness



Photo 92 - Cracking to render



Photo 93 - Slightly rotten and weathered

## 5.0 Interior

### 5.1 Roof Space and Structures

There is no roof space or loft to the property and as such we can provide no comments on the roof structures here.

### 5.2 Ceilings - Condition Rating 3

The ceilings throughout the property are mainly formed of plasterboard which have been skimmed and painted. Although some of the older lath and plaster may remain in sections.

Dampness was noted to the cloakroom ceiling, around the kitchen rooflight, around the top floor skylights, and to the utility room, as detailed under 'Dampness'. Once the issues are rectified, the areas will need repair and redecoration.

There are a couple of areas of damp staining to the top floor ceiling. We could not access the rear staining due to the ceiling height, however, the staining above the landing appeared dry when tested with a moisture meter. These may have been caused by past issues with the roof coverings or parapets/flashings above, the issue does not appear to be ongoing. Nevertheless, these areas should be redecorated and then monitored for any re-occurrence which may require investigation of the areas above.

There are areas of minor cracking and popped nail heads to the plasterboard ceilings which require localised repairs and redecoration.

Otherwise, we found the ceilings and their finishes, in our opinion, to be in generally satisfactory condition throughout the property. Some minor cracking and wear was noted in areas but this is common and not thought to be serious.

Cracks in plastered ceilings are commonly caused by movement of the floor above, normal shrinkage of the material and slight movement between sheets of plasterboard. Regular minor repairs and redecoration will be required and the cracking may re-occur over time.

Whilst there is no significant cracking currently, any older lath and plaster ceilings will be at risk from both moisture and vibration. The plaster was originally applied to the timber laths, however over time the bond between the plaster and lath can deteriorate and eventually the ceilings can collapse. The ceilings should be monitored for any signs of cracking or instability which may then require repair or re-plastering.

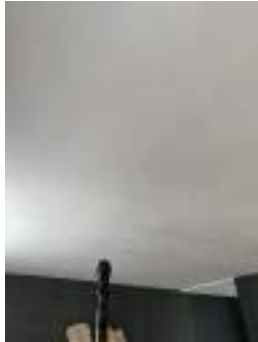


Photo 94



Photo 95 - Staining around skylight

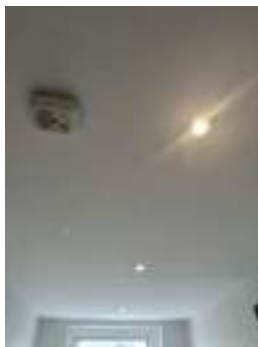


Photo 96



Photo 97



Photo 98 - Past staining from skylight



Photo 99 - Damp staining to the top floor landing

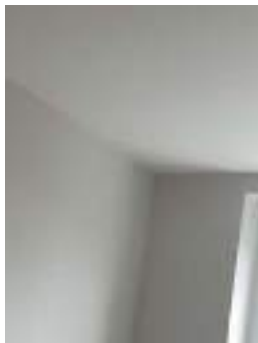


Photo 100 - Damp staining to the top floor landing



Photo 101 - Dampness to ceiling



Photo 102 - Minor cracking



Photo 103 - dampness around rooflight

## 5.3 Internal Walls and Partitions - Condition Rating 3

The internal walls are of solid masonry and timber framed construction. The walls have been variously finished in plaster, paint, tiles, timber panelling, fabric and wallpaper.

As reported in more detail under 'Dampness', high damp meter readings were recorded to the lower ground walls. Once the works resolving the dampness have been carried out some repairs to the plaster and decorative finishes may be required.

The dampness to the utility room has caused staining, cracking and peeling of the paint finishes. This will require redecoration following remedial works.

There are some minor cracks to the plastered finishes in several places. In our opinion, this is not uncommon or serious but will require some localised repairs prior to redecoration in due course.

Some of the wallpaper is starting to peel in a few areas and this will require redecoration in due course.

Otherwise, we spent some time inspecting the internal partitions and in our opinion, these generally appear in satisfactory condition with no significant defects visible. As with all plastered finishes some minor cracking and minor defects were noted, but this is not considered serious. Some minor localised repairs will be necessary when you come to decorate.

Minor cracks in plaster commonly appear as a result of movement of the floor below, the general ageing of plaster and normal shrinkage over time, these cracks, in our opinion, are not considered serious. The cracks should be cut out and filled prior to redecoration, but they are likely to reappear in due course.



Photo 104



Photo 105 - Peeling wallpaper



Photo 106 - Damaged finishes in utility room

## 5.4 Floors and Floor coverings - Condition Rating 2

The lower ground floors are of solid concrete construction. The upper floors are of suspended timber construction. The floors are covered with a variety of carpeted, tiled and timber floor coverings.

