[redacted]

Mi HOME BUYER SURVEY

360° CONFIDENCE FOR HOME BUYERS

RICS TECH AFFILIATE

HOME BUYER SURVEY REPORT

CLIENT [redacted]RVEY

PROPERTY

SURVEY DATE

REF

The format of this Mi HOME BUYER SURVEY REPORT is consistent with the guidance note requirements for a Survey Level 2 as defined by RICS Surveys of Residential Property 3rd edition May 2016

MHIS SURVEYORS

RPSA RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY SURVEYORS ASSOCIATION

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Manchester Home Inspector Services Ltd REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AT THE ABOVE ADDRESS. COMPANY REG NO : 06327609

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1.1 - About the survey and the report

Introduction

This report is for the private and confidential use of the client named in the report and for whom the survey is undertaken, and for the use of their professional advisors, and should not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by Third Parties for any purpose without the express written authority of the Surveyor.

This report is produced by a properly qualified surveyor who will provide an objective opinion about the condition of the property which you, as the buyer, will be able to rely on and use. However, if you decide not to act on the advice in the report, you do so at your own risk.

What this report tells you;

- about the construction of the property and the history of its development as far as could be ascertained.
- about the condition of the property on the date it was inspected.
- any limitations that the surveyor experienced during the course of the inspection, and the nature of risks that may be present in those areas
- the nature of any significant defects that were found.
- how to approach rectification of defects identified.
- about elements of the property that will require more frequent or costly maintenance than would normally be expected
- whether more enquiries or investigations are needed.

What this report does not tell you;

- the market value of the property or matters that will be considered when a market valuation is provided.
- about the nature or condition of any part of the property that is/was
  - specifically excluded from the inspection by prior arrangement
  - not accessible or visible using normal and accepted surveying practices
  - not accessible or visible for health or safety reasons
- about any minor defects that would be anticipated in a property of the type and age being inspected - the nature of such minor defects will vary between property types
- details of defects that would normally be categorised as wear and tear or which would normally be dealt with as a matter of routine maintenance.
- the report is not an asbestos inspection under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
- any advice on subjects that are not covered by the report. If you need further advice you must arrange for it to be provided separately.
- the condition of services (heating, plumbing, electrics, drains etc.) other than can be determined from a visual inspection and when checking them by operating them in normal everyday circumstances.

1.2 - How the survey is carried out

General

The surveyor carefully and thoroughly carries out a visual and non-invasive inspection of the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings, recording the construction and defects (both major and minor) that are evident. This inspection is intended to cover as much of the property as physically accessible. Where this is not possible an explanation is provided in the relevant sections of the report.

The surveyor does not force or open up the fabric, or take action where there is a risk of causing personal injury or damage. This includes taking up fitted carpets, fitted floor coverings or floorboards, moving heavy furniture, removing the contents of cupboards, wardrobes, and/or roof spaces, moving of personal possessions, removing secured panels and/or hatches or undoing electrical fittings. The under-floor areas are inspected only where there is safe and clear access.

If necessary, the surveyor carries out parts of the inspection when standing at ground level from adjoining public property where accessible. This means the extent of the inspection will depend on a range of individual circumstances at the time of inspection, and the surveyor judges each case on an individual basis.

The surveyor uses equipment such as a moisture meter, binoculars and a torch, and uses a ladder for flat roofs and for hatches no more than 3m above level ground (outside) or floor surfaces (inside) if it is safe to do so.
The surveyor may also carries out additional research about matters affecting the property.

Services

Services are generally hidden within the construction of the property. This means that only the visible parts of the available services can be inspected, and the surveyor does not carry out specialist tests other than through their normal operation in everyday use. The visual inspection cannot assess the efficiency or safety of electrical, gas or other energy sources; the plumbing, heating or drainage installations (or whether they meet current regulations); or the internal condition of any chimney, boiler or other flue. Intermittent faults of services may not be apparent on the day of inspection. If any services (such as the boiler or mains water) are turned off, they are not turned on for safety reasons and the report will state that to be the case.

Outside

The surveyor inspects the condition of boundary walls, fences, permanent outbuildings and areas in common (shared) use. To inspect these areas, the surveyor walks around the grounds and any neighbouring public property where access can reasonably be obtained. Where there are restrictions to access, these are reported and advice is given on any potential underlying risks that may require further investigation.

Outbuildings

Buildings with swimming pools and sports facilities are treated as permanent outbuildings and therefore are inspected, but the surveyor does not report on the leisure facilities, such as the pool itself and associated equipment internally and externally, landscaping or other facilities (for example, tennis courts and temporary outbuildings).

1.2 - How the survey is carried out

Flats

When inspecting flats, the surveyor assesses the general condition of outside surfaces of the building, as well as its access and communal areas (for example, shared hallways and staircases) and roof spaces, but only if they are accessible from within the property or communal areas. The surveyor also identifies drains, lifts, fire alarms and security systems, although the surveyor does not carry out any specialist tests other than through their normal operation in everyday use. For safety reasons, drainage inspection chambers in communal areas are not lifted.

Hazardous substances, contamination and environmental issues

Unless otherwise expressly stated in the report, the surveyor assumed that no harmful or dangerous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. However, the surveyor will advise in the Report if, in his view, there is a likelihood that harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction and specific enquiries should be made or tests should be carried out by a specialist.

The surveyor makes enquiries about contamination or other environmental dangers. If the surveyor suspects a problem, he/she recommends further investigation. See also section 3.3.

The Surveyor does not comment upon the possible existence of noxious substances, landfill or mineral extraction, or other forms of contamination other than in a general sense if information is available.

Asbestos

The surveyor does not carry out an asbestos inspection and does not act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. With flats, the surveyor assumes that there is a ‘dutyholder’ (as defined in the regulations), and that in place are an asbestos register and an effective management plan which does not present a significant risk to health or need any immediate payment. The surveyor does not consult the dutyholder. See also section 3.2

Consents, approvals and searches

The surveyor does not carry out an asbestos inspection and does not act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012.
With flats which have common areas, the surveyor assumes that there is a ‘dutyholder’ (as defined in the regulations), and that in place are an asbestos register and an effective management plan, which you should ask to see. The surveyor does not consult the dutyholder

Assumptions

Unless otherwise expressly agreed, the surveyor while preparing the report assumed that:

a. the property (if for sale) is offered with vacant possession;

b. the Property is connected to mains services with appropriate rights on a basis that is known and acceptable to the Client; and

c. access to the Property is as of right upon terms known and acceptable to the Client.

1.2 - How the survey is carried out (contd)

Legal matters

The surveyor does not act as ‘the legal adviser’ and does not comment on any legal documents. If, during the inspection, the surveyor identifies issues that your legal advisers may need to investigate further, the surveyor may refer to these in the report (for example, check whether there is a warranty covering replacement windows).

The report has been prepared by the Surveyor, who has the skills, knowledge and experience to survey and report on the property.

The statements and opinions expressed in the report are expressed on behalf of the Surveyor, who accepts full responsibility for these.

The report is provided for the use of the client(s) named on the front of the report and the Surveyor cannot accept responsibility if it is used, or relied upon, by anyone else.

Nothing in these terms removes your right of cancellation under the Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013.

If the property is leasehold, the Surveyor gives you general advice and details of questions you should ask your legal advisers. This general advice is given towards the back of the report.

1.3 - Condition Ratings

The report applies ‘condition ratings’ to the major parts of the main building, associated habitable structures, and other structures present. The property is broken down into separate elements, and each element has been given a condition rating 1, 2, 3, HS or NI – see more on definitions below.

To help describe the condition of the home, condition ratings are given to the main parts (the ‘elements’) of the building, garage, and some parts outside. Some elements can be made up of several different parts.
The condition ratings are described:-

Condition Rating 1

Only minor or cosmetic repairs, or no repairs at all are currently needed. Normal maintenance must be carried out.

Condition Rating 2

Repairs or replacements are needed but these are not considered to be serious or urgent

Condition Rating 3

These are defects which are either serious and/or require urgent repair or replacement or where it is felt that further investigation is required (for instance where there is reason to believe repair work is needed but an invasive investigation is required to confirm this). A serious defect is one which could lead to rapid deterioration in the property, or one where the building element has failed or where its imminent failure could lead to more serious structural damage. You should obtain quotes for additional work where a condition rating 3 is given, prior to exchange of contracts.

Condition Rating HS

These are actual, or potential, health and safety related matters that require your immediate attention. **Failure to attend to these issues could result in serious injury or death**. In many cases it will require specific testing of services such as electricity or gas to confirm that they are safe to use, but in other instances it may relate to actual, or perceived, risks of falls or other hazards.

It is recommended that that these matters are treated as urgent and should be attended to as soon as possible after receipt of this report and prior to any exchange of contracts.

NI

Not inspected. Indicates an element of the property that could not be inspected due to some restriction of access or view.

NA

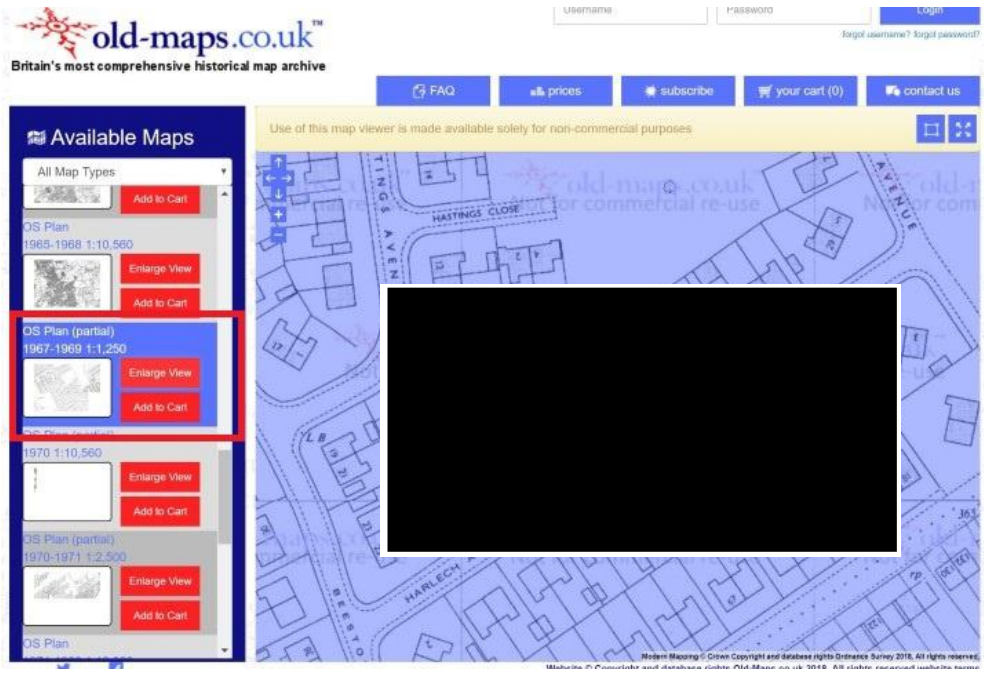
Not applicable – this element is not present at the property or is included within another section of the report.

	Section - 1.4/1.5 - Additional Information for this Survey
Conflicts of Interest	A conflict of interest is anything that impedes or might be perceived to impede an individual's or firm's ability to act impartially and in the best interest of a client.
	There are no known relevant conflicts of interest
Specific Exclusions	Areas which are excluded from the inspection and report by prior arrangement
	There are no areas of the property excluded from the extent of the inspection

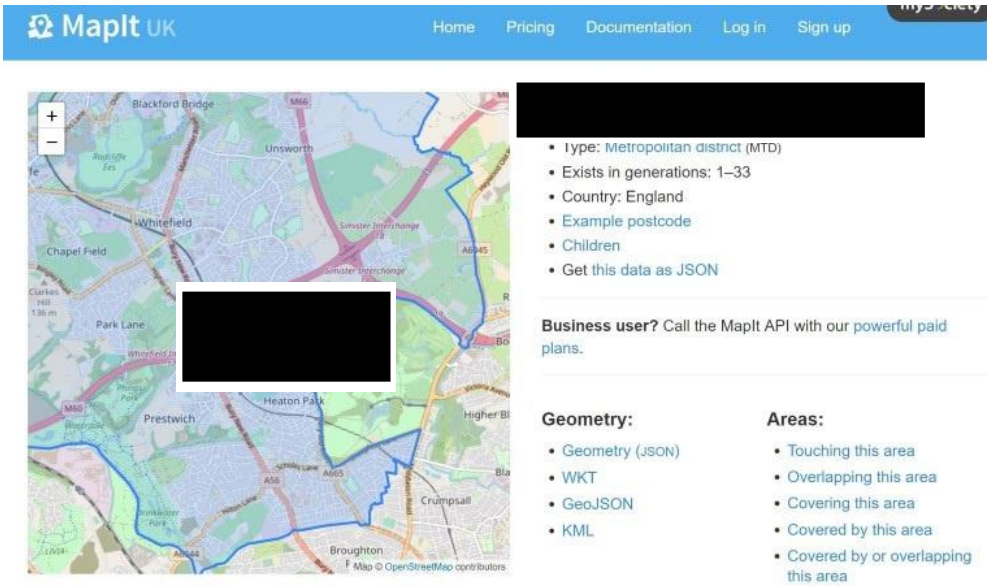
[redacted]

Section 2 Property information

2.1 - About the property

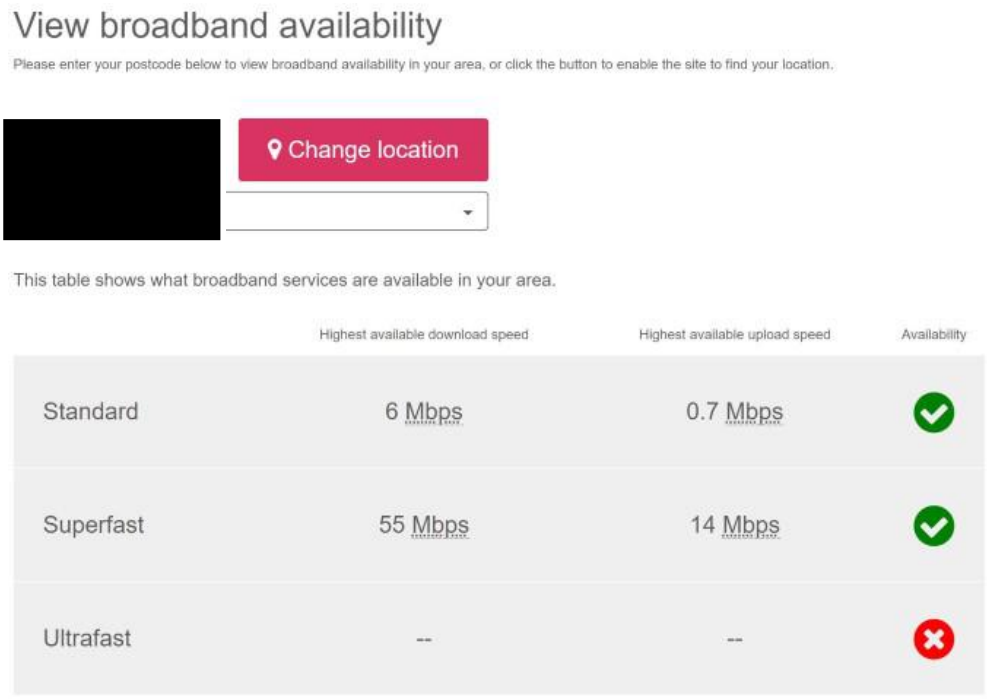
Persons Present	The property owner, [redacted] was present for the duration of the survey. She provided some information about the property and its history and although it is assumed that this information is true and accurate, no verification was carried out. You are therefore advised to confirm the accuracy of any such information prior to exchange of contracts. The vendors advised that they have been in residence for [redacted] years.
General Construction Information	The property is a semi-detached residence arranged over two floors. It was probably built around 1965. It is of brick cavity construction with retro fitted cavity wall insulation, the roof is of concrete interlocking tiles with concrete ridge tiles, the windows are mostly uPVC double glazed units (the small window on the side elevation is timber and single glazed). The ground floor is thought to be mostly of solid concrete with the hallway being timber. As there is evidence to suggest that the cavity walls may have been insulated, there may be an insurance backed guarantee. A single storey extension has been added to the rear to provide larger kitchen, but this was done at the time of construction References in the report refer: The front of the property is deemed as road side. The left and right of the property are as standing outside facing the front door. Room names are referenced from the floorplan supplied. The surveyed property is referenced as 'the subject property'  Property was built approx 1965

[redacted]

Council Information	No specific information for this property was available on the public areas of the council planning website section.
Listing	According to Historic England the property is not listed.
State of the property when inspected	The property was occupied, habitable and fully furnished All connected services were operational.
Summary of mains services	Gas – Connected to Mains Electricity – Connected to Mains Drainage – Connected to Mains (assumed) Water – Connected to Mains
Weather Conditions	At the time of survey the weather was dry.
Local Authority	The property is within the area of [redacted]  [redacted]

Conservation / AONB / National Parks	No specific issue noted by surveyor
Heating	A full central heating system is installed with a gas fired boiler supplying hot water to radiators throughout the property. At the time of survey, the boiler was activated only for the delivery of hot water, the radiator circuit was not in operation The boiler was not inspected in detail and should be examined by a suitably qualified engineer in accordance with the manufacturers' guidance.
Outside facilities	The gardens extend to the front and rear of the property. There is a timber decked patio area to the rear of the property. There is brick built garage to the rear. It has a flat roof and timber doors and window frames.
Renewable Energy Services	There are no renewable energy services installed at the property.
Broadband Service	I have not carried out an assessment of broadband speeds for this property. If this is important to you, it is essential you check with your preferred broadband provider or request a speed test at the property when you visit and certainly before you commit to the purchase.

