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BUILDING SURVEY

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PREPARED BY

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DATE OF INSPECTION

14 May 2019

BUILDING SURVEY

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Report is in accordance with the Terms & Conditions of Engagement sent to you on 10 May 2019 which were subsequently signed and returned.

You will appreciate that due to the nature of this as a pre-purchase investigation, we have had to restrict our examination to those parts of the building that were accessible, exposed or uncovered at the time of our inspection. Our external inspection was from ground level and internally we have not opened up any concealed surfaces by removing plaster, moving furniture or raising fitted carpets or floor coverings; but have done our best to draw conclusions about the construction and condition of the property from the evidence visible at the time of our inspection.

This Report should be construed as a comment upon the overall condition of the property and is not an inventory of every single defect.

This Report is based on the condition of the property at the time of our inspection and no liability can be accepted for any deterioration in its condition after this date.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES OF INSPECTION

Please note that throughout this report the building and rooms will be described when standing in Anytown Road facing the front of the property. The inspection was carried out on 14 May 2019. The weather at the time of the inspection was dry and warm. The vendor was present during the inspection.

The property was occupied and mostly furnished, and with fitted floor coverings throughout including carpets, woodstrip/laminate finishes, tiling etc.

All built-in cupboards and wardrobes contained stored items including the cupboard beneath the kitchen sink, and there were numerous household items throughout the property which restricted the inspection in some areas. Furniture and wall hangings have not been moved.

Our inspection of the cellar was restricted. Although we carry a torch, the only light in the cellar was extremely dim and therefore the cellar inspection was virtually only by torch light. Inspection of the cellar was restricted by stored possessions, and beneath the front section of the hall by corrugated metal sheeting spanning between the horizontal RSJs, with possessions stored on top of the sheeting.

Although it was possible to stand up in the section of cellar beneath the ground floor hall, typically it was not possible to stand up or even crouch in the void beneath flooring in both reception rooms, and instead this area would only be accessible if you were to crawl through on your stomach. For reasons of health and safety we did not crawl through this area but were able to carry

out a restricted view of the area beneath the reception room flooring from the main section of cellar (beneath the ground floor hall).

Inspection of the main roof space (which is above the front and middle bedrooms and adjacent hall) was significantly restricted. This is because the roof space did not have any floor boarding, and the ceiling joists where we would normally otherwise stand in the absence of floorboards were completely covered with a very thick layer of fibreglass quilt insulation making it unsafe to walk in this area. As a result the front roof space could only be inspected from the access hatch whilst standing at the top of our ladder, and all other areas were therefore not physically accessible. Those areas which could be seen were mostly only visible from a distance.

In the rear addition roof space (above the back bedroom, en suite bathroom, and small adjacent area of hall), our inspection was restricted by debris including pieces of old roofing slates strewn above the ceiling surfaces together with some possessions.

In both of the roof spaces our inspection was also restricted by the presence of underfelt beneath the roof tiling.

Not all of the main rear roof slope was visible from the back garden due to plot restrictions and due to the position of the double storey rear addition roof. It also prevented inspection of much of the 1st floor main back wall (which contains the small timber window) above first floor hall.

The weather was dry at the time of our inspection and therefore it was not possible to confirm whether the rainwater fittings, flashings and roof coverings are fully serviceable and totally weathertight.

3. TENURE

We understand the property is to be sold freehold with the benefit of full vacant possession and will be free of tenancies on completion. This should be verified by the usual legal enquiries.

We assume that there will be joint liabilities for the maintenance of the party wall, party chimney stacks and joint soil and surface water drainage systems.

All issues regarding freehold title will be dealt with by your legal advisers as part of their service to you.

4. SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

The property comprises a two storey mid terraced house, without extension, located on a reasonably level plot in an established residential location although close to Anytown High Street with its shopping facilities, restaurants, etc. The property is within reasonable distance of Market Street railway stations. We estimate that the house was built between circa 1875 and 1905.

You will have no doubt satisfied yourself as to the suitability of the location with regard to your particular requirements.

We have not inspected planning records and we are unaware of any impending large developments which may affect the future demand and saleability.

5. ACCOMMODATION

It is not our intention to advise as to the layout and suitability of the accommodation, as you have no doubt visited the property and verified that it meets your requirements. Details are given for identification purposes only.

For ease of identification, bedrooms have been referred to throughout this report using numbering as shown below.

Ground Floor

Hall, front reception room, rear facing reception room, compact bathroom/WC and kitchen.

First Floor

Front bedroom (bedroom 1), middle bedroom (2), rear bedroom (3) with small en suite bathroom/WC.

There is also a narrow cellar below the front part of the ground floor hall. This is typically accessed from a door beneath the main staircase, although unusually also accessed from a cast iron cover set within the front entrance path with concrete steps leading down. The external access is a security risk.

Outside

The front garden is typically small and there is no off-street parking or garage/garage space. The rear garden is of moderate size and fairly typical for a property of this age, type and location.

6. CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

EXTERNAL

6.1 Subsoil, Foundations and Trees

The Geological Survey Map indicates that subsoils in this locality are a mixture of Hackney gravel and Langley silt but we have not carried out soil analysis to verify this.

Foundations were not exposed or examined but in view of the age of the property, we would assume that shallow brick footings are provided. Brick footings are inferior to ballast concrete, but were a traditional type of

foundation used before the First World War. The depth of foundations is likely to be shallow by present day standards (and extremely shallow beneath bays), but will be average for properties of this age and type.

You will appreciate that buildings must be provided with foundations suitable for their purposes and designed and constructed to suit the type of subsoil. Foundations were not exposed or examined and from our superficial examination we found no evidence of any significant fracturing or distortion of the main walls indicative of failure at foundation level (such as subsidence, landslip and heave) at the present time. We must, therefore, conclude that the subsoil in the locality is stable and that the risk of future below ground movement is no greater on this property than with any other property built at a similar time within the immediate area.

A number of trees were noted near the property, both within and beyond the plot. These included for example cherry trees outside Numbers 1/3 and also Numbers 5/7, two relatively small trees in the rear garden of Number 5 adjacent to the left hand and right hand boundaries, approximately four tall trees immediately behind Number 7's back boundary, as well as a tall mature cherry tree just beyond those, etc.

Tree roots can exert physical pressure on foundations and cause direct movement. Tree roots can also cause disturbance to underground drains and service pipes, which again could result in movement. We found no indication of any problems at the present time, but it should be ensured that there is adequate Buildings Insurance cover in respect of any possible future damage by trees.

All trees within possible influencing distance of the property must be properly managed including pruning/pollarding where appropriate to prevent them exceeding their current size, in order to control water extraction from the subsoil.

6.2 Damp Proof Course and Sub-Floor Ventilation

We were unable to identify the horizontal damp proof course (DPC) due to the presence of external render, internal plaster and the cement plinth. However due to the period in which the property was built, it is almost certain that the house would have been built with a DPC, and this is likely to have been of slate. This membrane should be near the base of the external walls, and is designed to prevent dampness rising and entering the building. The DPC should also extend into loadbearing internal partitions and the party walls, but as these were plastered, this cannot be confirmed.

DPCs have a limited lifespan, and when they fail, internal dampness will result. In most properties of this age, the DPC would have failed already, and where they have not, the DPCs would be very close to the end of their lifespans. It is not known whether any damp proofing remedial treatment work has been carried out to the property, and you should make enquiries of the

vendor regarding any such works and the existence of any remaining guarantees, and arrange for these to be transferred on legal completion.

Random damp tests were taken using a moisture meter at the base of walls internally throughout the ground floor accommodation where accessible although tests were restricted by built-in fitments, furniture, possessions, dry linings and wall tiling. Furniture and possessions have not been moved.

Fairly widespread high damp readings were recorded throughout the ground floor accommodation. This suggests probable rising dampness, which is likely to be a result of breakdown of the DPC. The areas found to be affected are described in section 6.14. However as with any property we cannot rule out the possibility of other areas of concealed rising dampness being present, for example due to built-in fitments, furniture, possessions, dry linings, etc.

We therefore strongly recommend that a qualified specialist damp and timber treatment firm (preferably a member of a recognised trade body such as the PCA) is employed to inspect the property throughout, before exchange of contracts, to ascertain the cause and full extent of these defects, and urgently undertake all necessary remedial works to eliminate rising dampness. This would normally include provision of a chemically injected replacement DPC. You must ensure that all remedial work is carried out under a long term guarantee, preferably insurance backed.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

It should also be ensured that adjacent plasterwork is hacked off and replastered in accordance with the specialist firm's specification to ensure the damp proofing guarantee is not invalidated.

As there is always a risk of decay to timbers in proximity to areas of dampness, we also strongly recommend a complete investigation of all adjacent timbers, particularly in the concealed sub-floor area, such as joists, wall plates etc. as well as floorboards for any signs of associated rot. Should any rotted or otherwise defective timbers be present, they must be urgently cut out and replaced, or treated, or as appropriate, under long term guarantee, preferably insurance backed. We recommend that any specialist firms consulted are members of a recognised Trade body such as the PCA.

This requires urgent investigation (before exchange of contracts) and all necessary repairs must be carried out urgently, as soon as possible after purchase.

In order that the DPC can work effectively, it is essential that outside ground levels and paths which adjoin the external walls to the property are kept at least 150mm (approximately two courses of brickwork) beneath the DPC to prevent bypassing, or bridging the DPC, otherwise internal dampness and associated defects could result. There were however some areas where external ground levels were found to be high including we suspect adjoining

the kitchen rear wall. In all affected areas external ground levels must be reduced in height straightaway.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

Ventilation beneath the timber ground floor is achieved by air bricks set at the base of external walls.