Given the vendors' floor coverings we were unable to inspect the covered floor structures and cannot confirm its condition. It is outside the scope of our instructions to lift such floor coverings as it is likely that damage would be caused and the condition in which the floor would be left might be hazardous. It is possible that there may be some hidden defects beneath the floor coverings, we would therefore recommend that the floors are inspected when the structures are next exposed.

Given the property's age, it is unlikely that a damp-proof membrane was included in the concrete floor slab. We found some of the surrounding walls to be damp. We understand the damp-proofing contractor has recommended tanking the walls all the way down to the floor and this may resolve the dampness issues. But if there is no damp-proof membrane to the concrete floor this is a future risk.

We noted areas of staining to the lower ground timber flooring, which is associated with the dampness issues. Replacement of the floor coverings may be necessary when remedial works have undertaken.

The timber floors are not entirely level, move and creak underfoot and spring slightly, however this is fairly common with this age of property and type of construction. You should be aware that when the floors are next exposed some repairs or strengthening works may be required.

We noted that there is some deflection under foot to some of the floors. In our opinion, this is not currently significant enough to require the cost and disruption of exposing and strengthening the floor joists. Even so you should be careful not to overload such floors when the rooms are furnished. You should be aware that when the floors are next exposed some repairs and strengthening works may be required.

Otherwise, the floor coverings throughout the property are slightly worn, scuffed, stained and scratched but otherwise, in our opinion, appeared in satisfactory condition.

Given the age and construction of the property it is likely that the floor joists are bedded directly into the external walls which may be damp. If such is found to be the case the joist ends will be at risk of rot and decay. To expose the joist ends and either provide metal joist hangers or introduce a damp-proof membrane to the joists ends would be both disruptive and costly. As we did not note any significant dampness and noted no serious amount of deflection to the floors, in our opinion, such work is not thought necessary currently. Some localised repairs may

be necessary in the future.

We did not note any wood-boring beetle during our inspection. Given the type, age and location of the property it would be unusual not to have been affected by woodworm at some point over the course of its life even if this is now historic and inactive. Should active woodworm be noted, localised eradication treatments may be required.



Photo 107



Photo 108



Photo 109



Photo 110

## 5.5 Internal Joinery - Condition Rating 2

The internal joinery comprises of doors, stairs, skirting boards, architraves, built-in cupboards, bookshelves, window shutters and wall panelling.

As with the floors, there is some staining to the skirting boards to the lower ground floor related to the dampness issues. This could lead to further rot and decay overtime and these may need to be replaced as part of the remedial works.

The stairs throughout the property are slightly uneven, move and creek underfoot. This is common with properties of this age. The stair balustrades also feel slightly fragile and loose. These may require some strengthening works.

The front second floor bedroom door catches within its frame, and this requires easing and adjusting in the short term.

The glazed panels to the basement door doors do not contain a Kitemark to indicate the glazing is safety glass and this could be a hazard should someone trip and fall into them. A pane is also cracked. We recommend these are replaced with toughened safety glass in the short term.

There are signs of shrinkage/movement cracking to the joinery and paintwork. In our opinion, this is not considered serious and these areas should be filled in and re-decorated in due course.

Otherwise, the internal joinery is slightly worn and scuffed, but, in our opinion, is generally in a satisfactory condition.

We did not note any woodworm, wood rot or other timber defects during our inspection. Given the type, age and location of the property it would be unusual not to have been affected by woodworm at some point over the course of its life even if this is now historic and inactive. Should an outbreak be discovered you should instruct a PCA damp and timber specialist.



Photo 111



Photo 112



Photo 113



Photo 114



Photo 115



Photo 116



Photo 117 - Door catches



Photo 118 - Fragile balustrades



Photo 119



Photo 120



Photo 121 - Stairs, uneven



Photo 122 - Cracked pane and no safety glass

## 5.6 Fireplaces, Flues and Chimney Breasts - Condition Rating 1

There is a feature fireplace to the living room. However, we suspect that this is a false fireplace and a chimney breast throughout the property have likely been removed. However, it may be the case that the chimney breast remain in situ but have been covered over with plasterboard.

Where the chimney breasts appear to have been removed, this leaves a significant weight of remaining brickwork above which should have been supported as part of the removal works. We are not able to confirm if the remaining brickwork is adequately supported as these areas are hidden behind the plaster, ceilings and walls. The removal of the chimney should have required Building Regulation approval.





Photo 123 - Suspected false fireplace

## 5.7 Kitchen and Utility Rooms - Condition Rating 2

The kitchen fittings consist of laminated timber floor and wall mounted units with composite work surfaces.

There are a variety of kitchen appliances which include the following-

Franke double stainless steel, kitchen sink and mixer tap.

Bosch gas hob

Elica extraction fan

Bosch electric oven and grill

Smeg fridge freezer

Wine cooler

Bosch dishwasher

The kitchen, fittings and appliances are slightly worn, but generally appear to be in a serviceable condition.

There are basic utility room fittings which appear to be in a serviceable condition. It was noted some of the tiling here is cracked and needs replacing. These are quite basic and worn.