[redacted]

	 View broadband availability Please enter your postcode below to view broadband availability in your area, or click the button to enable the site to find your location. [redacted] Change location This table shows what broadband services are available in your area. Broadband
Tenure	The property is understood to be of leasehold tenure and with vacant possession but may be subject to a Ground rent, your conveyancer should confirm this to be the case.

	Highest available download speed	Highest available upload speed	Availability
Standard	6 Mbps	0.7 Mbps	✓
Superfast	55 Mbps	14 Mbps	✓
Ultrafast	--	--	✗

Section 2 Property information

2.2 - Summary and Issues

This section is a summary of matters that are of particular interest but you should consider ALL information contained in this report.

General	In general, the property is in a reasonable condition for its age. There are no serious or urgent issues with subsidence, the walls or the roofs. There are a number of medium level issues that require attention together with some minor observations made in the following report sections. It should be noted that in any property of this age there will be general unevenness of the surfaces and structures of walls, floors, ceilings, doors, windows and other elements. These have occurred due to settlement of the structure and general usage over an extended period. It is not possible to highlight each individual example of such distortions and only those felt to be of an unusual nature have been highlighted.
Main Issues	Cast iron downpipe is loose Guttering may be leaking causing damp in places Refer to the relevant sections for more details

Dampness Background Information	Dampness causes can be for a variety of possible reasons:- Rising dampness is where a damp proof course within the external and internal walls is either not present, has failed, or has been breeched by high ground levels. It is where ground based moisture rises up a wall to a maximum height of 1m. Penetrating dampness is where moisture penetrates from outside through a wall or roof element. This can include a roof tile failure, an open chimney, a gutter failure, driving rain through a solid wall, high ground levels, failed window seals, poor external drainage and a cavity being bridged by mortar or building debris. Cold bridging is generally where cold spots are created at the base of internal walls due to the proximity to another cold surface (such as a solid floor) - internal airborne moisture is then attracted to the cold spots which condenses. Condensation is moisture produced by washing, cooking and bathing etc., carried by the air as vapour, and which settles on colder surfaces, often around windows or on cold walls and ceilings, resulting in stains and mould growth. It is often present where there is a lack of good ventilation, heating and insulation. -------- o O o -------- A Protimeter Surveymaster moisture meter was used to take readings on all external and internal walls, at high and low levels (where possible), on all door and window reveals (where possible), on the chimney breasts throughout the property and on several roof timbers in the loft. There are some high damp readings in the porch, which is thought to be due to faulty rainwater fittings, there are some isolated damp patches near the landing window, which may be due to cracked sealant around the frame and there is a visible wet patch on the ceiling of the bay window in the front bedroom. This is thought to be due to blocked and leaking guttering. Refer to sections 4.3, 4.7, 5.2 and 5.3 All the dampness is considered to be penetrating damp and can be explained by faulty rainwater goods and window sealant. Refer to relevant sections for more details
Structural	No evidence of movement was seen other than that which would normally be expected in any building of this age.
Health & Safety related matters	There is no evidence of recent inspection of the electrical or heating systems, but certification may be available. See also 6.1 and 6.2.

[redacted]

2.3 - External Photographs

Front elevation

Rear elevation

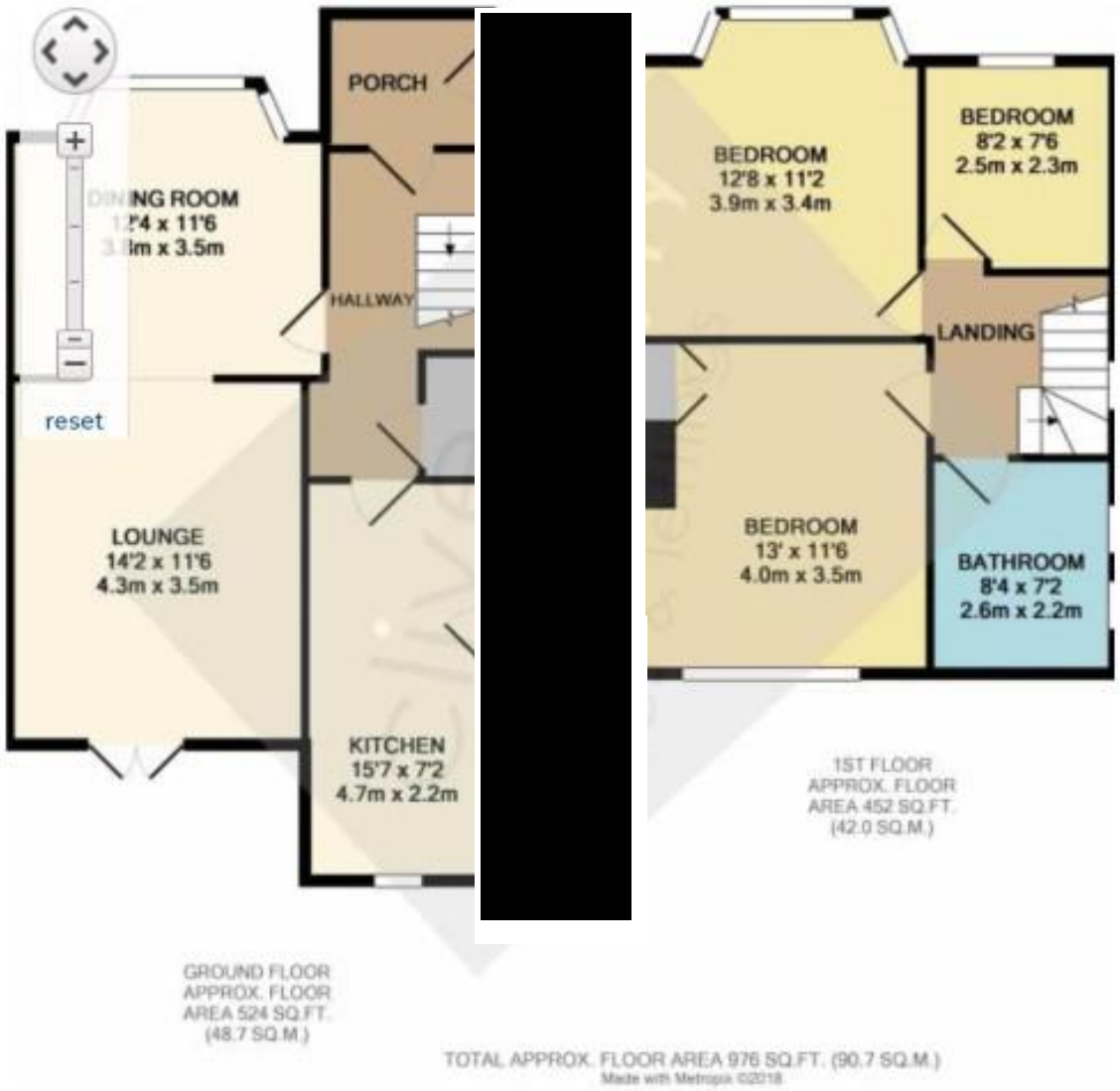
2.4 - Summary of Accommodation

	Reception Rooms	Bedrooms	Bath/ Shower	Sep WC	Kitchen	Utility	Conservatory	Other	Integral Garage
First Floor		3	1						
Ground Floor	1				1				

The approximate living area of the property, excluding outbuildings, is 91 m2

[redacted]

2.5 - Floorplan



Floorplan

The floorplan is taken from the estate agents details.

Floorplan for illustrative purposes only. Not to scale. Not to be used for estimating or measuring purposes

2.6 - Energy Performance

The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) is obtained from the publicly accessible national database where one has been lodged. There is no requirement for an EPC to be prepared for some property types, for example, listed buildings. The surveyor considers the contents of the EPC and provides information about energy efficiency measures that could be implemented.

The Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) for the property, which was not prepared by me, shows a current efficiency rating of 60, band D. The potential rating is given as 77, band B. The rating as provided for this property is around the UK average, however it is not accurate as it does not account for the 50 mm of loft insulation. I have obtained the complete 4-page EPC document should you wish to see a copy.

The boiler is a number of years old and is less efficient than a new condensing boiler. A newer boiler could help to reduce heating bills by burning gas more efficiently.

The property could benefit from increasing the depth of insulation to the roof space. Currently there is approximately 50 mm of insulation installed. The recommended depth is 270mm. When installing loft insulation it is essential to ensure that good ventilation of the roof space is maintained.

Further improvements can be gained employing renewable energy sources such as Solar and PV panels for hot water and electricity generation.

Before commencing any work you should ensure that all statutory permissions have been obtained for any changes you wish to make to your property.

It is understood that the property is not subject to a Green Deal financing loan for energy efficiency improvements.

[redacted]

Energy Performance Certificate

HM Government

[redacted]

- Compare current ratings of properties to see which properties are more energy efficient
- Find out how you can save energy and money by installing improvement measures

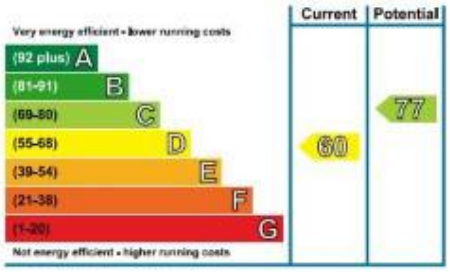
Estimated energy costs of dwelling for 3 years:	**£ 3,060**
Over 3 years you could save	**£ 597**

Estimated energy costs of this home

	Current costs	Potential costs	Potential future savings
Lighting	£ 369 over 3 years	£ 189 over 3 years	You could save £ 597 over 3 years
Heating	£ 2,337 over 3 years	£ 2,046 over 3 years	
Hot Water	£ 354 over 3 years	£ 228 over 3 years	
Totals	**£ 3,060**	**£ 2,463**	

These figures show how much the average household would spend in this property for heating, lighting and hot water and is not based on energy used by individual households. This excludes energy use for running appliances like TVs, computers and cookers, and electricity generated by microgeneration.

Energy Efficiency Rating



The graph shows the current energy efficiency of your home.

The higher the rating the lower your fuel bills are likely to be.

The potential rating shows the effect of undertaking the recommendations on page 3.

The average energy efficiency rating for a dwelling in England and Wales is band D (rating 60).

The EPC rating shown here is based on standard assumptions about occupancy and energy use and may not reflect how energy is consumed by individual occupants.

Top actions you can take to save money and make your home more efficient

Recommended measures	Indicative cost	Typical savings over 3 years
1 Floor insulation (solid floor)	£4,000 - £6,000	£ 114
2 Low energy lighting for all fixed outlets	£75	£ 153
3 Replace boiler with new condensing boiler	£2,200 - £3,000	£ 243

See page 3 for a full list of recommendations for this property.

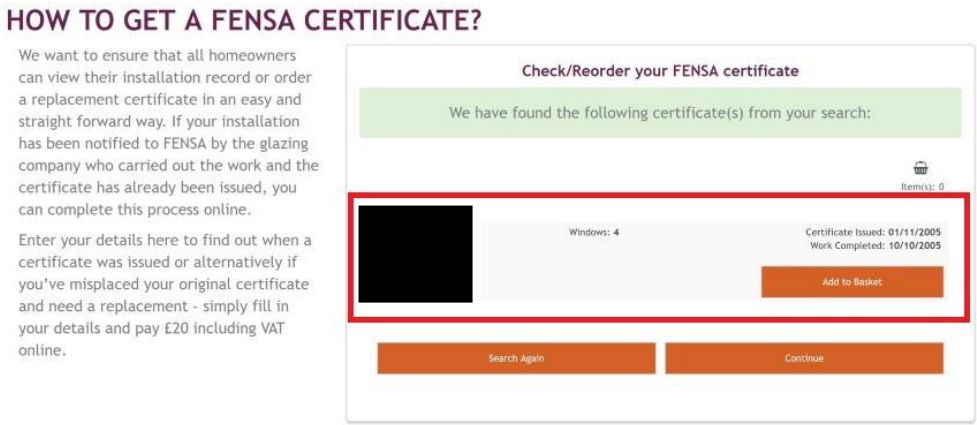
To find out more about the recommended measures and other actions you could take today to save money, visit www.gov.uk/energy-grants-calculator or call **0300 123 1234** (standard national rate). The Green Deal may enable you to make your home warmer and cheaper to run.

EPC

[redacted]

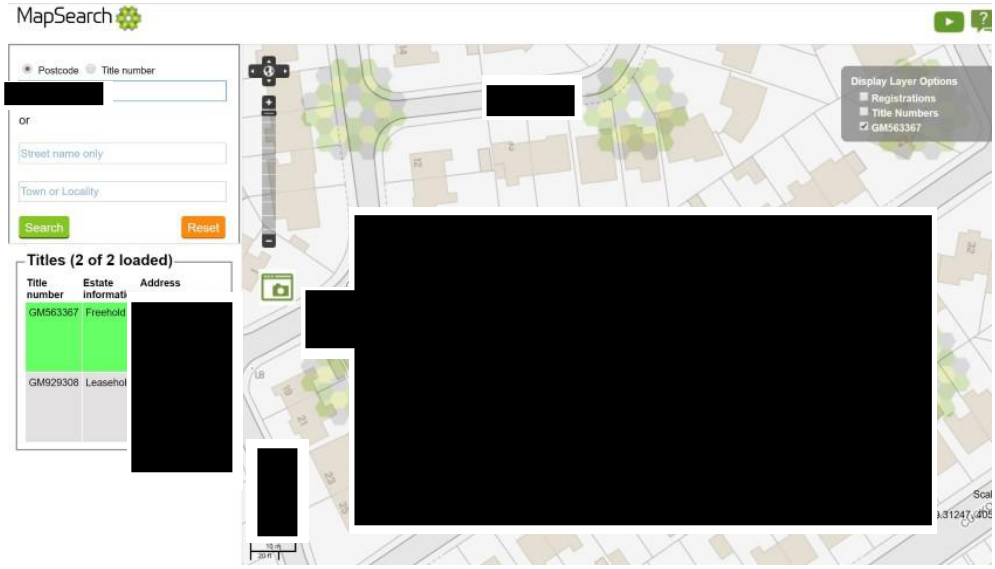
Section 3 - Conveyancing, Health & Safety and Environmental Matters

3.1 - Conveyancing Related Matters

Extensions & Alterations	Extensions: A single storey extension has been added to the rear but according to the owner, it was done at the time of construction. Conservatory: None noted. Loft Conversion: None noted. New Boiler: None noted. Chimney / Breast Removals: None noted. Wall Removal: None noted. A wall has been removed between the lounge and the dining room Post 2002 Windows: Post 2002 double glazing has been installed Log Burner Installation: None noted. Electrical Circuits: None noted Renewables: None noted Drainage: See Below The alterations mentioned above may have required statutory consents. There are no planning applications affecting the property.  Fensa certificate available for replacement window
Access & Rights of way	No issue noted by surveyor
Easements & Wayleaves	There may be underground pipes crossing the site which are not for the sole benefit for the property
Property Let	No issue noted by surveyor

Tree Preservation Orders	No issue noted by surveyor
Party Wall Award	No issue noted by surveyor
Drainage	There may be a shared drainage system within the boundaries of the property
Boundaries and Title Deeds	The Land Registry holds a map, called the Title Plan, which is the Government's official register of the location of a property. Although it shows the boundaries of the property, normally in a red line, they are only an indication of the location of the boundaries and are not specific or highly accurate. The line drawn on the plan may be 1 mm wide at a scale of 1:1250, giving an accuracy of significantly less than 1 metre on the ground. In most cases this is the only official recognition of the boundaries of a property. As such, it is impossible to determine whether a fence or wall is in the correct place. However, during the course of the survey an inspection was conducted to identify any obvious features which could suggest that the boundaries are not consistent with the general line identified on the title plan. No detailed measurements were taken to establish the precise location of any boundary, and, if concerned, you should seek further advice from a boundary dispute specialist, particularly if planning to make alterations that might be immediately adjacent to, or affect, the boundaries. Determining the precise location of a boundary can be a very lengthy and expensive process, and can result in disputes arising between neighbours. Similarly, the Land Registry title documents rarely indicate who is responsible for the maintenance, repair or replacement of a particular boundary fence or wall. And although existing neighbours may believe that an arrangement is officially recorded, it is usually the case that no such information is given within the title plan or register, and that most boundary fences and walls are of shared responsibility. Observations No issue noted but I have not checked the title plan against the actual house layout. I have just checked the indicative HMLR Mapsearch facility which shows no obvious anomalies. The boundaries to the front of the property are unclear on the ground. You should check the title deed as supplied by your legal advisor against the actual property layout on the ground.

[redacted]

	 Land Registry
Common and Shared Areas	No common or shared areas noted by surveyor

3.2 - Health & Safety related matters

Fire Risk

Some of the windows in the bedrooms are designed as Fire Escape Windows and open fully to allow egress in an emergency.

Although a smoke alarm is fitted at the property it has not been tested. You should ensure that there are sufficient devices fitted at the property and that they are all in good working order.

The lack of a smoke detector on the ground floor may increase to risk of being trapped in the event of a fire.

