BUILDING SURVEY
REPORT

-on-

47 Shirlock Road
London
NW3 2HR

-for-

Mr Chrisopher Kelly
128 St Paul's Road
London
N1 2LP

-inspected on-

22nd August 2024

HIP Property Services Ltd.
31 Fellbrook, Richmond Upon Thames TW10 7UN
Tel/Fax. 020 8240 6477 email: darrylhenson@gmail.com
Registered in England No. 5609038

CONTENTS

INSTRUCTIONS

In accordance with your emailed instructions to carry out a building survey at the above Property I can confirm that I have now had the opportunity to inspect and trust that you find the Report below satisfactory.

I must point out that it is not practical for a surveyor to remove items of the building fabric such as door or window frames or wall linings nor is it practical to take down skirting boards behind which such defects as dry rot, woodworm etc may manifest themselves, sometimes before showing on the surface. It must be emphasised that woodwork or other parts of the structure including the foundations, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible, have not been inspected; I am therefore unable to report that any such parts of the Property are free from defects.

In undertaking to provide this Report on this Property it is a strict condition of the Agreement that the work is undertaken on behalf of the named Client and that the Report shall not be shown to any person (other than the Solicitor of that Client), without the written consent of Darryl Henson - Chartered Surveyor. All statements and expression of opinion contained within this Report are provided on the strict understanding that they are for the benefit of the addressee only. The named Client understands that Darryl Henson accepts no liability in contract or tort to any person other than the client.

1. INTRODUCTION

All directions referring to left and right in this report are as if one were standing in Shirlock Road facing the front of the Property.

You will appreciate that due to the nature of this pre-purchase investigation, the examination of the Property has been restricted to those parts of the building that were accessible, exposed or uncovered at the time of inspection. The inspection was from ground level externally and internally. Plaster was not removed to expose concealed surfaces, heavy items of furniture were not moved, nor were fitted carpets or floor coverings lifted. Every effort has been made to draw conclusions about the construction and condition of the Property from the surface evidence visible at the time of 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, such as cracked panes of glass or loose door or window furniture, some of which would not significantly affect the value of the property.

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

2. LIMITATIONS OF INSPECTION

The Selling Agent provided access to the Property, which was unoccupied but fully furnished and cluttered with stored goods. Fitted floor coverings were also in place throughout; these were not lifted.

3. DATE OF INSPECTION AND WEATHER

The Property was inspected on 22nd August 2024, at which time it was fine and dry.

4. GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Property comprises a four-storey, mid-terrace house erected circa 1880. It has not been extended or significantly altered, although the rear dormer is unlikely to be original. The upper flight of stairs appears to be original, so it is likely there was an attic room. The house has been used as bedsits so three of the rooms are fitted out as kitchenettes and there are multiple gas and electricity meters.

Photo 1 – Front elevation

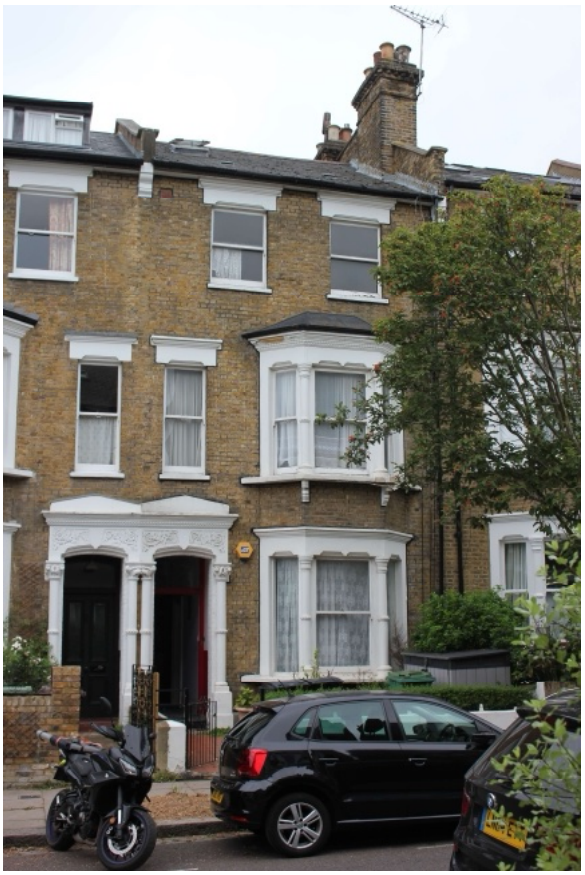
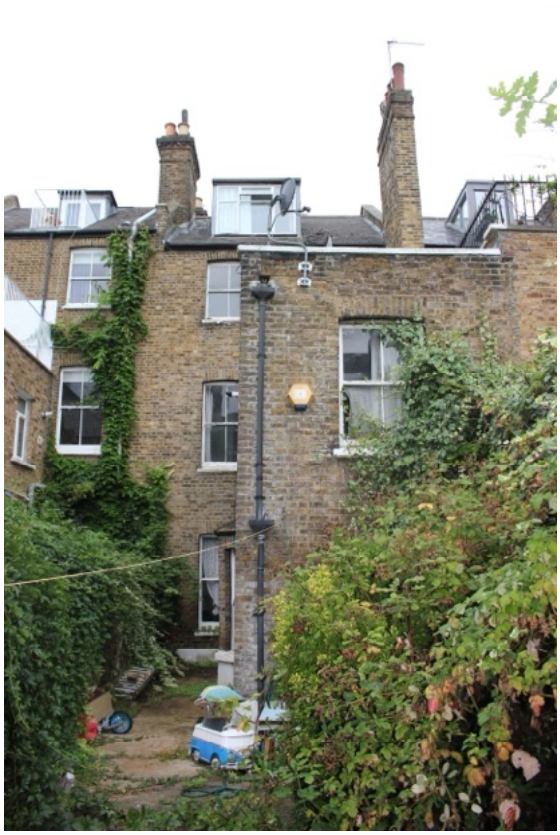


Photo 2 – Rear elevation



The building is of conventional construction with solid, load-bearing, brick main walls under a pitched, timber framed and artificial slate clad roof. Internally, the walls and partitions are of part masonry, part timber framed construction and the floors are predominantly of suspended timber.

The house is in the Mansfield Conservation Area. It is set on a flat plot, in an established residential area, with easy access into London's West End, the City of London and to public transport connections. Hampstead Heath and Gospel Oak Overground Stations are each 8-10 minutes' walking distance. Hampstead Heath is also within easy walking distance.

ACTION: Your solicitor should set out the implications of owning a property in a conservation area in terms of any proposed extensions, alterations, and in terms of general maintenance.

The building faces c.71º east, north east; the rear of the building has a west, south westerly aspect.

ACCOMMODATION

Ground floor: entrance hall with access to the cellar, which runs beneath the hall, mid-living room, rear living room, dining room, and kitchen.

First floor: split level landing, front bedroom (1), mid-bedroom (2), separate WC, bathroom with bath and boiler (water heater), and rear bedroom (3) (currently arranged as a kitchenette).

Second floor: landing, front bedroom (4) and rear bedroom (5).

Third floor: landing, bedroom (6), and box room (currently arranged as a kitchenette).

The gross internal floor area (GIA), excluding the cellar, is 208m² (2,238ft²).

