

Flat Buyer Report

Benchmarked to Level 1 RICS Home Survey Standard June 2020

Property address:

Flat X, Bolton, BL1 XYZ



Client: Mr and Mrs X YZ

Surveyor: Chris Brownlow BSc (Hons) Graduate Building Surveyor

Date of inspection: 10th February 2020

Date of report: 12th February 2020

Report reference: 20/XXXX



Repair



Maintain



Protect

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Important note: whether this report has a Valuation Appendix or not a very important aspect of purchasing a flat, apartment or maisonette is that the property is likely to be held Leasehold (Freehold flats and similar are rare and not usually acceptable as securities for mortgage and other loans) and there is usually a provision in the Lease whereby the property owner or occupier is obliged to contribute towards the cost of maintenance of parts of the development within which the property is located (i.e. the buildings, the communal areas and grounds) usually through payment (often monthly, quarterly or annually) of a service charge to a designated Management Company. The Management Company will also usually be responsible for maintaining a buildings insurance policy in respect of the buildings and other parts of the development. It is essential, therefore, that your legal adviser checks the details of the Lease, the management and any service charge and confirms to you that these are satisfactory and would meet the requirements of a mortgage lender even if you are purchasing without a mortgage.

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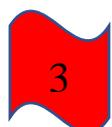
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Condition Ratings and Symbols

To help describe the condition of the property we give Condition Ratings to the main parts (the 'elements') of the building, garage and external areas. Some elements can be made up of several different parts.

In the Element Sections of parts F, G, H and I we describe the part that has the worst Condition Rating (CR) first and then briefly outline the condition of the other parts. The Condition Ratings are described below.



CR3 – the Building Element requires repair that is considered to be serious and/or urgent and/or in respect of which further investigation is considered appropriate. **Important note: a CR3 does not necessarily mean that expensive repair is required, there may only be a minor maintenance issue (such as a loose chimney flashing letting water into the roof void) but it is applied if an Element requires urgent repair and/or further investigation. In relation to some of the Services Installations (Electricity, Gas and Heating – “services that can kill”) a CR3 will be applied by default if the Surveyor does not have sight of current test certificates and/or service records at the time of inspection or prior to the report being completed.**



CR2 – the Building Element requires repair but the works are not considered to be serious or urgent and can be undertaken as part of routine maintenance.



CR1 – the Building Element is considered to be in a satisfactory state of repair **taking into account the building materials and the age of the building** and no immediate or short-term maintenance is required.

NI

Not inspected – it was not possible to inspect this building element on the day of the survey.



This symbol indicates that there is a Health and Safety issue even though the Building Element may not require repair in itself (**for example:** a door with a glass panel where the door opens and closes satisfactorily but the glazing is not of toughened glass).

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Appendices

- A. Terms of Engagement**
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- C. Condensation**
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- H. Maintenance notes**

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A. Introduction

The **Level 1 Condition Report** is produced by a member of RICS to provide an objective opinion about the condition of the property at the date of inspection. The report objectively describes the condition of the building, its services and the grounds. It highlights relevant legal issues and any obvious risks to the building, people or grounds. The report is succinct and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects and problems. Where the surveyor is unable to reach a conclusion with reasonable confidence, a recommendation for further investigation should be made. A Survey Level 1 report does not include advice on how to carry out repairs or on ongoing maintenance and this, combined with the less extensive inspection, usually means it is better suited to conventionally built, modern dwellings apparently in satisfactory condition. It will not suit older or complex properties, or those in a neglected condition.

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B. The Inspection

Surveyor's name and RICS number

Chris Brownlow BSc (Hons) Graduate Building Surveyor - 6717701

Instructions

Further to your instructions and our confirmation e-mail/letter I have now inspected the subject property and my Report follows.

The agreed Terms of Engagement are at Appendix A.

Conflict of interest/disclosure

Having checked our database and made other reasonable enquiries we confirm that to the best of our knowledge and belief we have no conflict of interest in carrying out these instructions.

Date and extent of inspection

The property was inspected on the 10th February 2020. My inspection was undertaken in accordance with the agreed **Terms of Engagement**.

Weather conditions

The weather at the time of my inspection was dull and dry but cold. It was very windy during my inspection.

Occupation

The property was vacant and unfurnished.

Handings

Unless otherwise stated, the terms "right, left, front and rear" apply throughout as if the property is viewed from the car park to the front.

Important note: We carry out only a visual inspection. This means that we do not take up carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, move furniture or remove the contents of cupboards. Also, we do not remove secured panels or undo electrical fittings.

We inspect roofs, chimneys and other surfaces on the outside of the building from ground level and, if necessary, from neighbouring public property and with the aid of binoculars and/or a camera on a telescopic pole. If necessary inspection will be carried out from land in third party ownership if the owner's permission can be obtained.

We inspect the roof structure from inside the roof space if there is access (although we do not move or lift insulation material, stored goods or other contents). We examine floor surfaces and under-floor spaces so far as there is safe access to these (although we do not move or lift

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furniture, floor coverings or other contents). We are not able to assess the condition of the inside of any chimney, boiler or other flues.

We note in our report if we are not able to check any parts of the property that the inspection would normally cover. If we are concerned about these parts, the report will tell you about any further investigations that are needed.

We do not report on the cost of any work to put right defects or make recommendations on how these repairs should be carried out. Some maintenance and repairs we suggest may be expensive

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C. Overall Opinion including a Summary of the Building Elements given a Condition Rating (CR) 3

The Surveyor will state his/her overall opinion of the property and will highlight any major repairing, legal or other issues that will be discussed in greater detail later in the report. Whilst you may find it informative to read this Section first it only provides a general “overview”. You should read and consider all parts of the report and so understand the Overall Opinion in the context of the property as a whole.