The extraction fan to the utility room does not operate and this is likely contributing to the condensation issues here. This needs upgrading immediately.

Your solicitor should confirm which appliances and white goods will remain with the property and any warranties that may be in place for these items.

Built-in fittings can conceal a variety of problems that are only revealed when they are removed for repair. For example, kitchen units often hide water and gas pipes, or obscure dampness to the walls. You should be aware of this hidden risk.



Photo 124



Photo 125



Photo 126 - Cracked tiles

## 5.8 Bathroom and Cloakrooms - Condition Rating 2

The ensuite bathrooms, ensuite shower rooms and cloakroom contain of a variety of modern sanitary fittings.

There is some staining to the worktop around the rear top floor wash basin. You may wish to upgrade this unit in the medium to long-term.

The extraction fan to the rear second floor shower room does not appear to operate, and it should be tested and repaired by an electrician.

The shower door seal to the main bedroom ensuite is defective and needs to be replaced.

Generally, the bathrooms, shower rooms, cloakroom, have suffered some minor wear and tear over the years, but appear to be of good quality and in a satisfactory condition.

The seals surrounding the fittings should be renewed regularly to prevent any leakages. Even the most microscopic cracks and holes can lead to water penetration behind and underneath the fittings which can cause rot and leaks. These areas should be monitored and any issues repaired immediately.

Shower trays are vulnerable to leakages and the seals should be kept in good order and re-sealed regularly.



Photo 127



Photo 128



Photo 129



Photo 130 - Staining around worktop, wash-basin



Photo 131



Photo 132



Photo 133



Photo 134 - Defective shower door seal

## 5.9 Other Areas

## 6.0 Dampness, Condensation and Timber Defects

### 6.1 Dampness

High levels of dampness were found to the following areas:

Significant dampness and evidence of staining was noted to the lower ground walls, most notably to the front living room area but this may also be present behind the kitchen fittings. This is likely due to the failure of the previous cement tanking system. You have instructed a Damp Specialist who has reported back with a quote for remedial works to re-tank the area with a cement slurry system. There are two main types of waterproofing for basements and lower grounds: application of a cement slurry or the use of cavity membranes combined with drainage channels and a sump pump. A cavity membrane system is far superior to cement slurry and typically lasts a lot longer. Such cement systems can fail after a number of years, and you may find that some damp start to present itself, requiring damp-proofing works once again. Condition Rating 3

The internal undercroft storage vault was also found to be damp, especially where the render finishes have cracked. This area has been waterproofed with a cement tanking system but this is starting to fail now. Given the vibration of the road above, these areas often suffer cracking and failure and therefore you may wish to install a membrane tanking system. Condition Rating 3

There is significant staining to the ceiling below the kitchen rooflight and this indicates the area is leaking. This could be due to the flashings or the seals, but without stripping back the area it is not possible to confirm the cause. We would recommend that the decking is stripped and the unit inspected - it is likely the glazed unit will need to be replaced and a new flashing installed, some works to the roof coverings may also be required when exposed. This should be done in the immediate term. Condition Rating 3

There is evidence of dampness and leaks to the cloakroom below the two storey extension roof. Externally, the asphalt coverings to the roof are rather weathered and cracked in areas. The roof should be re-covered and the flashings replaced in the short term to prevent further issues of water ingress. Condition Rating 3

Significant dampness and staining was noted to the utility room- we suspect that this is a condensation issue as noted below. However, the roof above the utility room does not have any coping stones to project water away from the walls and prevent it soaking the brickwork below. This may be contributing to the issues of dampness and conditions to the utility room below. Condition Rating 3

A small area of dampness was recorded around the rear terrace doors to the first floor. This is possible associated with the condition of the external walls, however we noted that the external render finishes at this level and water could be sitting on this ledge and entering down the back of the render. The edge of the render should be sealed and the area monitored. Condition Rating 3

We carried out testing for dampness using an electronic moisture meter, which whilst useful in indicating areas of dampness has its limitations and cannot be accurately relied upon to identify the moisture levels or causes of dampness. Our inspection was limited by the vendors furniture, bathroom and kitchen fittings, radiators, fitted floor coverings and tiling.

No further areas of significant dampness were noted during the inspection. However, it is possible that there may be areas of dampness to parts of the property which were inaccessible, hidden or concealed during our inspection, such as behind furniture, beneath tiling, behind the kitchen fittings etc.



Photo 135 - Dampness found- lower ground



Photo 136 - Dampness found- lower ground



Photo 137 - Dampness found- lower ground



Photo 138 - Dampness found- lower ground



Photo 139 - Dampness found- lower ground



Photo 140 - Dampness to utility room ceiling void



Photo 141 - Dampness due to rooflight leak



Photo 142 - Dampness to vault



Photo 143 - Dampness possibly entering via ledge of render

## 6.2 Condensation

There were signs of dampness and condensation to the utility room and the ceiling void above. The extraction fan to the utility room does not operate and this is likely contributing to the condensation issues here. This needs upgrading immediately.