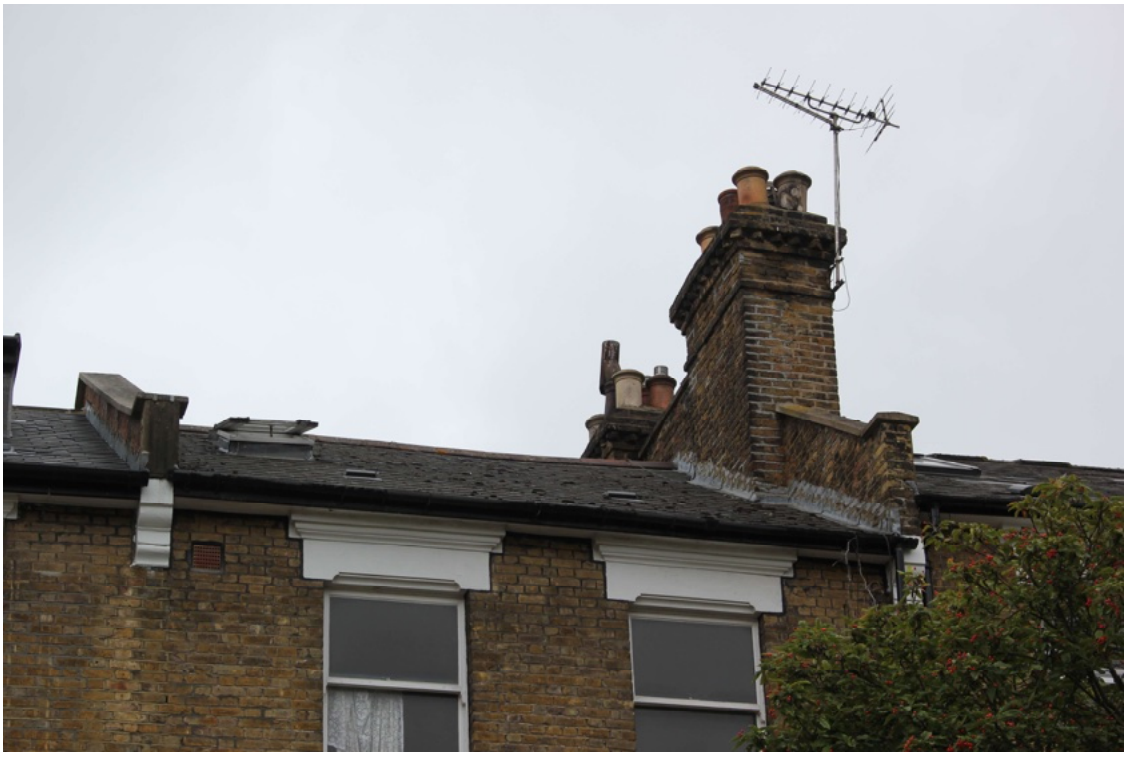
Externally: the front garden has a dept of 2.8m from the road to the bay and a width of 5.3m. The rear garden has a depth of 12.5m and a width similar to that of the front garden. There is no garage, no garage space and there are no outbuildings, although there is a small, single-storey, lean-to type structure housing a WC to the front of the rear garden.

5. EXTERNALLY

5.1 Roofs

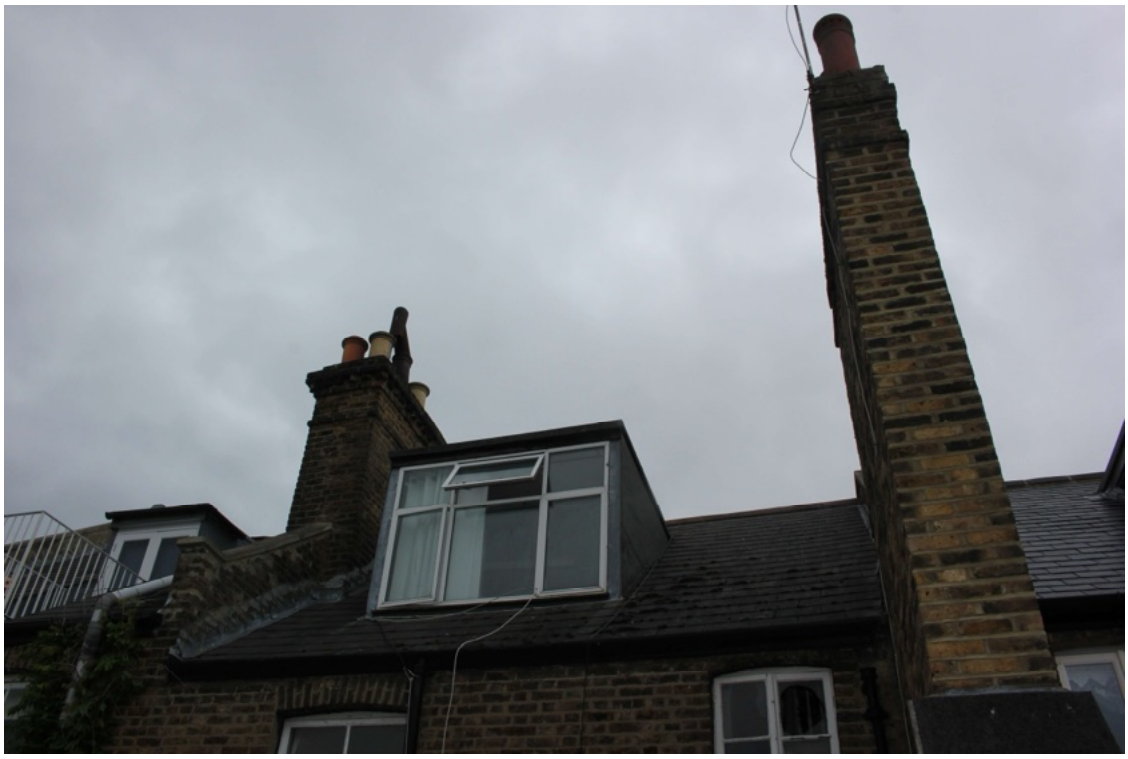
The front and rear main roof slopes are timber framed and covered with synthetic slates. The slates are discoloured as a result of the bleaching action of direct sunlight and will continue to fade to a pale cement-grey colour. There is also a light covering of moss. The deterioration is not entirely satisfactory for aesthetic purposes, but is superficial and no major remedial works are required. No slate slippage or other significant defects are apparent and no signs of leakage were noted when the corresponding ceilings and upper walls internally were inspected and tested with an electronic moisture meter, at least no dampness due to slate defects.

Photo 3 – View to the front main roof slope



The front and rear roof slopes are generally uneven/undulating. This is due to deflection of the timber joists under loading over the years. The distortions are not such as to cause any immediate concern, particularly given the lightweight nature of the artificial slates compared to the original natural slates. It would, nevertheless be prudent to have the roof timbers inspected as and when exposed to carry out refurbishment works. Some minor strengthening works may be required and works will be required to straighten the rafters to achieve a level surface for plastering the ceilings in the third-floor accommodation.

Photo 4 – View to the rear main roof slope and dormer



The junctions between the main roof slopes and the 'party parapet' walls are protected by lead flashings. These are secure as far as could be seen from ground level and front the rear flat roof. However, significant dampness was noted to the upper left party wall within the third-floor box room/kitchenette and the third-floor stairwell. This is due to downward migration of rainwater via the brickwork to the parapet wall externally above, probably prior to application of a cement render coating and provision of the existing lead flashing.

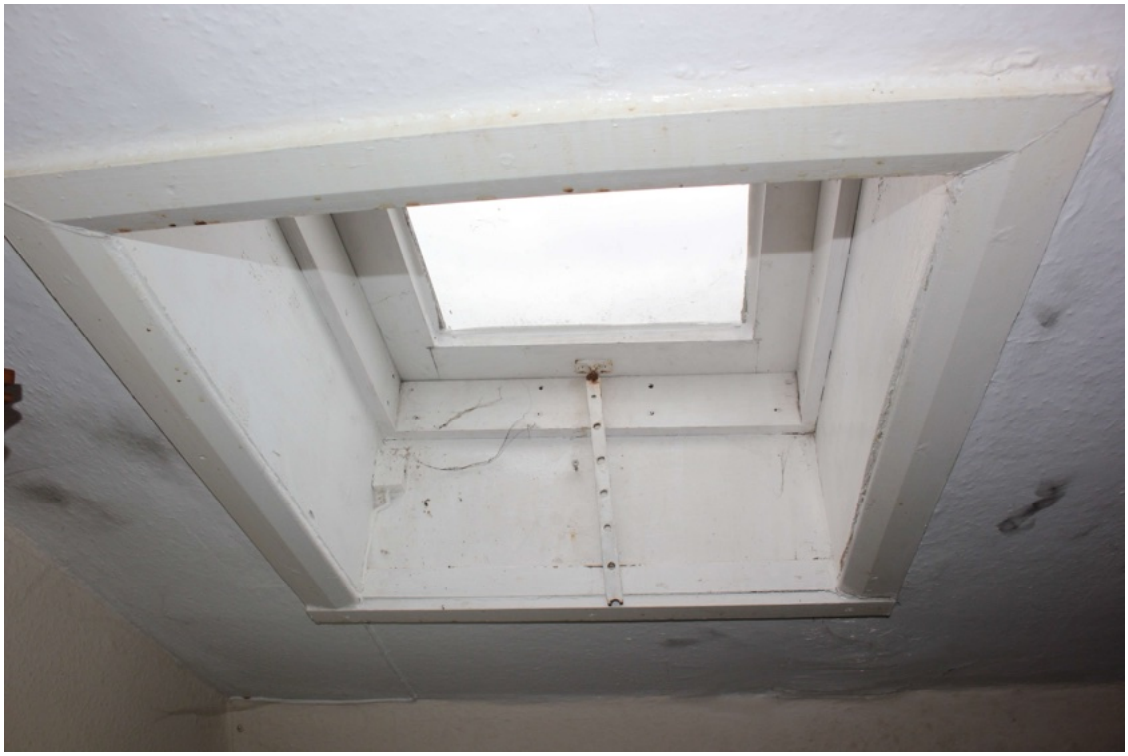
ACTION: The damp-affected wall plaster to the whole of the left party wall at third-floor level should be hacked off and replaced with sand/cement mortar containing a waterproofing additive. This will reduce the risk of residual dampness spoiling any new decorative finishes applied. The right party wall and upper chimney breast to the right side of the third-floor bedroom have already been rendered. The left party wall internally will require replastering and, of course, redecoration after.

