

SPECIFIC DEFECTS REPORT

Relating to Wall Dampness

Modern Apartment



**FOR
A Client**

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INDEPENDENT CHARTERED SURVEYORS

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INTRODUCTION AND INSTRUCTION

We have been instructed by Mr A Client to prepare a report related to dampness to the walls.

We have carried out a visual inspection of the property.

The instructions have been carried out under our standard terms and conditions which are available on our website and were forwarded to you prior to our confirmation of instruction.

It was an overcast day at the time of our inspection and it had been snowing heavily in the morning.



Apartment



Apartment block



Mould to Pillow



Mould

SYNOPSIS

The property has extensive mould to the external walls (only visible to the top of the main bedroom wall at the time of our inspection) and the shower curtain.

The builders have been back to look at the problem twice without satisfactory solution; they have agreed to return again.

We have been instructed to produce an independent report identifying the cause of the problem.

We have carried out a visual inspection of the rooms of the apartment and inspected externally from ground level. We have also viewed the roof.

We have drawn our evidence from this visual non evasive inspection. We have had to make various assumptions on the construction of the property as we have not had access to drawings.

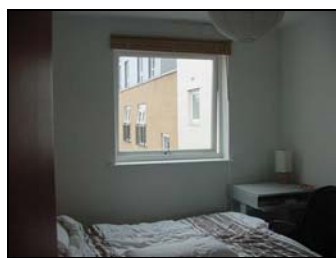
Internal Layout of Property

The property consists of:

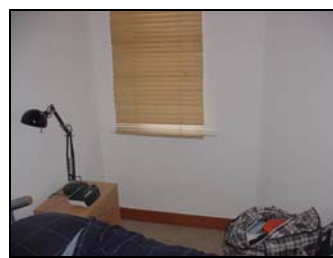
- Two Bedrooms
- Bathroom
- Lounge
- Joining Corridor



Lounge



Middle Bedroom



Bedroom



Bathroom

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Executive summaries are always “dangerous” as they try and encapsulate relatively complex problems in a few precise and succinct words. Having said that here is our executive summary and recommendations:

From our discussions with yourself and general visual investigations we believe there to be several issues with the property.

Roof

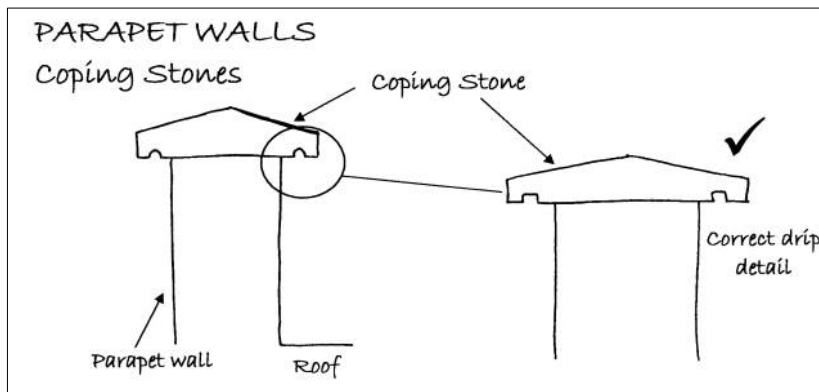
Water would appear to be coming in from the parapet wall at roof level. This we believe relates to the incorrect width of coping stone which has also not been laid to a suitable fall. The incorrect width means that the drip is too close to the brickwork and therefore discharges any rain down the face of the brickwork. This we believe to be a particular problem to the rear of the parapet wall. Unfortunately we do not know what construction is beneath and we believe that dampness is being transferred down via the inner course of brick.



Roof and parapet wall



Location of drip next to wall



Coping Stone

Coping Stone Defined

One of the finishing or protective stones that form the top of an exterior masonry wall or building.

We note that mastic has been used to cover the joints on the coping stone of the parapet wall and also to form a drip on the inner lip of the coping stone. We consider this to be a temporary solution, if indeed it does solve the problem.