There are gaps in the Party Wall in the loft space that could increase the risk of fire spread should one occur

Holes in Party Wall

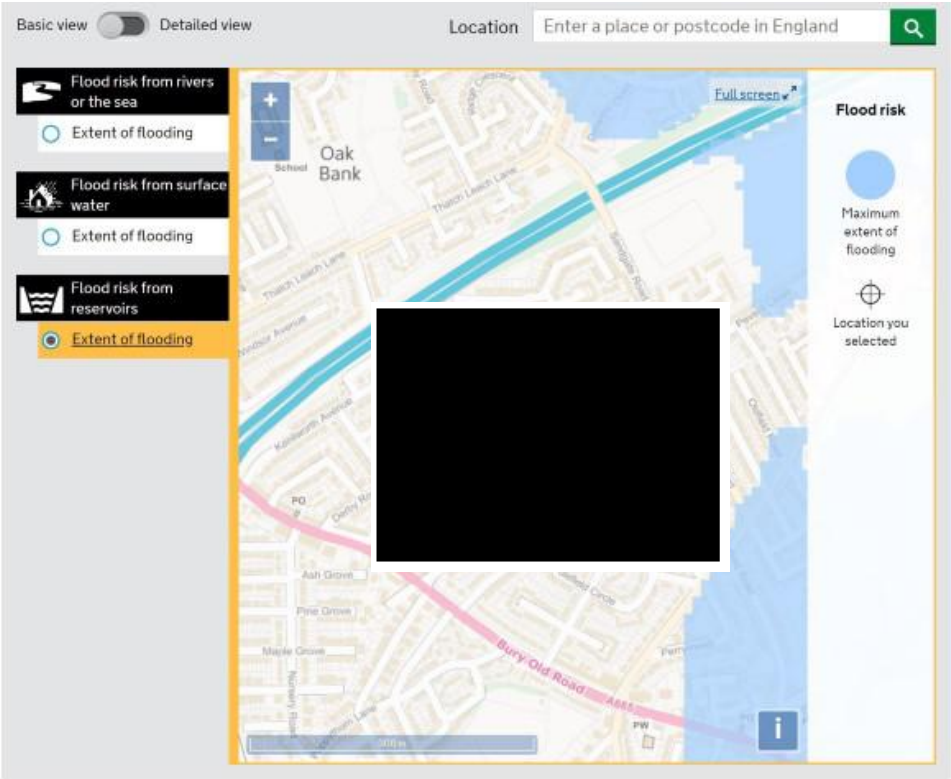
	 Some windows open fully and can be classed as fire escape windows
Safety Glass	The glass in the internal porch door may not be Safety Glass.  May not be safety glass

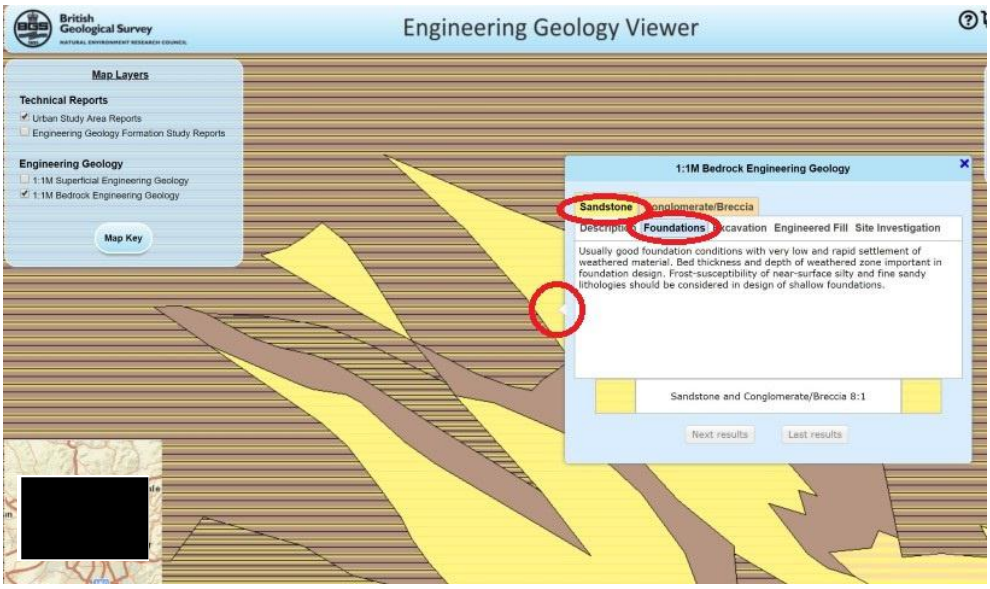
Lead Pipes	A visual inspection was carried out, however pipes buried within walls or beneath the ground were not inspected.
Risk of Falls	The banister on the staircase is constructed from long pieces of timber running parallel to the stairs. There are large gaps in between the timbers which could be a safety risk to children.  Banister is a risk to children due to large gaps
Unsafe Fittings	No issue noted by surveyor
Insect and Rodent Infestations	No issue noted by surveyor
Recent testing of services	There is no evidence of recent inspection of the electrical or heating systems, but certification may be available. See also 6.1 and 6.2.

Asbestos	Some construction materials and products used at the property may contain asbestos. Any such materials should not be drilled or disturbed without prior advice from a licensed specialist. Specifically, the thin material under the tiles at the edge of the roof and the soffits at the front eaves are suspected to be asbestos (refer to 4.3 and 4.6) The following should be noted:- This report is not an asbestos inspection under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006 so no specific tests have been carried out to confirm the presence or absence of asbestos in any materials, and so any references are an assumption based on of the type and age of material seen. None of the materials seen were in a condition that would give any cause for concern, even were they to contain any asbestos. Asbestos only poses a risk where airborne fibres are present and none of the materials seen were seen to be damaged in a way that would release fibres. Asbestos containing materials were commonly used in the construction, conversion and refurbishment of houses in the 1950’s-70’s, though the use of asbestos was not completely prohibited until the late 1990’s. Many houses therefore include materials that contain asbestos and are lived in safely and without risk to health. However you should be aware that there are health risks when asbestos containing materials are drilled or sanded and you should consider this when carrying out any alterations, repairs or renovations. You can obtain further information from the Health & Safety Executive asbestos site http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/index.htm
Misc	Timber decking can be extremely slippery when wet. Anti-slip materials can be added to timber decking to improve safety.

[redacted]

3.3 - Environmental Matters

Flood	No issue noted by surveyor at the time of the survey, no flooding was noted in or around the subject property but see flood maps c/o the environment agency below. According to the Environment Agency, there is no risk of surface water flooding. Please note that flooding can occur outside designated flood prone areas. The Environment Agency are constantly updating their data to reflect any new incidents of flooding or any increased risks of flooding. This publicly available information should be used to indicate a level of risk to the property. You should consult your legal advisor with regards to the options for carrying out a full environment search.  No flood risk
Geology	The British Geological website indicates the ground is of sandstone which is a solid base and hence not liable to move adversely. See further comments in 4.4



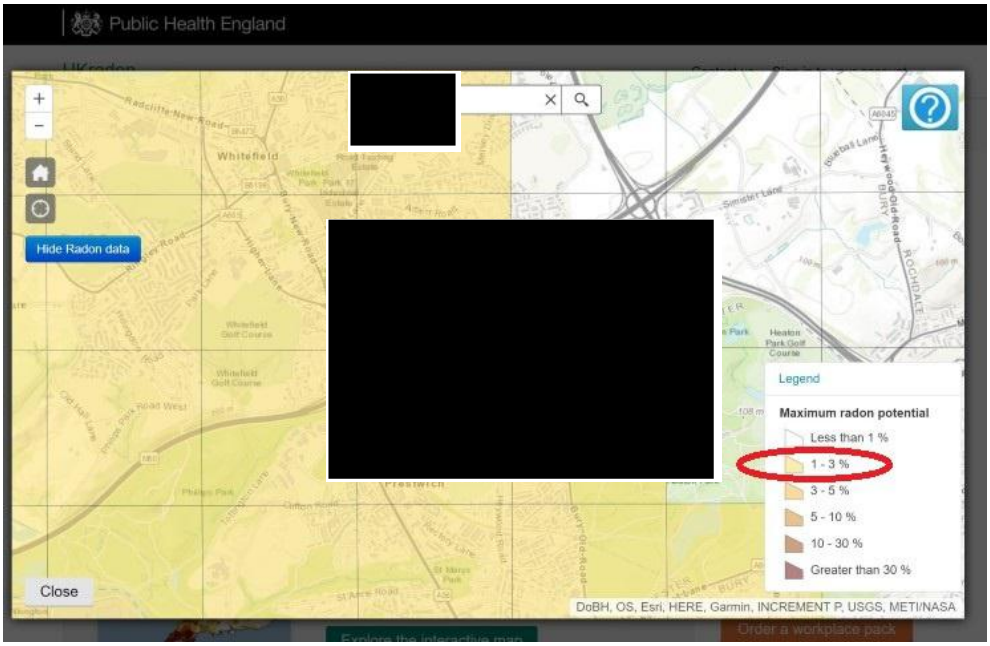
Geology

Radon

Radon is a colourless, odourless radioactive gas. It's formed by the radioactive decay of small amounts of uranium that occur naturally in all rocks and soils.

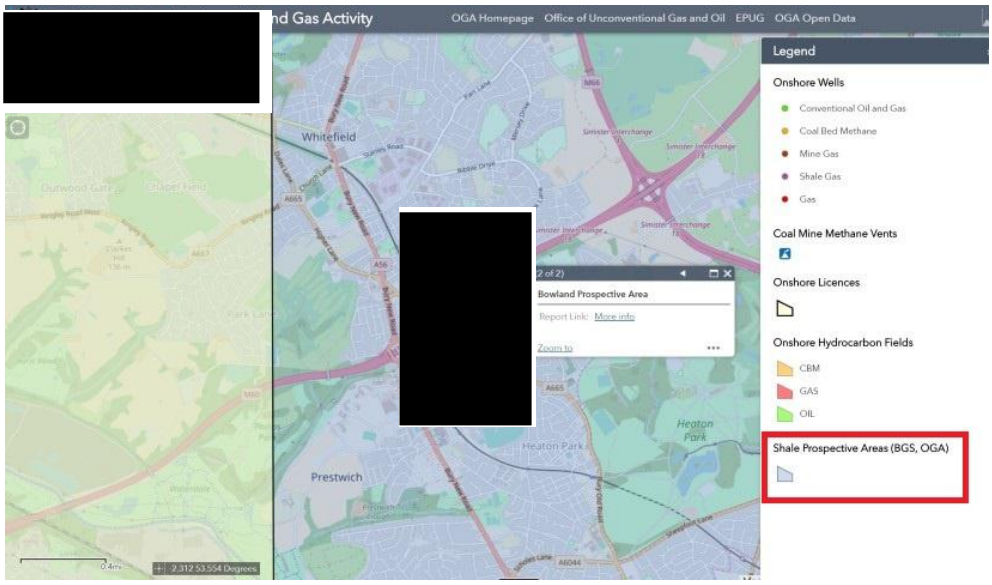
As the property is in an orange area, it means that there is a 1 - 3% risk and further action needs to be taken. In these cases, UKradon recommends an on-line 'UKradon search'. This is easily arranged and only costs a few pounds.

see http://www.ukradon.org/information/
for further information



Radon

[redacted]

Fracking	The Oil & Gas Authority (OGA) operates a website that provides information about the location of oil and gas deposits, wells, and areas where licenses have been granted or offered for exploration purposes. This may include drilling for oil or gas, or the extraction of shale gas, commonly known as fracking. The property is located in a Shale Prospective Area and therefore licences may be granted in the future. Further information is available from the website www.ogauthority.co.uk  Oil and Gas
Landfill	No issue noted by surveyor
Invasive Species	The grounds around the house were inspected for any indications of Japanese Knotweed. No evidence of the presence of Japanese Knotweed was seen during my inspection but you are advised to seek further advice if you believe it may be present or are aware that it is present in premises nearby.
Mining	The property is in a coal mining reporting area and according to the Coal Authority website, it is in a Development High Risk Area. It is highly recommended to have a Coal Authority search carried out for the property because any previous reports are not transferable. Their reports offer expert advice based on their unique database of coal mining information as well as their vast archive of historical maps and plans. The reports should also be covered by an indemnity insurance policy. https://www.groundstability.com/public/web/home.xhtml

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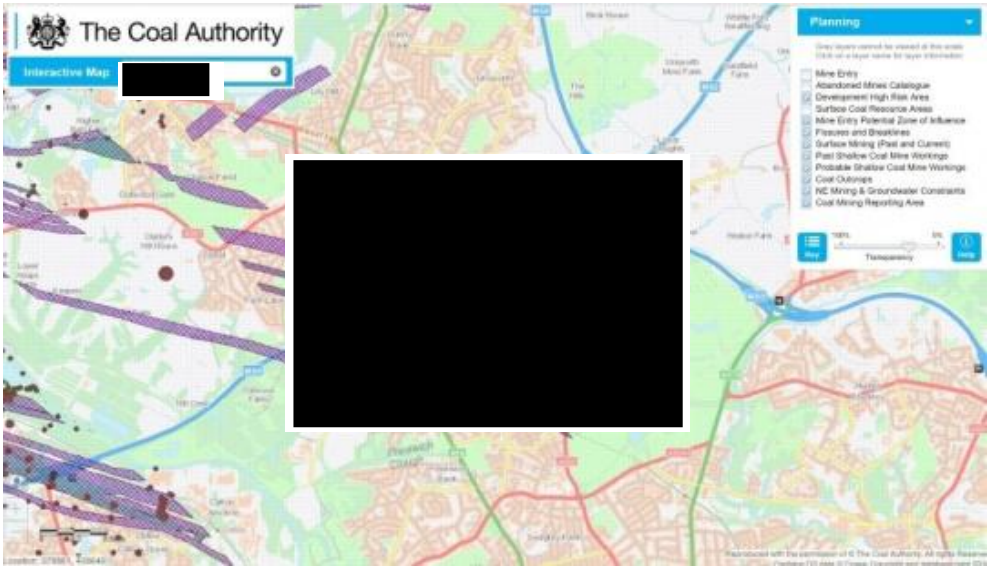
	 Property is in a Coal Mining reporting area

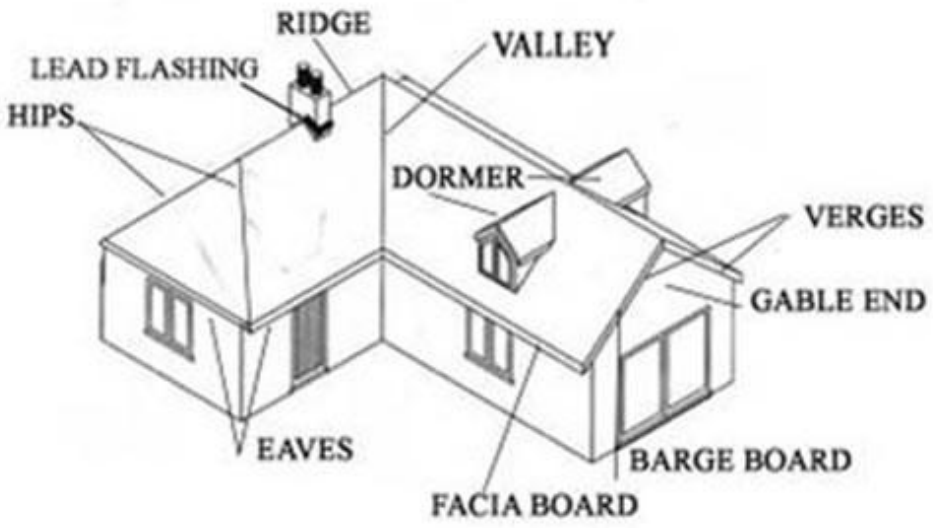
Section 4 - Outside of the Property

4.1 Chimney Stacks	Condition rating	2

Construction & Type and Limitations	The chimney stack is brick built with an aluminium flue inside the terracotta pot. The flashing at the base of the stacks at the junction with the roof slopes is of lead. The chimney was examined from ground level with the aid of a high zoom camera and also a pole camera, for possible defects including undue movement, distortion, chemical or weather related damage, brickwork, render and pointing damage and other evidence of failure. Due to limited viewing angles it is not possible to see all faces of the chimney stack from ground level, and it is assumed that the condition of those faces not visible is similar to that of the visible faces.
Condition	The aluminium flue has a rain cowl correctly fitted to allow flue gases to escape but prevent vertical rain entering the flue line. The pointing to the chimney stack is crumbling and missing in places which will be allowing the ingress of water.

Cracked and crumbling pointing on chimney

	4.2 Roof Coverings	Condition rating	2
Construction & Type and Limitations	The roofs are pitched and of traditional cut timber construction. They are covered with concrete interlocking tiles and concrete ridge tiles. The roof pitches were examined from ground level with the aid of a high zoom camera and using a pole camera, where necessary for possible defects including sagging, collapse, broken/missing/damaged tiles, holes, and other evidence of failure.		