Sub-floor ventilation in a property of this type is essential to reduce the risk of condensation dampness and timber decay to floor and sub floor timbers. However we consider that existing air bricks might possibly be too few in number to adequately ventilate the timber floor area/void. Therefore further vents must be installed at the base of the rear reception room external wall.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

Thereafter airbricks must be kept clear of obstruction and also regularly rodded through to remove any debris.

6.3 External Walls

The external walls have a facing brick finish, and measurements through door and window opening reveals indicate that walls are of conventional solid brickwork.

Inspection of the walls indicated a number of areas of distortion where walls are bulging and out of vertical, most noticeably to the kitchen rear wall, parts of the kitchen left hand flank wall (and in particular the small rear projection section), etc. We also noted that brickwork to the bedroom 3 back wall (above the kitchen roof) sags and slopes down from the rear left hand corner towards the window cill (where we noted some previously repointed cracks together with some existing cracking for example to the left hand side of the bedroom 3 window in a stepped diagonal pattern). We also noted that the kitchen tiled roof appears to slope down towards the party wall. It would appear that Number 3 have rebuilt their rear addition back gable wall in view of different colour brickwork and a ragged party wall brickwork joint between the properties.

From our single and superficial inspection, although we noted some fairly widespread internal plaster cracking throughout the property, this was generally no more than 1mm width on average, and there was no evidence of significant internal cracking to suggest structural failure.

Distortion of external walls is fairly common in properties of this age and type, often due to original inherent design defects, and in some cases due to Second World War bomb damage. From our single and limited visual inspection, the degree of distortion to the external walls was considered to be within acceptable tolerances, and whilst we think it is unlikely that the

distortion will worsen significantly, the risk of further distortion occurring in the future can never entirely be ruled out, especially if structural alterations are undertaken, or if loadings should change, etc.

However cracking to the bedroom 3 back wall and the sloping nature of the kitchen single pitched rear roof covering could possibly indicate failure of a concealed beam (above the kitchen ceiling) designed to support the back wall of bedroom 3. Such beams were often of timber construction, known as bressumers, and these can typically fail either through dampness/decay or woodworm. We strongly recommend a competent contractor exposes the concealed horizontal beam in this area to ascertain its condition. If it is found to be rotted or otherwise defective then replacement with a steel beam of a suitable size would be necessary.

This requires urgent investigation before exchange of contracts. Any necessary remedial works must be urgently implemented.

It is most important that the stepped diagonal cracking to the bedroom 3 back wall is repointed using matching materials straightaway to prevent possibly rainwater penetration internally.

Whilst external facing brickwork at the front of the property is in generally good condition, deterioration and other defects were evident to the rear of the property including the double storey rear addition. For example we noted poor brickwork around the kitchen side door (which may originally have been a window opening), rough cement repairs to the bedroom 3 window brick lintel, missing bricks to the first floor bathroom left hand flank wall, directly beneath the eaves area, etc. A competent contractor must attend to all such areas and repair/replace the affected brickwork where necessary to prevent rainwater penetration internally.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

A few ‘soft red’ bricks have begun to laminate slightly including for example to the back wall of bedroom 3. This will worsen over time, and affected brickwork will therefore need cutting out and replacing with matching bricks fairly soon to prevent rainwater penetration internally.

A number of external openings have been blocked up including two separate door openings to the kitchen left hand flank wall and a window opening at the back of the kitchen. In these areas the workmanship is questionable given poor bonding of brickwork, and slight gaps to the cement pointing at the junction of the bricked up sections and the adjoining original sections of external brickwork. All gaps require making good straightaway to prevent rainwater penetration internally.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

At the front of the building, the brickwork mortar joints (pointing) have been mostly renewed and were in generally good condition. However we noted some localised areas of perished pointing at the front, for example between the ground floor bay and left hand boundary fence and also at the front near the left hand party wall. At the back of the building significant areas of perished pointing were evident, some being very badly worn. Affected areas included for example the rear reception room back wall, rear addition left hand flank wall at ground and first floor level, the rear addition gable, the kitchen rear wall, etc. To prevent rainwater penetration internally all affected areas must be urgently raked out and repointed using matching materials.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

Buildings of this era suffered from inherent defects in structural design arising from the extensive use of embedded loadbearing timbers in the main walls. These timbers are to be found in the form of lintels behind brick arches over window openings, as timber bressumers (heavy beams) built over bays and larger openings to support brickwork above, as well as wall plates to take the end bearings of floor joists built into main walls and as bond timbers used within the thickness of walls often close to the outer face of the wall to even up the coursing of brickwork as the wall was constructed.

All such embedded timbers are susceptible to decay particularly if penetrating dampness occurs and this can affect the stability of a wall. The examination of embedded structural timbers was not possible, however the above should be borne in mind should any damp penetration occur in the future, and investigation carried out as necessary. We would reiterate the need for urgent investigation with regard to the possibility of dampness, decay or woodworm to a concealed bressumer beneath the bedroom 3 back wall.

The left hand and right hand party walls rise above the roofs as parapets. Not all of the parapet areas were visible from ground level or relevant vantage points.

All of the parapets are of unrendered brick construction and those above the main roof have concrete copings where seen. Parapets above the double storey rear addition right hand party wall and kitchen party wall have original brick-on-edge copings. The main parapets above first floor accommodation have lead flashings at their roof junctions.

Although the parapets were in generally reasonable condition where seen, some defects were evident. For example we noted slightly worn pointing (mortar joints) to the left hand party wall parapet above the front roof slope, and some laminating concrete copings to the right hand parapet above the same roof slope. We also noted some perished pointing to the kitchen right hand party wall parapet. We should warn that parapets are particularly prone to deterioration and are a common source of damp penetration which can in turn lead to timber defects internally. A competent contractor must carry out urgent repairs to the various parapet areas to ensure watertightness and

renew the basic cement flashing between the kitchen tiled roof and the adjacent wall parapet to ensure watertightness.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

It is also important that the various lead flashings are subject to regular inspection and overhaul to prevent rainwater penetration internally.

6.4 Roof Slopes

Main Roof

The main roof is double pitched with a replacement interlocking concrete tiled covering which we suspect was fitted some time ago. Not all of the main rear roof slope was visible as discussed previously.

Viewed externally the front roof slope appears to have a slight downward slope from right to left (which might possibly have been originally caused by bomb damage but this could not be verified). Viewed from the roof space (loft), the roof frame has been significantly strengthened and this is discussed in 6.8.

The degree of distortion does not appear to have adversely affected the structural integrity of the roof covering. Where seen the tiling was in generally good condition overall. However we did note some slightly proud tiles, for example on the rear roof slope towards the left hand chimney stack and also to the right hand side immediately below the ridge and adjacent to the right hand parapet. All such dislodged/proud tiles should be reset straightaway to ensure watertightness.

Eaves tiling at the bottom of the roof should have a slight upward gradient to slow down rainwater before it enters the gutter, but in this case we noted the opposite and we recommend this is addressed by a competent roofing contractor to prevent possible internal dampness.

Double Storey Rear Addition Roof

The single pitched roof above bedroom 3, the en suite bathroom and small adjacent section of hall has a matching interlocking concrete tiled covering and lead flashings at the parapet and front wall junctions.

This roof was not visible from the rear garden and not all sections could be seen from the bedroom 2 window. Where seen the roof undulates and is not therefore level. However inspection within the roof space below indicates that the roof frame has been subject to substantial strengthening (and this is discussed in 6.8).

The distortion of the roof frame does not appear to have adversely affected the tiled covering where seen and the tiles were in generally good condition.

Where seen the lead perimeter flashings were in good order, although where the front section of roof meets the main back wall of the building, the right hand section of flashing could not be seen and this should be checked as a precautionary measure by a roofing contractor straightaway. Any necessary works required to ensure watertightness must be urgently implemented.

A satellite dish is dangling by its cable above the front part of the rear addition roof and requires taking down urgently for safety reasons.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

Front Bay Roof

The bay roof above the front reception room is pitched and hipped with an elderly tin or zinc covering and matching flashings. The roof covering appeared to be in generally reasonable condition having regard for its age and no evidence of recent damp staining was detected to the bay ceiling beneath the roof, nor did we detect any dampness to this ceiling when using a moisture meter, although it was not raining at the time of the inspection.

Given the age of the roof covering, you should nevertheless expect the need for complete stripping and renewal (together with any allied works) in the foreseeable future.

Kitchen Rear Addition Roof

The small, single pitched roof above the rear part of the kitchen has an older, replacement interlocking concrete tile covering. The roof is affected by some distortion, sloping down towards the right hand parapet as discussed previously, and probably connected to the cracking/distortion noted to the back wall of bedroom 3. Although the tilling was in reasonable condition overall having regard for its age there appears to be a missing tile at the bottom right hand corner and this should be reinstated straightaway to prevent rainwater penetration internally. At the same time the cracked, elderly cement perimeter flashings should be replaced with lead to ensure a more watertight joint.

Random damp tests to the kitchen ceiling beneath this roof did not indicate any current dampness, nor did we detect any recent damp staining although it was not raining at the time of the inspection.

Roof above the Kitchen Side Door

This roof is single pitched with a metal, assumed aluminium covering and a matching flashing. The roof appeared to be in good condition and no evidence of recent damp staining was detected to the kitchen ceiling directly below, nor did we detect any evidence of dampness in this area using a moisture meter.

6.5 Chimney Stacks

There are two chimney stacks. The main stack is located above the left hand party wall and therefore shared with Number 7. The second stack is situated above the double storey rear addition right hand party wall and shared with Number 3.

The main stack has been repointed and mortar joints were in generally good condition. However some localised brickwork is affected by frost damage including to the right hand face. This will worsen over time and affected sections must therefore be cut out and replaced straightaway with matching bricks to prevent rainwater penetration internally.