Overall Opinion

Flat X is considered a reasonable proposition for purchase, it comprises a two-bed flat in a three-storey purpose-built apartment complex. The property is situated on the top floor and is in generally good condition. There are only some minor maintenance works that need to be undertaken. You should budget for a possible upgrade to the electrical installation. I have been advised that there is a £110 pcm service charge that includes a water supply as well as ground rent. Your legal adviser should clarify this (section L3).

The following Building Elements have been given a Condition Rating 3

Electricity (H1)

Gas (or oil if applicable) (H2)

Heating (H4)

Hot water (H5)

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D. Summary of Health & Safety issues

This summarises the Sections of the Report within which I raise concerns over risks to the Health & Safety of occupiers of and visitors to the property.

Ceilings (G2)

Doors (G8)

Electricity (H1)

Gas (or oil if applicable) (H2)

Heating (H4)

Hot water (H5)

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E. The Property

The property

Flat X, Bolton, BL1 XYZ

Description – type of property and intended use

Two-bed flat for owner occupation.

Approximate year built

I was advised by the agent that the building was constructed in 1991.

Approximate year the property was extended and/or converted (note: flats and apartments may have been created by conversion from older buildings and some of these may have been in industrial or commercial use).

Not applicable.

Notes: Structures such as porches, conservatories and sun lounges are often insubstantial and may have poorer standards of design, construction and performance than the main building. They are, therefore, covered separately under Section F8. Your legal adviser should check that any works that are identified in this Section received relevant Local Authority planning consents and Building Regulations approvals and, if the property is held Leasehold, that the approval of the owner of the Freehold interest also issued consents if necessary. You should also note that the Council Tax banding of the property, on which annual rates payable to the Local Authority are based, can be revised on a change of ownership and you may wish to check with the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) whether any past extensions and alterations are included in the current Council Tax banding. If there are modern extensions, alterations or other building works you should ask the property owners if they can supply copies of construction drawings, plans etc as, whilst noting that construction on site may not always match that on the drawings, these can give useful information on hidden details (insulation, steelwork, drainage connections etc) and materials used.

Location

The property is situated in a mixed residential and commercial area just outside Bolton Town Centre.

Facilities

The surrounding area offers a lot of everyday amenities as well as very good transport links.

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Local environment

Surrounding development comprises mixed age and type residential and commercial properties. This area has a history of coal mining and industrial activity and your legal adviser should obtain coal mining and environmental reports (section L2).

Summary of construction

Elevations are of cavity brick and block beneath a timber trussed roof with a profiled concrete interlocking tile covering.

Accommodation – brief summary

Ground floor:

Communal entrance corridor

Staircase – there is no lift access

First floor:

Landing area

Second floor:

Landing area

Flat 10:

Hallway

2 bedrooms

Kitchen

Living/dining room

Bathroom wc

Outside:

There is a car park with undesignated spaces to the front and some lawned areas to the rear of the building.

Floor area(s)

Without having undertaken a detailed measured survey of the property I calculate the Gross External Floor Area of the living accommodation to be 71 square metres or thereabouts. This includes all living accommodation within the subject flat.

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Services

All mains services (electricity, gas, water and drainage) are connected to the property.

Non-mains services (if any)

Not applicable

Heating

The property has no central heating system and space heating is provided by independent gas wall heaters.

Other services or energy sources including renewables

None

Notes:

If you have proposals to extend or alter the property you may need Local Authority approvals and guidance on planning and Building Regulations matters can be found here <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/> and here <https://www.labc.co.uk/homeowners/do-i-need-building-regs-application>

If you are intending to let the property to tenants you will need to ensure that you comply with all statutory liabilities (<https://www.gov.uk/renting-out-a-property>) and you should consult with an experienced letting agent (<https://www.arla.co.uk/>) in this regard.

Since 2010 Building Regulations may be necessary if major works are undertaken to a “thermal element” – such as a roof, external wall or floor – and this will cover, for example, replacement of a roof covering even if you re-use the existing slates; the roof is a “thermal element” https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200130/common_projects/47/roof/6

Additional planning controls will apply if the property is a “listed” building and/or in a Conservation Area or National Park.

If the property is held Leasehold (Section 13.1) then your legal adviser will need to check the Lease terms and whether any Freeholder’s consents (for which a fee may be payable) are required for extensions and alterations.

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F. External Elements

Limitations to inspection

None.

F1 Chimneys and vertical flues

Not applicable.

F2 Pitched roofs – structure and coverings

The roof over the subject property is double pitched with hips to external angles. There are lead lined valleys between roof slopes and at the intersection with a gabled area over the entrance elevation. I noted no signs of undue dips or sags to the roof structure. The profiled concrete interlocking tile roof covering is in good condition. The ridge and hip tiles are well bedded but did exhibit some moss growth. There is some minor build up of debris in the lead valleys and this should be cleaned and cleared of debris by the maintenance company as soon as possible.

CR1.

F3 Flat roofs

Not applicable.

F4 Rain and waste water disposal (above ground – see Section H6 for underground drainage)

The roof slopes are served by modern, half-round PVC gutters and downspouts. There are some signs of leaks at joints and the gutters should be cleaned of any debris and any leaking joints sealed. You may wish to ask the maintenance company to carry out this work as soon as possible. The downspouts run into back inlet gulleys that show no signs of any backing up.

CR1.