Condition	Pitched Sections The top line of ridge tiles is even with no evidence of any undue levels of flexing or bowing. The roof slopes look flat and even with no obvious signs of sagging. The pointing to the roof verge is cracked in places. There are a small number of slipped, chipped and cracked tiles visible on the main roof pitches. The number of damaged tiles is within a normal range for a roof of this type and age and would not significantly affect the performance of the roof at this stage. The tiles noted would benefit though from being replaced There is a large amount of moss growth on the rear slope and the extension roof. Moss retains water which adds weight the to the roof and can also lead to leaks in extreme circumstances
	 Roof Elements

Minor cracks in pointing and possible asbestos

Minor cracks in pointing

Cracked tiles

Large amount of moss growth to roof

Large amount of moss growth to extension roof

	4.3 Rainwater and Above Ground Drainage Fittings	Condition rating	HS
Construction & Type and Limitations	The rainwater gutters and downpipes are cast iron to the main property and uPVC to the extension and the porch. The soil stack is cast iron, there is a gully to the side providing drainage from the kitchen. Additional gullies for rainwater are provided around the property An inspection was carried out from ground level with the aid of a high zoom camera and also a pole camera where necessary to look for possible areas of leakage, misalignment, overflow and other defects. The soil stacks and gullies were examined for any signs of damage, leakage, correct supports, cracking and evidence of significant wear. As it was dry at the time of survey only a limited assessment could be made as to the effectiveness of the rainwater fittings.		

Condition	The majority of the gutters are blocked to some degree and require cleaning. There are stains on some walls which suggests that the gutters are leaking in places. This is thought to be contributing to the dampness in some areas (refer to 2.2, 5.2 and 5.3) All gullies were clear at the time of the survey with no evidence of any flooding or other drainage problems. However all gullies require regular clearing of any debris that will accumulate over relatively short periods of time. The cast iron downpipe at the front corner of the property is loose and the brackets are defective. This is the reason for the RED HS rating due to the weight of cast iron fittings and the potential for injury if it were to fall. All cast iron fittings are very heavy and are prone to sudden failure. Although no evidence of any failure was noted to the other fittings, it would be prudent to consider changing them to a more modern uPVC alternative. The soil stack and associated plumbing is in a fair condition with no leakages noted, but there is no vented cover to the top of the pipe.
	 Guttering is blocked to the extension

Guttering is blocked to the rear

Guttering is partially blocked to front

Downpipe is broken and loose

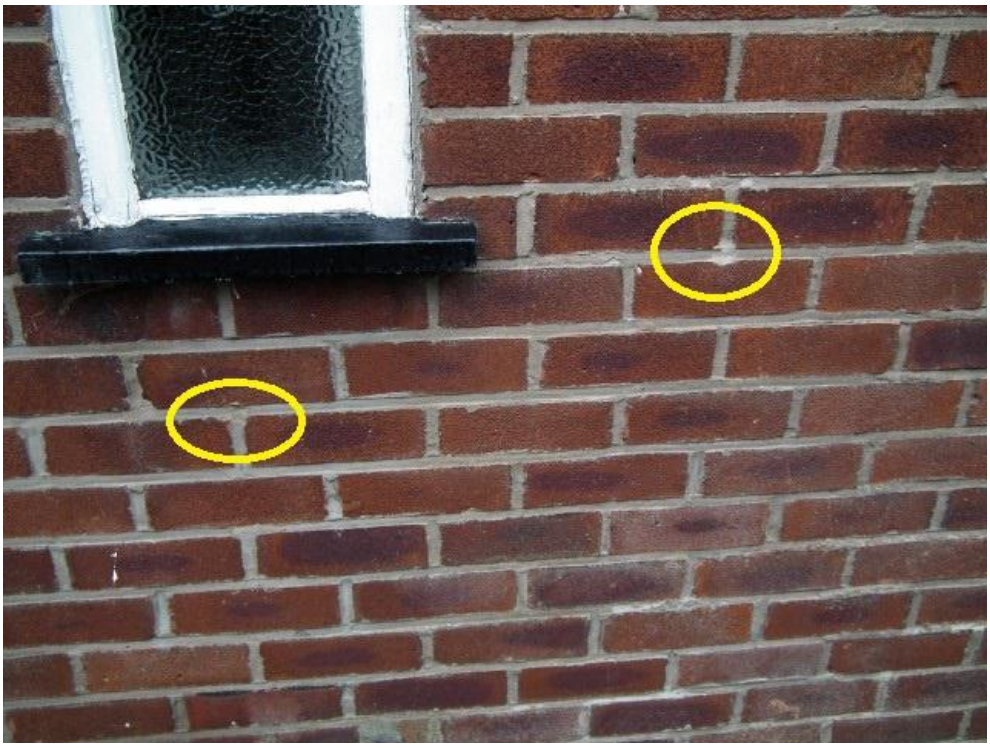
Downpipe is broken and loose at the centre also

Downpipe is broken and loose at the top as well

Vented cover in missing

	4.4 Walls	Condition rating	2
Construction & Type and Limitations	The outside walls are brick-faced and of cavity construction. There is evidence to suggest that retro fit cavity wall insulation has been installed. The outside walls were examined from ground level with the aid of a high zoom camera from vantage points within the grounds of the property and suitable public areas around. The walls were examined for signs of bowing or leaning, damaged brickwork and pointing, cracking, indications of subsidence and land failure and other defects.		

Condition	Foundations I have not undertaken exposure of the foundation structures during the course of my inspection. Whilst I am unable to confirm the depth to which these foundations bear, it is unlikely that they are consistent with current standards. However, this is applicable to a large proportion of the housing stock and the property should not therefore be considered unusual in this respect. Observations Stability and vertical alignment is generally satisfactory. Condition and alignment of the brickwork is fair. There is no evidence of any significant bulges or major structural cracks. There is no evidence of foundation cracking at ground level. Externally the brick window lintels and vertical mortar junctions are all complete with no evidence of any movement. These areas are mentioned specifically as any movement to the property would be noted at these points. Most properties are subject to slight settling down over the years as sub-soil consolidates and adjusts to changes in ground condition. This will frequently result in limited differential movement, which is often expressed as minor cracking or distortion of window and door openings and is rarely of structural significance. This can be seen above the side door and above a window of the extension. There are also minor cracks in the pointing and a damaged brick on the rear corner of the property. No other evidence of movement was seen other than that which would normally be expected in any building of this age. Other Aspects In all external walls there should be a damp proof course (DPC) just above ground level. This is an impervious layer present to prevent dampness rising up the walls from the ground. In modern properties this is often a plastic membrane but in older properties other materials such as bitumen felt or slate are often found. Houses built before 1880, or so, usually have no provision to prevent dampness rising up, or penetrating through, the walls. In this case the bitumen DPC can be seen at the base of the walls. Wall ties are metal linking plates built into the wall at intervals to hold the inner and outer leaves of the cavity wall together. In older properties these may have been of wrought iron that has since corroded and failed. In later properties they may be of galvanised steel, stainless steel or plastic. In the worst case their failure can allow the outer leaf to fall away from the inner leaf of brickwork. No evidence was seen to indicate any failure of the wall ties and it is therefore assumed that they are in a stable condition. There is evidence that the wall cavities have been filled with insulation (cavity wall insulation), though the exact nature, quality, and quantity of insulation inserted can only be determined by an invasive examination with the use of cameras. No issues are noted or suspected at this time. Staining can be seen at the front corner which suggest leaking guttering or downpipes (refer to 4.3) No significant defects were noted during my inspection and the external walls were found to be structurally sound.



Evidence of cavity wall insulation

Damaged brickwork and minor crack

Minor cracks in pointing

Minor cracks in pointing

Water stain

4.5 Windows and External Doors

Condition rating **2**

Construction & Type and Limitations

The front door and side door are of timber construction. The double doors from the lounge are upvc framed with double glazed panels.

The majority of windows are double glazed with uPVC frames but there is a timber framed single glazed window on the side elevation..

All external doors were checked for normal operation and signs of failure or damage.

Windows were examined for general signs of degradation and failure including blown double glazing units and worn seals. Opening was attempted to all windows and they were checked for normal operation. The condensation levels in certain weather conditions can disguise evidence of blown double glazed units.

Condition	Doors No significant defects were noted, all doors operated effectively on opening and closure. All locks functioned correctly. Windows WOOD FRAMES As expected the frame is showing signs of decay PVC FRAMES Internal sill heights were compliant with the current legal safety limits, all handles operated satisfactorily. Due to the recent construction of some glazing units (2005), they have a thermal e-coating on the internal faces to reflect some heat back into the property. FENSA certification is available The silicone sealant around some of the frames is cracked which will allow the ingress of water. There is a broken hinge on the window of the larger front bedroom. Blown vacuums - NONE There are no blown vacuums noted to any of the windows. This occurs when the seal around the edge of the window unit fails, allowing moisture laden air to enter between the panes of glass. This is identified by misting of the glass on the inside faces of the sealed unit, and the formation of crystals around the inside of the seal of the unit. Once the seal on a unit has failed it cannot be repaired and the window unit (though not always the frame) needs to be replaced. Under normal circumstances sealed double glazed units can be expected to last around 20 years before the seals begin to fail. This can occur more quickly where windows are in exposed or vulnerable situations. It is estimated that most of the windows currently fitted are approximately 13 years old and there is no evidence of any imminent failures.

Timber windows showing signs of decay

Cracked sealant around frames

Hinge is broken on front bedroom window

	4.6 External Joinery and Finishes	Condition rating	1
Construction & Type and Limitations	This includes such items as woodwork at the roof edges, fascias, and trim panels. Decorated areas include such items as windows, doors, walls, timbers at roof edges, porches. The soffits, fascias and bargeboards are all of timber construction. Fascia boards are the vertical timbers to which the gutters are normally fixed. Soffits are the horizontal timbers joining the fascia boards to the house walls. Barge boards are the diagonal boards at the roof edge on the gable end of the house. All such materials were examined from ground level for indications of poor maintenance, rot and other damage. Decorations were examined from ground level from vantage points within the grounds of the property and suitable public areas around. Decorations were examined for signs of wear and tear, peeling paint, lack of oiling where applicable and other defects.		
Condition	The paint is flaking and peeling on the timber around the roof edges. The soffits [panels that link the gutter boards to the walls] do not have ventilation grilles installed to supply cross ventilation to the roof space. (Refer to Section 5.1).		

Additional Information	Advice: The soffits boards [horizontal boards at roof edge) may contain asbestos. Asbestos should not be drilled, sanded or removed without protective equipment and/or specialist advice. See section 3.2.
	 Eaves detail

MHIS	**4.7 Conservatories and Porches**	**Condition rating**	**2**
Construction & Type and Limitations	The porch is brick built with a pitched roof covered with concrete interlocking tiles. The seal along the joint of the roof and the main wall is "Flashband" [Flashband is an adhesive tape that is used for temporary roof repairs. It is not considered to be suitable for use as a permanent roofing solution] The porch structure was examined for indications of leaking, bowing, leaning, cracking and undue timber movement, failure or damage of the floor, walls and roof, separation from the main building, and other defects.		

Condition	No significant defects are noted to the structure, but the guttering is partially blocked and requires cleaning, some of the tiles are missing or cracked around the base and there are high damp readings inside the porch (refer to 4.3) Although there were no signs of leaks at the time of the inspection, it is recommended that the "Flashband" that seals between the porch roof and the main wall of the house is upgraded to a lead flashing set into the brickwork of the house.
	 Guttering is partially blocked on porch

Missing tiles around porch

Cracked tiles around porch

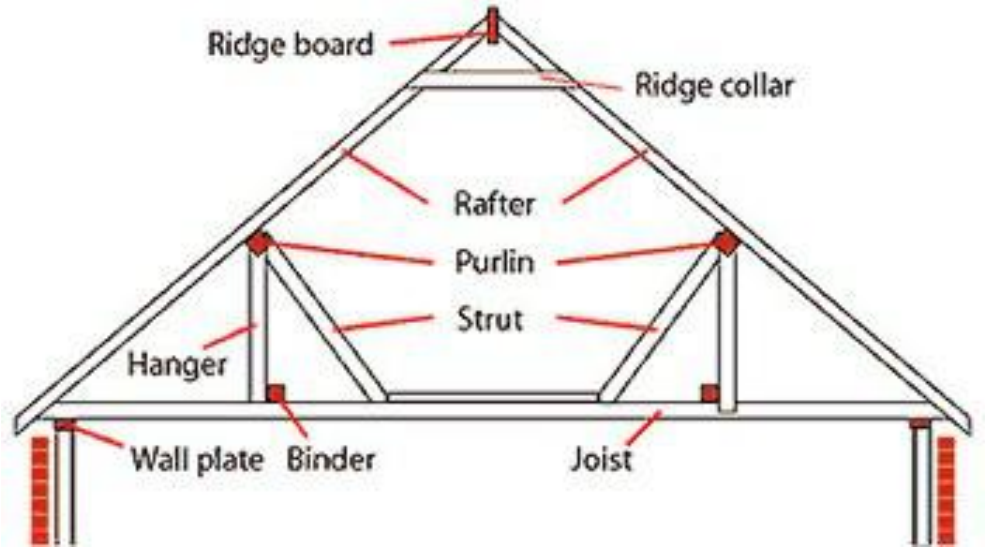
Some high damp readings on internal walls

Section 5 - Inside the Property

5.1 Roof Spaces

Condition rating **2**

Construction & Type and Limitations	The main roof is constructed using individual timbers in a traditional manner, comprising of rafters spanning from the ridge to the eaves, supported by purlins. The sarking felt [undercovering] is bitumen (which is not a breathable material). The insulation is laid to a depth of about 50 mm. The loft is partially boarded. The roof space was accessed via a hatch from the landing. There is a loft ladder fitted. The roof space was examined for signs of bowing, twisting, cracking and failure of roof timbers, signs of failure or damage to the roof covering, infestation including birds, insects, animals and beetles (woodworm), and other defects. The roof space was further investigated for any indications of lack of adequate ventilation or suitable fire walls. A representative selection of timbers was examined more closely for infestations by wood boring insects (such as Common Furniture Beetle and Death Watch Beetle), though it must be noted that within a general survey it is not physically possible to inspect every timber in sufficient detail to provide conclusive proof of the presence or absence of such infestations. Wood Moisture Equivalent readings were taken from timbers in a selection of representative locations to determine whether moisture levels within the roof space were above average. Normally approximately 6-8 readings will be obtained. The structures of the extension roof and porch roof are not accessible and cannot be inspected.
Condition	The roof structure is in a good condition with reasonable quality timbers throughout. The rafters, purlins and strut timbers are complete with no evidence of any undue stress or cracking. The bitumen undercovering (secondary waterproof covering) is complete with no major tears or missing sections. It has however been patched up at the eaves The roof space is laid with about 50 mm of wool type insulation at joist level. Increasing the thickness to the current recommendation of 270 mm is advised for maximum energy efficiency As mentioned earlier, in 4.6, the soffit boards [panels that link the gutter boards to the walls] do not have ventilation grilles to supply cross ventilation to the roof space. Without adequate ventilation condensation can form on the underside of the roof surface and hence introduce dampness to the roof space. However there were no signs of condensation at the time of the inspection. The loft insulation has been pushed into the eaves in places which will restrict the ventilation further in those areas. There are holes in the Party wall (refer to 3.2)



Traditional roof construction

Gaps in Party Wall in loft

Insulation pushed into eaves

Roof under felt has been patched up

	5.2 Ceilings	Condition rating	1
Construction & Type and Limitations	The ceilings are constructed from plasterboard. Ceilings were examined for signs of undue levels of bowing, cracking, staining and other defects. Moisture meter readings were taken at regular intervals.		
Condition	All internal ceilings have been maintained and all surfaces are presented in a fair decorative order. There is a visible damp patch to the ceiling of the bay window in the front bedroom which is thought to be caused by leaking guttering (refer to 4.3) There was some visible hairline cracking to some plaster boarded areas. There is perimeter junction cracking between the ceilings and walls in some places, which is not in itself of structural significance. This is normal thermal expansion movement and within tolerance levels. No undue levels of movement or detachment were observed during the survey		
	 There are visible damp patches on ceiling of bay window		

5.3 Walls

Condition rating **1**

Construction & Type and Limitations

The internal walls are of both solid and timber stud construction.

Internal walls were examined for indications of bowing, leaning, cracking and undue surface failure/damage. Moisture meter readings were taken at regular intervals where access and wall construction/location permitted.

Moisture meter readings can only provide a guide as to the presence of dampness and the recording of high readings can be affected by other factors, for example metallised wall finishes, chemical salts within internal plaster, or reactive materials below the plaster surface. A definitive and complete diagnosis for the presence of dampness, and the cause, will involve further testing requiring invasive methods that will cause some damage to the wall surfaces.

The Building Research Establishment (BRE) Cracking guide can be used to assess the severity of cracks in walls (see below)

Condition

All internal walls have been maintained and all surfaces are presented in a fair decorative order. Some general unevenness was noted. This is due to normal disturbance of the surface by decorations, minor repairs and fittings having been attached in the past.

There were some visible damp patches and high damp readings next to the landing window, which could be due to cracked sealant around the frame.

Some minor cracking of the plaster can be noted in a variety of locations. It is common for cracking to occur as the materials of the building expand and contract during normal heating and cooling. Often this cracking is focused on the weakest areas of the walls which are the openings, such as windows and doors. These cracks should be filled as a part of normal decoration, though it is quite likely that they will reappear from time to time.

Some of the internal walls are dry-lined or of timber stud construction. This means that special fixings will be required where heavy objects are to be hung onto or attached to the walls as the plasterboard facing of the walls is not sufficiently strong to carry heavy weights. It will also be the case that picture hooks and other nailed-in fixings will only have a light hold within the wall facing.

No significant defects were noted during my inspection and the internal walls were found to be structurally sound.