The chimney pots currently lack any cowls and this also applies to the second stack and upgrading is advisable to reduce the risk of internal dampness.

The main stack leans towards Number7. One possible cause could be removal of chimney breasts in the adjacent property but this could not be verified. The contractor must check the stability of the chimney stack and undertake any necessary repairs to ensure future structural stability. You must also enquire whether chimney breasts have been removed in the adjoining house and if so whether the remaining brickwork has been supported in accordance with current Building Regulations.

The second stack is rendered. In places the render was cracked and affected sections therefore repair straightaway to prevent rainwater penetration internally. At the time same time localised missing cement flaunching requires replacing to prevent internal dampness.

Lead flashings between the roof coverings and the base of the chimney stacks appeared to be in good condition and these must be regularly inspected and overhauled to ensure watertightness.

6.6 Rainwater Fittings, Wastepipes and Surface Water Drainage

Rainwater gutters and downpipes are of replacement uPVC type although in places these are of older type including for example at the back of the kitchen.

As it was not raining at the time of our inspection, we were unable to verify whether there are any leaking joints or if all of the gutters are properly aligned.

The rainwater goods were in fair condition overall, requiring some attention. For example the front gutter appears to sag near the centre which will encourage overflow and possible internal dampness, and the kitchen rear gutter is twisted and probably also with a reverse gradient which will also encourage overflow and internal dampness. (Badly perished brickwork pointing to the kitchen back wall near the right hand boundary may have been caused by rainwater overflowing from the gutter for a considerable period of time, see also 6.3). We also noted that the bottom section of the kitchen left hand flank rainwater downpipe is loose and that the kitchen rear downpipe

stops short of the rainwater gully and is likely to saturate the rear wall. A competent contractor must therefore repair/replace all defective rainwater fittings, realign where necessary and also re-seal any defective joints to ensure watertightness and to ensure rainwater flows properly to the downpipes.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

We also recommend the rainwater fittings are checked during wet weather for any signs of leakage or other defects.

Contrary to popular belief, plastic rainwater goods are not trouble free and need regular maintenance. Plastic guttering joints can fail as the guttering expands in hot weather and heat can also cause gutters to twist and distort. Ongoing maintenance is recommended.

There are several trees near this property and a number of these will shed their leaves during the autumn months in particular. You must therefore arrange to have the gutters, downpipes, etc. cleaned out straightaway and thereafter at regular intervals especially after autumn to prevent blockage and overflow otherwise internal dampness might result. You might well consider fitting guards over the tops of the gutters and the downpipe outlets to try to reduce the leaf nuisance, but this will not remove the obligation for maintenance.

The replacement uPVC soil (waste) pipe attached to the rear addition left hand flank wall was in satisfactory condition. However some of the other external wastepipes require attention including for example the kitchen sink rear wastepipe which was found to be loose and requires refixing and resealing.

The below ground surface water drainage system could not be seen and we cannot therefore comment on its condition.

6.7 External Joinery, including Windows, Doors and Decorations

Doors

The timber single (wired) glazed front entrance door is likely to be original and situated in the recessed storm porch. The door was in reasonable condition although does not fit perfectly in its frame.

The kitchen side door is of elderly timber single glazed type. The door is warped resulting in a wide gap between it and the surrounding frame. The door also jams when being opened and closed, some of the timber perimeter external beading is missing and the door and surrounding frame are in poor decorative condition. In addition the door is unlikely to afford any significant security and we therefore recommend that the door and surrounding frame are replaced straightaway.

Windows

Windows are mostly of replacement, older uPVC double glazed type and unusually set within timber surrounding frames. Several of the windows jam when being opened and closed and require attention. We also noted general split and peeling paintwork to the timber frames surrounding the uPVC sections in addition to some gaps between the timber frames and brickwork (where rainwater could penetrate), as well as deterioration including decay to some of the timber frames (such as to bedrooms 1 and 2, the latter having caused some internal dampness given damp staining internally beneath the window cill).

The timber frames therefore require repair/replacement, re-sealing at their brickwork junctions and preparation and redecoration as soon as weather conditions permit to prevent further internal dampness.

It should be appreciated that the double glazing is of considerable age and already with signs of age related deterioration, and you should therefore expect the need for replacement in the foreseeable future.

You should be aware that double glazing can suffer from loss of glazing seal which is often indicated by misting and condensation developing between the panes. However, such symptoms do depend on atmospheric conditions and can therefore be intermittent and not always visible from a single inspection. As with all properties, as the double glazing becomes older you should anticipate the need for renewal of glazing within the frames where loss of glazing seal occurs.

Please note that uPVC double glazed window units still require maintenance. You should regularly monitor their condition, particularly caps to sills, locks, latches, seals, etc. which are very susceptible to failure in window and door openings.

There is an elderly timber single glazed window with basic internal swivel catch located at high level to the back wall of the first floor hall (overlooking the rear addition roof). This window could not be seen externally due to plot restrictions, and only a very limited view was possible whilst standing on our ladder in the first floor hall. Where seen the window is in a poor decorative condition externally and there are likely to be additional defects which we could not see including possible decay, poor perimeter seals, etc. The windows should be examined at close quarters by a competent contractor and all necessary remedial works carried out to prevent rainwater penetration internally and to prevent external decay.

Although the external concrete window cills were in reasonable condition overall for their age, they do require general preparation and redecoration.

Fascia and Soffit Boards

Not all sections of the fascia and soffit boards were visible but where seen these are of timber construction and in a generally poor decorative condition. Poor decorations will encourage wet rot, especially where gutters are defective and we cannot rule out the possibility of decay particularly those sections hidden by the gutters themselves. A competent contractor must inspect the timbers at close quarters and undertake all necessary repairs. At the same time the fascia and soffit boards must be prepared and redecorated to reduce the risk of future rot. Alternatively the fascia and soffit boards could be replaced with uPVC which would significantly reduce the requirement for maintenance.

INTERNAL

6.8 Roof Space and Roof Frame

There are two separate roof spaces. The main roof space is above bedrooms 1 and 2 and the adjacent section of first floor hall. The rear addition roof space is above bedroom 3 and its en suite bathroom.

Neither roof space has a fitted pull-down ladder and whilst there appears to be a light in the rear addition roof space, we were unable to locate any switch to operate this. (The main roof space would appear to be without lighting).

Main Roof Space

We were unable to walk around in the main roof space as discussed in Section 2 and therefore only a very limited inspection was possible from the access hatch whilst standing on our ladder (placed in the first floor hall). As a result those areas which could be seen were generally only visible from a distance.

We referred in Section 6.4 to some distortion of the roof, viewed externally. As seen from the roof space, the timber roof frame has been significantly strengthened with a number of replacement timbers including diagonal struts beneath the horizontal purlins, provision of horizontal collars running from front to rear, etc. Viewed from the roof space hatch area only, the timber roof frame appeared to be in generally satisfactory condition although it should be appreciated that not every length of timber was examined, or indeed accessible, and we have not carried out calculations to verify the structural adequacy of the roof frame.

It should also be appreciated that the ceiling joists (which would normally provide some roof triangulation) were completely hidden by the ceiling insulation and could not therefore be examined.

The brick party walls and the older style underfelt beneath the roof tiling were in satisfactory condition. Chimney flues built against the left hand party wall appeared to be in good condition although we noted some dark staining to the

upper sections of the brickwork which could suggest rainwater penetration and we would reiterate the need for chimney stack repairs discussed in 6.5.

Rear Addition Roof Space

Typically this area is considerably smaller than the main roof space.

In 6.4 we referred to general undulation of the rear addition tiled roof covering. Viewed from the roof space, the timber roof frame has been subject to significant strengthening work including replacement horizontal purlins and provision of a significant number of diagonal struts to support the purlins. The roof frame appeared to be in good condition although not every length of timber was examined, or indeed accessible, and we have not carried out calculations to verify the structural adequacy of the roof frame.

The horizontal timber wall plate at the top of the rafters appeared to be in generally satisfactory condition and whilst we noted some damp staining, this was found to be dry when tested with a moisture meter in random places although it should be appreciated that it was not raining at the time of the inspection. The staining may have occurred before the roof covering was replaced although the condition of the parapet and parapet flashings directly above should be regularly checked and overhauled where necessary to ensure watertightness.

Inspection of the first floor ceilings was restricted by discarded roof slate fragments which we recommend are removed.

Because chimney breasts have been removed from the party wall position in bedroom 3 and the kitchen below, the bottom section of chimney flue (beneath the chimney stack) has been removed in the roof space. The remaining section of flue in this area has been supported using gallows brackets. Gallows brackets was an accepted method of chimney breast support for many years although if you were undertaking this work today, then most Local Authorities would require an alternative method of support (which tends to be more difficult and also more costly). Although the gallows brackets appeared to be in satisfactory condition, the horizontal supporting plate between the brackets and the underside of the brickwork flue is particularly thin and has sagged as a result. We therefore strongly recommend that this arrangement is upgraded straightaway to ensure the base of the remaining chimney flue brickwork is properly supported, to prevent possible collapse.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

There is a bucket beneath the remaining section of chimney flue in this roof space and whilst it was found to be dry at the time of the inspection (and with no evidence of rainwater penetration or damp staining to the bedroom 3 ceiling directly below), it was not raining during the inspection. We would however reiterate the need for chimney stack repairs (see 6.5), and strongly

recommend that the chimney pots are provided with cowls to prevent rainwater penetration internally.

Underfelt in this roof space was in generally satisfactory condition.