We did not note any other excessive signs of condensation during the inspection.

You will be familiar with condensation such as your bathroom mirror steaming up after a shower or the kitchen window during cooking. In technical terms, condensation occurs when warm air, containing water vapour, comes into contact with a cool surface which has a temperature below the dew point of the water vapour. This causes the water vapour to cool and condense, forming tiny droplets which we refer to as condensation.

Water vapour gets into the air within your home from all sorts of sources but the most common are cooking, bathing and drying clothes, although even breathing can contribute to high levels of water vapor.

Historically, homes were draughty and cold as they weren't particularly well insulated and gaps in the building's fabric allowed draughts to occur. This meant condensation didn't often form, as the draughts allowed fresh air (containing less moisture) in to replace the moisture laden air already in your home.

Nowadays we're all obsessed with having air-tight insulated homes which will make condensation worse unless we install the correct form of ventilation. This is because the stale water vapour laden air isn't replaced with fresh air as there are no draughts and restricted ventilation.

We would advise that any double glazing is fitted with small trickle vents. The windows and trickle vents should be left open as much as possible without compromising heating and security. Bathrooms should be fitted with extractor fans with a delay timer. Extractor fans should be used when cooking and ideally windows should be open during/after running a shower /or bath or cooking. This ventilation should be balanced with adequate heating in the property also to ensure there are no cold walls and windows for any humid air to condense on.



Photo 144



Photo 145

### 6.3 Timber Decay and Infestation

As mentioned previously, there was signs of staining to the lower ground floor, skirting boards and timber flooring due to the dampness noted to the walls here. This could lead to rot and decay is left. The sections will likely need to be replaced along with any remedial works to the walls.

We did not note the presence of any wood rot during the inspection. We did identify areas of dampness and this may have resulted in an environment that was perfect for the onset of wood rot in areas which were not visible or inaccessible. The dampness should be dealt with as a matter of urgency. You should be aware of the risk the dampness poses to these hidden timbers, when they are next exposed, they should be inspected for signs of rot or decay.

We did not note any signs of active woodworm or other wood boring insect infestations defects during our inspection. Given the type, age and location of the property it would be unusual not to have been affected by infestations at some point over the course of its life even if this is now historic and inactive.

Timber boasts quality in both strength and longevity, but untreated damp can be extremely destructive to timber and can result in extensive repair bills.

Dry rot and wet rot can affect buildings of all ages and if decay is discovered it should be identified and remedial action taken without delay. Fungal decay occurs in timber which becomes wet for some time and is the result of the attack by one of a number of wood-destroying fungi. Dry rot is a serious wood destroying fungus that digests parts of the wood which give the timber strength and its structural integrity.

Timbers which are poorly ventilated and are therefore unable to dry out effectively will be most at risk of fungal decay occurring. The treatment of both wet and dry rot can be difficult and costly. It is therefore a better plan to prevent the dampness being caused in the first place or react swiftly to any unexpected dampness.

Infestations of wood boring insects are unfortunately common in many buildings, particularly older ones most of which will no doubt have been affected at some point over their lifespan. Wood boring insects is a common term which refers to a number of beetles which as larvae eat and destroy timber.

Most people are familiar with woodworm which is otherwise known as the Common Furniture Beetle. This beetle does not cause structural damage, however it does consume the softwood timbers. The Death Watch Beetle is the second most common in the UK and can cause structural damage. The House Longhorn Beetle is the most damaging beetle but is commonly limited to Surrey, although we have found this in other areas of London. The

House Longhorn Beetle can cause serious damage if not identified in its early stages.

Unfortunately, our inspection is often limited and there are always a number of concealed timbers in the property. We are unable to confirm that no fungal decay is present to those areas of the building which were inaccessible during the inspection, such as the underside to floor boards, skirting boards, roof timbers etc. Our inspection for any signs of infestation was restricted by the floor coverings, plastered finishes and the number of concealed timbers present within the property. Should this be of particular concern to you, we suggest you instruct an inspection by a PCA damp and timber specialist. Such specialists can be found on the PCA website:  
<https://www.property-care.org>



## 7.0 Services

We have undertaken a visual inspection of the accessible services and have commented on any obvious defects, but as you will hopefully understand, we are not qualified electricians, gas engineers or drainage contractors and are therefore not qualified to test or comment in detail upon the services within the building. Elements such as the wiring, plumbing and underground drainage are often hidden and therefore cannot be fully visually inspected.

We do however work closely with a number of electricians, gas engineers/plumbers, and drainage contractors and are more than happy to provide contact details. We would always recommend having these additional tests as faulty wiring, leaking plumbing or blocked drains can often go unidentified resulting in costly repairs.

All service installations deteriorate with age and use. They should therefore be inspected and tested at regular intervals to check whether they are in a satisfactory condition for continued use.