Category 0	"negligible"	< 0.1mm
Category 1	"very slight"	0.1 - 1mm
Category 2	"slight"	>1 but < 5mm
Category 3	"moderate"	>5 but < 15mm
Category 4	"severe"	>15 but < 25mm
Category 5	"very severe"	>25 mm

BRE cracking guide

There are visible damp patches on some walls

Minor cracks in plaster

	5.4 Floors	Condition rating	1
Construction & Type and Limitations	The floors are a mixture of solid construction and suspended timber construction. All floors have a floor covering of some description, e.g carpets, laminate flooring or tiles etc, therefore the actual floorboards could not be seen. Floors were examined for sagging, unevenness, undue springiness and other signs of failure or damage. Fixed floor coverings in all rooms prevented direct examination of the floor surfaces. Tiled floors were examined for any cracked tiles which could indicate movement of the structure.		
Condition	Ground Floors Being mostly of solid construction specific checks were made for any floor drops to the ground floor. Construction materials used for the floors can sometimes settle and cause distortion of the slab base. At the time of the survey no evidence of any undue movement was noticed. There was no gapping between the skirting boards and the floor base. No significant defects are noted. Upper Floors It is common for upper floors in properties to be uneven and out of level. This reflects settlement of the structure that has occurred over a long period of time. If significant movement of the floor structures has occurred recently, it is common for the joints of skirting boards, door frames and other associated finishes to separate, exposing undecorated areas where one surface has moved away from another, and also there may be an unusual amounts of spring in the floor surfaces. There were no undue levels of movement noted at the time of the survey.		

	5.5 Chimney Breasts, Fireplaces and Flues	Condition rating	1
Construction & Type and Limitations	The chimney breasts are of masonry construction. Breasts remain to the rear bedroom and lounge. A fireplace remains to the lounge housing a fuel effect gas fire. The fire was not in operation at the time of the survey. The remaining breasts are all blocked up and are currently unused. The chimney breasts were examined for indications of dampness, lack of support, failed lining and other defects. It is not possible to investigate the condition or serviceability of chimney flues for use with fixed or open fires during a survey. The active fireplaces was not tested during the survey. It is recommended that chimneys are swept and carefully checked before they are used in this way.		

Condition	No significant defects are noted. If the flue is to be used, it should be checked by a reputable heating engineer specialising in flues and chimneys, prior to use. Flues should also be swept clean at this time. If the flue is not to be used, it is important to maintain an adequate airflow, by means of ventilation, through unused chimney flues to prevent the build-up of condensation within the chimney. Ventilation grilles should be fitted to all blocked breasts.

	5.6 Built-In Fittings	**Condition rating**	**1**
Construction & Type and Limitations	The kitchen fittings are a modern style. The worktops are of laminated chipboard, units are a mixture of wall-hung and floor standing. The kitchen units and utility room were examined for general condition. A selection of cupboards and drawers were checked for normal operation. Built in appliances were not checked for operation or safety.		
Condition	No significant defects are noted		

	5.7 Internal Joinery	**Condition rating**	**1**
Construction & Type and Limitations	The internal woodwork includes such items as: doors, frames, skirting’s, banisters and staircases. All the internal doors are made from softwood. The internal doors were checked for normal operation and other woodwork examined for a range of defects. Woodwork was also examined for evidence associated with movement of the structure of the property, woodworm and other infestations, and general condition. Moisture meter readings were taken at regular intervals.		

Condition	The stair balustrades and hand rails are of softwood construction and of suitable quality. All parts were firm with no undue levels of movement during usage. However, the banister is constructed from large planks that run parallel to the stairs. These planks have large gaps between them that could be a safety risk for children (refer to 3.2) As mentioned in 4.4 most properties are subject to slight settling down over the years as sub-soil consolidates and adjusts to changes in ground condition. This will frequently result in limited differential movement, which is often expressed as minor cracking or distortion of window and door openings and is rarely of structural significance. All internal doors were in fair alignment with no undue movement noticed to the frames. All doors operated effectively. No significant defects are noted

MHIS	**5.8 Bathroom and Sanitary Fittings**	**Condition rating**	**1**
Construction & Type and Limitations	The main bathroom is to the first floor and comprises a bath, shower cubicle with power shower, WC and basin. The fittings were checked for signs of damage, cracks, leaking pipes and other common defects. Sealant joints were checked for undue wear and failure. All fittings were checked for normal operation – the WC was flushed at least twice to ensure correct drainage and flow.		
Condition	There is mechanical ventilation to the bathroom. This should be kept operational as it reduces the levels of moisture within the room and hence the risk of condensation to the walls and ceiling structures. No significant defects are noted, all fittings operated as required with water pressures at fair levels.		

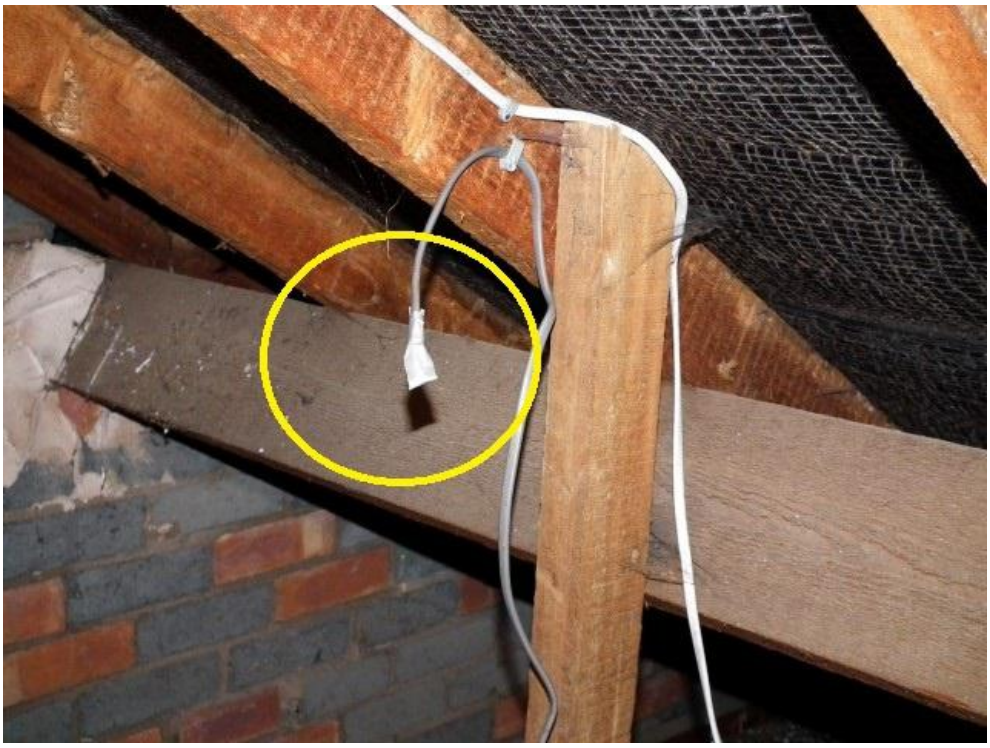
Section 6 - Services

6.1 Electricity	Condition rating	HS

Construction & Type and Limitations	There is an underground electrical supply and the meter and consumer unit [fuse box] are located in the cupboard under the stairs. The consumer unit is a modern unit with MCB's (miniature circuit breakers) and also an RCD (Residual Current device). The electric meter is on a single tariff. It is not possible to fully assess the condition and safety of an electrical installation on the basis of a visual inspection only. Distribution wiring is largely concealed and therefore date and quality of installation cannot be verified within in the scope of this inspection. The installation was inspected visually to the extent sufficient to form an overall opinion of the type of installation, the materials used, its apparent age, its visible condition and the need for further investigations. No testing of the installations or appliances was carried out other than operation in normal everyday use. Some services will be obscured by furniture and other objects at the time of the survey. Upon occupation it is strongly advisable to visually check all socket outlets and switch points for any broken housings or loose fascias. Any damage seen should be repaired accordingly.
Condition	In general the electrical circuits seen are in a fair condition. PVC cabling was observed at the property and the socket face plates and switch plates are of a suitable modern quality. Observed Issues Internal wiring has been used on the external walls in places and is unprotected. If internal cabling is used externally it should run through suitable conduit to protect it from damage (by ladders for example) and from the UV rays of the sun, which can harden the insulation, making it brittle. There was no visible earth bonding to the heating or water pipework, there are some loose cables in the loft that should be tested to make sure they are not live and as a current test certificate was not available at the time of the inspection, further advice should be obtained to ensure the electrics comply with current standards and are in a safe condition.
Additional Information	The NICEIC recommends that electrical installations are subjected to an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) by a suitably qualified engineer at least every 10 years.

Electricity meter and consumer unit under stairs

Unprotected cables



Possible live wiring in loft

Possible live wiring in loft

	6.2 Gas / Oil	Condition rating	HS
Construction & Type and Limitations	There is a mains gas supply and the meter and valve are located in the cupboard under the stairs The system was inspected for any obvious signs of leakage and damage to the supply pipes where visible.		
Condition	No significant defects were noted but there was no current test certificate available at the time of the inspection. This is the reason for the RED health and safety rating.		
Additional Information	Advice: Gas Safe recommends that all gas appliances and boilers are inspected and serviced according to manufacturers' guidance, but at least once a year. At the time of survey, no documentation was seen to verify that an inspection or servicing has been carried out within the last 12 months. From a health and safety perspective, it is recommended that you validate any available certification, or commission an inspection and servicing of the gas installation and ALL gas appliances prior to occupation of the property. As the property is currently inhabited the system should be in use. In addition the boiler is a fairly recent model. These observations reduce the risk of any hidden issues but it is still advisable to seek confirmation as to the operational safety of the complete system. The Gas Safe website called 'Buying a new home', it states: 'Homebuyers cannot always be sure when the gas appliances in their new home were last safety checked and serviced. Ask your vendor for an annual gas safety record which shows that a Gas Safe registered engineer has checked the gas appliances. If your vendor cannot supply an up to date annual gas safety record, you should get a Gas Safe registered engineer to check the gas appliances before you move in. This check should include the gas boiler, oven, and hob and gas fire. The registered engineer will give the vendor a gas safety record, which they should handover to you before you move in. Better Gas Safe than sorry. Poorly maintained or badly fitted gas appliances can put you at risk from gas leaks, explosions, fires and carbon monoxide poisoning.' 'Safety check' - As a minimum, this must check: • Appliances are positioned in the right place; • Any flue or chimney serving appliances are safe and installed correctly; • There is a good supply of combustion air (ventilation) to appliances; • The appliances are on the right setting and are burning correctly; the appliances are operating correctly and are safe to use.		

Location of gas meter under stairs

	6.3 Water	Condition rating	1
Construction & Type and Limitations	There is a mains water supply. The incoming mains pipework could not be seen but the stop valve is in the kitchen near the washing machine. The water installation is of the more modern unvented system style. This does not require a cold water storage tank; all the cold water draw-off points are fed directly off the mains supply. There are no water storage facilities (hot or cold) at the property. The visible parts of the system were checked for any obvious signs of leaking, damaged pipes and other evidence of defects. Water taps were operated to check for flow pressure and correct drainage.		
Condition	No significant defects are noted, all fittings operated as required with water pressures at fair levels.		

	6.4 Heating and Cooling	Condition rating	HS
Construction & Type and Limitations	The heating and hot water is provided by a combination gas boiler which is located in a kitchen cupboard. Additional heating is provided to the lounge by a gas fire – these were not in operation at the time of the survey. The boiler is a Baxi Combi 105e model. It provides heat to the property via the hot water radiator system. It also provides hot water on demand to the hot water taps. On the SEDBUK efficiency database this boiler is rated as 78.9% efficient. As a guide, modern condensing boilers are around 90% efficient. There are TRV's (thermostatic radiator valves) on most radiators for individual room temperature control. There is also a wall thermostat in the hall and a programmer unit on the boiler. It is not possible to fully assess the condition and safety of a gas and heating installation on the basis of a visual inspection only. A visual inspection was carried out of the radiators, pipework and boiler to detect leaks, corrosion and other common defects.		
Condition	The radiator system was not in operation during the survey but the hot taps were tested, the boiler fired and hot water was delivered. The water pressure in the radiator circuit is at 1.5 bar which is as required. No evidence was seen to suggest that an inhibitor has been added to the heating system recently to prevent a build-up of sludge in the pipework and radiators, and it is therefore recommended that the system be flushed through and an inhibitor added. There is no earth bonding to the heating pipework. (refer to 6.1) No significant defects were noted but there was no current test certificate available at the time of the inspection. This is the reason for the RED health and safety rating. Normal maintenance and servicing must be continually undertaken. Health and Safety – See also notes in 6.2 regarding the general safety and servicing of the complete Gas system.		

Location of boiler in kitchen

Boiler ID

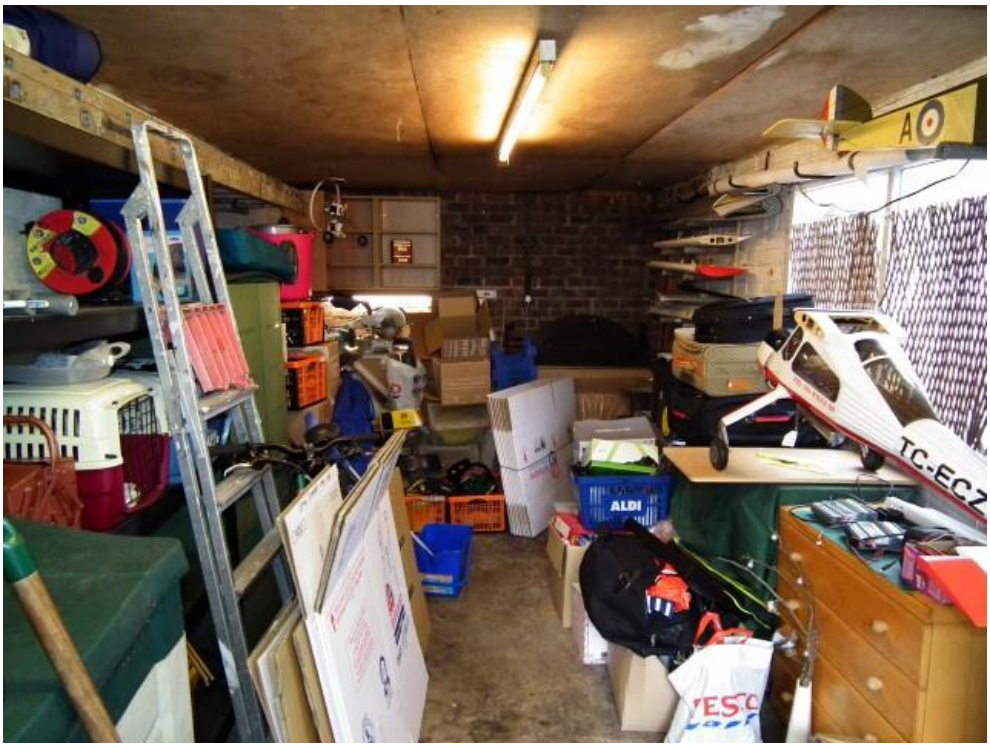
	6.5 Drainage	Condition rating	NI
Construction & Type and Limitations	There is a mains underground drainage system and they are thought to run along the side of the property and to the road at the front. However, the drains could not be inspected because there were no apparent inspection chambers within the boundaries of the property There is a possibility that the drains are leaking near to the gullies because the ground above has become sunken (refer to 7.3). But as there was no inspection chambers, this cannot be confirmed without a camera inspection by drainage engineers. However, there are no signs of subsidence to the property or cracking of the foundations at the time of the inspection.		

	6.6 Other Services	Condition rating	1
Construction & Type and Limitations	There is a television aerial mounted to the chimney stack. There is a satellite dish mounted to the side wall at the rear The house also benefits from a burglar alarm. This was not in operation and not tested at the time of the survey. A visual inspection was made to locate television aerials and satellite dishes at the property. They were examined for general condition and security of fixing from ground level and with the aid of binoculars where necessary. No specific checks were made to confirm connections to/from the aerials or dishes or their effectiveness of providing a signal. I have not carried out an assessment of broadband speeds for this property. If this is important to you, it is essential you check with your preferred broadband provider or request a speed test at the property when you visit and certainly before you commit to the purchase.		
Condition	No significant defects were noted. Ensure TV and Radio reception is possible if these are desired services. Examine all fittings regularly to ensure that they are secure.		

Section 7 - External Elements

7.1 Garaging	Condition rating	2

Construction & Type and Limitations	The garage is of brick construction with a flat roof of mineral felt. The garage is accessed via timber double doors to the front and timber pedestrian door to the side. It was examined from ground level, using a pole camera where necessary, for signs of bowing or leaning of walls, damaged brickwork, render and pointing, internal defects, and the condition of the roof both internally and externally. It was not possible to access the external left side of the garage due to the proximity of the boundary and foliage growth. Due to the absence of specified safe walking areas the roof was not traversed. There was a lot of storage inside the garage which prevented a full inspection.
Condition	The flat roof covering is wrinkled in places and there is evidence of pooling water. Compared to traditional coverings such as tiles and slates, most felt roofs have a typical life of 10-25 years. They are also prone to sudden failure and leakage. Periodic re-covering will therefore be necessary. When this is undertaken, the supporting structure may also need some attention. The panelling on the double doors are bowing outwards, the timber window frame is showing signs of decay and there are some minor cracks in the pointing of the brickwork in places.