6.9 Ceilings

When the property was built, ceilings would have been of lath and plaster construction. Some of the ceilings would appear to have been replaced with plasterboard, including we suspect, to most parts of the first floor accommodation and the kitchen.

It is possible that remaining lath and plaster ceilings might possibly have been lined below with plasterboard including we suspect in the front and rear reception rooms but this could not be verified from a visual inspection. In some places it is possible that there may also be some older lath and plaster ceilings which have not been taken down or lined below with plasterboard including possibly bedroom 3 but this could not be verified.

Where ceilings have been replaced with plasterboard, these were found to be in generally reasonable condition and stable. A number of cracks were however evident in various rooms at the junction of the plasterboard sections and at their perimeters. This is however due to normal shrinkage and is not structurally significant. The cracks can be made good using a flexible filler prior to redecoration, although cracks can often re-open over time.

Lath and plaster ceilings are usually formed by the application of plaster onto laths which are fixed to joists. Over the years, fractures occur to the plaster where it passes through the laths and the surface can become separated.

The normal useful life of a lath and plaster ceiling is considered to vary between 40 and 70 years, although in our experience can often be a good deal longer. The lifespan will depend partly on joist vibration and this can be exacerbated by building work, not only in this property, but also in any adjoining properties. In addition, central heating can tend to cause failure and vary the anticipated lifespan as can water leaks. On rare occasions, such ceilings have been known to collapse without warning.

Although they were found to be generally stable, the remaining lath and plaster ceilings are of an age where they may be expected as being close to the end of their life expectancy (assuming they have not been lined below with plasterboard), and some typical unevenness and cracking in areas such as to the reception room ceilings, etc, indicates that early works will be required. You must therefore budget for replacement of the older lath and plaster ceilings with plasterboard very soon. We should warn that this work will often involve allied repairs to the tops of adjacent wall plaster and any ceiling cornices, and tends to be messy and disruptive.

In localised areas ceiling cornices were missing including for example in the reception room bay and should be replaced.

6.10 Walls and Partitions

Party walls between this and the adjoining houses are of masonry construction with a plaster finish. Internal partitions would appear to be of timber construction and a mixture of modern studwork and older type lath and plaster.

The verticality of the partitions was considered generally satisfactory. There were however a significant number of cracks to the wall plaster, plasterboard and lath and plaster sections throughout the property. These were in generally less than around 1mm wide and were present to internal partitions, party walls, the internal faces of external walls and in some places above door openings. The interior does not appear to have been redecorated for some time and from our single and superficial inspection these did not appear to be structurally significant and in most cases are probably of a longstanding nature. We recommend the cracks are made good using a flexible filler before redecoration but should warn that cracks can sometimes re-open over time.

The plasterboard wall linings were otherwise in generally satisfactory condition.

We did note some unevenness to the plaster, and lath and plaster sections together with some hollow and unkeyed areas which is fairly typical for a property of this age. During the course of refurbishment you must therefore expect the need for some general replastering.

Considerable damp staining was noted to the upper part of the first floor hall back wall, behind the staircase. Tests using a moisture meter indicated the presence of significant dampness which will be the result of rainwater penetration. We could not see most of the external face of this wall due to plot restrictions and the double storey rear addition roof. However we suspect it may be a result of perished brickwork mortar joints (pointing), discussed in 6.3, but we cannot rule out the possibility of other defects, which could include defective guttering, etc. The cause of the dampness must be urgently identified by a competent contractor and all necessary repairs carried out to prevent recurrence.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

All damp affected plaster will require hacking off and replastering.

We also noted damp and perished plaster beneath the bedroom 2 window cill and likely to be a result of decay to the timber frame surrounding the bedroom 2 window discussed earlier. Once the external defects have been rectified, internal plaster will require replacing.

Walls were partly tiled in the kitchen and fully tiled in the bathrooms. The wall tiling is of ordinary type and older appearance. Whilst in generally satisfactory condition, tiling adjacent to the first floor bath was found to be uneven and should be checked by a competent contractor and replaced if necessary to prevent water seepage otherwise dampness and decay could result. (It is important that wall tiling and grouting surrounding the baths is kept in good condition to prevent water seepage, otherwise dampness and decay could occur).

An opening has been formed in the timber partition separating the front and rear reception rooms. The opening has been partly blocked up, presumably with timber studwork and plasterboard although leaving timber doors between the two rooms. This wall is likely to have been a spine partition and therefore load bearing and therefore the work undertaken would probably have been a structural alteration. No evidence of significant cracking or major distortion around the opening suggesting failure was noted. However the means of any support above the opening could not be seen due to surface finishes such as plaster. Building Regulation approval would have been necessary for such structural alterations and your legal adviser must make further enquiries as discussed in Section 10.1.

6.11 Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces

Chimney breasts are in place against the left hand party wall in both reception rooms and bedrooms 1 and 2 directly above. The fireplaces in both reception rooms and bedroom 1 have been temporarily blocked up. If the fireplaces are to remain blocked then you will need to install vents at the fireplace positions to guard against condensation dampness occurring in the flues.

The bedroom 2 fireplace includes a heavily painted period style surround although there is no gas appliance in this fireplace nor it is used for burning solid fuel.

If you intend installing a gas fire or intend using the fireplace for burning of solid fuel (if permitted by the local authority) then you should be aware that flues in properties of this age are often decayed and unsuitable for use unless they are relined.

If you intend removing any chimney breasts, this would be structural alteration for which Building Regulation approval would be necessary.

Chimney breasts have been removed from the right hand party wall in bedroom 3 and the kitchen below, and the remaining section of brickwork flue in the roof space above has been supported using gallows brackets but we would refer you to previous comments and recommendations in 6.8.

6.12 Floors

Floors are of suspended timber construction at first floor and also within the reception rooms and the adjacent (front) section of ground floor hall. Flooring

in the ground floor bathroom, adjacent section of hall and kitchen are of solid concrete construction.

Inspection of the floors was restricted due to fitted floor coverings throughout, built-in fitments, furniture and possessions. Not all parts of the floor structure at ground floor level were visible from the cellar.

Timber Flooring

No specific calculations were made with regard to loading and we were not able to gain access to the sub-floor void beneath the timber floors and we cannot therefore confirm details of the precise nature of the construction or condition.

Most of the surfaces appeared reasonably level and firm to the tread although typically for an older property, there were some areas of timber flooring which were not exactly level and true, especially for example in the front and rear reception rooms, bedroom 1, etc. In the front reception room, some parts of the floor were a little springy especially towards the left hand side although the reason for this was not immediately apparent from our restricted inspection from the section of cellar beneath the ground floor hall. It would however suggest defects to the supporting floor structure, and this can often be caused by rot, woodworm, etc.

A competent contractor must exposed and examine timber flooring at ground floor level especially those sections which slope significantly. This can either be undertaken from the cellar (if the contractor is able to safely crawl through), or alternatively, floorboards should be lifted within the affected rooms which would then expose the supporting structure below, such as joists etc. All necessary works required to ensure the floors are properly supported must be urgently undertaken including cutting out and replacing any timbers found to be rotted or otherwise defective.

This requires urgent investigation before exchange of contracts. All necessary remedial works must be urgently implemented.

A number of loose and creaking floorboards were evident. This is not structurally significant although the loose boards should be re secured to the joists below using screws, taking care not to puncture any concealed plumbing or electrics.

In a property of this age it is likely that floorboards have been lifted over the years when undertaking any plumbing or electrical works and as a result there may well be split or damaged floorboards which would only be revealed once floor coverings are lifted. You should therefore expect the need for some possible repairs being necessary.

The floor timbers such as joists and floorboards were concealed at first floor level and could not therefore be examined, and this applies to a significant proportion of floor and sub-floor timbers at ground floor level. Timbers built

into external walls such as joist ends and wall plates are always susceptible to decay particularly where dampness is present or where sub-floor ventilation is inadequate. We must also warn that floor timbers in a building of this age can often suffer from wood boring beetle infestation (woodworm), and you will appreciate that without actually exposing and inspecting all floor timbers, the presence and extent of any such defects cannot be confirmed.

In view of the restricted scope of our inspection, we strongly recommend that a qualified timber treatment specialist (preferably PCA registered), exposes and inspects at least sample areas of covered timber flooring and accessible parts of roof frame timbers throughout the property for evidence of decay, woodworm infestation or any other form of defect, with particular attention being paid to timbers in the vicinity of any damp walls, prior to exchange of contracts. If any timbers are found to be rotted or otherwise defective, or should any necessary remedial treatment be required, remedial work must be carried out under long term guarantee, preferably insurance backed.

This requires urgent investigation before exchange of contracts. All necessary remedial works must be urgently implemented.

The timber threshold lip beneath the bedroom 3 en suite bathroom door is a trip hazard which requires removing.

Loose floor tiling in the first floor bathroom requires refixing and re-grouting.

<u>Concrete Flooring</u>

Concrete floors at ground floor level were found to be generally level and without significant defect although the inspection was restricted by fitted floor coverings.

Sometimes, especially in older properties, poor initial preparation and/or compaction of loose hardcore beneath the concrete slab can cause the slab to sag and distort, and in some cases we have known this to occur many years after construction. In this case there was no indication of this having occurred although we cannot entirely rule out the possibility of this happening in the future.

The concrete floor should incorporate a damp proof membrane (DPM) but this will always be concealed and therefore was not capable of inspection. At the time this property was built, concrete floors were generally provided with very basic forms of damp proofing only, and it is not known whether this has been upgraded over the years. We were unable to test the solid flooring for dampness due to fitted floor coverings. A precautionary inspection of the solid floor by a damp proofing specialist is therefore advisable and any necessary works required should be urgently implemented.