You should ask the current owner for recent copies of any available test certificates. The electrics should be tested every 10 years for an owner-occupied home, and every 5 years for a rented home, when the property is planned to be let or when buying a new home which has been previously occupied.

All gas appliances in your property need to be safety checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer annually and serviced according to manufacturer's instructions. Any appliance left unchecked could leave you at risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. It's also extremely advisable to have your gas pipework inspected at the same time as having a gas safety check. Having the gas services serviced annually is the law if you plan to let the property as a landlord.

### 7.1 Electrics - Condition Rating 3

We found the electric meter and consumer unit (fuse box) in the lower ground front entrance area. We noted the consumer unit is fitted with Residual Current Devices (RCD's) and Miniature Circuit Breakers (MCB's), these safeguard occupants should a fault occur with the system.

We suspect there are no mains powered fire/smoke alarms installed to the subject property, this is a hazard to the safety of the occupants as there is no early warning system in the event of a fire. In the interests of safety, a qualified electrician should be instructed to install a mains smoke alarm system to the property.

Condition Rating 3- the electrics failed the electrician's safety test for the following reasons:

- No end to end continuity on ground floor ring main
- Some circuits not labelled correctly (C3)
- Fault on circuit 20 (trips when switched on)

They have provided quotations for these works, which should be undertaken in the immediate term. Once completed, the system should be re-tested and a new electrical certificate provided.

You should ask your solicitor to obtain any test certificates and confirm that the electrical installation had Building Regulation approval and signoff.

A smoke alarm system is likely to be your first warning in the event of a fire, it may just save your life. As such it should be carefully maintained and we would recommend the following; regularly checking that the green light is

on; press the test button weekly to ensure it is in working order; at least monthly clean the smoke alarm with a brush or Hoover nozzle to remove dust and cobwebs which may interfere with the system; and at least annual press the test button with the mains electrics off to ensure the back-up battery is operational.



Photo 146



Photo 147

## 7.2 Gas - Condition Rating 1

The property has the benefit of a mains gas supply which serves the central heating boiler and the hob. The gas meter is in the outside vault.

A Gas Safety Test was recently undertaken by Maxwell Heating and received a satisfactory certificate. You should refer to this.

Moving forward the system should be inspected annually. Please be aware that if you intend to let the property you are legally responsible for the safety of your tenants. As such, you are required to ensure that a Gas Safe Registered heating engineer carries out annual checks on all gas fittings and all gas-enabled appliances. Upon successful completion, it is important that you maintain the record for at least 2 years so you can demonstrate your compliance with regulators and make the certificate available to all new tenants immediately or make it available to all existing tenants within 28 days.



Photo 148

## 7.3 Heating and Hot Water - Condition Rating 2

Heating is provided to the property by a gas fired Worcester boiler in the undercroft vault. The flue for the boiler passes through the wall. The hot water is produced and stored in two Megaflo un-vented pressurised hot water cylinders also in the undercroft vault. The heating comprises a traditionally pumped hot water system with

radiators linked by copper pipes. Heating has been supplemented by an underfloor heating system to the ground floor and lower ground floor.

There is some staining to the pipework and carpet around the second floor, landing radiator. It appears that the pipe here has leaked in the past. The area was currently dry and therefore we suspect that this has been resolved. Nevertheless, you should monitor this area.

The inset trench radiator to the rear lower ground is lifting slightly to the frame and this will require repair in the short term.

Again, a Gas Safety Test was recently undertaken by Maxwell Heating and received a satisfactory certificate. You should refer to this. However, he did note a number of minor issues which will require repair including the top floor heating not operating and no thermostat for the trench heating. You should refer to his job sheet for the full report and details.

Moving forward the system should be inspected annually. Please be aware that if you intend to let the property you are legally responsible for the safety of your tenants. As such, you are required to ensure that a Gas Safe Registered heating engineer carries out annual checks on all gas fittings and all gas-enabled appliances. Upon successful completion, it is important that you maintain the record for at least 2 years so you can demonstrate your compliance with regulators and make the certificate available to all new tenants immediately or make it available to all existing tenants within 28 days.

You should ask your solicitor to confirm that the heating installation had Building Regulation approval and signoff.

You should be aware that the unvented hot water cylinder installed in the property is a pressurised container and will require regular maintenance just like a gas boiler. An annual check is vital to ensure your safety and must be carried out by a qualified engineer.

The under floor heating systems should be serviced in line with the manufactures guidance. You should be mindful of the fact that as the system is embedded in the floors it can prove rather difficult to repair if any issues arise.



Photo 149



Photo 150



Photo 151 - Staining around radiator



Photo 152 - Lifting

## 7.4 Water Supply and Plumbing - Condition Rating 2

A mains water supply is provided to the property. Where accessible the internal pipework appeared to be in copper and plastic. The mains incoming pipe, stopcock and water meter is located in the undercroft vault.