The rear dormer is not well detailed and the window is a relatively flimsy fixture that does nothing to enhance the character or value of the house. Also, the dormer structure and window will have poor thermal insulation characteristics.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of replacing/upgrading the rear dormer. You may wish to enlarge the dormer and provide doors and a balcony similar to those to neighbouring properties.

The roof light in the front roof slope is a poor-quality painted softwood fixture, which is not double-glazed and the opening casement is ill-fitting.

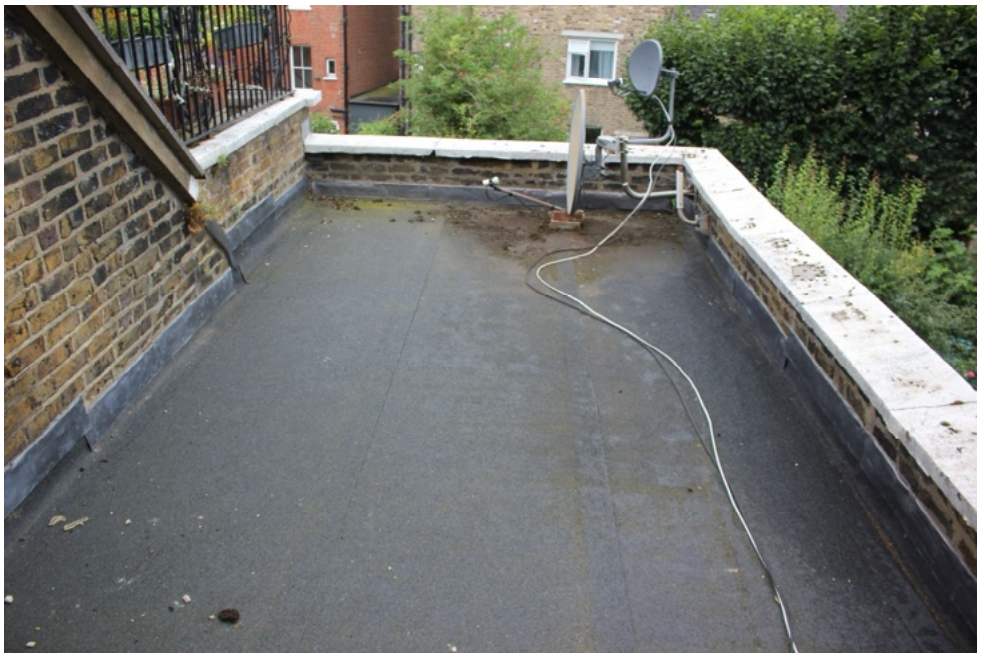
Photo 5 – View to the poor quality front rooflight



ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the front rooflight replaced. You may wish to provide a larger unit and you may also wish to have a further rooflight inserted to allow more daylight into the third-floor bedroom.

The roof over the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house is flat, timber framed and covered with bituminous felt. Bituminous felt is not a particularly durable material, with a life in use of 25-30 years depending on detailing and exposure to direct sunlight. The existing felt appears to have been replaced within the last 10-15 years and is in fair condition. There is extensive damage and staining to the ceilings in the first-floor rear bedroom and bathroom. However, this is likely to have occurred prior to the provision of the existing felt, and the staining was found to be dry. The two-storey section of the house should, in any event be demolished because of structural movement noted in Section 5.4 below, at which time, of course, the roof will have to be rebuilt and re-covered.

Photo 6 – View to the flat roof over the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house



ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the roof over the two-storey rear-projecting section of the house rebuilt, at which time it is assumed that you will wish to enlarge the window opening off the landing providing access to the flat roof so that you can insert doors, provide decking or other pedestrian covering and use the flat roof as a deck. You will need to provide handrails to the perimeter of any deck/terrace and works to provide a terrace will require planning and building control consents.

The small roof to the front bay is pitched, timber framed and covered with glass reinforced plastic. This is free from obvious defect.

5.2 Chimneys, Flashings and Soakers

There are three, substantial, shared, brick-built chimneys, one to the front right, one to the rear right, and a further, very tall structure, to the left of the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house. All three are reasonably 'plumb' (level in a vertical plane) and structurally sound. The brickwork and 'pointing' are weathered in places, as one would have expected given their age and exposed positions, but not such as to warrant any immediate remedial works.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of localised repointing of the chimneys as and when scaffold is in place to undertake external redecoration and refurbishment of joinery etc. The redundant pots/flues should be capped with terracotta cowls at this time.

5.3 Gutters (including parapets, parapet gutters, valleys, and downpipes)

Inadequate disposal of rainwater can cause serious problems in a building, including damp, timber decay and structural movement. Keeping gutters and downpipes clean and in good condition is always important.

The gutter serving the front bay structure is an old cast iron fitting, which is corroded and has been leaking for some time given the staining to the walls beneath, the damage to the first-floor bay window sill, and the dampness noted to the walls in the bay in the front living room.

ACTION: The gutter and downpipe serving the front bay should be replaced as soon as is practicable.

The gutters and downpipes at the lower edges of the main roof slopes, which are PVC, are free from significant defect. However, staining is apparent to the left side of the rear gutter suggesting that the gutter is misaligned and leaking.

ACTION: The gutters serving the main roof slopes should be cleaned and realigned as necessary as and when scaffold is in place to undertake roof works recommended above.

ACTION: You should, of course, allow for the cost of replacing the gutters and downpipes to the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house as and when this is rebuilt.

5.4 Main Walls

The front and rear main walls are of substantial 317mm thick, solid, load-bearing brick. Those to the two-storey, rear section of the house are of 225mm thick brick.

The walls to the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house have been subject to significant settlement, hence the open joints between the tall chimney and rear main wall, see Photo 7 overleaf, the open joints internally between the ceiling and walls to the lower first-floor landing and the rear main section of the building, see Photo 8, and distortion to the floors in the first-floor rear bedroom and bathroom. This movement appears to be the result of an inherent design defect, i.e., the footings/foundations to the rear section of the house simply do not appear to be deep enough. Similar movement can be seen to neighbouring properties. In fact, the rear sections of the immediate neighbouring properties have been rebuilt. In addition, and more seriously, the right and rear walls to the two-storey section of the house, and particularly the right wall, are lacking lateral restraint at first-floor level and have bowed outward some 50mm-60mm. To exacerbate the issues with this part of the building, the brick-on-arch to the kitchen window has partially collapsed leading to deflection of the brickwork adjacent, see Photo 9.