We were unable to verify whether heating and other pipework is laid directly into the concrete floor screed without any insulation. If so, then this can eventually cause joints in the pipework to become corroded by chemical

additives in the cement. (Modern practice would now require pipework to be ducted and insulated to avoid corrosion). We would stress that there was no sign of defects at the present time, but these factors should be borne in mind as any pipework leakage which occurs within the floor screed can prove difficult to locate and expensive to remedy.

6.13 Internal Joinery and Kitchen Fittings

The kitchen built-in wall/base cabinets and worktops are of older style, of average quality and in fair condition only given the presence of some damage, for example to sections of the worktop as well as vinyl wrappers to the door and drawer units, etc. In addition the fittings were fairly grubby. Repair is therefore necessary but given the age of the kitchen, we assume you would probably wish to carry out complete refurbishment.

Please be aware that we do not inspect or test any kitchen/utility appliances (white goods), whether built in or not, and you should therefore arrange for these to be inspected and tested by qualified engineers to ensure satisfactory and safe operation. Vendors will sometimes remove utility machines and you must check that any associated water supply or waste pipes, including connections to the kitchen sink waste have been properly capped to prevent leakage. (In fact we noted an open ended wastepipe branch beneath the kitchen sink which requires capping straightaway to prevent overflow).

The timber staircases were reasonably level and generally firm to the tread although there were typically some loose and creaking treads which should be overhauled during the course of routine maintenance including refixing of the middle diagonal timber brace beneath the lower staircase as seen in the cellar.

The staircase and hall timber balustrades were in generally acceptable condition.

Internal doors are mostly elderly and basic. Several doors no longer fit properly within their frames with some being warped and others significant gaps between the doors and frames themselves. Overhaul or replacement is therefore required.

Door frames and visible skirting boards were in generally satisfactory condition but these timbers should be re-examined by the damp proofing specialist referred to in 6.14 for any signs of rot.

Timber internal shutters in both reception rooms no longer fit properly and require overhaul.

There are no built-in wardrobes and only a small built-in cupboard against the party wall in bedroom which is elderly albeit generally serviceable.

6.14 Dampness, Condensation and Timber Decay

Random damp tests were taken inside the property where accessible to internal wall and other surfaces using a moisture meter.

Widespread high damp readings were recorded near the base of internal walls throughout the property which we suspect is probably rising dampness, and likely to be a result of breakdown of the DPC. Areas found to be affected by dampness included for example the section of the front reception room front wall to the right hand side of the bay, the back wall of the rear reception room, the right hand party wall in the rear part of the ground floor hall and also to the front part of the kitchen, the left hand partition between the ground floor hall and bathroom, the back wall of the kitchen beneath the kitchen sink, in the kitchen external door opening area and adjacent walls, etc.

We cannot rule out the possibility of other areas being similarly affected although concealed, for example by built-in fitments, furniture, possessions, wall tiling or dry linings.

A damp/timber treatment specialist (preferably PCA registered) must be instructed to identify the cause and full extent of these defects throughout the property before exchange of contracts and urgently undertake appropriate remedial treatment to prevent recurrence, under long term guarantee, preferably insurance backed.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

In conjunction with these works it will be necessary to undertake associated replastering of affected internal wall surfaces and we recommend any such works are carried out by the specialist firm themselves (rather than a general builder) to avoid any guarantee certificates being invalidated.

Considerable damp staining was noted to the upper part of the first floor hall back wall, behind the staircase. Tests using a moisture meter indicated the presence of significant dampness which will be the result of rainwater penetration. We could not see most of the external face of this wall due to plot restrictions and the double storey rear addition roof. However we suspect it may be a result of perished brickwork mortar joints (pointing) but cannot rule out the possibility of other defects, which could include for example defective guttering, etc. The cause of the dampness must be urgently identified by a competent contractor and all necessary repairs carried out to prevent recurrence.

This requires urgent investigation before exchange of contracts. All necessary remedial works must be urgently implemented.

Damp staining and perished plaster was noted to the bedroom 2 back wall beneath and adjoining the window cill, and probably due to defective

timberwork surrounding the window as discussed previously. All rotted or otherwise defective external joinery must be urgently cut out and replaced.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

There are several other defects noted throughout this report which can also give rise to penetrating dampness including for example perished brickwork pointing, defective rainwater fittings etc. It is most important therefore that all such defects are urgently attended to.

No evidence of serious timber decay such as dry rot was noted. There is however always a risk that timbers in proximity to areas of dampness could be affected by decay. For this reason we recommend that all timbers adjacent to areas of suspected rising dampness (including floor and sub-floor timbers) are exposed and examined by the timber treatment specialist (preferably PCA registered) together with timbers adjacent to areas of penetrating dampness referred to previously. If any timbers are found to be rotted or otherwise defective, these must be urgently cut out and replaced.

This requires urgent investigation before exchange of contracts. All necessary remedial works must be urgently implemented.

From our examination we found no evidence of any significant condensation problem. Condensation is however usually more common during cold weather. Condensation can also be a problem for some occupiers where it was not for a previous one due to differences in habits and lifestyles. For example drying washing on radiators or on room airers will increase moisture levels and leaving windows closed will prevent the necessary air flow required. The risk of condensation can be reduced by maintaining adequate heating, ventilation and thermal insulation, also by placing furniture in rooms so that walls can breathe. Areas where air cannot circulate are most likely to be affected.

The provision of mechanical ventilators to kitchens and bathrooms is particularly helpful in reducing condensation. In severe cases extractors can be fitted which activate automatically when humidity levels are high.

To reduce the risk of condensation build-up, we strongly recommend that you close the kitchen and bathroom doors when in use in order to contain steam. For this reason it is not ideal removing doors between a kitchen and adjacent rooms such as a reception room as it will cause steam to circulate.

Efforts should be made to keep condensation to a minimum. A build-up of condensation over a period of time will affect plaster and decorative finishes. In time, it will affect timber elements of the structure and ultimately could affect the health of the property's occupants, causing conditions such as asthma.

Woodworm infestation was noted to various timbers in the cellar including for example floor and sub-floor timbers, timbers beneath the main staircase, etc.

It is more than likely that other, concealed timbers throughout the property (such as floor and sub-floor timbers at first floor level, roof timbers, etc,) could be similarly affected.

All accessible timbers should be exposed and examined by a timber treatment specialist (preferably PCA registered) before exchange of contracts. All necessary remedial treatment works must be urgently undertaken under long term guarantee, preferably insurance backed.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

6.15 Decorations

The interior does not appear to have been redecorated for quite some time. Internal decorations were found to be grubby, marked, stained and affected by dampness. There were also various cracks to wall and ceiling surfaces. You must therefore expect the need for general internal redecoration throughout and also expect the need for some damage to decorations when undertaking repairs.

When wall coverings are removed, this can often reveal cracks and blemishes to the plaster behind which would require repair.

Prolonged use of steam powered wallpaper strippers must be avoided as this can cause substantial damage to plasterwork, particularly in older properties.

Due to the property's age, there is every probability that parts of the interior woodwork will have been decorated over its life with lead based paint and this no doubt would also apply to the exterior. This product is considered to pose a health risk if the paint is disturbed by sanding and the dust is inhaled. Your attention is therefore drawn to this issue.

6.16 Common Parts and Cellars

Cellar

The cellar extends beneath the front part of the ground floor hall where it is only just about possible to stand up. The void beneath the reception rooms is only high enough to be able to crawl through, and for safety reasons this section was not physically accessed as discussed earlier, and only restricted views of this area were possible from the main cellar area.

The drain style cast iron cover in the front entrance path unusually provides access to the cellar. This access point would originally have been a coal hole. The cover in the path is however no longer watertight and the area below inside the cellar was typically damp as a result due to rainwater penetration. The cover should be fully sealed or removed and the path made good straightaway to prevent further rainwater penetration.

The cellar does not have any made up floor and instead the ground is uneven and typically very damp. As a result you should avoid storing perishable items in this area. The cellar walls beneath DPC level were typically found to be damp which is only to be expected given that cellars were not intended as habitable accommodation. Although you could damp proof this area, it is likely to prove costly and is not always successful on a long term basis.

Timber flooring at ground floor level is supported by several brick piers. Whilst these appeared to be in generally satisfactory condition, in places some of the brickwork has crumbled away and requires replacing and this work must be carried out straightaway.

The timber joists are supported by horizontal bearing timbers which sit on the brick piers. In places these bearing timbers are damp stained, and (where accessible from the main cellar area) were in fact found to be damp in places. This indicates that the piers no longer have any effective DPC. This can cause rot to the floor timbers and therefore DPCs should be inserted to all of the piers to reduce the risk of rot.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

The elderly timber steps leading down into the cellar from the hall lack a handrail, and are potentially hazardous. They were also found to be damp where they are in contact with the ground below and we recommend these are replaced to incorporate a DPC between the cellar floor and the base of the timber steps to reduce the risk of future rot.

We should warn that cellars can sometimes flood. There was no evidence of this having occurred recently but we cannot rule out the possibility of this happening in the future.

6.17 Thermal Insulation

The solid brick external walls will have a relatively poor standard of thermal insulation resulting in heat loss. From an insulation point of view there is no easy or cheap way to bring these outside walls up to current insulation standards.

Although there is a thick layer of fibreglass quilt insulation above first floor ceilings in the front roof space, the rear addition roof space is completely without insulation which will allow significant heat loss. We therefore recommend that you provide insulation in this area to a thickness of 270mm. Increasing insulation in the roof void will result in a drop in temperature which may give rise to condensation. Ventilation should therefore be increased at eaves level and insulation must be kept clear from the eaves junctions where the ceilings meet the roof slopes.

The external doors and the small window above the first floor hall are single glazed which will result in significant heat loss and provision of double glazing is therefore recommended.