Maxwell Heating were instructed to inspect and test all the plumbing. He noted a number of minor issues which require repair including but not limited to:

- kitchen handle top broken
- waste plugs stuck open
- partial sink blockages

You should refer to his full report for the details.

We did not note the presence of any lead pipework during our inspection, however lead pipes were commonly used in properties prior to 1970, around which point it was phased out. As such it is likely that the subject property would have either originally had lead pipes or lead pipes retrofitted. As there may be hidden lead pipes within the structure or behind fixtures and fittings or covered by stored items, we cannot confirm there is none present to these areas. Exposure to lead can be harmful to our health. If you are particularly concerned, you should instruct the water company to test the water for lead content. If the test highlights a risk of lead, the lead pipework will need to be found and replaced.



Photo 153

## 7.5 Drainage - Condition Rating 3

We were not able to inspect the underground drainage system as no inspection chambers could be found. As such we cannot comment upon the construction or condition of the drainage system. The above ground drainage pipes

which discharge the waste water are formed from plastic.

The Drainage Detectives were instructed to undertake a CCTV drainage survey and you currently await their results. You should refer to this report and their recommendations.

The soil pipe to the rear of the building has a split in it, and it's leaks when operated on to the living room terrace. This section requires replacement immediately. Condition Rating 3



Photo 154 - Leaking joint

## 7.6 Other Services - Not Inspected

The property appears to be served by an air conditioning system. We cannot comment upon the working order or condition of such services.

The air conditioning should be tested and serviced by a competent qualified contractor before exchange and first use, to ensure you are fully aware of their condition.



Photo 155

## 8.0 Other Matters



### 8.1 Asbestos and Hazardous Materials

We did not note the presence of any asbestos containing materials or other hazardous or deleterious materials during the course of our inspection. However, as these may be concealed in areas that it was not possible to inspect we cannot confirm 100% that none are present. You should inquire with the vendor if they are aware of any asbestos in the building. Given the property's age it is likely that asbestos containing materials were used either in its construction or else were subsequently retrofitted.

Asbestos was commonly found in textured coatings to walls and ceilings, vinyl floor tiles, insulation board panelling found lining cupboard doors and boiler flue penetrations etc (occasionally used for boxing in pipes and other serves), asbestos cement for roofs and panelled walls of outbuildings (occasionally also used as dry lining within internal partitions), loose insulation and lagging to pipework.

Although there are exceptions, as long as most asbestos containing materials are in good unbroken condition and they are not damaged or disturbed they would not be regarded as a high risk hazard.

If you are especially concerned regarding the presence of asbestos, we would recommend that you instruct a qualified asbestos specialist to carry out a "Asbestos Management Survey" of the property.

Should you intend to carryout refurbishment or extension works, you should consider first having an "Asbestos Refurbishment and Demolition Survey" carried out on the affected areas so that your work force will not inadvertently disturb any asbestos containing material placing both themselves and your household at risk.

You should be warned that the removal of asbestos materials especially if the works are licensable can be very costly.

Asbestos is a term used to describe naturally occurring silicate minerals. The most common of which in the UK are Chrysotile, Amosite and Crocidolite.

If damaged the fibres released are hazardous and a known risk to health. Inhalation of the fibres can lead to various lung conditions, including asbestosis and cancer.

Asbestos was widely used in the building industry between the end of the 19th Century up until 1999. It was popular in building materials and products due its fire resistance, chemical resistance and tensile strength. It was also relatively cheap to produce. Damaging such materials may release harmful fibres into the atmosphere which if inhaled are a health hazard.

Public recognition of the risks posed by asbestos containing materials in the 1970's lead to the first ban of Amosite and Crocidolite fibres in 1985. Chrysotile fibres were later banned in 1999.



### 8.2 Thermal Insulation and Energy Efficiency

Enquiries of the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government show the property has an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of D.

The building is constructed with solid walls with no cavity and these will provide somewhat poor levels of thermal insulation.

There is little that can be done to improve the solid walls. The provision of internal insulation, although effective, will reduce the internal floor area and the installation cost of doing so will likely be disproportionate to the savings made. External insulation is also an option but can ruin the aesthetic appeal of the property and lead to issues of condensation.

The original single glazed windows have been replaced with double glazed units which will provide superior levels of insulation. If you desire further levels of thermal insulation you should consider triple glazing.

There was no access to the roof space, but it is possible there is no insulation here. Modern building regulations recommends a depth of 300mm of man-made mineral fibre or similar to provide good thermal insulation. We recommend that you upgrade the insulation levels accordingly. This is relatively cheap and can be undertaken by yourselves by purchasing the insulation from your local DIY store.

We have reviewed the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and there are no obvious discrepancies, however of course we have not undertaken our own EPC assessment. You should refer to the EPC report for advice on the various improvement methods that could be undertaken.