Photo 7 – Previously filled and open joints between the rear main wall and tall chimney

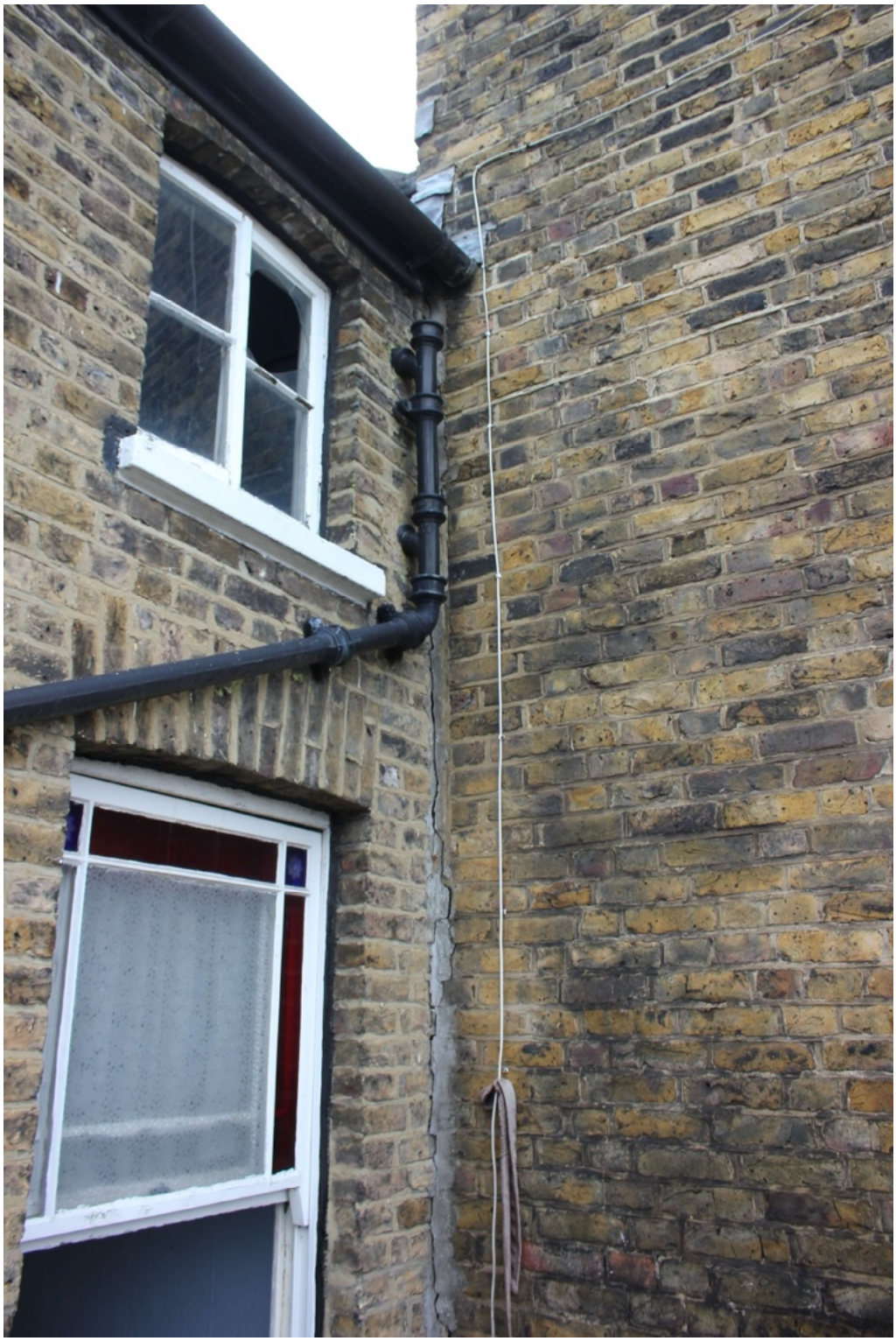


Photo 8 – Open joint at the ceiling and rear main wall in the lower hall

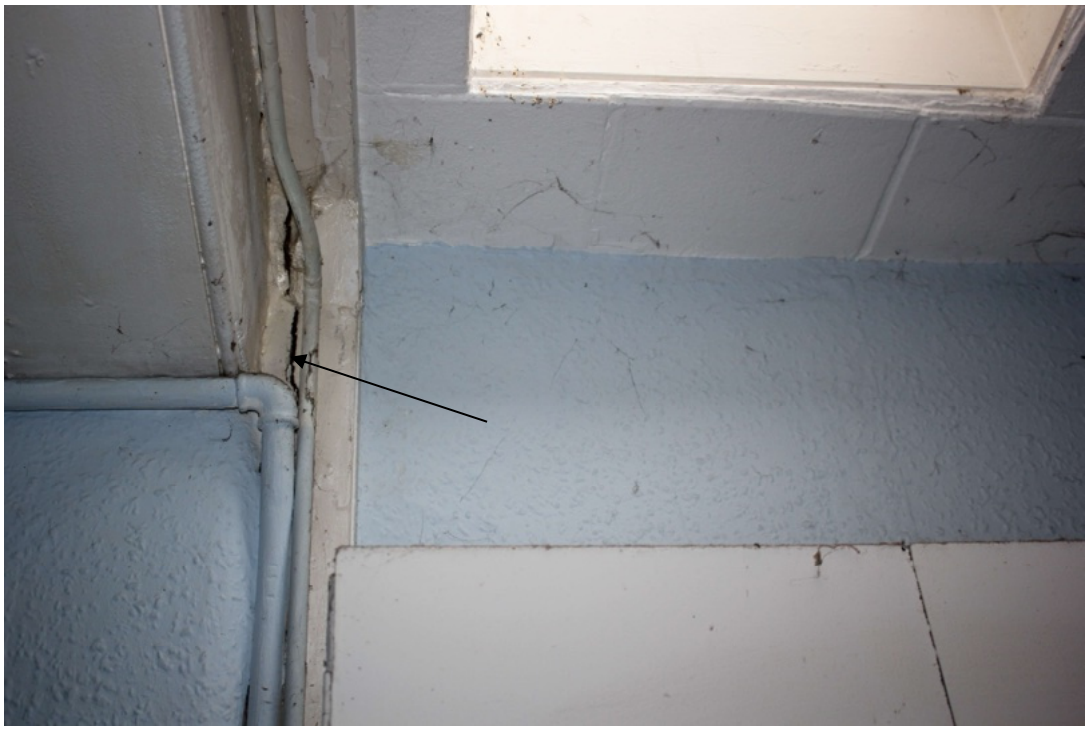


Photo 9 – Partially collapsed arch to the kitchen window with unstable brickwork adjacent

Taking all issues into consideration, the only economically viable option in this instance is to demolish the right and rear walls and interior of the two-storey, rear projecting section of the building, leaving only the party wall, chimney and chimney-breasts, and to rebuild the external walls on new foundations. It would be preferable to rebuild the party wall as this is likely to be built on relatively shallow footings and may, therefore, be subject to 'seasonal movement' at least, (movement caused by seasonal fluctuations in the moisture content of the underlying subsoil), but this would, of course, be a very disruptive undertaking that would require the consent and cooperation of the neighbour. An alternative would be to underpin the party wall, but this too would be costly and complicated. The rebuilt walls should serve to stabilise the structure as a whole and rebuilding or underpinning of the party wall is not considered essential.

ACTION: You must allow for the cost of having the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the building rebuilt.

The rear main wall has been subject to some settlement, which has cracked the brickwork above the window opening above the first-floor mid-bedroom. The crack has been filled with cement-rich cement mortar, see Photo 10 below. The movement has also caused distortion of the rear window openings, deflection of the sills to these window openings, and distortion of the brick courses beneath the sills, see Photo 11 overleaf. The sills are misaligned from the horizontal by some 25mm-30mm across their width.

Photo 10 – Filled crack to the rear main wall above the first-floor mid-bedroom window opening