Where mastic drip has been added



Mastic Drip



Shows mastic drip has been added



Mastic seal used to seal joints of coping



Mastic used to seal joints



Mastic used to seal joints



Mastic used to seal joints



Mastic used to seal joints

ACTION REQUIRED: Builder to replace all coping stones or over clad them. We would also recommend a lead flashing is placed on the inner wall to stop dampness ingress.

It was noted that the parapet walls were a darker colour, indicating that they are damp. This is likely to cause spalling to the brickwork, in turn causing an accelerated maintenance problem and the need to renew the parapet wall if work is not carried out.

Spalling Defined

Spalling occurs to brick or stone when water penetrates the surface and via freezing and thawing starts to cause deterioration to the surface. This in turn allows further water penetration and the surface breaks up further. This ultimately can lead to water damage or structural damage to the area.

Roof Finish

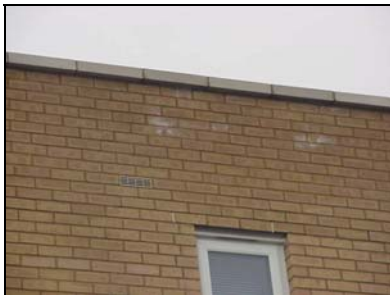
Unfortunately we were unable to see the roof finish due to a layer of pebbles and the insulation.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that the waterproof membrane of the roof is exposed and checked.

Efflorescence

Efflorescence was noted to the brickwork. Efflorescence gets its name from concentrated salt deposits forming a crystalline layer which some say look like small flowers.

Efflorescence is where a white dust is deposited on the surface; this is where moisture will dissolve soluble salts from building materials such as calcium sulphate, which then evaporates through the permeable brick surface and the salts will be left behind forming deposits leaving a white dust on the walls. This is a certain sign that there is dampness in the brickwork. Expanding salt crystals in these locations result in a fracture to the material, which results in spalling, as mentioned above.



Efflorescence visible on parapet walls



Efflorescence. Also note the weep holes to the lintels above the windows



Adjoining properties Efflorescence

Internally

We have used two types of damp meters identified in the inspection notes to the end of this report. The meter readings indicated dampness levels ranging from double to treble that found in joining materials with the higher readings being obtained approximately half a meter to a meter from the ceiling level.

ACTION REQUIRED: Water ingress to be stopped from roof level with the replacement of the coping stone and checking the flat roof for leaks.

Throughout the property we would recommend increased ventilation, for example the extract in the bathroom could be increased to 150mm. We would also check that the extracts are extracting to the exterior of the property; there were no obvious signs of where they ventilate to.



Extract fan
Need to identify where the
extract fan discharges to

NHBC and Building Company Correspondence

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that you write immediately (within the next 24 hours) sending recorded delivery explaining that you have problems with the property and that you believe them to be more than just condensation, although it may be a contributory factor.

We would also refer you to our website which has various articles about the NHBC.