F5 Main walls

The elevations are of cavity brick and concrete block with some rendered sections to the entrance area and the upper levels. I did note some minor cracks to the rendered sections, but these are of no major concern. You should also note that there is a timber bay to the rear of the property that is also in good condition. There are galvanised mild steel lintels over window openings. I noted no signs of any significant cracking or distortion to the walls. The brickwork remains in satisfactory condition. There are some rather untidy patch repairs to areas where old flues have been removed and there is some minor efflorescence and weather marking in some areas but this currently causes no major concern. The pointing remains in satisfactory condition. I identified a PVC damp-proof course a good level above external ground level. **CR1.**

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F6 Doors

Entry to the block of flats is through a timber door with wired glass units. The door is hung in a timber frame which is showing some signs of minor weathering. There is an intercom system which was not tested. **CR1.**

1

F7 Windows (including skylights)

The windows are of wood grain uPVC. They are in satisfactory condition and where tested all opening lights operated satisfactorily. There are fire escapes to the bedrooms although escape via these will rely on the fire department having ladders of sufficient length. Your legal adviser should advise whether you will be responsible for the maintenance and replacement of windows in the future or whether the management company will carry out necessary works (section L3). I did note some signs of water marking and possible rainwater ingress to the large, timber windows above the front and rear entrance. The management company should be notified and carry out any necessary works. There is also some condensation mould visible around the windows of the subject property (see *Appendix C*). This should improve when the property is heated and properly ventilated. **CR2.**

2



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F8 Balconies

Not applicable.

F9 Conservatories and porches

Not applicable.

F10 Other joinery items and decorative finishes

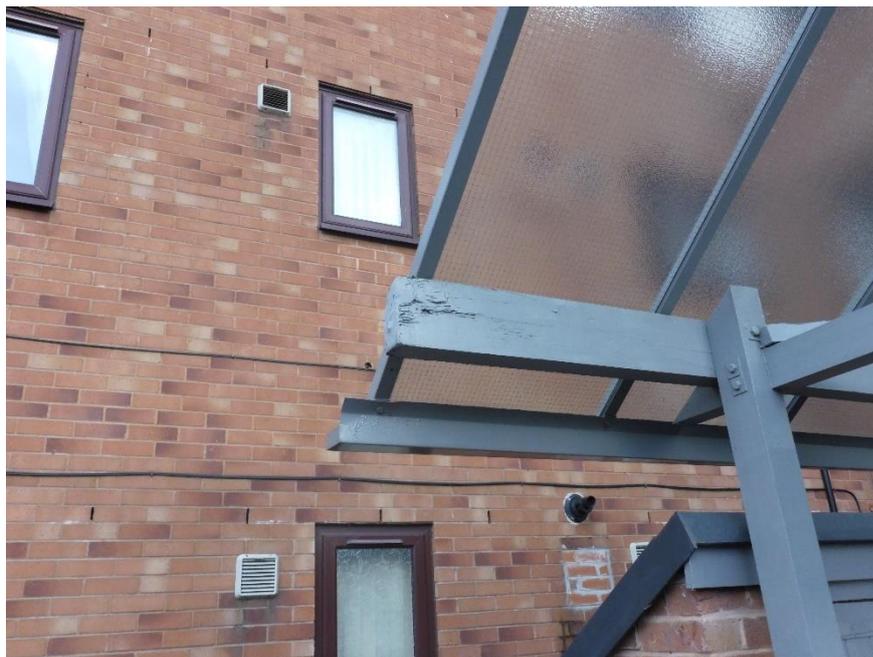
There is some minor weathering to decorative finishes. The roof perimeter is boarded in timber. There are areas that show some weathering, especially to the fascia board above the entrance. You may wish to notify the management company of this. **CR2.**

2

F11 Other items

There is a timber and glazed panel canopy over the entrance walkway. This is in generally good condition. There is some weathering visible to the timber members of the roof and the management company should be notified of this. **CR2.**

2



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G. Internal Elements

Limitations to inspection

All floor areas remained close covered. Only a head and shoulders inspection of the roof void was possible due to lots of untidy fibreglass insulation and a lack of boarding. The loft hatch on the landing was locked.

G1 Roof voids

Access to the roof void was via an insulated plastic hatch in the hallway of flat 10. The roof is of pre-fabricated timber truss construction. The trusses are evenly spaced and have a good level of bracing. I noted no signs of any racking or distortion to the roof structure. I also noted no signs of any beetle infestation. The underfelt is in generally good condition, but I did note some loose sections near the hipped section of roof. This should be repositioned. You may find that the management company will carry out these repairs as the roof is considered an element that is shared by all flats in the block. I found no signs of any rainwater ingress, but I did note some condensation mould on the underside of the felt (see *Appendix C*). This should be monitored for the time being and the management company notified. **CR1**.



G2 Ceilings

The ceilings are of plasterboard and are generally level throughout. You should note that the ceilings have textured finishes. Some textured finishes have been known to contain asbestos and so care should be taken if any work is to be undertaken that may disturb or damage the ceilings (see *Appendix D*). **CR1**.

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G3 Internal walls and partitions

The load bearing walls are dry-lined in plasterboard. There are some minor hairline cracks, but the walls are in generally good condition. There are lightweight partitions between rooms that are also in generally good condition. I did note some shrinkage cracks at the junctions between the ceilings and the walls. These cracks should be repaired prior to any future decoration. When using a conductance meter to investigate damp I noted some slightly high readings and visible water damage to the skirting boards in the bathroom. I am of the opinion that this has been caused by the splashing of water when using the shower, bath or any other sanitary fitting. **CR1.**



G4 Fireplaces, chimney breasts and flues

There is an electric fire on a display fireplace in the living room. The operation of this appliance was not tested.

G5 Floors

The floor is of suspended, reinforced concrete construction. All floor areas remained close covered, but the floor surface was generally level throughout. **CR1.**

G6 Kitchen and utility fittings

The kitchen is equipped with a reasonable range of old, vinyl wrapped base units and cupboards that are showing wear and tear typical of their age. There is an inset, stainless steel sink with laminate worktops and tiled splashbacks which are in a similar condition to the other kitchen fittings. There is an extractor fan ducting through the wall. The extractor has been covered in cling film, presumably as an effort to draught-proof, but this should be removed to allow the extractor fan to function correctly. **CR2.**

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G7 Sanitary fittings

The bathroom is fitted with an old three-piece suite including a bathtub with a shower off the mixer tap. These show wear and tear but that is typical of fittings of this age. There is copper pipework where visible, but I was unable to check for any leaks as the water had been drained. **CR1.**

1

G8 Internal joinery items including doors and staircases

The doors are of reasonable quality timber with flush panel finishes. They remain in reasonable condition with some minor wear and tear to moving parts. You should note that the self-closing mechanisms have been removed from the fire rated doors to both bedrooms and these should be replaced so that the provisions for fire safety are improved. **CR1.**

1

G9 Other built in fixtures (such as wardrobes)

Not applicable.