Garage is full of storage

Minor cracks in pointing

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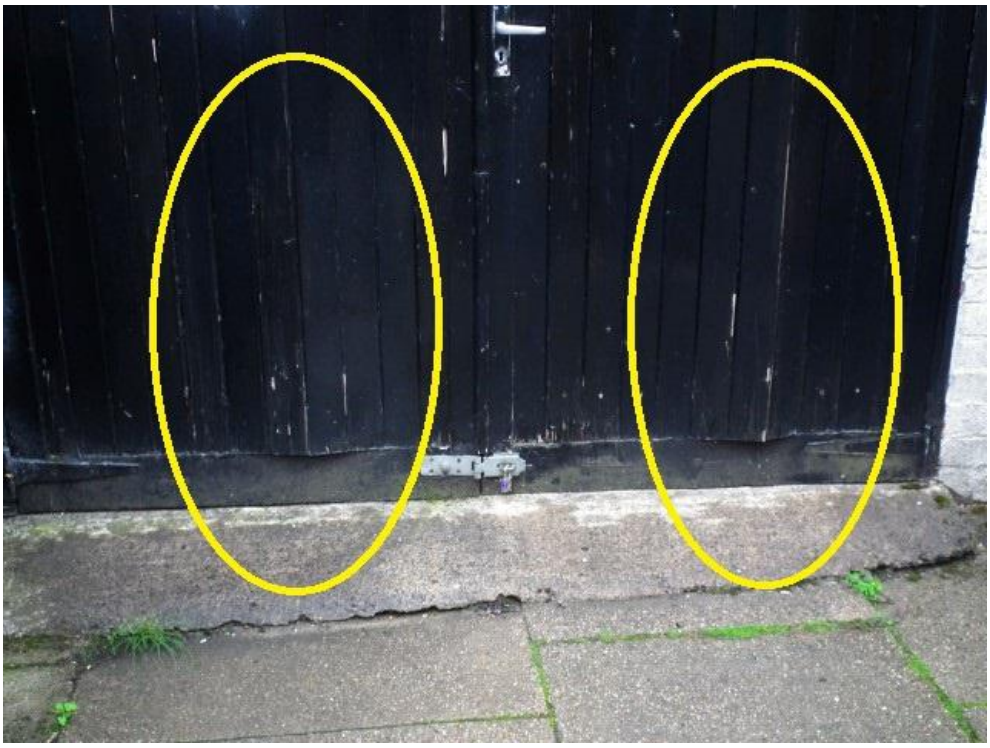


Garage doors are bowing outwards

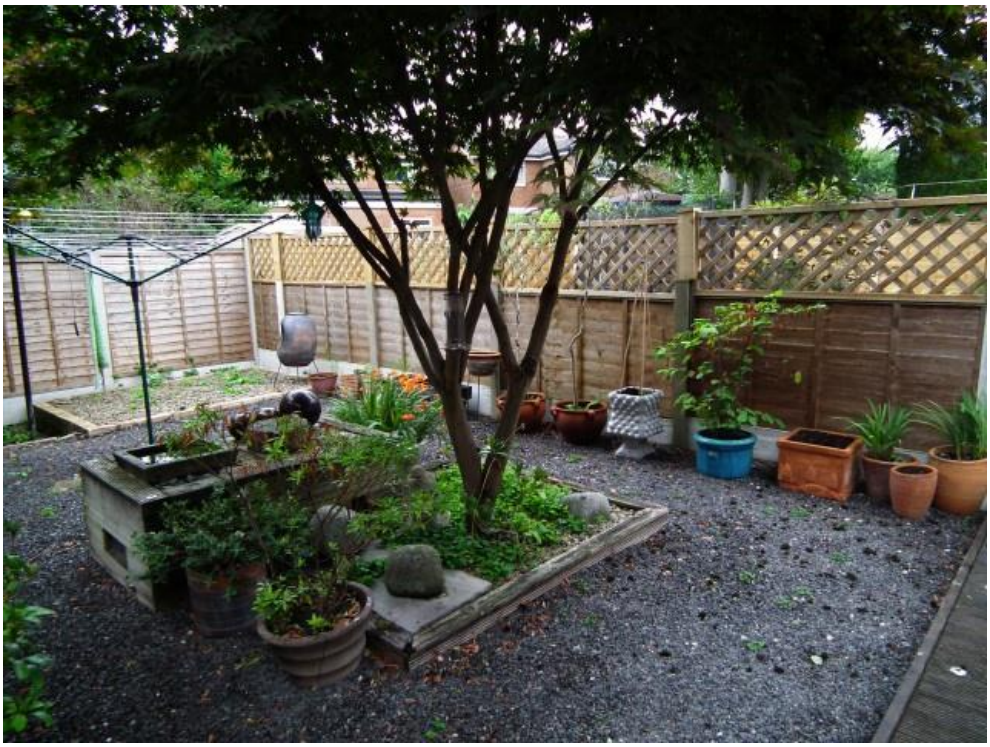
Timber windows showing signs of decay on garage

Garage roof is wrinkled and has pooling water

	7.2 Outbuildings and Sheds	Condition rating	NA
Construction & Type and Limitations	There are no permanent outbuildings.		

	7.3 Grounds	Condition rating	2
Construction & Type and Limitations	There are gardens to the front and rear which are mostly lawned with surrounding borders. There are paths, a patio and other paving around the property which are of concrete slabs. There are some trees and bushes in close proximity to the property. The driveway is to the side of the property and is laid to concrete slabs. The boundaries are defined by a mixture of timber panel fencing and brick walls. The grounds around the house were inspected for any indications of land failure or movement, or other defects that would have a material effect on the property as a whole. No evidence of the presence of Japanese Knotweed was seen during my inspection but you are advised to seek further advice if you believe it may be present or are aware that it is present in premises nearby.		
Condition	There is no evidence of any damage from flooding. The gardens are both presented in a fair and maintained condition. The driveway surface is in a serviceable condition and is reasonably level, but has sunken areas near to the gullies (refer to 6.5) The boundary fences are presented in a fair condition but some repairs are required to some panels, there is also a crack in a garden wall. (There is no indication of the ownership of any of the boundary walls, fences or hedges, and in most cases this is not specified by the deeds or title documents. Often, responsibility for boundaries to one side or another has been assumed by subsequent owners. You should ask your conveyancer to advise on any indications of ownership included in the title documents.) NOTE: Tree roots have the potential to cause damage to the drains and foundations of properties. They also remove the moisture from the ground which can cause shrinkage and this has the potential to cause subsidence. Conversely, removing trees completely can also cause damage to buildings by destabilising the ground or by causing ground swell due to excess moisture. There was no evidence of this at the time of the inspection.		

Trees close to property



Trees close to property

Trees close to garage

Cracks in garden wall

Fence in poor condition

Driveway has sunken areas above the possible drain run

	7.4 Common and Shared Areas	Condition rating	NA
Construction & Type and Limitations	There were no common or shared areas noted at the property.		

	7.5 Neighbourly Matters
Observations	A general unspecific overview of the immediate local area was carried out during the course of the survey, to identify issues that might affect the normal enjoyment of the property. No obvious causes of concern were noted however it cannot be known if issues are present at other times. You are advised to visit the property on a number of occasions at different times of the day and night to form an opinion of any factors that might be relevant

[redacted]

	Section 8 Addendum **8.1 - About your Surveyor**			
Surveyor	Neil Openshaw			
Address	Manchester Home Inspector Services Ltd 19 Vicarage Drive, Dukinfield, Greater Manchester, SK16 5HZ			
Contact Details	Telephone	07759 742423		
	Mobile	07759 742423		
	Email	info@mhisuk.com		
Signed (electronic signature)			Date Finalising Report	[redacted]

8.2 - Maintenance advice

Your home needs maintaining in the normal way, and this general advice may be useful when read together with your report. It is not specific to this property and does not include comprehensive details. Problems in construction may develop slowly over time.

Outside

You should check the condition of your property at least once a year and after severe weather.
Routine redecoration of the outside of the property will also give you an opportunity to closely examine the building.

Chimney stacks: Check these occasionally for signs of cracked cement, split or broken pots, or loose and gaping joints in the brickwork or render. Storms may loosen aerials or other fixings, including the flashings, the materials used to form the joints with the roof coverings.

Roof coverings: Check these occasionally for slipped, broken and missing tiles or slates, particularly after severe weather.

Flat roofing has a limited life, and is at risk of cracking and blistering. You should not walk on a flat roof. Where possible keep it free from debris. If it is covered with spar chippings, make sure the coverage is even, and replace chippings where necessary.

Rainwater pipes and gutters: Clear any debris at least once a year, and check for leaks when it is raining. You should also check for any loose downpipe connectors and broken fixings.

Main walls: Check main walls for cracks and any uneven bulging. Maintain the joints in brickwork and repair loose or broken rendering. Re-paint decorated walls regularly. Cut back or remove any plants that are harmful to mortar and render. Keep the soil level well below the level of any damp proof course (150mm minimum recommended) and make sure any ventilation bricks are kept clear. Check over cladding for broken, rotted or damaged areas that need repairing.

Windows and doors: Once a year check all frames for signs of rot in wood frames, for any splits in plastic or metal frames and for rusting to latches and hinges in metal frames. Maintain all decorated frames by repairing or redecorating at the first sign of any deterioration. In autumn check double glazing for condensation between the glazing, as this is a sign of a faulty unit. Have broken or cracked glass replaced by a qualified specialist. Check for broken sash cords on sliding sash windows, and sills and window boards for any damage.

Conservatories and porches: Keep all glass surfaces clean, and clear all rainwater gutters and down pipes. Look for broken glazing and for any leaks when it’s raining. Arrange for repairs by a qualified specialist.

Other woodwork and finishes: Regularly redecorate all joinery, and check for rot and decay which you should repair at the same time.

Grounds

Garages and outbuildings: Follow the maintenance advice given for the main building.

Other: Regularly prune trees, shrubs and hedges as necessary. Look out for any overhanging and unsafe branches, loose walls, fences and ornaments, particularly after severe weather. Clear leaves and other debris, moss and algae growth. Make sure all hard surfaces are stable and level, and not slippery or a trip hazard.

8.2 - Maintenance advice (contd)

Inside the property

You can check the inside of your property regularly when cleaning, decorating and replacing carpets or floor coverings. You should also check the roof area occasionally.
Roof structure: When you access the roof area, check for signs of any leaks and the presence of vermin, rot or decay to timbers. Also look for tears to the under-felting of the roof, and check pipes, lagging and insulated areas.

Ceilings: If you have a leak in the roof the first sign is often damp on the ceiling beneath the roof. Be aware if your ceiling begins to look uneven as this may indicate a serious problem, particularly for older ceilings.

Walls and partitions: Look for cracking and impact damage, or damp areas which may be caused by plumbing faults or defects on the outside of the property.

Floors: Be alert for signs of unevenness when you are moving furniture, particularly with timber floors.

Fireplaces, chimney breasts and flues: You should arrange for a qualified specialist to regularly sweep all used open chimneys. Also, make sure that bricked-up flues are ventilated.

Flues to gas appliances should be checked annually by a qualified gas technician.

Built-in fittings: Check for broken fittings.

Services

Ensure all meters and control valves are easy to access and not hidden or covered over.
Arrange for a competent person to check and test all gas and oil services, boilers, heating systems and connected devices once a year.

Electrical installations should only be replaced or modified by a competent person and tested as specified by the Electrical Safety Council (recommended minimum of a ten year period if no alterations or additions are made, or on change of occupancy).

Monitor plumbing regularly during use. Look out for leakage and breakages, and check insulation is adequate particularly as winter approaches.

Lift drain covers annually to check for blockages and clean these as necessary. Check any private drainage systems annually, and arrange for a qualified contractor to clear these as necessary. Keep gullies free from debris.

8.2 - Maintenance advice (contd)

Important information for purchasers of older, listed and historic properties

Modern properties, those built after 1900 or so, are essentially constructed as sealed boxes which are designed to keep all moisture out. This is achieved by the use of impermeable membranes at ground level (such as a damp proof course) to prevent moisture rising up from the ground below, and cavity walls which are designed to prevent moisture penetrating through the walls. Windows and doors are made to seal tightly, and most houses built today are constructed without any chimneys at all.
In this type of property, where dampness is found inside then it is generally due to some specific defect which will require repair.

Older properties, generally those built before 1850 or so, were constructed in a very different way, and one in which moisture will naturally enter the property. They do not have damp proof courses or cavity walls and are not intended to be a sealed unit.
However, these properties are designed to manage the movement of moisture in such a way as to prevent it becoming a hazard to health or to the structure of the building, and it is important to understand the mechanisms by which it does this in order to protect the structural elements of the building from becoming defective.

At the time that these properties were constructed it was the normal for them to have many openings where draughts could enter the building, such as multiple open fireplaces, ill-fitting doors and windows, and gaps in floorboards. As a result, ventilation levels were very high, allowing moisture to evaporate readily in the moving air, and to be carried away to the outside. So, for example, where moisture penetrated the walls, although the inside surfaces of those walls would be damp, the levels of moisture would achieve equilibrium as the rate of evaporation compensated for the rate of penetration.
Today, we try to minimise draughts by blocking fireplaces, adding secondary or double glazing, laying laminate floors and sealing the gaps around doors and windows. As a result moisture levels rise due to the decreased air movement that is a consequence of the reduced ventilation. This then leads to dampness becoming evident, particularly in areas of minimal air movement, such as behind large objects of furniture and within cupboards and wardrobes.

Many older homes were built at a time when lime mortar was the primary method of setting bricks and stones. Lime mortar is both flexible and porous, unlike the very hard, inflexible and nonporous cement mortars used in more modern construction. Lime mortar, therefore, allows the moisture evaporation process to continue by acting as a wick for moisture to leave the main walls between the bricks and/or stones that make up the bulk of the wall. This is a further step in the process of managing moisture within the property.

Today, we see many repairs carried out to older homes using cement mortar. This seals the gaps between the bricks and/or stones, trapping the moisture in the wall and forcing it into the surface of the bricks and stones, causing them to fail when that moisture freezes in the surface of those materials. And by reducing the amount of moisture that can evaporate through the wall to the outside, it increases dampness levels inside.

As a result of the actions described above, it is common, today, to find higher than average moisture levels in older properties. The consequences of this can cause significant defects within the property. In particular, high moisture levels, especially in roof spaces and cellars, can promote the development of wood boring insects such as Common Furniture Beetle, and Death Watch Beetle in structural timbers such as roof and floor joists. High levels of dampness in walls causes plaster to fail, decorations to become damaged, and in some properties, significant damage to the timber frame of the building.

To avoid these defects developing and becoming a serious threat to the building, it is important to be aware of the consequences of any actions which may have an impact on moisture management within the building.
The following is a list of suggestions and recommendations that will help maintain the building in a good and sound condition. It is by no means an exhaustive list and it is recommended that all owners of listed, historic and older buildings inform themselves of the best way to protect such a property.

1.Consider ways to improve ventilation within the property. This may include the installation of mechanical extractors in kitchens and bathrooms, removing secondary glazing units, ensuring that windows can be opened easily and that they are used regularly, removing insulation from the eaves area of the roof where it may block ventilation, and not leaving the property closed up and unoccupied for extended periods.

2. Where repairs are necessary, ensure they are carried out by tradespeople who are knowledgeable and competent in traditional building methods and that materials are sympathetic to those used originally. In particular, where walls are to be repointed, then lime mortar (which is very different from cement mortar with some lime added!) should be used and any earlier cement mortar repairs removed and refinished.

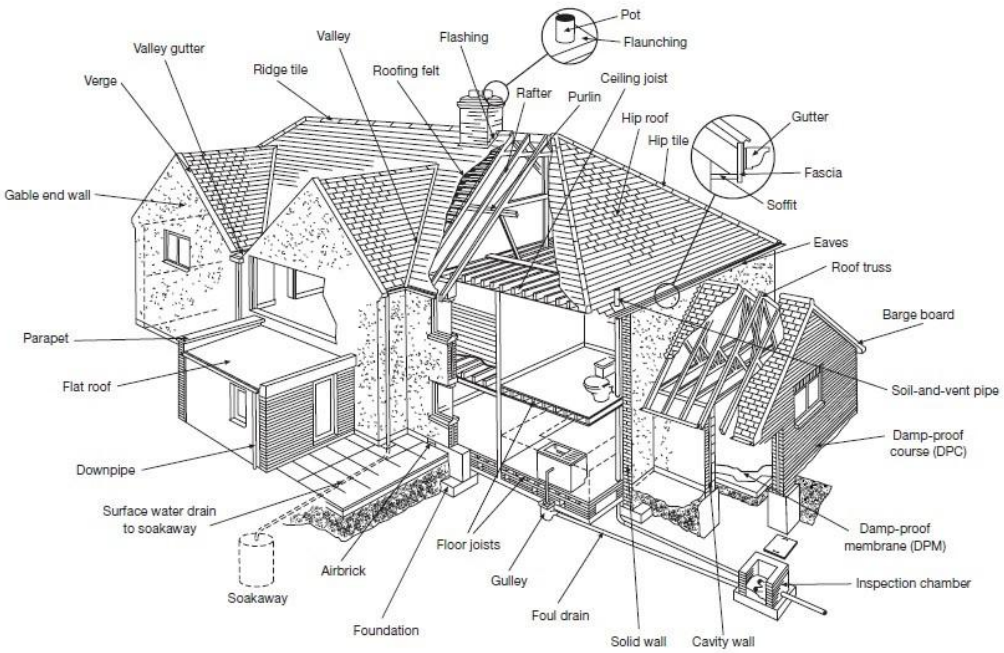
3. Ensure that the guttering and rainwater handling systems are in a well maintained and fully operative condition. Very significant damage can be caused in a very short period of time due to simple leaking gutters, downpipes, hoppers and other elements of the rainwater handling systems. It is therefore essential that these are inspected regularly, at least three or four times a year, and any damages or defects repaired as quickly as possible. In particular they should be cleared after autumn leaf fall to ensure they are as effective as possible during the winter.