CONSTRUCTION SUMMARY

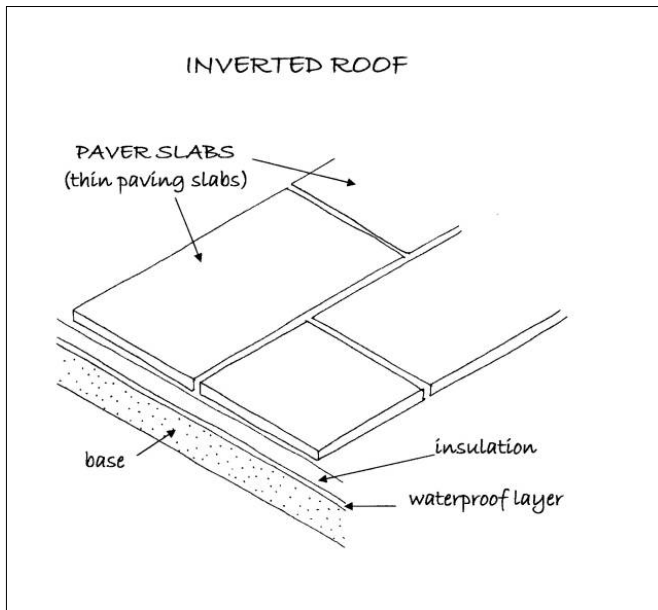
External

Main Roof:	Inverted warm roof (see sketch below) with a brick parapet wall surrounding the roof
Gutters and Downpipes:	Plastic hopperheads and plastic downpipes
Soil and Vent Pipe:	Assumed internal
Walls:	External finish – stretcher bond brickwork (assumed)
Structure:	Possibly timber frame (see sketch below), although floors felt concrete underfoot, which would not be a typical modern timber frame construction
External Joinery:	Painted softwood double glazed timber windows
Foundations:	Not seen, but we would expect them to be stripped concrete foundations or a pile or raft foundation

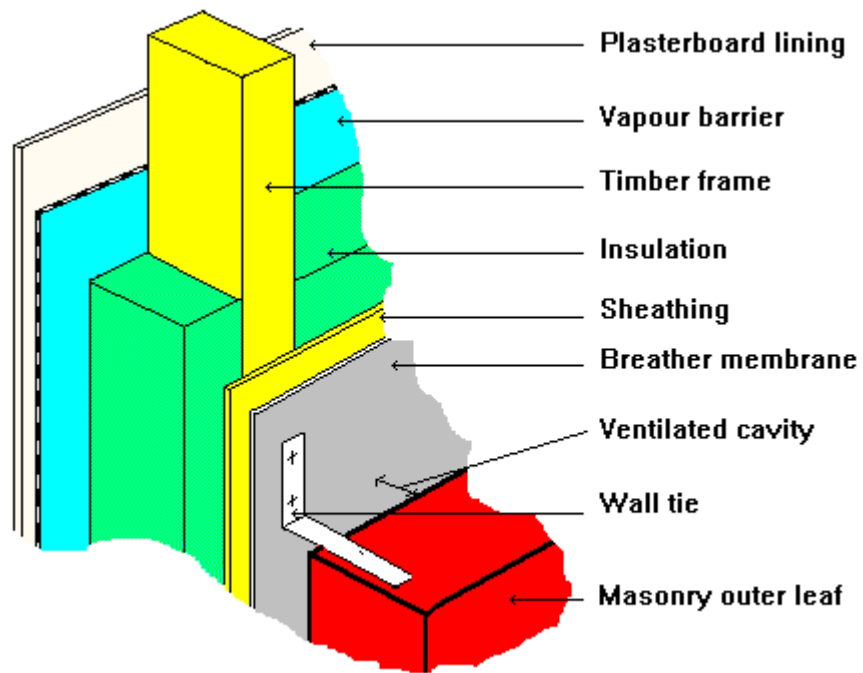
Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard (assumed) Paint finish unknown, i.e. whether it is water based, oil based or has a plastic element
Walls:	The property is believed to be dry lined or of timber frame construction and the room dividing walls are studwork (assumed) Paint finish unknown (as ceilings above) with a mould retardant paint to the kitchen and shower rooms
Floor:	Solid underfoot, assumed concrete

We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.



Inverted Roof



TYPICAL TIMBER FRAME CONSTRUCTION

INSPECTION

Our inspection has been specifically related to the damp wall issues detailed below:

- An external visual inspection of the front wall – rear wall not inspected as it would form the neighbouring property's wall.
- A visual inspection of the roof
- Internal meter readings taken with a protimeter and a Gann meter

SURVEY FINDINGS

Meter Readings

We take three meter readings:

1. Approx 300mm from floor level
2. Approx One metre from floor level
3. Approximately 1.5m – 2m

Lounge / Kitchen (all directions given as you face the property externally)

Location	Meter Readings
Front Right Hand Corner	18, 18, 70
Front Left Hand Side of Bay	18, 20, 34

Bedroom (Middle Room)

Location	Meter Readings
Left Hand Side (right hand corner from within the room)	18, 17, 38

End Bedroom

Location	Meter Readings
Right Hand Side of Window	21, 21, 22
Left Hand Side of Window	21, 22, 19
Angular Wall	17, 18, 17

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out when we are doing the second or third draft a few days after the initial survey when we have had time to reflect upon our thoughts on the property. We would add the following in this instance:

We believe you need to put your concerns in writing to the NHBC and to the original house construction company forwarding a copy of this report. The problem appears to relate to a fundamental design issue with the coping stones. We would be concerned that the dampness may have caused deterioration to the timber frame structure, if indeed this is how the property is built and we would recommend that a section is opened up to establish any problems that have been caused.