Although the remaining windows are double glazed, these are elderly and unlikely to be as thermally efficient as modern day double glazed units.

Due to concealment we cannot comment on the presence or adequacy of any insulation within the front bay roof structure or the kitchen side or rear pitched roofs. It is however unlikely that these areas will be insulated to current standards (and there might be no insulation at all). Upgrading to current standards is therefore recommended when the roof coverings are next replaced.

The ground floor flooring timber flooring is not insulated, and it is unlikely the concrete floor incorporates any insulation. Heat loss will therefore occur.

There will also be heat loss through unlagged sub-floor central heating pipework.

7. SERVICES

As confirmed in our Terms & Conditions, we are not qualified to give you any detailed reports on the services that are connected to this property and must emphasise that no formal tests have been carried out. We have not been provided with any inspection and test certificates, unless otherwise stated in section 7. We have of course carried out visual checks and will comment as appropriate below, but if you require a detailed report or assurances as to the quality and condition of any of the services, further separate specialist inspection(s) will need to be commissioned. Obviously the choice of specialist(s) will be a matter for you, but they should be properly qualified in their field and should hold membership of an appropriate professional body. Your appointed specialist(s) will be able to guide you on any costs that may be necessary to bring the installation(s) into a proper state**.**

7.1 Electricity

The property is connected to the mains electricity supply with the meter and consumer unit located in the ground floor hall.

We would stress that no specific tests were applied to the electrical installation. We would advise you that we are not qualified to judge the safety, efficiency or compliance of the installation with current Electrical Regulations/Standards. However the electrical installation is very dated and has not been subject to any apparent recent upgrading.

For example the consumer unit is particularly elderly and with a very limited number of fuses and no RCD protection. The bathroom ceiling lights lack watertight lenses which would contravene current regulations, neither of the bathroom extractor fans were working (and both lack isolation switches). We

also noted a surface mounted metal power socket adjoining the bedroom 2 chimney breast which is a serious safety hazard.

You should also be aware that the electricity meter is currently a credit meter operated by a key.

We have not undertaken any tests but it is more than likely that a formal electrical inspection and test would indicate that the house is in need of at least partial, if not complete rewiring/upgrading for safety reasons.

In view of the above matters/concerns we strongly recommend, in the interests of safety, that a NICEIC qualified electrician is employed to inspect and test the entire electrical installation (including any external electrics), prior to exchange of contracts, and urgently upgrade as necessary to meet all current standards.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

As you may be aware from articles in the press, there are now stringent regulations in force regarding who may and may not deal with alteration and repair work to electrical installations. There is now a virtual bar on amateur involvement and most work of any consequence needs to be dealt with by an approved electrical contractor. Although this will make electrical changes relatively expensive you will, we are sure, appreciate that where electrical problems are involved a defect could be a matter of life or death. With most aspects of a building, a defect at worst means that costs are incurred, whereas with electrical installations the dangers are much more real.

7.2 Gas

The gas supply is from the mains service with a meter in the cellar. No specific tests were carried out to either the gas supply system or any of the gas appliances and we are not competent to judge their safety. It is obviously very important for all appliances to be in good working order and that they comply with current regulations, as leaking fumes can be fatal. It is also very important that the gas supply system and all appliances are regularly serviced and it should be confirmed when this was last carried out.

If no satisfactory or very recent service history is available, then we would recommend that a Gas Safe Register installer should be employed to check and service all fittings and appliances prior to exchange of contracts. You should also note that it is now against the law for anyone other than a Gas Safe Register installer to undertake any installation or alteration work.

7.3 Plumbing and Cold Water

The property is provided with mains cold water.

Since the incoming water main is of course run below ground, we are not able to confirm its material, nor make any comment regarding its route or condition, nor whether it has been laid correctly to avoid damage or frost. When originally built, the incoming rising main is likely to have been in lead. Lead was a traditional piping material but no longer installed nowadays due to potential health implications. Any lead pipes still present would also now be very old.

Where seen at the front of the cellar, the rising main in this area was in fact found to be of elderly lead. All lead sections should therefore be replaced as soon as possible with Alkathene.

The internal isolation stopcock to shut off the cold water supply, located near the front right hand corner of the cellar, was found to be dripping and therefore no longer watertight. This has contributed to the dampness to the cellar floor discussed earlier. A competent plumbing contractor must urgently rectify the plumbing leak to ensure watertightness and also ensure that the stopcock turns off the water supply satisfactorily.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

In this particular property there is no cold water storage tank and all the cold taps are taken directly off the mains service. Although a very common method of piping, you need to accept that water pressure can be adversely affected if two or more taps are turned on at the same time, and in the event of a mains water failure you will be without a cold water supply.

Internal cold water plumbing where visible is generally in older type copper and wastes in uPVC. Apart from the cellar, no evidence of leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the plumbing was concealed in ducts and floors.

It should however be appreciated that most of the plumbing was hidden and we cannot comment whether there are older sections in concealed areas including for example lead, or cast iron (which will corrode with age). We suspect that isolation valves are not present on all sections of pipework. If complete confirmation is required regarding the age and condition of the plumbing, further, more detailed inspection by a plumbing contractor would be necessary which would involve removal of floorboards etc. An inspection in this regard is strongly recommended.

7.4 Heating and Hot Water

Heating and hot water are provided by a replacement wall mounted gas fired Vaillant Ecotec Plus 837 condensing combination boiler located in the kitchen

and with an external fan assisted flue. Heating is provided to radiators which were mostly of older style albeit generally having thermostatic valves (although these were also of dated appearance).

We were unable to confirm the output of the boiler and we would stress that no calculations were made to verify its adequacy. Furthermore, no calculations were made to verify whether the radiators are suitably sized for their locations.

The vendor was unaware of the age of the boiler but we suspect that this model number might have been first manufactured in circa 2005 but this has not been verified. Although the vendor believed that the boiler was last serviced in November 2018, this has not been confirmed but should be verified.

There is no hot water storage facility and the hot water is heated by the combination boiler. This type of boiler is designed to heat the water as it passes through while being drawn off, thus providing a near instantaneous hot water supply. Combination boilers are generally considered to be a relatively economic and effective way of heating water for domestic use. However we should warn that hot water flow, pressure and temperature can sometimes fluctuate if more than one tap is turned on.

Although hot water was in operation at the time of the inspection, central heating was turned off due to warm weather.

Tests have not been carried out and without the benefit of a specialist's report we would be unable to comment further regarding the condition or standard of the installation.

We therefore strongly recommend that the entire heating and hot water installation is inspected and tested by a Gas Safe Register qualified engineer, before exchange of contracts. Any necessary works required to ensure satisfactory and safe operation in accordance with latest regulations should be urgently implemented and thereafter the installation should be serviced annually. The engineer should also provide advice on the likely remaining lifespan of the installation and in particular the boiler itself.

This requires urgent investigation before exchange of contracts. All necessary works to ensure satisfactory and safe operation must be urgently implemented.

We were unable to verify whether pipework is laid directly into the concrete floor screed without any insulation. If this is so, then this can eventually cause joints in the pipework to become corroded by chemical additives in the cement and modern practice requires pipework to be ducted and insulated. We would stress that there was no sign of defects at the time of the inspection, but these factors should be borne in mind as any leakage which occurs in the pipework within the floor screed can prove difficult to locate and expensive to remedy.

7.5 Sanitary Fittings

Sanitary fittings in the ground and first floor bathrooms are of older style and ordinary quality. Although the sanitary fittings appeared to be in generally serviceable condition, slight dampness was detected to the ground floor bathroom flooring adjoining the rear edge of the WC pan which suggests a possible plumbing leak. A competent plumbing contractor must inspect the WC and associated pipework and undertake any necessary remedial works to ensure future watertightness.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

In the first floor bathroom the wash basin hot water tap spindle is missing and requires reinstating.

We would reiterate the need for replacement of the non working bathroom extractor fans. (See also 7.1).

It is most important that mastic sealant around the bath edge perimeters are kept in good condition to prevent water seepage otherwise dampness and decay could occur.

As is quite normal these days, many waste pipes are hidden from sight and we cannot of course see or check these.

As a matter of routine maintenance, all waste traps should be thoroughly cleaned through and we suggest that this is repeated at regular intervals in the future.

7.6 Drainage

We assume the property is provided with mains drainage but your legal adviser must verify this.

One drain inspection cover was noted outside the building and located behind the kitchen. Two plastic pipes have been inserted inside the drain at some point which would have required Building Regulation approval and your legal adviser should make enquiries.

Only those sections of the drains passing through this chamber were visible and we cannot therefore comment on unseen sections, such as those beneath the ground. Within this chamber, no evidence of blockage or significant defect was detected. However, as drains do deteriorate with age and can also block and leak, and in view of nearby trees, a precautionary inspection and test of the drains by a drains specialist, (using CCTV camera equipment), is strongly recommended before exchange of contracts. Any necessary works required to ensure satisfactory and watertight operation should be implemented.

7.7 Other

We recommend that smoke detectors are provided throughout the property.

8. THE SITE

8.1 Garage and Outbuildings

Not applicable.

8.2 Gardens and Boundaries

Front Garden

The elderly front boundary wall was in reasonable condition for its age although we noted some deterioration to the flower bed wall directly behind this. The front entrance gate is elderly and corroding and therefore requires attention.

The right hand boundary wall is also elderly albeit in generally satisfactory condition and the left hand boundary timber fence was in reasonable condition.

The concrete front entrance path and the section in front of the front reception room is elderly, cracked, worn and uneven and requires replacing for safety reasons.

Boundary hedges should be properly managed including pruning to prevent them exceeding their current size.