G10 Other items

Not applicable.

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H. Services Installations

*Notes: We are not plumbers, electricians or gas engineers and we are not qualified to test service installations or to report on their condition. **Remember – electricity and gas in particular are “services that can kill”** and it is essential that your legal adviser ensures that electrical and gas installations and appliances have up to date inspection documentation from appropriately qualified contractors; if not these installations should be inspected by competent persons (<https://www.competentperson.co.uk/>) **prior to purchase**. If you are purchasing the property as an investment to be let to tenants, there is specific legislation that will apply to the service installations and your legal adviser and/or letting/managing agent should be able to advise on what you will need to provide to your tenants. It must be noted that many parts of service installations, such as pipes and cables, are concealed within the building or below ground and cannot be inspected. The following Sections are for information only but the Surveyor will advise if any specialist advice is considered appropriate. **Please note also that the electrical, gas (or oil) and heating installations will be given a CR3 by default if the Surveyor does not have sight of current test certificates or servicing records at the time of inspection or prior to the Report being issued.***

Limitations to inspection

I was unable to access the services cupboard on the ground floor hallway as it was locked and I was not given a key. I was unable to lift any of the heavy inspection chamber covers on site.

H1 Electricity

Please note the following, particularly if the Surveyor advises that you should have the electrical installation tested prior to purchase:

<http://www.electricalsafetyfirst.org.uk/find-an-electrician/periodic-inspection-explained/>

You should also note that even minor electrical works are now covered by Building Regulations and must be carried out by a competent electrician who will be able to issue the relevant certification. You may wish to check that the property has an adequate number of electrical sockets etc. to meet your likely requirements.

The property has a mains electricity supply. There is an old 4-way mains fuse box in the storage cupboard in the hallway. The date sticker suggests that previous inspections may have been overlooked and an Electrical Condition Report should be obtained **prior to purchase**. It is obvious that this installation dates from original construction and may require to be upgraded. You should employ an electrician to carry out a condition report and implement any recommendations. I assume that the electricity meter is situated in the cupboard in the ground-floor hallway, but I could not gain access as it was locked and I was not given a key. **CR3**.

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H2 Gas (or oil if applicable)

Please note that it is illegal under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1994 for unqualified persons to test or work on any part of a gas installation or a gas appliance and all qualified gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register <http://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/>

The property has a mains gas supply with the gas meter being situated in the kitchen. Although I have no reason to suspect any major issues I have not had sight of any relevant documentation and so a Gas Safety Certificate should be obtained **prior to purchase** unless the vendor can supply this documentation. **CR3 subject to documentation.**



H3 Water

The property has a mains water supply. A concealed incoming main runs to a stop and drain valve and onto copper pipework with a meter in the bathroom linen cupboard. You should note that the water had been drained down in the property so I was unable to check for any signs of plumbing leaks. I understand that the charge for the water supply is included in your service charge however, your legal adviser should seek clarification on this matter (section L3). **CR1.**

H4 Heating

The property does not have a central heating system. The rooms are heated by a number of mixed age, gas fired wall heaters. These should be checked when you obtain a Gas Safety Certificate. Although I have no reason to suspect and major issues I have not had sight of any service records for the appliances and so a Gas Safety Certificate should be obtained **prior to purchase** unless the vendor can supply this documentation. **CR3 subject to documentation.**

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H5 Hot water

Hot water is provided by a gas-multi point heater located in the kitchen. This could not be tested as the water had been drained down and you should have this checked by your gas engineer **prior to purchase**. **CR3.**

H6 Drainage

General note

In most cases the drainage system to a property is below ground and largely inaccessible. The Surveyor will, where possible, open any accessible drainage chambers and, if water is available at the property, run water through them to check the flow and for any signs of blockage, backing up or other issues BUT no specialist drainage tests will be carried out. The Surveyor will advise if no inspection chambers are located or if there are any that could not be opened with an explanation as to why. If there are reasons to suspect drainage problems then further specialist advice will be recommended.

Your legal adviser will normally recommend that you obtain a Drainage and Water Search (known as a CON29DW) and this will cover:

- *services to which the property is connected*
- *charging basis for services*
- *contact details for sewerage and water billing company*
- *meter location (if applicable)*
- *adoption agreements*
- *consultation on build over*
- *sewers within the boundaries and 100 feet thereof*
- *low water pressure*
- *internal flooding from overloaded public sewers*
- *nearest public sewage treatment works*
- *water quality*

The following links should help you understand which of the drains within the boundaries of the property may be your responsibility and which may be maintained by the Water and Sewerage Company (e.g. United Utilities) under The Water Act 2011:

<http://www.ccwater.org.uk/waterissues/currentkeywaterissues/privatesewersandlateraldrains/>

and

<https://www.yorkshirewater.com/sites/default/files/downloads/Private%20Sewer%20Transfer%20Regulations.pdf>

and your legal adviser should be able to confirm.



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I was unable to lift any of the heavy covers to the drainage inspection chambers on site so I was unable to inspect any drainage channels. I assume that maintenance of the drainage system is the responsibility of the management company. **Not Inspected.**

H7 Non-mains services (if any)

Please note we do not test or comment on specialist non-mains service installations such as:

- *Smoke detectors and fire alarms*
- *Carbon monoxide alarms*
- *Sprinkler systems*
- *Security alarms and CCTV equipment*
- *Telephone and computer cabling and equipment*
- *Multi-media installations, home cinema and sound systems etc*

None.

H8 Other services or energy sources including renewables

Not applicable.