On a more general note this deterioration could have been caused throughout the property as a whole and it is likely therefore to have repercussions in years to come.

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed! Please do not hesitate to contact us on 0800 298 5424.

Independent Chartered Surveyors

LIMITATIONS

Specific Defects Report

1. Conditions of Engagement

Please note: references to the masculine include, where appropriate, the feminine.

Subject to express agreement to the contrary (which in this particular case has been none) and any agreed amendments/additions (of which in this particular case there have been none), the terms on which the Surveyor will undertake the Specific Defects Report are set out below.

Based upon a visual inspection as defined below the Surveyor will advise the Client by means of a written report as to his opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the specific problem or problems only, which In this instance relate to the damp walls.

2. The Inspection

a) Accessibility and Voids

The Surveyor will base this report on a visual inspection and accordingly its scope is limited. It does not include an inspection of those areas, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible. Our visual inspection will relate to the specific defects shown to us only.

b) Floors

We have not opened up the floor structure. We have only carried out a visual inspection and any conclusions will be based upon our best assumptions. We can open up the floor if so required at an extra fee.

c) Roofs

The surveyor has inspected the roof.

d) Boundaries, Grounds and Outbuildings

The inspection will not include boundaries, grounds and outbuildings unless specifically stated (none stated).

e) Services

No services inspected.

f) Areas not inspected

The Surveyor will have only inspected those areas identified within the report. His report will be based upon possible or probable defects based upon what he has seen together with his knowledge of that type of structure. If you feel that any further areas need inspection then please advise us immediately.

g) Specific Defects Report

As this is a report upon a Specific Defect we do not offer any comment or guidance upon reactive maintenance and/or planned or routine maintenance items.

h) Whilst we have used reasonable skill and care in preparing this report, it should be appreciated that the Chartered Surveyors cannot offer any guarantee that the property will be free from future defects or that existing defects will not suffer from further deterioration;

3. Deleterious and Hazardous materials

a) Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. However the Surveyor will advise in the report if in his view there is a likelihood that high alumina cement (HAC) concrete has been used in the construction and that in such cases specific enquiries should be made or tests carried out by a specialist.

4. Contamination

The Surveyor will not comment upon the existence of contamination as this can only be established by appropriate specialists. Where, from his local knowledge or the inspection he considers that contamination might be a problem he should advise as to the importance of obtaining a report from an appropriate specialist.

5. Consents, Approvals and Searches

a) The Surveyor will assume that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property.

b) The Surveyor will assume that all bye-laws, Building Regulations and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings and alterations and extensions, which require statutory consents or approval the Surveyor will not verify whether, such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or his legal advisers.

Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor. It is the Clients responsibility to forward any drawings and specifications that he has or knows the whereabouts of to us to include information in our report. If these are not forthcoming we will make our best assumptions based upon the information available.

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

6. Fees and Expenses

The Client will pay the Surveyor the agreed fee for the Report and any expressly agreed disbursements in addition.

7. Restrictions on Disclosures

- a) This report is for the sole use of the Client in connection with the property and is limited to the current brief. No responsibility is accepted by the Chartered Surveyors if used outside these terms.
- b) Should any disputes arise they will be dealt with and settled under English law;
- c) This report does not fall under the Third Parties Rights Act.

8. Safe Working Practices

The Surveyor will follow the guidance given in Surveying Safely issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS).

9. Weather

It was an overcast day at the time of our inspection and it had been snowing heavily in the morning which limited our inspection.