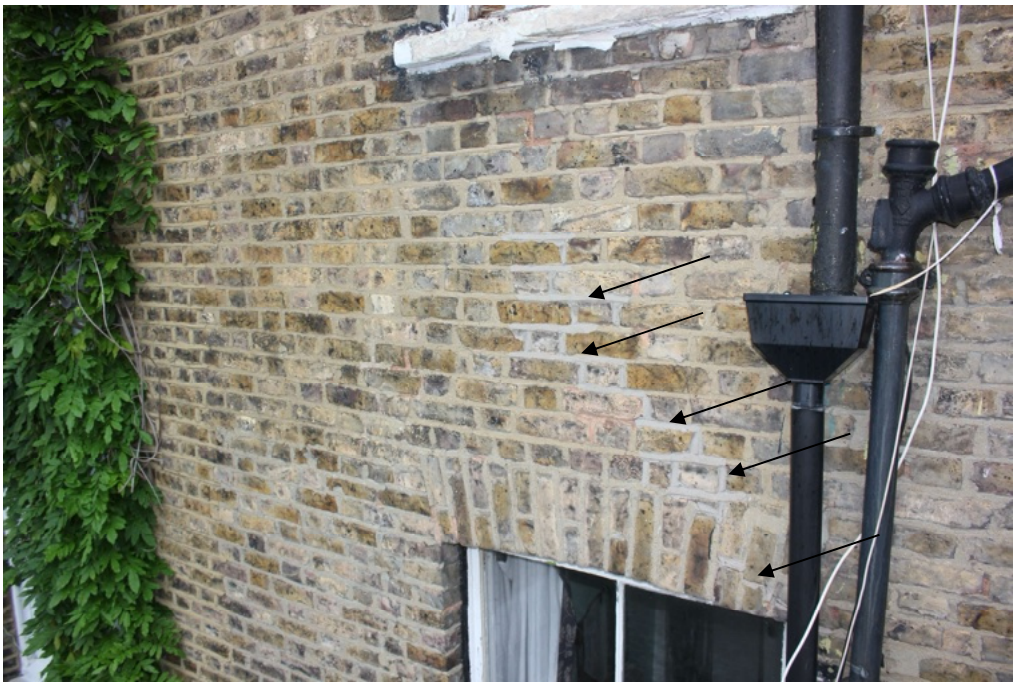
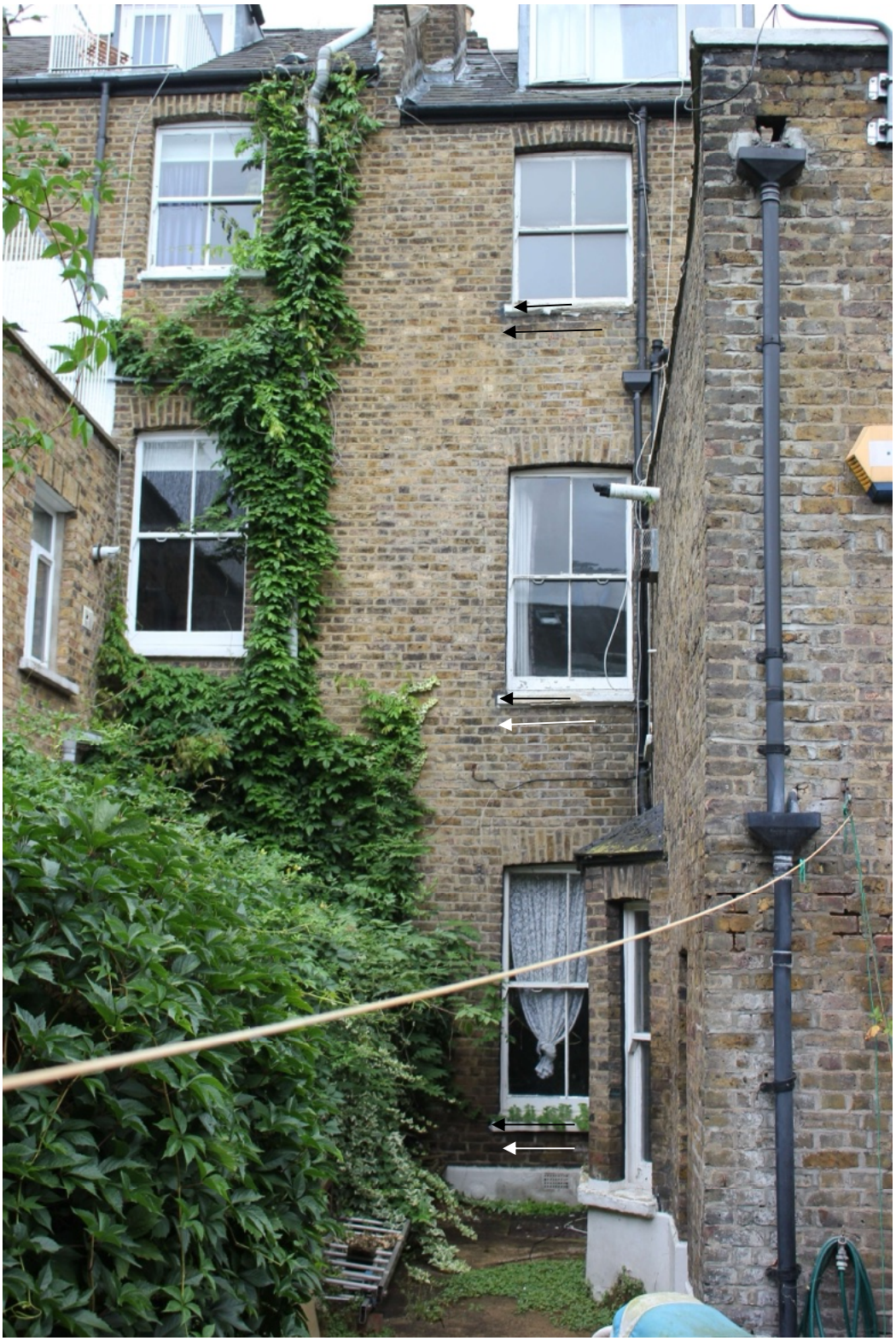


Photo 10 – Settlement of the rear main wall



The settlement noted to the rear main wall is likely to be the result of uneven consolidation of underlying subsoil shortly after the house was built, although the drain runs from the rear of the building, underneath this wall, and out toward the front of the Property, and it is possible that leakage from this has caused or contributed to the movement. There is no sign of recent or ongoing movement and no major remedial works are essential. However, the drains should be checked and some works are required to the external masonry.

ACTION: You should have the drains inspected with the aid of a CCTV camera, ideally prior to exchanging contracts, so that you are able to assess the extent of any drain repairs required. A further allowance should be made for having the distorted and weathered window sills to the rear bedrooms re-formed.

Further movement was noted to the two-storey, front bay structure. The bay walls have settled slightly and have pulled away from the adjoining front wall, see Photos 11 & 12 below. This is likely to be the result of seasonal fluctuations in the moisture content and, therefore, volume of the underlying subsoil, probably exacerbated by moisture uptake from a nearby street tree, which has recently been removed. The movement, whilst noticeable, is not likely to worsen to a significant degree in the future and no major remedial works, i.e., underpinning or rebuilding, are required. Some relatively inexpensive, wall tying would nevertheless be prudent.

Photo 11 – Cracked bay sill

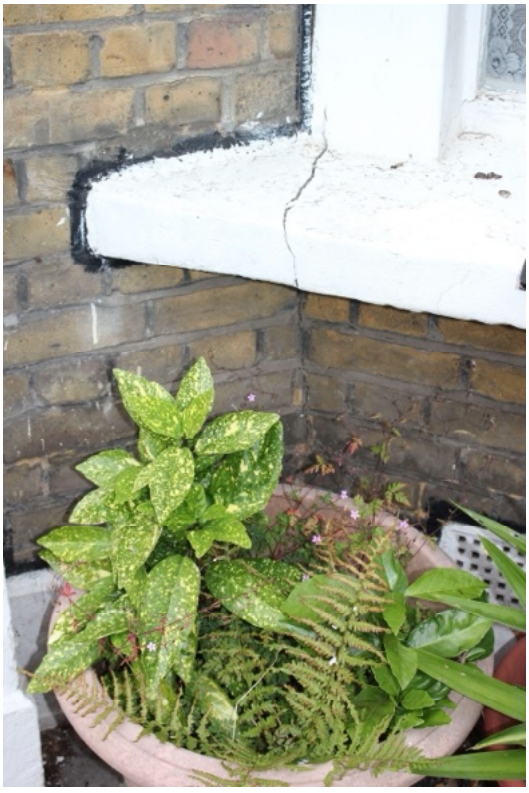
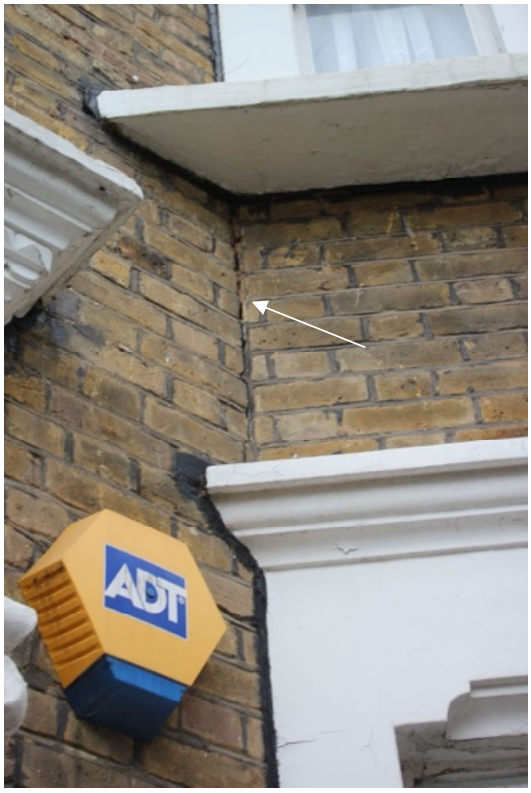


Photo 12 – Crack at bay wall junction



ACTION: It would be prudent to insert Helibar wall ties into the joints between the front bay walls and the front main wall at ground and first-floor levels. These would be inserted into the brick joints and would be an invisible strengthening measure. The street tree, which would have exacerbated fluctuations in the moisture content of the underlying subsoil has, as mentioned, already been removed.