H9 Communal services and/or facilities

There are communal areas of landings, staircases and hallways and these are well maintained by the management company. **CR1.**



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I. Grounds, boundaries and outbuildings

I1 Garage

Not applicable.

I2 Other outbuildings

There are two bin stores by the front entrance to the block. These have elevations of brick beneath a timber roof with a fibreglass covering. The bin stores are in generally good condition.

CR1.

I3 Grounds – note these are **NOT** given a Condition Rating

There is a large parking area with undesignated parking spaces to the front of the property. There are some lawned areas to the rear of the property with neatly bordered lawns and planning beds.



I4 Boundaries

The front of the property is largely open plan with the other boundaries being a mix of brick walls and concrete post and timber panelled fencing which are in generally good condition.

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J. Energy Performance

We have not prepared the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). If an EPC has been lodged at <https://www.epcregister.com/> then we will present the ratings here. We have not checked these ratings and so cannot comment on their accuracy.

We note that the property's current energy performance, as recorded in the EPC, is:

Energy-efficiency rating: 61D

Environmental impact rating: 69C

Whilst I am not a qualified Domestic Energy Assessor my observations on the recommended measures to improve energy performance as noted in the EPC are as follows:

These ratings are not unusual for a property of this age and type. Improvements could be made by ensuring that all light fittings are fitted with low energy light bulbs. More improvements could be seen by installing a more conventional central heating system.

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K. Comments regarding Fire Safety

My observations on fire safety at this property are:

The provisions for fire safety in this property are good. There are fire doors between stairways and landing areas as well as a well signed fire exit route. There is a fire evacuation plan clearly visible on the noticeboard inside the front entrance. Within the flat there are numerous fire escape windows that can be used providing that the fire department have ladders of sufficient height. There is a smoke detector positioned in the hallway of the flat. There are fire doors to the entrance to the flat, between the kitchen and the living room and to both bedrooms. But the self-closing mechanisms to the bedroom fire protection doors have been removed and should be re-installed immediately.

Useful guides on fire safety in the home can be downloaded here:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564803/Fire-Safety-in-the-Home.pdf

<https://www.rics.org/globalassets/rics-website/media/news/press-releases/rics-fire-safety-new-web-version.pdf>

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L. Matters for your Legal Adviser

This is a Flat Buyer Report – please see the Important Note on page 3.

*Your legal adviser is responsible for following the “paper trail” in respect of a property transaction. The Surveyor is NOT a legal adviser but will act as the legal adviser’s “eyes and ears” in relation to the property and this Section will outline any legal issues the Surveyor considers require clarification. **You should note that the Surveyor’s advice, including any such relating to the value of the property, may be affected by the outcome of your legal adviser’s enquiries and any discrepancies should be referred back to the Surveyor.***

Boundaries

In a physical, rather than legal, sense and noting that I have not seen any deed or other title plans or undertaken any detailed measurements on site, boundaries appeared to be well defined and in an adequate state of repair unless noted under Section I3.

Easements and rights of way

Unless otherwise stated I noted nothing to indicate that the property may be subject to any onerous or unusual easements or restrictions and our opinion of value is reported on this basis.

Roads

Access to the property is by way of made up highways that are believed to be adopted for maintenance at public expense.

L1 Regulations and approvals

Your legal adviser should obtain any documentation relating to:

- * Building Regulations approvals and planning permission applications for the development.

L2 Guarantees etc

Your legal adviser should seek any documentation relating to:

- * Any claims made under the building insurance policy.
- * Any service records relating to the gas appliances.
- * Any certification relating to the electrical installation.
- * Gas Safety Certificates
- * The double-glazing installation.

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L3 Any other matters

Your legal adviser should seek information and provide guidance or clarification on matters relating to:

- * The service charge and whether this includes the water supply and ground rent.
- * Responsibility for the maintenance and repairs of the windows to the subject property.
- * Coal mining and environmental reports.

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M. What to do next

Getting quotations

The cost of repairs may influence the amount you are prepared to pay for the property (if applicable). Before you make a legal commitment to buy the property, you should get reports and quotations for all the repairs and further investigations the surveyor may have identified.

You should get at least two quotations from experienced contractors who are properly insured. You should also:

- ask them for references from people they have worked for;
- describe in writing exactly what you will want them to do; and
- get the contractors to put the quotations in writing.

Some repairs will need contractors with specialist skills and who are members of regulated organisations (for example, electricians, gas engineers, plumbers and so on). Some work may also need you to get Building Regulations permission or planning permission from your local authority.

Further investigations

If the surveyor is concerned about the condition of a hidden part of the building, could only see part of a defect or does not have the specialist knowledge to assess part of the property fully, he/she may have recommended that further investigations should be carried out to discover the true extent of the problem.

Who you should use for these further investigations

You should ask an appropriately qualified person. Specialists belonging to different types of organisations will be able to do this. For example, qualified electricians can belong to five different Government-approved schemes. If you want further advice, please contact the surveyor.

What the further investigations will involve

This will depend on the type of problem but parts of the building may have to be disturbed and so you should discuss this matter with the current owner, via the estate agent if applicable. In some cases, the cost of investigation may be high.

When to do the work

The Condition Ratings help describe the urgency of the repair and replacement work. The following summary may help you decide when to do the work.

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CR2 – repairs should be done soon. Exactly when will depend on the type of problem, but it usually does not have to be done right away. Many repairs could wait weeks or months, giving you time to organise suitable reports and quotations.

CR3 – repairs should be done as soon as possible. The speed of your response will depend on the nature of the problem. For example, repairs to a badly leaking roof or a dangerous gas boiler need to be carried out within a matter of hours, while other less important critical repairs could wait for a few days.

Warning

Although repairs of elements with a **CR2** are not considered urgent, if they are not addressed they may develop into defects needing more serious repairs. Flat roofs and gutters are typical examples. These can quickly get worse without warning and result in serious leaks. Accordingly, you should regularly check elements with a **CR2** to make sure they are not getting worse.

