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Residential Property
Surveyors Association



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chartered association
of building engineers



11 Sandhurst Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 3HR



Jack Smith



25th March 2020

Level 1 – Home Survey

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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 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 categorized 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.

This report has been prepared by a surveyor ('the Employee') on behalf of Home Heroes Limited ('the Employer').

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

Without prejudice and separately to the above, the Employee will have no personal liability in respect of any statements and opinions contained in this report, which shall at all times remain the sole responsibility of the Employer to the exclusion of the Employee.

To the extent that any part of this notification is a restriction of a liability within the meaning of the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977 it does not apply to death or personal injury resulting from negligence.

If given to any interested party or its advisers. Any such liability is expressly disclaimed.

This service is delivered in accordance with the Home survey standard (1st edition) RICS professional statement and is equivalent to level 1. In addition, this service has the following particular features: [XXXXXXXXXXXXXX] in accordance with client requirements and specific instructions in writing

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 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 is entitled to assume that the property is not subject to any unusual or onerous restrictions, obligations or covenants which apply to the property or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the Property.

The surveyor is entitled to assume that all planning, building regulations and other consents required in relation to the Property have been obtained. The surveyor did not verify whether such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the client or the client's legal advisers. Drawings and specifications were not inspected by the Surveyor unless otherwise previously agreed.

The surveyor is entitled to assume that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a Statutory Notice, and that neither the Property, nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

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

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. Where deemed safe according to the surveyor on the day we may also use an extended pole camera to look at higher items but this will depend on personal circumstances i.e. injury and the localised weather conditions.

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).

1.3 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 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.

1.4 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

1.5 Specific Exclusions

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 at the request of the client

1.6 About your Surveyor

Surveyor	Nathan Foley BSc (Hons) MCIOB MCABE C.Build.E AssocRICS	
RICS Membership Number		
Address	11 Sandhurst Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 3HR	
Contact Detail	Telephone	01227 806334
	Mobile	07751 8028865
	Email	info@home-heroes.co.uk

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Signed (electronic signature)		Date Finalising Report	
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1.6 About your Surveyor

Insert Image Here

1.7 Customer Care

Customer Care

At Home Heroes Limited our aim is to provide the best level of service possible and we always endeavour to ensure that the survey 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 raise a concern. We will treat any concerns positively and recognise that they are a means of identifying improvements which can be made to our service delivery standards. We will deal with any concerns quickly and will take prompt action to resolve them.

How to contact us

There are several ways you can contact us: - You can call us by telephone – 01227 806334 - You can email us at info@home-heroes.co.uk - You can write to us at our office, Home Heroes Limited, 11 Sandhurst Road, Margate, Kent, CT9 3HR

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

2.1 About the property

Seller Information	
General Construction Information	
Council Planning Information	
Listing	
Nature of the property when inspected	
Summary of mains services	
Weather Conditions	

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Local Authority	
Conservation / AONB / National Parks	
Heating	
Outside facilities	
Renewable Energy Services	
Broadband Service	
Tenure	
Additional 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	
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Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Main Issues	
Dampness Summary	
Structural Summary	
Health & Safety related matters	
Documents	<p><u>Note: These are Documents we may suggest you request before you sign contracts:</u></p> <p>Check these documents have been supplied and if not, you have taken legal advice and fully understand the implications of not receiving these documents:</p>
Further Investigations	<p>Note: Further Investigations should be carried out before making a legal commitment to purchase the property.</p>

2.3 External Photographs

2.4 Summary of Accommodation

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

2.5 Floor plan

Insert Your Picture here

For guidance purposes only

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

2.5 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.

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Energy Performance Certificate
Insert Your Image Here

3.1 Conveyancing Related Matters

This information should be highlighted to your conveyancer.

This may not include all relevant issues but is an indication of those matters that were apparent to the surveyor, who is not legally qualified. Legal documents will not have been examined during the course of preparation of this report.

Extensions & Alterations	Extensions
	Conservatory
	Loft Conversion
	New Boiler
	Chimney / Breast Removals
	Wall Removal
	Post 2002 Windows
	Log Burner Installation
	Electrical Circuits
	Renewables
	Drainage
Access & Rights of way	
Easements & Wayleaves	
Property Let	

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Tree Preservation Orders	
Party Wall Award	
Drainage	
Boundaries and Title Deeds	
Common and Shared Areas	

3.2 - Health & Safety related matters

A full Health & Safety risk assessment of the property and grounds was not conducted, however any matters noted during the survey which could increase the risk of accidents or injury are reported here.

Fire Risk / Means of Escape	
Safety Glass	
Lead Pipes	
Risk of Falls	<div>Stairs Steepness</div> <div>Stairs Handrails</div> <div>Stairs Balustrades</div> <div>Window Cill heights</div> <div>Unprotected Balconies</div> <div>Trip Hazards</div> <div>Additional Notes:</div>
Unsafe Fitting	

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Insect and Rodent Infestations	
Recent testing of services	
Asbestos	
Vermin & Insect Nests	
Ponds and Other Garden Features	

3.3 - Environmental Matters

A full environmental assessment of the property and grounds was not undertaken. Publicly available information is reproduced herewith, and may be supplemented by a more detailed search which can be commissioned by your conveyancer

Flood	
Geology	
Radon	
Fracking	
Landfill	
Invasive Species	
Mining	

Section 4 - Outside of the Property

Scope of survey

The following was carried out:

- A visual, non-invasive inspection of the outside of the main building and permanent outbuildings from various points within the boundaries of the property and from public areas such as footpaths and open spaces, without entering neighbouring private property unless permission had been expressly granted. - High level features were inspected either from points within the property using binoculars, a ladder or other equipment, where safe to do so. A ladder was used to view areas not visible from the ground, or other safe and accessible vantage points, where those areas were no more than 3 metres from ground level. - Because of the risk of falls or of causing damage, flat roofs were not walked upon.