Elsewhere, no signs of recent or significant structural movement or settlement were noted. Also, the brickwork and pointing are in fair condition bearing in mind the age of the building, and except where cracked and distorted as mentioned above. An allowance should simply be made for localised repointing as and when scaffold is in place to undertake other external works, including works to the windows and decorations.

5.5 Damp Proof Course(s) and Sub-Floor Ventilation

A damp-proof course (DPC) is a waterproof layer built into, or formed within, the walls to prevent ground dampness from rising. The building, as constructed, incorporates a slate type DPC. This has been breached in places, including the lower walls in the front bay, although the bulk of the dampness here is likely to be the result of persistent leakage from the gutter serving the bay roof. Dampness was also noted to the lower rear wall in the mid-living room, and all the lower walls in the rear dining room and kitchen.

ACTION: A specialist contractor should be employed to inspect the lower walls throughout the house and treat those noted as damp as necessary. This will entail removal of the existing damp plaster and replacement with sand/cement render containing a waterproofing additive. Obviously, only the left party wall and chimney-breast in the dining room will have to be treated because all the other walls in the dining room and kitchen are to be rebuilt.

Ventilation is required to provide air circulation to the sub ground-floor timbers thereby reducing the likelihood of wood rot and insect attack. There are, to this end, two airbricks through the lower front bay wall, plastic vents under the adequate, but the vents under the front doorstep are not entirely satisfactory for aesthetic purposes.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of replacing the plastic air vents under the front doorstep and it would, at this time, be prudent to provide a further airbrick through the lower central section of the front bay wall to improve the subfloor ventilation as far as is practicable without major works.

5.6 External Joinery (including windows, doors, and frames)

The windows and external doors are, in the main, of painted softwood. These have been neglected and require a comprehensive overhaul. The window sashes are ill-fitting; they have either been painted up and are inoperable, or are loose and will readily admit draughts. A number of sash cords are also broken or missing. The left and right sashes to the front ground-floor window have simply been replaced with less than attractive fixed panes of glass. Also, dry rot was noted to the lower sash and frame to the in the second-floor rear bedroom window.

ACTION: You must allow for the cost of having the windows and external doors overhauled, or replaced. Given the conservation area status, you may well be compelled to retain and overhaul the windows to the front, and it is assumed that you will wish to provide new sashes to the left and right of the ground floor front bay. It will almost certainly be cost effective to replace the windows and doors to the rear of the house. Those windows and doors to the two-storey rear section of the house should, in any event, be replaced as and when this structure is rebuilt. The rot-affected window to the second-floor rear bedroom will also have to be replaced.

The rear dormer window is an old aluminium framed fixture set in a timber frame. The frame is rot-affected and the window is an unattractive feature.

It is assumed that you will wish to have the rear dormer re-worked and the window replaced with doors and a small balcony. The dormer should, in any event, be replaced as recommended in Section 5.1 above.

5.7 Exterior Decorations and Paintwork

The external decorations have been neglected.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the external joinery and masonry prepared and brought forward for complete external redecoration as and when scaffold is in place to attend to other external items, including overhaul of the joinery, and gutter and dormer works.

6. INTERNALLY

6.1 Roof Spaces

The third-floor accommodation occupies the main roof space. It is not, therefore, possible to inspect the undersurfaces of the slates, the timber battens upon which these are hung, or the supporting timber framework and it is not possible report on their condition. Relatively minor undulations were noted to the front and rear main roof slopes when viewed externally, and the ceilings and partitions are very uneven. The distortions noted are not such as to cause significant concern, but some strengthening of the rafters is likely to be required.

You should, as mentioned, allow for the cost of having the rafters to the main roof slopes strengthened and straightened, not least to obtain an even finish to new ceiling plaster in the third-floor accommodation, and to accommodate any new rear dormer to be provided.

6.2 Ceilings, Walls, and Partitions

The ceilings are, in the main, original lath and plaster surfaces. These are in generally poor condition.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the ceilings throughout the third-floor accommodation replaced and, of course, all the ceilings in the two-storey, rear-projecting section will have to be replaced following demolition and reconstruction works. Elsewhere, the ceilings will, at the very least, require plaster skimming to obtain a decorative finish commensurate with the value of the house.

No significant cracks, weaknesses or distortions were noted to the internal walls or partitions, which are of part masonry, part timber framed construction.

The internal wall plaster is old and extensively perished.

ACTION: You must allow for complete replastering throughout in conjunction with damp proofing and rewiring works.

6.3 Fireplaces, Flues and Chimney-Breasts

The original fireplaces have been removed. The replacement fireplaces are of inferior quality and are fitted with gas fires, which are old and unsafe.

ACTION: You should allow for removal of the existing fireplaces and gas fires and for sealing and venting the chimney-breasts/flues. You may wish to provide new feature fireplaces, but you should note that the flues will require lining for use with solid fuel or new gas appliances.

6.4 Floors

The floors are, in the main, of suspended timber board upon timber board and joist construction. The kitchen floor is of concrete.

The floors have been subject to some general deflection under loading over the years. However, the distortions are no more than would be expected for a property of this type and age, and no major strengthening or stiffening works are essential. Some levelling works may be required, particularly if you would like to provide hardwood floor coverings, which tend to highlight any distortions. The floors are generally firm under foot and adequate to bear normal domestic loading.

It goes without saying that the floors in the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house will require replacement following demolition and reconstruction of the external walls to that part of the building. You may, at this time, wish to alter floor levels slightly to obtain improved finished floor to ceiling heights, particularly in the kitchen and rear living/dining room, where they are currently somewhat restricted.

6.5 Internal Joinery (including doors, staircase, and built-in fitments)

The internal joinery is very poor, although the stairs are firm under foot and the balusters, handrails and newel posts are secure.

ACTION: It is assumed that you will wish to upgrade the internal joinery throughout, including the provision of new fitted wardrobes in the bedrooms, new internal doors, new and additional fitted cupboards and shelving units in the living rooms and new kitchen fittings.

6.6 Internal Decorations

ACTION: You should allow for complete internal redecoration.

6.7 Cellars and Vaults

There is a small cellar that runs under the hall. Access to this was restricted by stored goods. It is, however, clear that the walls and floor are damp, as would be expected unless they had been 'tanked' (lined with an impermeable membrane).

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the cellar walls lined with an impermeable membrane and for the provision of a new damp proof membrane and floor screed if you require dry cellar storage space.

6.8 Dampness

The ceilings, walls and floors were tested where practicable with an electronic moisture meter.

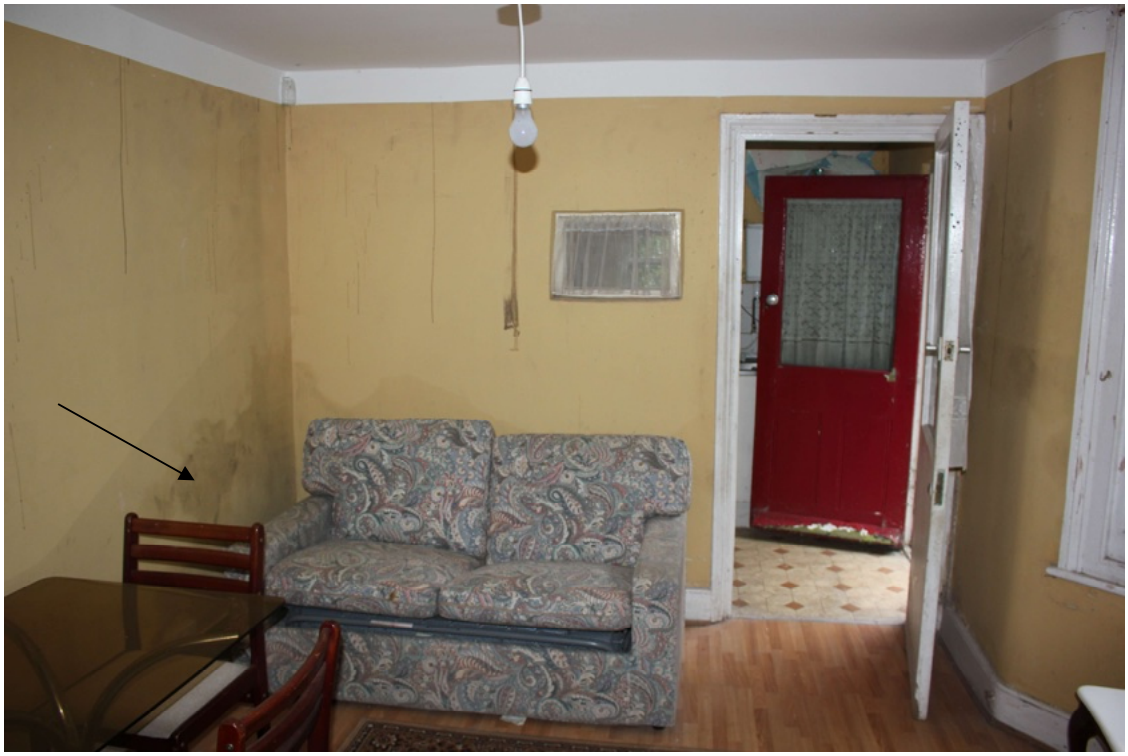
Extensive dampness was noted to the left party wall in the box room/kitchenette, landing, and stairwell at third-floor level. The comments in Section 5.1 above should be noted in this respect.