Why the bee?



This is the Manchester Bee and it was adopted as a symbol of the City after the tragic terrorist bombing at the Manchester Arena in 2017. As a business working in Greater Manchester, we aim to embody the Mancunian spirit of industry and fairness whilst retaining a "northern" sense of pride, perspective and good humour! The words on the bee's body are "Hope", "Strength" and "Peace".

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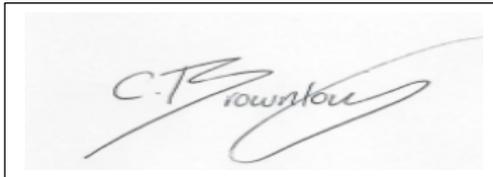
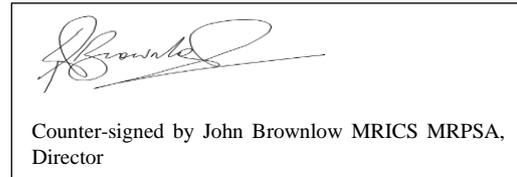
N. Surveyor's declaration

I confirm that I personally this property and have prepared this report. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Surveyor's name: Chris Brownlow BSc (Hons) Graduate Building Surveyor

RICS number: 6717701

Signature:

Counter-signed by John Brownlow MRICS MRPSA,
Director

For and on behalf of

Edwards Genesis (Chartered Surveyors)

Suite 5, 1 Derby Street, LEIGH WN7 4PF (Main Office)

(also at 82 New Hall Lane, Heaton, BOLTON BL1 5HQ)

Tel: 0844 412 8585 (24 hours with answering service)/01942 608608 (office hours, Monday-Friday)

e-mail: edwardssurveyors@gmail.com

web: www.edwardsgenesis.co.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EdwardsGenesisSurvey/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/egsurvey>

You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB2q431nHmxYFxy1UsgpGuw>

This report has been prepared by the surveyor solely in his or her capacity as an employee or agent of the named Company The report is the product of the Company, not of the individual surveyor. All of the statements and opinions contained in this report are expressed entirely on behalf of The Company, which accepts sole responsibility for these. For his or her part, the individual surveyor assumes no personal financial responsibility or liability in respect of the report and no reliance or inference to the contrary should be drawn.

Edwards Genesis is the trading name of Miller Edwards Ltd. and also incorporates Edwards Genesis (Consultant Surveyors and Valuers) and the Valuation Department of Millers (Chartered Surveyors).

Company Registration no: 6702718

Directors: John Brownlow MRICS MRPSA, Simon Miller FRICS MRPSA

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APPENDICES

A. Survey Report - Terms of Engagement

Introduction

Edwards Genesis are committed to providing the Client with sound, cost effective, independent and professional advice to help you make the correct decisions in respect of the property you are proposing to purchase. As part of this service, our Surveyor will endeavour to submit a readily readable Report, avoiding technical jargon wherever possible but fully explaining technical terms where these are used. The Report will identify major defects and serious items of disrepair, with recommendations as to repair, including carrying out further investigation or obtaining specialist advice where necessary, taking into account the age and type of property and any specific requirements identified by the Client.

“Benchmarking” of Survey Reports – RICS Home Survey Standard June 2020

"Benchmarking" of all levels of Survey Report became mandatory for all RICS members carrying out surveys on residential properties under the Home Survey Standard (HSS) from 1st June 2020.

These are the minimum standards each survey level should achieve. Where possible we will exceed the minimum standards in the areas **highlighted**.

Notes – any of the Survey Levels can be provided as a standalone Report OR, at an additional cost, with a Valuation Appendix that will meet the requirements of RICS Valuation – Global Standards 2020.

The HSS does not require reports to include photos – all our reports will include photographs and may also include diagrams, weblinks, reference sheets, maps etc

Survey Level 1 - Condition Report

This service is designed for clients (buyers, sellers and owners) seeking a professional and objective report on the condition of the property at an economic price. As a result, it is less comprehensive than Survey Level 2 and Survey Level 3. This level of service includes a visual inspection that is less extensive than for the other Survey Levels. No tests of the building fabric or services are undertaken. **(We will, where possible, observe services in normal operation as under a Survey Level 2 and this will include lifting of covers to drainage inspection chambers. Roof voids are inspected on a “head and shoulders” basis).** The report objectively describes the condition of the building, its services and the grounds. It highlights relevant legal issues and any obvious risks to the building, people or grounds. The report is succinct and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects and problems. Where the surveyor is unable to reach a conclusion with reasonable confidence, a recommendation for further investigation should be made. A Survey Level 1 report does not include advice on how to carry out repairs or on ongoing maintenance and this, combined with the less extensive inspection, usually means it is better suited to * conventionally built, modern dwellings in satisfactory condition. It will not suit older or complex properties, or those in a neglected condition.

*Notes – *as a guide, but each case to be judged on its merits, houses built since 1990 and not greatly extended or altered (except perhaps by addition of a small conservatory or porch), of conventional style (typically on an estate rather than being a “one-off”) with upto 3 floor levels above ground.*

Survey Level 2 - Home Buyer Survey

This level of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion at an economic price. It is, therefore, less comprehensive than a Level 3 service. The focus is on assessing the general condition of the main elements

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of a property. This intermediate level of service includes a more extensive visual inspection of the building, its services and grounds, but still without tests (we will, where possible, turn on taps, flush toilets and run water through drainage chambers). Concealed areas normally opened or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces, basements and cellars). (We will, where possible, inspect sub-floor voids although physical entry will only be undertaken if the surveyor judges it to be safe). The report objectively describes the condition of the different elements and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. At this level, although it is concise, the report does include advice about repairs and any ongoing maintenance issues. Where the surveyor is unable to reach a conclusion with reasonable confidence, a recommendation for further investigations should be made. This level of service suits a broader range of conventionally built properties, although the age and type will depend on the knowledge and experience of the RICS member. This level of service is unlikely to suit:

- complex buildings, for example those that have been extensively extended and altered
- unique or older historic properties – although Survey Level 2 services may be appropriate for some older buildings, the decision will depend on the RICS member's proven competence and knowledge and the nature of the building itself. For example, a Survey Level 2 report on homes with traditional timber frames or those built much before 1850 is likely to be inconclusive and be of little use to the client or
- properties in neglected condition.