4.1	Chimney Stacks
4.2	Roof Coverings
4.3	Rainwater and Above Ground Drainage Fittings
4.4	Walls
4.5	Windows and External Doors
4.6	External Joinery and Finishes
4.7	Conservatories and Porches

Report Number:

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Date:

4.1 Chimney Stacks		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

4.2 Roof Coverings		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

4.3 Rainwater and Above Ground Drainage Fittings		Condition rating	3
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

4.4 Walls		Condition rating	NA
Construction & Type			

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Nature of inspection and Limitations	
Condition	

4.5 Windows and External Doors		Condition rating	HS
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

4.6 External Joinery and Finishes		Condition rating	NI
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

4.7 Conservatories and Porches		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

4.8 Other External		Condition rating	1
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

Section 5 - Inside the Property

Scope of survey

The following was carried out:

- A visual, non-invasive inspection of all the parts of the property that can be seen without causing damage to the fabric or any fixtures, fittings or furnishings present at the time of inspection. - Checks for damp using a moisture-measuring meter where possible. - Inspection of the roof structure from inside the roof space where it was safe to access and move around the roof space, but insulation material, stored goods and other contents were not moved or lifted. - Floor surfaces were inspected where readily and safely accessible, but fitted floor coverings and heavy furniture were not moved. - Sound insulation or noise is not commented on. - Personal possessions, including those within cupboards and wardrobes, for example, pictures, mirrors, furniture, and other items were not moved.

5.1	Roof Spaces	
5.2	Ceilings	
5.3	Walls	
5.4	Floors	
5.5	Chimney Breasts, Fireplaces and Flues	
5.6	Built-In Fittings	
5.7	Internal Joinery	
5.8	Bathroom and Sanitary Fittings	

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

5.1 Roof Spaces		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

5.2 Ceilings		Condition rating	3
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

5.3 Walls		Condition rating	NA
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

5.4 Floors		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

5.5 Chimney Breasts, Fireplaces and Flues		Condition rating	NI
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

5.6 Built-In Fittings		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

Report Number:

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Date:

5.7 Internal Joinery		Condition rating	1
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

5.8 Bathroom and Sanitary Fittings		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

5.9 Other Internal		Condition rating	HS
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

Section 6 -Services

Scope of survey

A visual, non-invasive inspection of the services was carried out, but specialist tests were not conducted. If any services (such as the boiler or mains water) were turned off, they were not turned on for safety reasons and the report will state that to be the case.

The reports only comments on the services covered in this section (electricity, gas, oil, water, heating and drainage).

All other services and domestic appliances are not included in the inspection: for example security and door answering systems, smoke alarms, television, cable, wireless and satellite communication systems, cookers, hobs, washing machines and fridges (even where built in).

Competent Person Schemes

Competent person self certification schemes (commonly referred to as competent person schemes) were introduced by the Government in 2002 to allow registered installers (i.e. businesses, mostly small firms or sole traders), who are competent in their field, to self-certify certain types of building work as compliant with the requirements of the Building Regulations.

These schemes offer benefits to the building industry and consumers: - scheme members save time by not having to notify in advance and use a building control body (i.e. a local authority or a private sector approved inspector) to check/inspect their work - consumers benefit from lower prices as building control charges are not payable.

The schemes help to tackle the problem of cowboy builders by raising standards in the industry and enabling consumers to identify competent installers. They also allow building control bodies to concentrate their resources on areas of higher risk.

Any works undertaken to these services should be carried out only by a suitably qualified competent person.

6.1	Electricity
6.2	Gas / Oil
6.3	Water
6.4	Heating and Cooling
6.5	Drainage
6.6	Other Services

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

6.1 Electricity		Condition rating	3
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

6.2 Gas / Oil		Condition rating	1
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

6.3 Cold Water		Condition rating	3
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

6.4 Hot Water		Condition rating	3
Construction & Type			

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Nature of inspection and Limitations	
Condition	

6.5 Heating and Cooling		Condition rating	NA
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

6.6 Drainage		Condition rating	HS
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

6.6 Other Services		Condition rating	NI
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

Section 7 - External Elements

Scope of survey

The condition of the boundary walls and fences, outbuildings and areas in common (shared) use was inspected from within the grounds and any public areas, but not from neighbouring private property.

The report provides a summary of the general condition of any garden walls, fences and permanent outbuildings. Buildings containing swimming pools and sports facilities are treated as outbuildings, but the report does not comment on the leisure facilities, such as the pool itself and its equipment.

7.1	Garaging
7.2	Outbuildings and Sheds
7.3	Grounds
7.4	Common and Shared Areas
7.5	Neighbourly Matters

7.1 Garaging		Condition rating	1
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

7.2 Outbuildings and Sheds		Condition rating	2
Construction & Type:			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

7.3 Grounds		Condition rating	3
Construction & Type			
Nature of inspection and Limitations			
Condition			

7.4 Common and Shared Areas		Condition rating	NA
Construction & Type	As mentioned previously there is a possibly shared right of way to access the rear of the properties. Your legal advisor should check this matter during the conveyancing process.		

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

Nature of inspection and Limitations	
Condition	

7.5 Neighbourly Matters	Condition rating	HS

Section 8 - Maintenance and Future

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 aials 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

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.

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 program.
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.

Report Number:

Property Address-: your property address here

Date:

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.