Dampness was noted to the walls beneath the windows in the rear bedrooms, the upper landing, and mid-living room. This is due to rainwater ingress via weathered and distorted external windowsills, exacerbated by rot to external window frames, poor seals between window frames and the walls in which they are fitted, and neglected external paint finishes. The sills should, therefore, be re-formed as set out in Section 5.4 above. The windows should be overhauled, and the external joinery should be prepared and brought forward for complete redecoration.

Significant dampness was noted to the front walls in the front living room. This is, in the main, due to a persistent leakage from the gutter and downpipe serving the front bay, although there may be an element of rising dampness to the lower walls. The comments in Sections 5.3 & 5.5 above should be noted in this respect.

Dampness was noted to the lower chimney-breast and left wall in the rear living/dining room, see Photo 13 below. This chimney-breast and the left party wall will be retained while the adjoining walls are demolished. You should, therefore, allow for the cost of damp treatment, as set out in Section 5.5 above. The chimney flues should be opened up and swept to remove all damp soot and detritus prior to this damp proofing work.

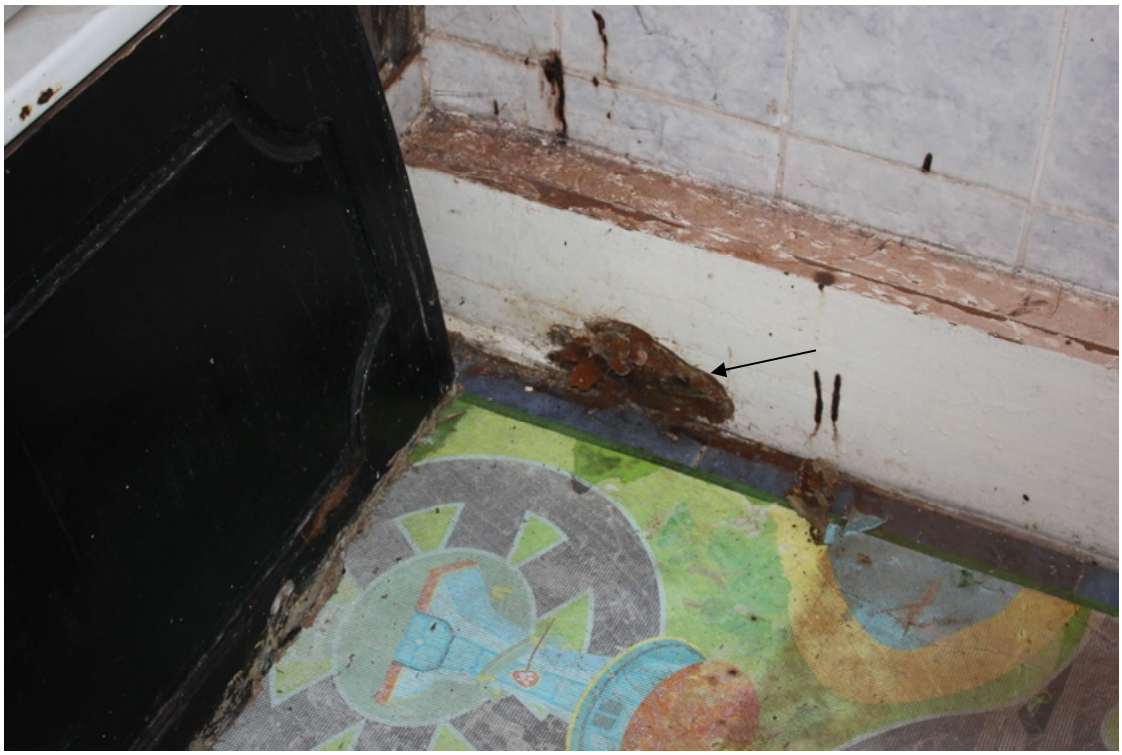
Photo 13 – Dampness to the lower chimney-breast and left wall in the rear living/dining room.



6.9 Wood-Boring Beetle Infestation, Rot and Other Timber Defects.

A dry-rot fruiting body was noted to the skirting board in the first-floor bathroom, see Photo 14 overleaf. Further dry rot was noted to the lower sash and frame to the window in the second-floor rear bedroom. The floor to the first-floor bathroom will, obviously, be removed as and when the walls to the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house are demolished. The rot-affected timbers to the window in the second-floor rear bedroom should be cut out and replaced, or the window should simply be replaced as set out in Section 5.6 above.

Photo 14 – Dry rot in the skirting board to the first-floor bathroom.



There is an increased risk of wood-boring beetle attack and fungal decay where timbers abut the damp walls in the ground-floor accommodation.

ACTION: The floor timbers throughout the ground-floor accommodation should be opened up (they will, in any event, have to be opened up to facilitate rewiring and the installation of central heating pipework), and treated with a combined insecticide and fungicide as a precautionary measure. Any rot-affected, or otherwise defective timbers revealed should be cut out and replaced at this time.

6.10 Insulation

The third-floor accommodation is effectively built into the roof space, hence the sloping ceilings. The depth of void available for the provision of thermal insulation is, therefore, restricted and equates to the depth of the rafters, i.e., c.120mm only. The third-floor accommodation will, therefore, be subject to relatively rapid heat loss whether these voids are insulated or not. Clearly, the provision of thermal insulation in the sloping ceiling/roof voids and, indeed, the currently inaccessible eaves voids would significantly improve matters.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of removing all the ceiling and wall plaster in the third-floor accommodation and for the provision of rigid, foil-backed, expanded-foam insulation cut to fit snugly between the rafters prior to replastering.

The solid external main walls will not comply with current regulations with regard to thermal insulation but should, nevertheless, provide a reasonable degree of protection against heat loss.

ACTION: You may consider the provision of insulation to the external main walls internally given the extent of refurbishment and replastering required.

The windows and external doors are fitted with single panes of glass only. Clearly, the provision of double-glazing would reduce heat loss. However, the house is in a conservation area and there may be some resistance to the provision of double-glazing, particularly to the front of the house.

6.11 Asbestos and Other Deleterious Materials

No asbestos or other deleterious materials were noted, or are likely to have been used in the construction of this building.

7 SERVICES

7.1 Electricity

Mains electricity is connected to the house. There are multiple electricity meters throughout the house; the main fuse board is in the cellar.

The wiring is clearly dated and does not comply with current regulations. Also, the lighting and power socket provision is well below the standard one would expect for a house of this value.

ACTION: You must allow for the cost of complete rewiring, including the provision of new and additional power sockets, new and more sophisticated lighting circuits, including 5amp lamp sockets where appropriate, a mains-connected heat/smoke detection system and a new consumer unit. The supply system should also be rationalised, including the removal of all the old meters.

7.2 Gas

Gas is supplied from the mains. There are multiple gas meters and numerous dated and unsafe gas fires.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of rationalizing the gas supply system and the provision of all new gas plumbing off a new meter.

7.3 Cold Water, Plumbing and Sanitary Fittings

Mains water is plumbed directly to the various outlets in the house. There is no cold-water storage facility as far as could be seen. Again, the water supply system is dated, including the incoming main, which is an old lead pipe.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the incoming water main replaced with a new 25mm or 30mm-diamter pipe, which will improve flow rates and allow a greater choice of hot water system. The plumbing throughout the house should also be replaced, along with the provision of new sanitary ware.

7.4 Space Heating and Hot Water

There is no central heating system and only a combination boiler in the first-floor rear bathroom to provide hot water.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of providing a new hot water and space heating system.