Survey Level 3 - Building Survey

This level of service is for clients who are seeking a professional opinion based on a detailed assessment of the property. The service consists of a detailed visual inspection of the building, its services and the grounds and is more extensive than a Survey Level 2. Concealed areas normally opened or used by the occupiers are inspected if it is safe to do so (typical examples include roof spaces, basements and cellars). Although the services are not tested, they are observed in normal operation – in other words, they are switched on or off and/or operated where the occupier has given permission and it is safe to do so. The report objectively describes the form of construction and materials used for different parts of the property. It describes the condition and provides an assessment of the relative importance of the defects/problems. Additionally, it should:

- describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects in areas not inspected
- propose the most probable cause(s) of the defects based on the inspection
- outline the likely scope of any appropriate remedial work and explain the likely consequences of non-repair
- make general recommendations in respect of the priority and likely timescale for necessary work

Where an RICS member feels unable to reach the necessary conclusions with reasonable confidence, they should refer the matter for further investigations. **However, at Survey Level 3 such referrals should be the exception rather than the rule.** A Survey Level 3 report should aim to provide the client with all the information they need to make a decision. This level of service will suit any domestic residential property in any condition depending on the competence and experience of the RICS member.

Purpose of Report & Extent of Inspection

1. The Surveyor will advise the Client, by way of written Report, as to his/her opinion of the state of repair and condition of the property's structure and fabric in the context of its age, type and quality of construction but not as an inventory of every individual defect.
2. Other than as set out below, the Surveyor will carry out such work as is reasonable, in his/her professional judgement, and possible having regard to the Surveyor's personal safety so as to enable him/her to meet the requirements of Item 1 above, bearing in mind the practical limitations imposed by the individual

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circumstances of the property at the time of the inspection, and always bearing in mind that the Surveyor is a visitor to the property.

3. The Surveyor will inspect as much of the internal and external parts of the property as is practicable in order to meet the above requirement. Where accessible, loose floorboards, trap doors, unsecured hatches and covers will be lifted or opened as applicable but the Surveyor will not be under any obligation to lift fitted floor coverings, move stored items or furniture, or remove fixtures and fittings to facilitate inspection.
4. Any areas of the structure, including woodwork, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible will not be inspected, and no parts of the building will be opened up in any way which may cause damage without the prior written consent of the Vendor or Owner (or their authorised Agents) being obtained. The Report will not purport to express an opinion, implied or otherwise, on the condition of un-inspected parts of the property. However, if the Surveyor has valid reason to suspect that there is a material risk of defects in any parts where inspection has not been possible, recommendations will be made as to what practical steps, if any, should be undertaken to determine the condition of those parts.
5. The property will be inspected from ground level and available vantage points (with the aid of binoculars and a camera mounted on a telescopic pole where necessary) within the curtilage and/or from adjacent public areas. Where necessary and possible the Surveyor will inspect from an adjoining owner's land if the permission of said party can be obtained in advance or at the time of inspection. Flat roofs and other upper parts of the structure will be inspected more closely by use of the Surveyor's 3 metre ladder, having due regard to the safety of the Surveyor and others, and/or by use of a camera mounted on a telescopic pole. If the Client requests in advance, and the nature of the particular property so requires, the Surveyor will arrange for longer ladders or other access equipment to be brought to site **at the Client's expense**.
6. Where parts of the exterior are impossible to inspect, or where inspection is restricted due to, for example, trees or nearby structures, the Surveyor will comment on this fact in the Report and will make appropriate recommendations if it is felt that closer inspection is required.
7. Roof voids will be physically inspected where suitable access hatches of adequate size are present and can be safely opened without causing damage or any risk of injury to the Surveyor or others. It is noted that modern levels of thermal insulation often restrict a Surveyor's ability to move safely within roof voids but our Surveyors carry high-power torches that facilitate better inspection from access hatches and other safe vantage points.
8. Sub-floor areas of reasonable depth (generally a minimum of 450mm) and not flooded or excessively wet will be inspected, again with due regard to the safety of the Surveyor and with particular regard to the presence of electrical equipment (cables and connections), gas service pipes and plumbing and/or heating pipework, where a suitable trap door or other access point, of adequate size, is located and accessible at the time of the Surveyor's visit. **Note:** Clients purchasing properties with suspended timber ground floors are advised to ask Vendors whether such traps are known to exist.
9. No comment can be made as to the condition of chimney flues or the practicality of using the same.
10. The building structure and fabric will be examined for evidence of foundation problems or ground movement, and the Surveyor will comment on any potential destabilising influences, but it is impractical during the course of a routine Survey to excavate and expose foundations.
11. Theoretical calculations to check sizes and/or adequacy of structural elements will not be undertaken.

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12. In the case of a flat or maisonette (*note:* we offer a purpose-designed Flat Buyer Report), the inspection will cover such areas as are, or are believed to be, included in the sale (as advised by the Vendor, Owner and/or Agent where applicable) and will not extend in detail to other parts of the building/buildings or common parts although reference will be made to any areas of obvious concern. The Surveyor will be under no obligation to inspect the Lease and/or Management or Service Charge Agreement and Clients are advised of the need to obtain sound legal advice when purchasing flats and similar properties as Leases and other Agreements can impose onerous obligations in respect of parts of the building, communal areas etc. which may not be immediately related to the property being purchased.
13. The inspection and Report will include garden areas, outbuildings, boundaries etc. but comment on such features may be limited if the Surveyor finds only minor defects and/or considers that the condition of items such as outbuildings is of little concern in relation to the condition of (and, if applicable, the value of) the main building. Specialist installations such as swimming pools and similar leisure facilities, ornamental garden features etc. will normally fall outside the scope of a Survey Report other than at **Level 3**.