Rear Garden

The rear garden is particularly unkempt. The lawn is overgrown and much of the path area was covered with weeds.

The concrete side/rear path where seen is elderly, cracked, worn and uneven and requires replacing for safety reasons.

The left hand and right hand boundary walls were not fully visible due to vegetation. Where seen the walls were elderly and the left hand boundary wall affected by perished pointing and deteriorated brickwork and therefore requiring repair.

The right hand boundary wall leans significantly towards Number 3 and the pointing is in very poor condition. The middle section of the wall is slightly unstable. For safety reasons, the wall must be urgently rebuilt to ensure structural stability and also repointed.

This is an urgent repair, and must be remedied as soon as possible after purchase.

The rear boundary appears to be formed by a tall brick structure belonging to the property behind. Ownership of the various boundaries should be verified by reference to the Deeds, together with any rights of way etc.

We have referred previously to the presence of trees near the property, both within and beyond the boundaries. These must be properly managed including pruning/pollarding where appropriate to prevent them exceeding their current size in order to control the demand for water extraction from the subsoil. Before undertaking any tree maintenance however you should first establish whether any of the trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders as this would either prohibit or restrict works from being carried out.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

We are not aware of the contents of any environmental audit or other environmental investigation or soil survey which may have been carried out on the property and which may draw attention to any contamination or the possibility of any such contamination. In undertaking our work, we have assumed that no contaminative or potentially contaminative uses have ever been carried out on the property. We have not carried out any investigation into past or present uses of either the property or any neighbouring land to establish whether there is any potential contamination from these uses or sites to the subject property and have therefore assumed that none exists. Should it however be established subsequently that contamination exists at the property or on any neighbouring land or that the premises have been or are being put to a contaminative use, this might reduce the values now reported.

No evidence of flooding was detected at the time of the inspection, but we have not carried out any Environmental Searches. However a basic check on the Environment Agency website indicates that the property is in an area at high risk of surface water flooding. (This may have implications on the cellar). Your legal adviser must obtain the usual Environmental Searches (including those relating to flood risk) before exchange of contracts and report back any adverse issues to you before exchange of contracts. We should warn that where properties are in a potential flood risk zone, it can sometimes be more difficult to obtain contents and buildings insurance, and where this is available premiums and excesses might be loaded.

We cannot comment on Environmental Search reports as they are not specific to the property and the information contained therein is too general for us to provide any meaningful comment. Should you be concerned as to the aspects of the environmental report, we suggest that the matter be referred to the originator of the report for more detailed comment.

10. MATTERS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISER

10.1 Planning And Building Regulations

No specific searches have been made and we are unaware of any town planning proposals, redevelopment schemes, statutory, mining or environmental matters likely to affect the property adversely. It is however essential that your Legal Adviser makes the usual written pre-contract enquiries of the appropriate authorities.

An opening has been created in the assumed load bearing partition which originally separated the front and rear reception rooms. As this property has been subject to alteration work, it is essential that a check is made by your legal adviser to ensure that all appropriate Building Regulation approvals have been sought and issued, and that final completion certificates for the work have been issued by the local authority. If any shortcomings in the paperwork are traced, we will be pleased to comment further.

Some of the works required at the property will need to be undertaken in accordance with the Party Wall Act and your legal adviser should advise you fully in this regard.

10.2 Roads

We assume that the frontage road is made up and adopted, and that no maintenance costs can be claimed from you as a homeowner.

We have no knowledge of any road improvements or major road proposals likely to affect the property adversely. Again, no specific searches have been made and it is essential that your legal adviser makes written pre-contract enquiries of the Highway Authority.

10.3 Guarantees and any other matters

Your legal adviser should enquire whether there are any outstanding guarantees for example with regard to double glazing, any damp and timber treatment works etc. and arrange for the benefit of these to be transferred on legal completion.

Your legal adviser should carry out the normal checks to ensure retention of any rights or guarantees which should be reserved for you and clarify any liability which you may have to others in respect of:

1. The rights for you to enter onto adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundaries and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter upon your property.

2. The ownership of perimeter boundary walls and fences.

3. The existence of adequate wayleaves and easements to serve the services of the property.

4. Usual enquiries regarding drainage particularly any responsibility for the maintenance or upkeep of any jointly used parts of the system.

We have no knowledge of any onerous or restrictive covenants affecting the property, but your legal adviser should make the usual written pre-contract enquiries.

11. SUMMARY & REPAIRS

Summary

The house is in a dated condition requiring general modernisation and redecoration together a significant amount of repair, both internally and externally.

The property is considered to be a reasonable proposition for purchase provided that you are prepared to accept the cost and inconvenience of dealing with the various repair and improvement works reported.

Repairs

We have set out in this report details of various defects, some of which can be dealt with during the course of normal maintenance, but others requiring urgent and immediate attention are as follows, although in no particular order:-

1. Specialist attention to rising dampness to ground floor walls and all allied repairs.

2. Penetrating dampness was noted in a number of places. The cause must be urgently identified and appropriate remedial works carried out to prevent recurrence.

3. Upgrading of sub-floor ventilation.

4. All timbers in proximity to areas of dampness must be exposed and examined. Any timbers found to be rotted or otherwise defective must be urgently cut out and replaced.

5. Reduction of high external ground levels adjoining the outside walls.

6. In view of distortion to the kitchen rear wall and bedroom 3 back wall, the concealed beam below the bedroom 3 back wall must be exposed and examined by a competent contractor and replaced with a steel beam if found to be rotted or otherwise defective.

7. External brickwork repairs to prevent penetrating dampness internally and possible vermin entry.

8. Repointing of external brickwork including where the kitchen side doors have been blocked up.

9. Parapet repairs.

10. The dangling satellite dish above the rear addition roof requires taking down for safety reasons.

11. Repair/replacement of defective rainwater fittings.

12. Chimney breast support in the rear addition roof space requires upgrading where the horizontal metal plate is sagging.

13. Given significantly sloping floors which in places are springy, floor and sub-floor timbers must be exposed and examined by a damp/timber treatment specialist. All necessary repair/replacement works required must be urgently implemented.

14. Woodworm was evident to various timbers. A timber treatment specialist must check accessible timbers throughout the property and undertake appropriate remedial treatment to prevent recurrence.

15. The brick piers in the cellar which support the ground floor timber flooring need some repair, and must be provided with DPCs. Timbers directly above should be checked for any signs of rot.

16. Upgrading/rewiring of the electrical installation for safety reasons in accordance with latest IEE Regulations.

17. Repair of the leaking cold water rising main stopcock.

18. The heating and hot water installation must be inspected and tested by a Gas Safe Register qualified heating engineer and any necessary works carried out to ensure satisfactory and safe operation.

19. The rear garden right hand boundary wall is slightly unstable and requires urgently rebuilding for safety reasons.

20. A competent contractor must check the ground floor WC for water leakage and undertake all necessary repairs to ensure watertightness, and all allied repairs.

It is essential that competitive estimates are obtained in respect of <u>all</u> repairs listed in this Report and remedial work revealed by further investigations, before exchange of contracts, so that you are fully aware of your liability before proceeding. Your attention has been drawn to matters which require further investigation and you must accept risk for any areas which are not investigated as recommended.

It should be borne in mind that when the structure is opened up for repairs, additional defects may be found and furthermore, as previously mentioned, no liability can be accepted for any deterioration in the property's condition after the date of our inspection.

This report must, however be read as a whole and although we have stressed certain items which we consider to be essential repairs, other items mentioned in the report must not be ignored.

We must advise you, however, that should you decide to exchange contracts without obtaining estimates and without waiting for responses from your legal advisers with regard to matters raised in this Report, you have to accept the risk of adverse matters that may come to light and result in a need for expenditure.

There may also be other matters of a personal choice which will involve expenditure in the future and these should be borne in mind as you consider whether or not to buy this property.

12. MARKET VALUATION

Not applicable. (A Market Valuation has not been requested).

13. BUILDINGS INSURANCE COVER / REINSTATEMENT COST

We estimate that the current cost of reinstating the property in its present form is £294,000 (Two hundred and ninety four thousand pounds). This figure is in accordance with the BCIS House Rebuilding Index and should be reviewed at least annually, and also reviewed to reflect any works of refurbishment and/or future extension.

The external floor area of the accommodation is approximately 127 square metres. This floor area does not include the cellar.

14. LIMITATIONS

We would advise you that this report is made and is deemed to be accepted on the understanding it is based on the following assumptions:-

Unless otherwise expressly stated, we inspected the property whilst it was fully occupied and furnished with floors covered by fitted carpets, etc. and no searches have been made for hidden defects except where specifically stated.

We remind you that we have not inspected parts of the property which were covered, unexposed or inaccessible, or which could not be inspected without removing carpets or fittings. We are unable to report that such parts are free from rot or beetle infestation and we would add that the absence of flight holes to accessible timbers does not necessarily mean that there is no infestation as beetles could be present within. We can therefore accept no responsibility for any defects that were hidden at the time of our inspection.

Unless otherwise expressly stated in the report we assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. Asbestos has historically been commonly used in buildings as it has a number of valuable properties and only presents a health hazard in situations where it has been damaged and fibres become airborne and are inhaled. The cost of removal of asbestos from properties can be extremely expensive. Unless otherwise stated, from our superficial examination the use of asbestos was not immediately apparent, although obviously we cannot comment on covered, unexposed or inaccessible areas and are therefore unable to confirm as to whether asbestos has been used somewhere in the property. If you require more information or a more detailed investigation then we would recommend you contact the Environmental Health department at the Local Authority or The Asbestos Removal Contractors Association.