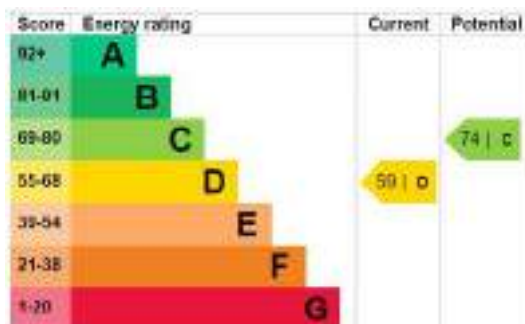


Photo 156

## 8.3 Security and Means of Escape

We suspect there are no mains powered fire/smoke alarms installed to the subject property, this is a hazard to the safety of the occupants as there is no early warning system in the event of a fire. In the interests of safety, a qualified electrician should be instructed to install a mains smoke alarm system to the property.

There appears to be a fire curtain and fire door to the ground floor living areas. We cannot test their operation. They would appear to be fire doors to the remaining bedrooms.

The doors and windows are fitted with standard locks.

The property benefits from an intruder alarm, whilst we could see no visual defects with the system, we have not carried out any tests and cannot confirm its working order. The vendor should demonstrate the working order of the system to you as well as provide any codes and information on service agreements. The system should be serviced annually or in line with the manufactures requirements.

Home security is an important issue for many home owners and there are now a number of products out there such as smart intruder alarms, doorbells and CCTV systems that can be linked to your smart phone to alert you to anything suspicious or even just to accept an Amazon delivery. But some things don't change, the most basic principle being that burglars like to operate in the darkness and will choose houses that appear to be the easier targets. Therefore, there are more basic steps you can take to bolster your home's security, such as installing motion sensor lighting, high fencing and gates and strong locks to any outbuildings or sheds.

Sometimes the presence alone of an external intruder alarm box, or even a dummy box, is enough to deter potential burglars. Intruder alarms should be serviced annually to ensure they are in functional order.

Properties built to modern regulations must consider how occupants will escape the building in the event of an emergency such as a fire. There should be a protected route from the upper floors leading to the exit. The protected exit route should not pass through the kitchen. Doors leading on to the escape route should be fire doors. In the event that a safe exit route is not possible, alternative exit routes should be provided such as external staircases or a sprinkler system. Although it is not generally a statutory requirement for older properties to meet modern standards, we would suggest in the interest of personal safety that modern standards be followed.



## 8.4 Noise and Disturbance

As the property is a terraced house it is likely to suffer increased noise transference from the neighbouring occupiers. In certain circumstance this can prove to be a significant nuisance and you should be mindful of the risk of noise when compared with a modern or detached property. Given that we inspected during the day, there is likely to be less activity than on an evening when most occupiers are home.

The maps below show the recorded noise levels from roads and rail:





Photo 157



Photo 158

## 9.0 Environment Matters



### 9.1 Japanese Knotweed and Other Non-Native Invasive Plants

We did not observe the presence of any Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed or any other invasive or hazardous plants during our inspection. However we are not horticultural experts and cannot comment if there is any such plants hidden within the garden.

The most commonly found non-native invasive plants include: Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam. You are responsible for the plants on your property and must ensure that you control their spread according to legislation and avoid damage to neighbouring properties.

Japanese knotweed is an invasive and resilient weed. It's roots and rhizomes can grow to a depth of 2m. Even after herbicide treatment has "eradicated" the aerial and surface growth, the deep underground rhizomes can remain in a viable state and may do so for up to twenty years. It can re-emerge and re-grow on its own accord at any time and especially if the contaminated ground is disturbed. If knotweed is left to grow untreated for a number of years, it has the potential to cause damage to drains, paving, paths, driveways and poorly constructed boundary walls. For this reason, if Japanese knotweed is growing on your property, it should not be ignored.

When buying a property, the presence of any known Japanese knotweed should be stated by the current owner in the responses to the TA6 form provided to your solicitor.

If Japanese knotweed or other invasive plants are found to be growing on the property or the neighbouring properties, this can cause issues in obtaining mortgage finance. The lender may insist that a management plan by a professional eradication company backed by a transferable guarantee is in place. It is most common for this plan to be provided by the seller before the purchase is completed.



### 9.2 Flooding Risk

Your solicitor should make enquiries with the vendor to confirm if the property has previously been flooded. Through environmental searches they should also confirm if the property is in an area at risk of flooding. Flooding can cause devastating damage and any risks of these should be fully understood. You should also check what impact any flooding risk may have on your building's insurance costs.

We have checked the Gov.uk website for the likelihood and risk of flooding to this area, both the risk from surface water and the risk from rivers and the sea. The information and maps below provide an indication of the risk of flooding to and around the property.

Surface water flooding results from overland flow before the runoff enters a watercourse or sewer. It is usually the result of high intensity rainfall but can occur with lower intensity rainfall when the land has a low permeability and/or is already saturated, frozen or developed. Surface water flooding is becoming a regular issue due to the high rate of developments creating large impermeable surfaces.