7.5 Underground Drains

Rain and foul waters are gathered into a drain that runs from the rear garden, beneath the house, and out toward the front of the Property where it will ultimately connect to the public sewers in the road.

The drains visible via the chamber to the rear of the house were found to be free flowing. However, it appears that the drain has been displaced and it is almost inconceivable that it is not leaking.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of having the drains inspected with the aid of a CCTV camera. An allowance should be made for replacing that section of drain in the rear garden as and when the rear-projecting section of the house is demolished and rebuilt.

7.6 Other

There are no other services, e.g. no intruder alarm, no data/AV systems, no mechanical ventilation and heat recovery system, no air conditioning, and no leak detection system.

8. GENERAL

8.1 The site

The front and rear gardens have been poorly maintained.

ACTION: You should allow for the cost of clearing the gardens and for re-paving and planting out. A further allowance should be made for repointing the rear boundary walls at least.

8.2 Garage and Outbuildings

There is no garage and there are no outbuildings other than the single-storey structure housing an external WC. This will have to be demolished along with those external walls to the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house.

9. LEGAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS

The Property is in an established residential area forming part of a conservation area. I am not aware of any planning or road schemes likely to adversely affect the property but it is obviously important for your solicitor to make the usual formal enquiries of the appropriate authorities.

9.1 Tenure

The Property is freehold.

9.2 Roads

Shirlock Road is made up and adopted. There will be no direct liability for future road charges.

10 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Property comprises a four-storey, mid-terrace house of conventional design and construction, originally built to a good standard, except where otherwise mentioned below, using durable materials. The house has very clearly been maintained to a minimal standard only and needs modernisation and refurbishment.

The two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house and, indeed, other two-storey sections to houses in the same terrace, were built on inadequate footings/foundation, unable to deal with the loadings imposed and seasonal fluctuations in the moisture content of the underlying subsoil. There is a further inherent design defect, that of a lack of lateral restraint to the external walls. These factors, combined with a weakness to the lintel and arch over the kitchen window opening mean that remedial works to the walls are no longer economically viable. You must, therefore, allow for the cost of having the two-storey rear-projecting section of the house, with the exception of the party wall and chimney-breast, carefully demolished and rebuilt.

Further structural movements were noted in the form of settlement of the front bay structure and settlement of the rear main wall. Some precautionary tying in of the bay walls is required to deal with the former. The drains running under the house should be inspected with the aid of a CCTV camera and repaired as found necessary to address the latter.

The house has not, as mentioned, been well maintained, and requires extensive refurbishment, including the following:

1. The damp-affected wall plaster to the whole of the left party wall at third-floor level should be hacked off and replaced with sand/cement mortar containing a waterproofing additive. The wall will require replastering thereafter.

2. Allow for strengthening and straightening of the rafters forming the main roof structure, not least to form an even surface onto which new plasterboards can be fixed.

3. You should allow for the cost of replacing/upgrading the rear dormer. You may wish to enlarge the dormer and provide doors and a balcony similar to those to neighbouring properties.

4. Replace the front rooflight. You may wish to provide a larger light and you may also wish to have a further rooflight inserted to allow more daylight into the third-floor bedroom.

5. The roof over the two-storey rear-projecting section of the house should be rebuilt, at which time it is assumed that you will wish to enlarge the window opening off the landing providing access to the flat roof, provide doors, and decking or similar so that you can use the flat roof as a terrace. You will need to provide handrails at the perimeter of the roof and works to provide a terrace will require planning and building control consents.

6. You should allow for the cost of localised repointing of the chimneys as and when scaffold is in place to undertake external redecoration and refurbishment of joinery etc. The redundant pots/flues should be capped with terracotta cowls at this time.

7. The gutter and downpipe serving the front bay should be replaced as soon as is practicable.

8. The gutters serving the main roof slopes should be cleaned and realigned as necessary as and when scaffold is in place to undertake roof works recommended above.

9. The gutters and downpipes to the two-storey, rear-projecting section of the house should be replaced as and when this is rebuilt.

10. You should have the drains inspected with the aid of a CCTV camera, ideally prior to exchanging contracts, so that you are able to assess the extent of any drain repairs required.

11. The distorted and weathered window sills to the rear bedrooms should re-formed.

12. It would be prudent to insert Helibar wall ties into the joints between the front bay walls and the front main wall at ground and first-floor levels.

13. A specialist contractor should be employed to inspect the lower walls throughout the house and treat those noted as damp as necessary. This will entail removal of the existing damp plaster and replacement with sand/cement render containing a waterproofing additive. Only the left party wall and chimney-breast in the dining room will have to be treated because the other walls in the dining room and kitchen are to be rebuilt.

14. You should allow for the cost of replacing the plastic air vents under the front doorstep and it would, at this time, be prudent to provide a further airbrick through the lower central section of the front bay wall to improve the subfloor ventilation as far as is practicable without major works.

15. You must allow for the cost of having the windows and external doors overhauled, or replaced. Given the conservation area status, you may well be compelled to retain and overhaul the windows to the front, and it is assumed that you will wish to provide new sashes to the left and right of the ground floor front bay. It will almost certainly be cost effective to replace the windows and doors to the rear of the house. Those windows and doors to the two-storey rear section of the house should, in any event, be replaced as and when this structure is rebuilt. The rot-affected window to the second-floor rear bedroom will also have to be replaced.

16. You should allow for the cost of having the external joinery and masonry prepared and brought forward for complete external redecoration.

17. You should allow for the cost of having the ceilings throughout the third-floor accommodation replaced and, of course, all the ceilings in the two-storey, rear-projecting section will have to be replaced following demolition and reconstruction works. Elsewhere, the ceilings will, at the very least, require plaster skimming to obtain a decorative finish commensurate with the value of the house.

18. You must allow for complete replastering throughout in conjunction with damp proofing and rewiring works.

19. You should allow for removal of the existing fireplaces and gas fires and for sealing and venting the chimney-breasts/flues. You may wish to provide new feature fireplaces, but you should note that the flues will require lining for use with solid fuel or new gas appliances.

20. It is assumed that you will wish to upgrade the internal joinery throughout, including the provision of new fitted wardrobes in the bedrooms, new internal doors, new and additional fitted cupboards and shelving units in the living rooms and new kitchen fittings.

21. You should allow for complete internal redecoration.

22. You should allow for the cost of having the cellar walls lined with an impermeable membrane and for the provision of a new damp proof membrane and floor screed if you require dry cellar storage space.

23. The floor timbers throughout the ground-floor accommodation should be opened up (they will, in any event, have to be opened up to facilitate rewiring and the installation of central heating pipework), and treated with a combined insecticide and fungicide as a precautionary measure. Any rot-affected, or otherwise defective timbers revealed should be cut out and replaced at this time.

24. You should allow for the cost of removing all the ceiling and wall plaster in the third-floor accommodation and for the provision of rigid, foil-backed, expanded-foam insulation cut to fit snugly between the rafters prior to replastering.

25. You may consider the provision of insulation to the external main walls internally given the extent of refurbishment and replastering required.

26. You must allow for the cost of complete rewiring, including the provision of new and additional power sockets, new and more sophisticated lighting circuits, including 5amp lamp sockets where appropriate, a mains-connected heat/smoke detection system and a new consumer unit. The supply system should also be rationalised, including the removal of all the old meters.

27. You should allow for the cost of rationalizing the gas supply system and the provision of all new gas plumbing off a new meter.

28. You should allow for the cost of having the incoming water main replaced with a new 25mm or 30mm-diamter pipe, which will improve flow rates and allow a greater choice of hot water system. The plumbing throughout the house should also be replaced, along with the provision of new sanitary ware.

29. You should allow for the cost of providing a new hot water and space heating system.

30. You should allow for the cost of having the drains inspected with the aid of a CCTV camera. An allowance should be made for replacing that section of drain in the rear garden as and when the rear-projecting section of the house is demolished and rebuilt.

31. You should allow for the cost of clearing the gardens and for re-paving and planting out. A further allowance should be made for repointing the rear boundary walls at least.

It is strongly recommended that you obtain firm contractors' estimates for the items listed above prior to exchanging contracts so that their cost and inconvenience can be reasonably reflected in the price ultimately to be paid.

In addition to the above, all the comments in this Report should be borne in mind.

11 BUILDING REINSTATMENT COST

The external floor area of the accommodation is approximately 237m².

The cost of reinstating the Property in its current form is estimated to be approximately £830,000 (eight hundred and thirty thousand pounds).

I trust that this report provides you with the information that you require. Should you have any queries or if I may be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

D Henson MRICS **15th September 2024**