Unless otherwise stated, there was no evidence of Japanese Knotweed within the plot of the subject property. Japanese knotweed is a rapidly spreading destructive weed which can prove difficult, and costly, to eradicate. (Eradication by specialist firms is usually the only option and should not be attempted by unskilled persons or on a DIY basis).

It should be noted that we have not inspected beyond the boundaries for Japanese Knotweed, for example in other properties gardens/land.

Furthermore we cannot comment whether there is any hidden Japanese Knotweed present, for example concealed by bushes or vegetation, or cut back to ground level, nor can we comment if there is any Japanese Knotweed concealed beneath outbuildings such as sheds, garages etc.

It should be noted that virtually all boroughs have a Japanese Knotweed problem and you should be aware that knotweed is a rapid grower and can appear in gardens suddenly where it has spread from other plots. Because of this please be aware that Japanese knotweed can sometimes be present when a purchaser moves in even though there was no evidence of a problem weeks or months earlier when the survey was undertaken. We cannot therefore accept responsibility for the presence of concealed Japanese Knotweed or the cost of any eradication works.

Liability for opinions expressed in this report are restricted to you as the instructing client and are not extended to any third party who may become acquainted with its contents without our prior knowledge or consent, copyright observed.

Our final comment in this Report is to perhaps confirm the obvious by saying that this property was built before current Building Regulations came into force. As a consequence, the property does not and cannot comply with all modern standards or expectations and you can but accept the situation. Where significant disabilities exist, they have been mentioned in our Report. It is also fair to confirm to you that regulations are not retrospective and you cannot be required to make changes to the property just because it does not

meet current design and detail criteria, unless the breach or detail is likely to cause danger or be construed as a Health and Safety issue, in which event we will have commented as appropriate.

Nigel T Grossman, FRICS
Nigel Grossman Surveying Ltd

Date of report: 18 May 2019

Front

Front

Front

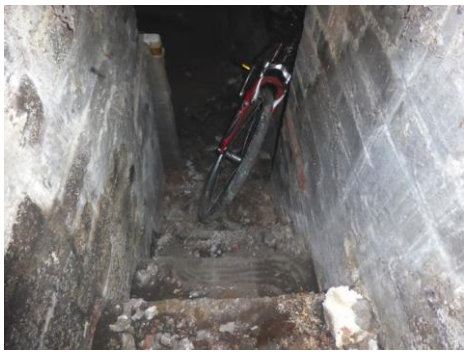
Front

Front roof slope/parapet

Main chimney stack

LH parapet

Perished pointing, front wall



External access to cellar (security risk)

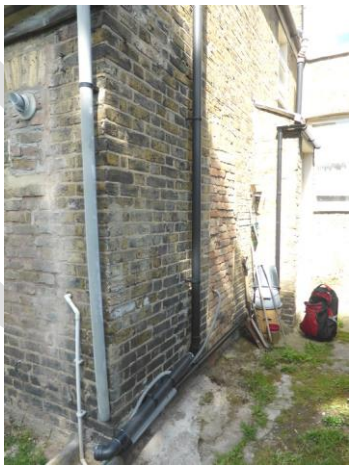
Rear

Rear

Rear

Rear

Kitchen roof and defective parapet



Rear addition LH flank

LH flank and kitchen door

Rear reception room back wall

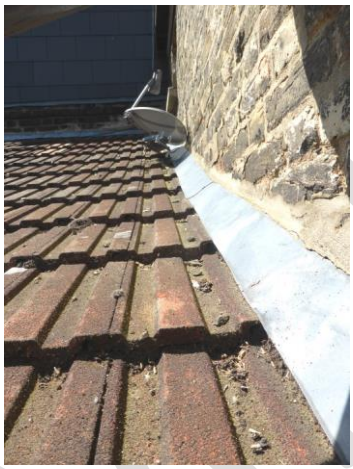
Rear addition LH flank

Rear

Rear roof slope

Rear roof slope

Rear addition roof



Rear addition roof and front flashing

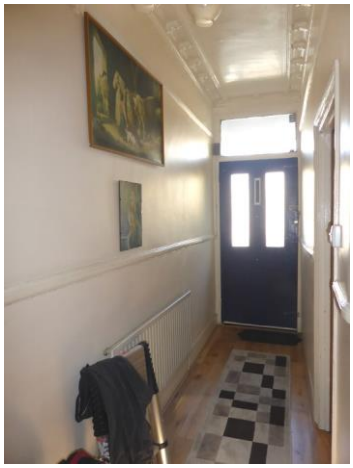
2nd stack

Rear garden

Defective rear garden RH boundary wall

Kitchen RH side roof

Bay roof



GF hall

GF hall

Front reception room

Front reception room

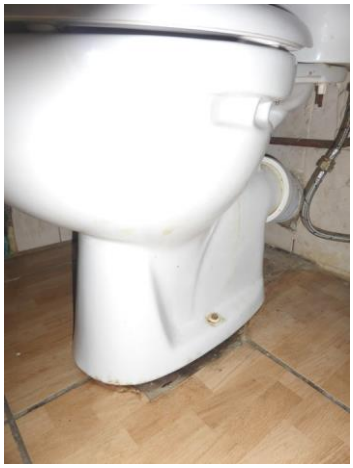
Front reception room

Rear reception room

Rear reception room

Rear reception room

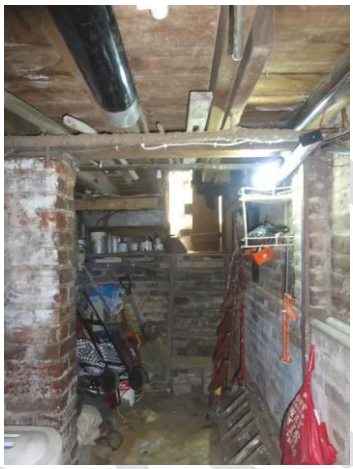
GF bathroom



Possible WC leak

Kitchen

Cellar



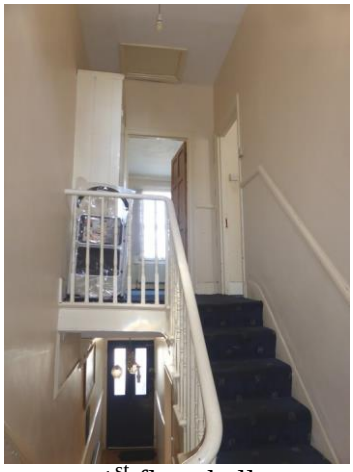
Cellar

Cellar

Cellar

Cellar

Cellar

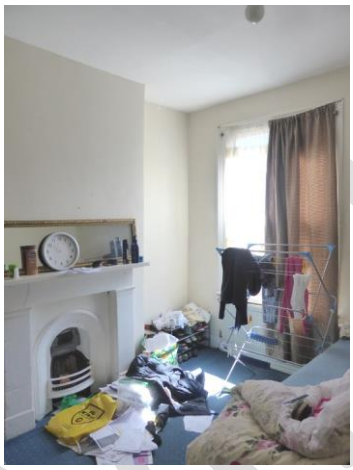


1st floor hall

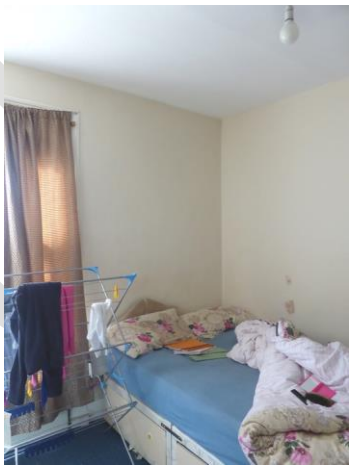
Penetrating damp hall rear wall

Bedroom 1

Bedroom 1



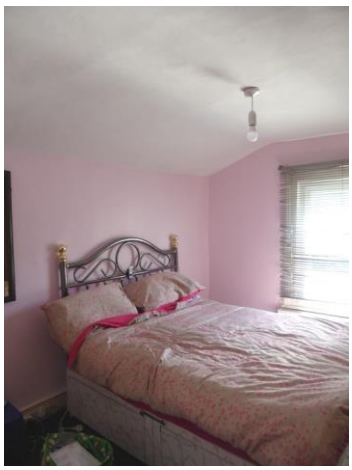
Bedroom 2



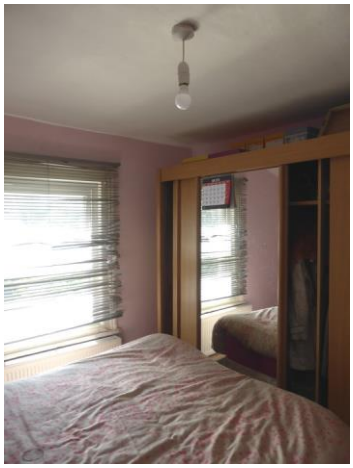
Bedroom 2

Bedroom 2

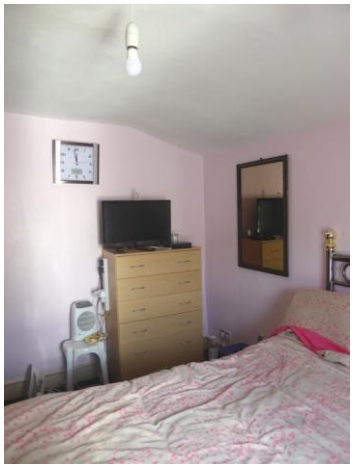
Bedroom 2, hazardous socket



Bedroom 3



Bedroom 3



Bedroom 3

1st flor bathroom

1st floor bathroom

Damp cellar joist above brick pier

Gaps in rear addition wall

Rear addition roof space

Rear addition roof space and gallows brackets

Rear addition roof space


Main roof space


Main roof space


Main roof space


Main roof space


Main roof space


Main roof space