4. Maintain a regular and vigilant inspection process. Unidentified or unrepaired defects can rapidly become more significant, and therefore more costly to repair. A regular process of inspection is more likely to ensure that defects identified at an early stage and can be rectified before further damage is caused. Such a process should include inspection of all the outside elements such as chimneys, roofs, walls, guttering and downpipes, windows and doors and roof edge timbers etc. Internal inspections should include a detailed examination of the roof timbers, moving of large objects of furniture to assess the wall condition behind, examination of floors, doors and timber fittings to identify signs of movement, and the condition of the heating and plumbing systems to ensure no leaks are present. This is in addition to a general and normal maintenance programme.

5. Avoid the introduction of unnecessary interventions. Many companies will recommend the use of chemical processes, such as spraying of timbers or injection of damp proof courses, as a means of rectifying the effects of dampness. In most cases, in respect of older properties, these processes are completely unnecessary, usually ineffective, and in many instances counter-productive. Attempting to prevent the passage of moisture through a wall which was always intended to be damp is unlikely to affect a cure. In fact, it is likely to push the problem elsewhere, and may cause even more significant damage.

Remember that, if the property is listed, any works you wish to carry out may require Listed Building Consent, and it is always best to check with the local authority Conservation Officer before undertaking any activities.

There are many useful resources of information available from, for instance English Heritage, and the Society of Protection of Ancient Buildings, which can help you in understanding how to manage an older property in a sympathetic and considered way. It is strongly recommended that you gain an understanding of the means and methods that they advocate in order to protect your investment.


Pot
Flaunching
Valley
Flashing
Valley gutter
Ridge tile
Roofing felt
Verge
Rafter
Purlin
Ceiling joist
Hip roof
Hip tile
Gutter
Fascia
Soffit
Gable end wall
Eaves
Roof truss
Barge board
Parapet
Flat roof
Soil-and-vent pipe
Damp-proof course (DPC)
Downpipe
Surface water drain to soakaway
Damp-proof membrane (DPM)
Floor joists
Airbrick
Gulley
Inspection chamber
Soakaway
Foul drain
Foundation
Solid wall
Cavity wall

8.3 – Complaints Procedure

Policy Statement - Our commitment to you

At Manchester Home Inspector Services Ltd our aim is to provide the best level of service possible and we go to very great lengths to ensure that the survey report we have prepared for you is as accurate, informative and complete as possible.

It is possible, however, that for some reason we have not met your expectations in some way and that you wish to complain.

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the Company, or our staff, affecting an individual customer or group of customers.

We will treat complaints positively and recognise that they are a means of identifying improvements which can be made to our service delivery standards.

We will deal with complaints quickly and will take prompt action to resolve the complaint and take steps to ensure that complaints of a similar nature do not arise in the future.

How to Register a Complaint

Manchester Home Inspector Services Ltd has published this complaints procedure to ensure that you have access to your rights.
There are several ways in which you can register your complaint:
- You can call us by telephone - 07759 742423
- You can email us at info@mhisuk.com
- You can write to us at our office, Manchester Home Inspector Services Ltd, 19 Vicarage Drive, Dukinfield, Greater Manchester, SK16 5HZ

8.4 – Leasehold Advice

If you are buying a leasehold property it is important that you discuss with your legal advisors the nature of the lease and your rights and responsibilities in respect of the property.

Before you buy a leasehold property, you need to pay particular attention to the terms of the lease. Other than in Scotland, most flats and maisonettes and a few other properties are leasehold.
Your legal advisers are responsible for checking the lease for you, but they do not normally see the property. The surveyor may note specific features that may have legal consequences.
These matters will be set out in section 3 of your report and you should give a copy to your legal advisers immediately.

The surveyor assumes that:
• if there are more than six properties in the building, the property is managed either directly by the freeholder or by a professional managing agent;
• if there is more than one block in the development, the lease terms apply (except for upkeep of common roads, paths, grounds and services) only to the block the property is in;
• you have the right of access over all shared roads, corridors, stairways, etc., and the right to use shared grounds, parking areas and other facilities;
• all the leases are the same in all important respects if there is more than one leaseholder;
• there is no current dispute, claim or lawsuit relating to the lease;
• the lease has no particularly troublesome or unusual restrictions;
• the unexpired term of the lease is 70 years (that is, the lease has at least 70 years still to run); and
• the property is fully insured.

When calculating the reinstatement cost (where included), the surveyor assumes that the property is insured under a satisfactory policy covering the whole building. (The ‘reinstatement cost’ is the cost of rebuilding an average home of the type and style inspected to its existing standard using modern materials and techniques and in line with current Building Regulations and other legal requirements.)

Your legal advisers should check the full details of any lease. You should also ask your legal advisers the following questions:-

(a) Are the other flats occupied by owners or tenants?
(b) Is there a management company or a managing agent (or both) correctly set up to deal with running and maintaining the block the property is in?
(c) Who is the ‘dutyholder’ under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012? Your legal advisers should also get confirmation that an asbestos register and current management plan are in place, and confirmation of any associated costs that you may have to pay.
(d) Is there a suitable maintenance and replacement fund, with suitable reserves, to deal with:
• general cleaning;
• maintaining and repairing the shared parts;
• repairs to the main structure;
• shared heating systems; and
• repairing and maintaining lifts?
(e) How much is the ground rent?
(f) How much was the last paid maintenance or service charge and what period did it cover?
(g) Are the service charge accounts satisfactory and up to date?
(h) Are there any existing or likely management problems or disputes, or any known repairs or programmed work still to be carried out, which would affect the level of the maintenance or service charge to be paid?

(i) Are services regularly and satisfactorily maintained and are there satisfactory and current certificates for:

- any lifts;
- the fire escapes and fire alarms;
- the security systems;
- any shared water and heating systems; and
- other shared facilities?

(j) Is the liability clearly set out for repairs to the property, to the shared parts and the main structure?
(k) Is the liability for repairs shared equally between leaseholders and is there a suitable process for settling any disputes which may arise in this area?
(l) Is it the management company or each individual leaseholder who is responsible for the building insurance, and is there a block insurance policy?
(m) A re there any unusual restrictions on the sale of the property? If the property is a leasehold house, it is not likely to share responsibilities with other building owners, and so may not involve management companies, service charges, etc. You should ask your legal advisers to confirm this. You may also want them to investigate the possibility of buying the freehold (which might be complicated).

FACTSHEET

Electricity in the Home

Electricity in the modern home

Electricity has been used in domestic properties since the early 1920s following the invention of a cost effective and reliable lamp in 1907. But from its humble beginnings running a simple light bulb it has wormed its way into the very heart of our homes. It now allows us to mow the lawn, watch television, take a shower, wash clothes, cook and connect to the rest of the world via our personal computers and the internet.

Home owners usually take the electrical system for granted—and why not? Flick a switch and the light or the TV comes alive.

It generally requires very little or no maintenance on a year-on-year basis, never mind day to day. However, although electricity in the home appears to be inherently safe it should be remembered that Official Health and Safety figures show that unsafe electrical installations cause more than 750 serious accidents and 12,500 fires in homes each year.

Government introduction of Part P of the Building Regulations

Due to the large number of accidents, fires and deaths caused by poor installation, maintenance and general upkeep of electrical systems within domestic houses the government introduced legislation in the form of a document known as PART P of the Building Regulations. These regulations came into effect on 1 January 2005. The overall desired effect of the new regulations is to ensure the health and safety of the occupants and visitors within a domestic dwelling.

Who is allowed to carry out electrical work in a house?

1. **Part P registered electrician—full scope.**

As from 1 of January 2005 all electrical installations (including alterations and additions) must be carried out by a competent person. In order to be recognised as a competent person he/she must have received suitable and sufficient training, qualifications and experience and registered in one of the governments 'competent persons' schemes. Being a member of such a scheme allows the electrician to 'self certify' his work. This means he is able to design, install and test any work without notifying the local authority building control department prior to starting the work.

All Part P registered electricians must adhere to the exacting standards laid down in the Institute of Electrical Engineers (IEE) Wiring Regulations **BS767 1**.

2. **Part P registered electricians—limited scope.**

Some kitchen & bathroom fitting companies are deemed competent to carry out electrical work limited to the connection of their primary role, i.e. kitchen and bathrooms only.

3. **The home owner** is permitted to carry out small repairs and maintenance, generally extending to:
   - Replacing existing accessories, such as sockets & switches
   - Replacing a single length of damaged cable on a like for like basis.

What to expect from an electrician?

On completion of all work carried out by an electrician the home owner should be provided with a copy of a test certificate, which come in two forms:

1. **Minor works certificate** covering alterations or additions to the original wiring.

2. **Installation certificate** covering all major installation tasks such as installing a new circuit, maybe a shower or installing a new consumer unit.
All installation tasks **and** any minor works carried out in what are deemed as **'special locations'** (outdoors, kitchens, bathrooms or rooms containing a shower) must be notified to the Local Authority Building Control Department.

The electrician is responsible for doing this in conjunction with his Part P scheme provider. Within 6-8 weeks a Building Control Certificate should be received. The certificates will be required by a solicitor upon the sale of the property.

Why should I have my electrical system tested?

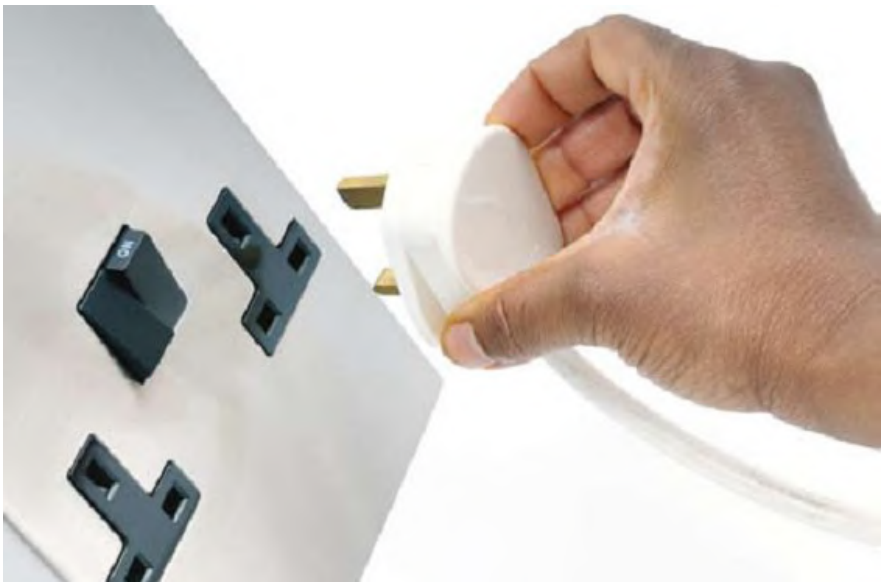
The vast majority of the electrical installation is built deep within the fabric of the building, hidden in the walls, the ceiling, the floors, loft space and even under the bath. The fuse box (now called a consumer unit) will be hidden in a dark cupboard at the bottom of the stairs behind the vacuum cleaner or the ironing board.

These items receive almost no attention from the day they were installed. All elements of the installation will deteriorate over time, nothing lasts forever. Cables become worn due to heat damage, rodents nibble away at the insulation, and screws work themselves loose and create bad joints. If your house was built in the 1970s its wiring is now getting on for 40 years old. As time has passed improvements and safety features have been built into the modern electrical installation. Is your house as safe as it could be?

The recommendation given by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers is that all domestic dwellings should be tested at a period not exceeding 10 years.

If you are moving home, you need to know about the electrics in your new property. Be extra cautious if the property is old as it runs a higher risk of having faulty wiring. Although the lights may work when you take a look at your new prospective home, it does not by any means ensure it is safe.

How old is the property? Has it been altered in any way since new? Who carried out the work? Did they really understand what they were doing?—It's easy to make an electrical circuit work, it's far more demanding to make the circuit work safely. It would be useful to know of any underlying deficiencies prior to moving in. Rewiring a house is a messy and expensive operation.



If some remedial electrical work is required, budget for it and get the work done before you have the walls skimmed and a new kitchen or bathroom installed. Remember: rewire first—decorate later. Don't put your life or your investment at risk; get an electrical survey of your new home before you sign on the dotted line.

Who should I contact to test my electrical installation?

Any full scope Part P registered electrician who holds the correct private indemnity insurance to carry out this type of work. The report is know as a Periodic Inspection Report.

What should I expect to gain from a Periodic Inspection Report?

This type of testing can take anything up to a day to complete. It covers every element of the condition of the installation from the suppliers fuse to the light bulbs. It is primarily concerned with the general condition of the fuse box/ consumer unit, fixed cables buried within the walls and floors, main earth bonding arrangements and accessories.

On completion you should be provided with a copy of the test certificate along with written advice explaining what work is required to bring the installation up to the required standard.

Further Information

Part P registration schemes:
http://www.napit.org.uk/

http://www.niceic.com/

Local authority building control:
http://www.labc.uk.com

CLG website:
http://www.communities.gov.uk

Planning portal website:
www.planningportal.gov.uk

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FACTSHEET

Gas in the home

Many people heat their homes and cook using mains gas and thankfully there are only a few accidents involving gas each year. However, while fortunately rare, in 2009-10, there were 223 incidents according to the national independent watchdog for work-related health, safety and illness the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). In many cases these accidents result in fatalities and for this reason the HSE takes issues relating to gas very seriously. There are two specific dangers associated with using gas in the home:

- Explosion and fire, which actually account for very few gas related incidences
- Carbon monoxide poisoning, which accounts for approximately 20 deaths each year

What is carbon monoxide and why is it a problem?

Carbon monoxide is a deadly poisonous gas, because when it enters the body, it prevents the blood from carrying oxygen to cells, tissues, and organs. The problem with carbon monoxide is that it is colourless, odourless and tasteless. Excess carbon monoxide is produced when normally safe-to-use carbon-based fuels including gas, oil, wood and coal do not burn properly.

Because you cannot see it, taste it or smell it, carbon monoxide can kill quickly without warning. Sadly, each year there are news reports recounting such tragedies. People die from carbon monoxide poisoning which is caused by appliances and flues that have not been properly installed, maintained or that are poorly ventilated.

Even if the level of carbon monoxide is too low to actually kill, it can still cause serious harm to health if breathed in over a long period. In extreme cases prolonged exposure can result in paralysis and brain damage.

How to keep safe

The HSE recommends that all gas appliances, including gas boilers, ovens, hobs and gas fires, should be regularly serviced in accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines at least once a year. Testing should be undertaken by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer.

A free gas safety check may apply to home owners on means tested benefits who:

- Are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick and either live alone or with others who are all of pensionable age, disabled, chronically sick or under 18
- Are living with others where at least one is under 5 years old

- Have not had a gas safety check carried out at the premises in the last 12 months
- Do not occupy premises where a landlord is responsible for arranging a check under regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act

You should contact your gas supplier for more information and to find out if you are eligible. They may be able to provide you with a free of charge gas safety check upon request.

You could consider installing an audible carbon monoxide alarm. They are cheap, easy to fit and are a good way to ensure you're immediately alerted to any carbon monoxide in your home.

Gas and rented accommodation

Landlords have specific responsibility when it comes to gas safety and they have legal obligations in relation to any gas supply and appliances at their rented property. Under the Gas Regulations the landlords must:

- Repair and maintain gas pipe work, flues and appliances so that they are kept in a good condition
- Carry out a gas safety check every year on each appliance to be done by a Gas Safe Register approved installer (you must give your tenants a copy of the gas safety record within 28 days of it being carried out or before they move in)

The landlord must also keep proper records. As a minimum, the record of a gas safety check must contain:

- A description of the location of each appliance or flue checked
- The name, registration number and signature of the individual carrying out the check
- The date on which the appliance or flue was checked
- The address of the property at which the appliance or flue is installed
- The name and address of the landlord (or his agent where appropriate)
- Any defect identified and any remedial action taken
- A statement confirming that the safety check completed complies with the requirements of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998

You are also obliged to show your tenants how they can turn off the gas supply in the event of a gas leak.

Gas Safe and Gas Safe Registered Engineer

The Gas Safe Register is the official gas registration body for the UK, Isle of Man and Guernsey appointed by the relevant Health and Safety Authority for each area. It is run by Capita Gas Registration which ensures that all their members are appropriately qualified to work with gas. The sole focus of the register is on improving and maintaining gas safety to the highest standards. There are around 120,000 gas engineers on the register.

Gas Safe Register replaced CORGI as the gas registration body in the UK and the Isle of Man on 1 April 2009 and Northern Ireland and Guernsey on 1 April 2010.

Remember that before you let your gas engineer into your home to work on your gas appliances you should check their Gas Safe ID card. If they don't show this to you when they turn up at your door then don't be afraid to ask to see it. You can also check that your engineer is Gas Safe registered by calling the Gas Safe Register on 0800 408 5500 or using their 'check an engineer service' online.