The risk of flooding from surface water is classified as low.

River flooding occurs when a river or stream is unable to take on water draining into it from surrounding land. The

additional water causes the water to risk above its banks or retaining structures and subsequently flows onto the land. Sea flooding is due to the accumulation of water along the coast caused by rising sea water above normal levels. Coastal flooding can result from a combination of high tides, stormy weather conditions and tidal surges in times of low atmospheric pressure.

The risk of flooding from rivers and seas is classified as very low.

For further information see the Gov.uk website:

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk/map>



Photo 159



Photo 160



## 9.3 Radon Risk

Radon gas is created when natural radioactive uranium slowly decays in the ground under our homes and seeps to the surface. Because of the way we heat and ventilate our homes, some radon gets indoors through the floor. This is where we get most of our radon exposure.

Every building contains radon, but the levels are usually low. In some parts of the country, homes may have higher levels and the chances of a higher level depend on the type of ground.

Radon produces a radioactive dust in the air we breathe. The dust is trapped in our airways and emits radiation that damages the inside of our lungs. This damage, like the damage caused by smoking, increases our risk of lung cancer.

The “UK Radon” map shows that the property is located in a low risk area for radon.

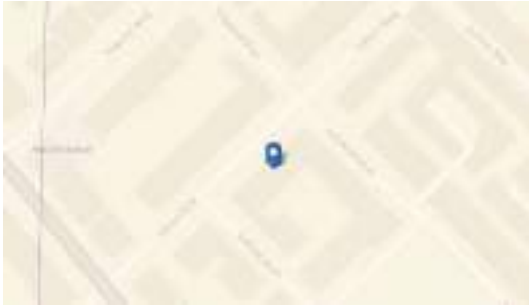


Photo 161



## 9.4 Vermin

During our inspection we saw no obvious signs of vermin infestation, however this is not to say there is no vermin as often there can be limited signs.

No matter how clean your home, disrepair or poor building design may result in infestation by mice, rats, squirrels, bats, bees, wasps and other vermin. Such pests may spread diseases, damage your home and belongings and sting or bite. A severe infestation problem could make your home uninhabitable and unsellable.

Care should be taken to ensure that there are no open entry points into the main building, the roof or the sub floor void. In particular, the seals around door and window openings should be maintained. The sub-floor vents should be checked for any damage which may allow rodents to enter the sub floor void. The fascia and soffit boards should be routinely checked for any openings or damage which may allow birds, bats, bees or wasps to enter and make nests in the roof space.



## 9.5 Broadband Speeds and Mobile Coverage

We have checked the availability of both broadband speeds and mobile coverage on the OFCOM website. This is shown in the tables below:

Service	Download Speed	Upload Speed	Availability
Standard	7 Mbps	0.9 Mbps	✓
Superfast	10 Mbps	20 Mbps	✓
Ultrafast	100 Mbps	10 Mbps	✓

Photo 162

Service	Availability	Coverage
EE	✓	✓
Three	✓	✓
O2	✓	✓
Vodafone	✓	✓

Photo 163

## 10.0 Legal Matters

We do not act as legal advisers and will not comment upon any legal documents. If your solicitor has any queries, we are happy to assist to the best of our ability. If during the inspection we identify any issues that your legal advisers may need to investigate further, we may refer to these in the report and below:

### 10.1 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas

The property is situated in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

The property is located within a conservation area, this will limit the external works which you can carry out to the property. It is also likely that certain permitted development rights will have been withdrawn. Your solicitor should explain the implications of living within a conservation area.

We believe that the property is not listed. This should be confirmed by your solicitor.

### 10.2 Regulations

Your solicitor should check if the correct approvals, including any necessary planning permission, listed building consent and building regulation approval and sign off (either by the local Building Control department or an Approved Inspector) for:

the rear extension works, the basement conversion, the removal of the internal chimney breasts, any damp treatments that may have been undertaken, the double glazing installation, the installation of the electrical system, the installation of the boiler and the internal alterations and structural openings.

If the works lack building regulation approval or sign off, were they carried out by a company on a 'competent person scheme' such as FENSA or HETAS. If the works have been carried out without the correct approvals and certification, then costly remedial works may be needed to bring the works up to standard.

### 10.3 Guarantees and Warranties

Your solicitor should confirm if any previous damp-proofing works which may have been carried out, any timber infestation treatment which may have been carried out, the double glazing installation, the electrical system, the gas installation, the white goods and appliances and the boiler and central heating system have any guarantees or certificates. It should be confirmed whether these can be transferred to you.

Your solicitor should confirm which if any of the following have test certificates or service agreements in place: the gas, central heating system, the electrics, the boiler and the hot water cylinder.

## 10.4 Other Items for your Legal Adviser

Your solicitor should confirm the exact location and ownership of the boundaries, the drainage arrangements and your rights of access over the property as well as any responsibilities which go with it.