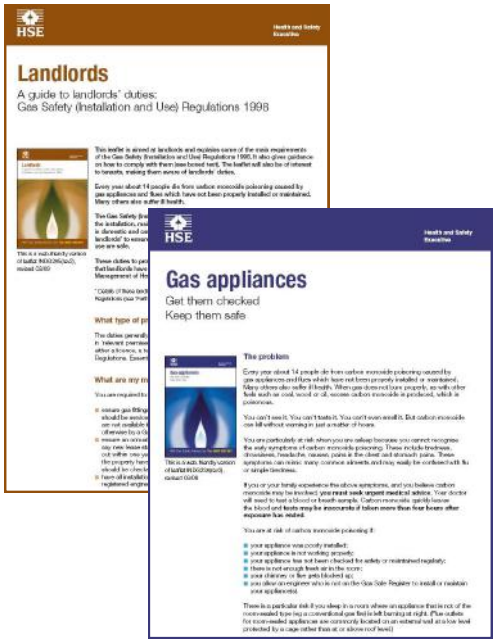
Buying a new home

In most cases, if you commission an independent surveyor to undertake an inspection and to report on the condition of a property prior to purchase, he/she will not be able to comment in detail on the gas appliances. This is because:

- The inspection will be visual only (the property belongs to the seller and an invasive inspection would not be tolerated)
- The gas appliances are rarely running at the time of the inspection and if they are, it is unlikely that the surveyor will be in the property long enough to get a clear impression of how well they are running
- The surveyor is unlikely to be a Gas Safe Registered Engineer.

For this reason it is sensible if you are selling a property to have a gas safety report on all the appliances you intend to leave in order to show copies to the potential purchasers, their surveyor and their conveyancer/solicitor.

If you are buying, ask the sellers to provide a gas safety report on the appliances and make sure the report is provided by a Gas Safe Registered Engineer.



Useful websites

www.hse.gov.uk/gas/index.htm

www.gassaferegister.co.uk/

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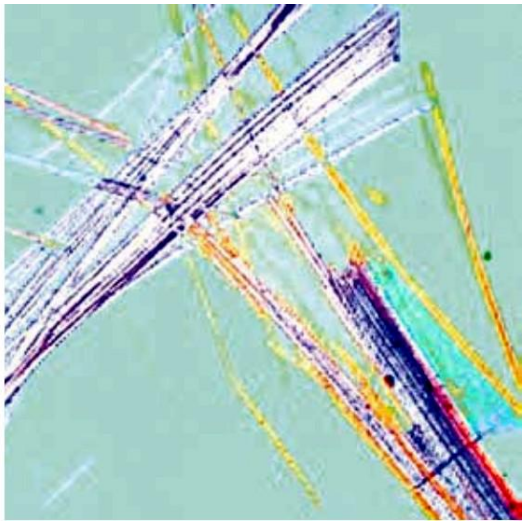
FACTSHEET

Asbestos in the Home

What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name of a group of fibrous minerals (silicates) contained within certain rock, which has been mined in many parts of the world for centuries. Asbestos is not a scientific name, but is derived from the Greek word for "unquenchable" – a reference to its fire resistant qualities.



The scientific and commercial properties of asbestos were soon recognised. Asbestos has the ability to resist corrosion, has excellent thermal insulation properties and can sustain high temperatures without deterioration. Although substitutes have been developed to replace individual asbestos applications, nothing has ever been found or created which has all of the properties of this mineral.

Asbestos has been widely used since the industrial revolution but this use expanded dramatically during the 20th century. The construction industry accounted for the bulk of its use.

Early in the 20th century it became recognised that the fine needle-like fibres within asbestos products were hazardous if breathed in, and over time could cause cancers and other lung related conditions.

The commercial imperative and war resulted in this issue not being addressed until the second half of the century, when various legislation and codes were introduced to limit its use, starting with the most hazardous forms.

Many people have heard of the most common forms of the mineral: blue, brown and white (crocidolite, amosite and chrysotile)—named in the order of the risk associated with each form in its raw state. Less well known are the risks when combined with other components e.g. the most hazardous form of the three is crocidolite, but if this is combined with cement to make a roofing sheets, it presents a much lower risk than chrysotile in a loose condition.

It is no longer legal to import or use asbestos in the UK, but the ban on use of the chrysotile form was only effective from November 1999. This means that asbestos can still be found in many thousands of products and locations. However, much of it is in a form that presents a very low risk, and if properly assessed and managed, can be allowed to

Where will I find it in my home?

Asbestos was widely adopted in the building industry and inevitably found its way into many homes in the UK. Where it can be found depends on the age of the property and the date of any additions, extensions and refurbishments.
For instance, vinyl tiles contained asbestos up until the 1980s.

Textured wall coatings (e.g. Artex) can contain asbestos if they were applied up to the end of the 1980s, although it was mostly phased out by 1985.

Asbestos cement products such as imitation slate roof tiles, rain water systems, garage and lean-to roofs and walls are still extremely common and have also been used in as partitions, ceilings under stairs, airing and boiler cupboards and bath panels.

Asbestos insulating board (AIB) has also been used for indoor applications. Less common, but in certain parts of the country cement profiled sheets have been used in roofs. Sarking felt (used under slates and tiles in the roof space) and other external roofing felts contained asbestos until the 1980s.

Externally, boarding around the roof line are common examples of cement based products which may contain asbestos if they were installed before the end of 1999.

Asbestos may also be contained in miscellaneous items such as boiler and range flues; vent grilles and gaskets; old black toilet cisterns and seats; and even window boxes and planting containers.

Is it dangerous?

Most asbestos containing materials found in the home do not present a significant risk to those living there. The majority contain asbestos fibres bound in a matrix (the fibres are bound together in floor tiles by a plastic substance and in cement sheets by the cement itself).

This matrix limits the release of fibres, and the material only becomes a serious hazard if damaged or broken during removal. Such products can be removed by the householder or a non-licensed contractor if the person is aware of the danger and takes appropriate

precautions. Disposal of these products can be made at a local reclamation facility, most of which have special skips for asbestos.

Certain materials though, can only be handled or removed by a licensed contractor. This includes AIB and any loose product such as pipe or lagging insulation. Removal is likely to be expensive and involve extensive safety precautions. Waste product will be disposed of by the licensed contractor in accordance with the Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005.

Artex was until recently a licensed product, but has now been removed from this category. However, its removal inevitably involves breaking the material in to small pieces, and this will release fibres. It is wise therefore, to involve a person or contractor who has experience with such work. In reality this may mean a licensed contractor. Generally, a cheaper option is to plaster skim over the textured finish, giving a smoother appearance.

Maintaining asbestos containing materials is rarely a problem because they are normally already painted, or don't need painting. Applying further paint over an existing coat does not present a hazard if the material is undamaged. Painting a previously unsealed surface, particularly of AIB would need special precautions.

If you plan to undertake work on a material which may be asbestos you should always be sure you know what the material is, and whether or not a licensed contractor is required to carry out the work. If in doubt, obtain specialist advice from an asbestos surveyor (Yellow Pages: Asbestos Services or Asbestos Removal).

Are there any legal requirements?

The law requiring commercial property owners and managers to assess their buildings for the presence of asbestos containing materials (AcMs) does not apply to homeowners (although it does apply to landlords of flats who have a responsibility for the common areas). In this sense, it is unlikely that a homeowner would be liable for the exposure to asbestos of a contractor or other visitor to their home.

However, if the householder or occupant was aware of the existence of asbestos within the property, they would have a duty of care to inform the contractor or visitor if they were likely to come into contact with the material. Failure to do so could result in some liability under common law.

Insurance:

Asbestos in domestic properties is not generally a significant issue for insurance companies. In the event of a major building insurance claim small amounts of asbestos would probably be accommodated in the claim without question. If a large quantity exists which might materially affect the rebuild cost of the home or part of it, the insurance company should be informed.

Additionally, there maybe a "Pollution or contamination" exclusion in the policy which means that the cost of clearing up asbestos, or dealing with claims from neighbours following a fire for example, would not be covered.

Further information

Health and Safety Executive website: **www.hse.gov.uk**

Asbestos advice: **http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/**

Asbestos Information centre, (independent site): **www.aic.org.uk**

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FACTSHEET

Guttering

Rainwater goods, i.e. guttering and down pipes are often overlooked because, on the face of it, what they do is so straightforward—taking rainwater from the roof and disposing of it somewhere. But guttering and down pipes play an important role and serious problems can occur when they are badly fitted or poorly maintained.

What is the purpose of guttering?

The purpose of guttering is to prevent the rain which falls on the roof from wetting the wall surfaces and the ground too close to the building. The need to shed rainwater away from the walls is not new. Our historic buildings, such as medieval churches and cathedrals, are often admired for their decorative gargoyles and impressive water spouts, simple yet effective ways of deflecting water away from the building.

Water is the main agent of decay in buildings. Blocked, cracked or badly designed rainwater goods can allow water into the main fabric, i.e. the walls and roofs. If water does run down the walls, the resulting problems will depend on the quality of the construction and the general condition of the wall. If it was well built and the brickwork of modern construction quality it is quite likely that the wall will suffer no more than algae or moss growth. However, if the walls are not so well constructed or the materials have deteriorated over time, then water can soak into the walls and the resulting damp can encourage timber decay through fungal attack and insect infestation.

In the winter months water that has soaked into the surface of masonry can freeze and cause brick and stone work to crumble, particularly where the brickwork is older, softer and more porous, and where the mortar is 'weak' because it is of the incorrect mix or is old.

If the water washes into the soil too close to the building this can have the same result as a broken drain under the soil, with the fine particles in the soil being washed away leaving 'voids' (or gaps in the soil) which can collapse when the soil dries out. In severe cases, the bearing capacity of the ground will be reduced and the property could be in danger of subsidence.

The water collected by the guttering is directed to an area where it can do no damage, either to a soak-away or storm drain.

In older buildings, it is allowed to enter the 'foul sewer', but this is no longer permitted in new dwellings.
Guttering and down pipes are therefore an important element to a property. However, not all properties need guttering. Some buildings, notably thatched cottages, are designed to function without guttering.

Where this is the case a broad 'roof overhang' (called the 'eave') is designed so that the roof edges are a good distance from the face of the walls. The depth of the eaves is normally at least 300 mm.

What prevents gutters from working properly?

Gutters at roof level intercept water as it runs off the roof slopes and channels it away from the walls. Where gutters fail to do this it can usually be attributed to the following:

- Inappropriate sizing—the gutter is too small to cope with the amount of water shed by the roof in heavy rain
- Leaves in autumn, which can quickly block gutters
- Stray rubbish, which can vary from children's balls, beer cans and plastic bags to wildlife such as dead birds or bird nests which cause blockages
- Fragments of tile, slate, fallen stonework and other mineral matter can 'silt' up guttering

- Self-seeded plants (e.g. *Buddleia)*
- Natural wear and tear over time (corrosion if the rainwater goods are cast iron or brittleness if they are plastic)
- Damage from repair work (ladders etc.)
- Poor installation

Types of guttering

The main styles of guttering materials are:

- PVC
- Cast-iron
- Pressed metal (normally galvanized steel)
- Extruded metal (normally aluminium)

Asbestos cement

It is also possible to find cement gutters on some post WWII houses, and lead guttering, usually associated with historic buildings.

Metal or plastic?

More recently, plastic in the form of PVC has become a popular material for guttering and down pipes. The major advantage of PVC is that it is lightweight and can be installed by one person, although two are preferable. (The weight of cast iron or galvanised guttering is such that it precludes a one-man job). Because it is lightweight, the lengths of a piece of guttering can be longer than cast iron and therefore requires fewer joints and supports. Installation is relatively quick and the material is comparatively cheap. However, PVC guttering does present some problems.


Cast iron

Firstly there are environmental concerns about the material itself. Secondly, a major disadvantage of the PVC guttering is that the material does not have a very long life span. It is affected by ultra-violet light and will fade and can become brittle with age. Also, plastic rainwater goods are not inherently rigid and can be affected by thermal movement, thus reducing their effectiveness. The PVC does not take paint very easily and, therefore, the choice of colours is limited.


PVC

Cast iron

This was the most common material for guttering and down pipes for older houses, but in many cases it may have since been replaced. It is strong, durable and relatively easily maintained. Cast iron gutters can be of varying shapes but the most common profiles are 'ogee' sections, half-round and hexagonal profiles. Cast iron gutters should be painted on both surfaces, even though the inner surface is less likely to receive the paint well.

The most frequent problems associated with cast iron gutters result from joint failure (where the gutter lengths join one another or the down pipes), and impact damage (for instance where vehicles hit unprotected down pipes or ladders are banged against the gutters). Sometimes, maintenance can cause the damage if, for example, the bolts securing a joint are rusted and have been incorrectly removed; also the gutter itself can be cracked or broken.

If the property is listed or in a conservation area and the rainwater goods need replacing or repairing, then often the local planning office will demand that the same style is retained for aesthetic reasons. Finding replacement cast iron parts is very difficult. New replacement cast iron can be obtained from specialist foundries but is expensive.

Sometimes replacement parts can be obtained from demolition sites but these may be damaged and must be very carefully inspected. (Some plastic guttering systems offer 'imitation cast iron' rainwater goods that may be acceptable to local planning authorities).

Another point is the cost of installation, as the lengths are so heavy that one person cannot manage them on their own. Replacement is awkward and further damage can be done to remaining parts as attempts are made to release well-rusted bolts.

Pressed metal

The most common defect of pressed metal guttering is simply age. The zinc in the galvanised coating oxidises over the years and eventually completely disappears. This exposes the metal to normal weathering and oxidation (rusting) and eventually the deterioration is complete and the gutter needs to be replaced.

This type of guttering has been used for many years and was always more popular than cast iron on the simple basis of cost. Like cast-iron guttering, pressed steel needs to be painted on both the inside and the outside.

Some modern steel guttering systems do offer significant advantages over PVC systems. PVC tends to discolour and become brittle with age. It is not inherently rigid (therefore needs a large number of fixings) and can be affected by heat and cold—expanding and contracting accordingly.

Steel guttering systems are rigid and durable. They can easily be recycled without any loss of quality and 50% of all world steel comes from recycled sources. In comparison with other alternatives to PVC guttering, such as cast iron or aluminium, steel guttering can be competitively priced and is relatively lightweight and consequently not difficult to install.


Pressed steel

Concrete and asbestos

With the shortage of steel in the immediate years after WWII, other materials became popular for guttering and down pipes and on houses from this period you may find concrete gutters (known as 'Finlock' gutters) or asbestos gutters, where the asbestos is used as a bonded material in cement.

Asbestos cement guttering is durable, virtually everlasting, never rusts and requires little maintenance. It will not accept paint easily and sometimes therefore was not painted. Cement 'Finlock' gutters are slightly different. Instead of being 'attached' to the property they are an integral building component, capping the cavity of the outer brickwork and kept in place by the weight of the roof. Unfortunately, there can be severe maintenance problems relating to these gutters. The points where the concrete gutters meet/abut each other were commonly 'made good' with a mixture of bitumen and mortar. Over the years this can crack and split and moisture then seeps through the gap. A tell-tail sign is the presence of damp patches at the junction of the top of the wall and the ceiling; particularly if it is a regularly spaced pattern of patches.

With Finlock gutters the least expensive method of repair is to paint the interior of the guttering with a thick bitumastic liner but it is never very long lasting and problems invariably recur. Alternatively, the gutter can be lined with reinforced fibreglass felt which can also be taken up to the roof beneath the first few rows of tiles. This has slightly better longevity but still has a limited life. It is sometimes possible to install modern gutter systems but because the gutter is integral with the building usually specialist firms are needed to maintain or repair them.


Finlock gutter


Aluminium

Aluminium

Aluminium guttering is a modern innovation and is generally durable and corrosion resistant. As with PVC, aluminium is lightweight, and it can be 'shaped' more easily and is often used on older properties where there is the need to replicate the shape and look of the original cast iron gutters (for aesthetic or planning reasons). Aluminium gutters can be produced in long single lengths, reducing the number of joints and therefore the risk of leakage due to joint failure.

The aluminium guttering may be left 'unfinished' or may be painted or powder coated, therefore a wide variety of finishes and colours is available from different manufactures. If unfinished, the aluminium will slowly oxidize over time to a dull grey colour. The oxide then protects the material from further corrosion. If a finish is applied then the manufacturers maintenance instructions will have to be followed in order to maintain the finish; for example harsh abrasives may remove some paint or powder coatings.

Gutter maintenance

Gutters should be:

- Regularly cleaned out
- Down pipes should be checked for blockages
- Brackets and fixings should be inspected to ensure they are secure
- Where appropriate and in line with manufacturers instructions some coated finishes may need regular washing using a warm mild detergent (non-toxic) solution

Gutter repair

All gutters deteriorate in time but the damage may differ depending on the material and the level of maintenance over the years. Replacement costs also vary depending on whether the replacement is to be 'like for like' or a different material is to be used.

An important feature for all guttering is the actual support for the gutters and the down pipes: the fixtures holding the guttering to the roof or wall.

Weakening of the supports/brackets can be as serious as damage to the gutters and pipes themselves. Also, even if the supports themselves are sound, the timbers to which they are screwed can often be far too rotten to do the job properly so these must also be periodically inspected.

When carrying out repairs, it should also be noted that from the mid 1970s the lowest part of the roofing under-felt (which sits behind the tiles/slates etc. but over the timber framework) was designed to drape into the gutter to help facilitate water run off if water does get under the top covering. If this has disintegrated it should also be repaired at the same time as the guttering, because if not corrected there can be problems with dampness at high levels in upper rooms.

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