Service Installations and Specialist Fixtures and Fittings

1. *Edwards Genesis* are not plumbers, electricians or gas engineers and are not qualified to test service installations or to report on the condition thereof. Accordingly, no specialist tests of service installations (water, electricity, gas, heating & drainage) will be applied. Similarly, we cannot test or report on specialist fixtures and fittings such as lifts, security and fire alarms, built in cooking or other gas and electrical appliances etc. However, the Surveyor will inspect service installations where possible and will Report on any patent defects and/or will advise where further investigation or specialist tests are considered necessary. Everyday items such as taps, toilet fittings, etc. may be tested by normal operation if appropriate and the Surveyor will lift any drainage inspection covers within the curtilage of the property where such covers are intact and accessible, not stuck or secured shut, and can be lifted without specialist equipment. However, no drains test will be applied.
2. Where the Client requires specialist tests/reports on service installations etc. *Edwards Genesis* will be pleased to assist in arranging these, with the consent of the property Vendor/Owner or the Agent, but the Client will be responsible for agreeing Terms of Engagement with any specialist contractors employed and for meeting their charges direct.

General Matters

1. Unless otherwise stated in the Report, The Surveyor will have made no direct enquiries of planning, local, highway or other statutory authorities, Government Departments or Agencies etc. in relation to tenure, covenants, rights of way, planning schemes, NHBC or Architects Certificates etc. but comment will be made if the Surveyor has reason to suspect problems in any such areas so the Client may bring these to the particular attention of his/her legal advisers and the Surveyor may refer to information known to him/her or discovered by pre- or post-inspection internet research or other enquiry.
2. In providing the Survey Report, the following assumptions will apply unless there is information to the contrary:
 - that no high alumina cement/concrete, calcium chloride additive, asbestos or other potentially deleterious, hazardous or toxic material or technique was used in the construction of the property or has been incorporated since (the report will fall outside *The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012*), but the Surveyor will advise

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in his/her Report if he/she has any reason to suspect the presence of asbestos-containing materials,

- that the site on which the property stands, or any immediately adjacent land, has not been contaminated (within the meaning of The Environmental Protection Act 1990 and subsequent legislation) by any past use but the Surveyor will advise on any known or suspected environmental issues, taking into account the location of the property, and will advise if any appropriate reports should be obtained by your legal adviser; if the report includes valuation advice, this will be given on the assumption that full buildings insurance cover will be available on normal terms,
 - that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous easement, restrictions, encumbrances or outgoings, is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a local search and replies to the usual pre-contract enquiries, or by any Statutory Notice; and that neither the property, its condition or its use (or any intended use) is or will be unlawful,
 - that an inspection of those parts which have not been inspected would not reveal any material defects or, if applicable, cause the Surveyor to materially alter any valuation advice.
4. The Report will be provided for the sole and confidential use of the named Client and his/her professional advisers. It must not be made available, copied, sold or otherwise transferred to third parties without the express written consent of *Edwards Genesis* (for which consent a fee may be payable) and we will accept no liability to any such party unless such consent has been given. *Edwards Genesis* retain the copyright and intellectual property rights to the report and all associated material, including photographs and other images, and reserve the right to publish or otherwise use all of this material, or any part thereof, in any printed or electronic format, including web pages and social media, but in so doing we will take all reasonable precautions not to identify the property and/or the named client. Comments within the Report will be made in good faith **and on the strict understanding that they will not be quoted out of context to any third parties.**
 5. Where requested, the Surveyor may provide the Client with a verbal précis of his findings, and/or a pre-report “bullet point” summary of his/her main findings and observations, and/or a draft copy of the Report, but the Client should not, under any circumstances, make any binding commitment to purchase the property or enter into any other contract relating to the proposed purchase before receiving the final Report, signed by the Surveyor or an authorised representative of *Edwards Genesis*. We can accept no responsibility for any loss in such circumstances. **Note: we can only provide pre-Report advice, verbally or in writing, once the Client has acknowledged agreement to the Terms of Engagement and made payment of the agreed fee.**
 6. Any repair costs or other sums quoted will be for guidance only and it is incumbent on the Client to verify the likely costs of remedial and other works by obtaining contractors’ estimates/quotations before entering into a binding contract to purchase. It is also prudent to allow a contingency sum for extra or unforeseeable items.
 7. Where it is agreed in advance that the Report is to include valuation advice, including completion of a mortgage lender’s standard Mortgage Valuation Report, such advice will be given in accordance with *Edwards Genesis*’ Terms of Engagement for Valuation Reports (attached if appropriate) in so far as they are not superseded by these Conditions of Engagement in terms of the level of inspection etc. Any valuation advice will be included in an **Appendix** to the Survey Report and will be provided in accordance with the **MANDATORY** requirements of *RICS Valuation - Global Standards 2020*.
 8. Formal acknowledgement of the Client’s agreement to these Terms of Engagement is required and such

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acknowledgement must be received **as a condition of our Professional Indemnity Insurance** before the Report, or any précis or draft version thereof, can be issued (see Item 5 above).

9. The Client will pay to **Edwards Genesis** the agreed fee, as set out in the accompanying letter or e-mail, for preparation of the Report and, unless otherwise agreed in advance, the fee is due on the date of the accompanying letter or e-mail (see attached **Payment Terms** if advance payment of the agreed fee is requested). **Reports will not normally be released until payment has been received.** Where advance payment is not requested our Terms of Credit are payment within 28 days of the date of invoice and we reserve the right to charge statutory interest on overdue accounts.
10. In accordance with **RICS Regulations** we have a formal Complaints Handling Procedure. A copy is available on request.

TofESurvey/January 2020
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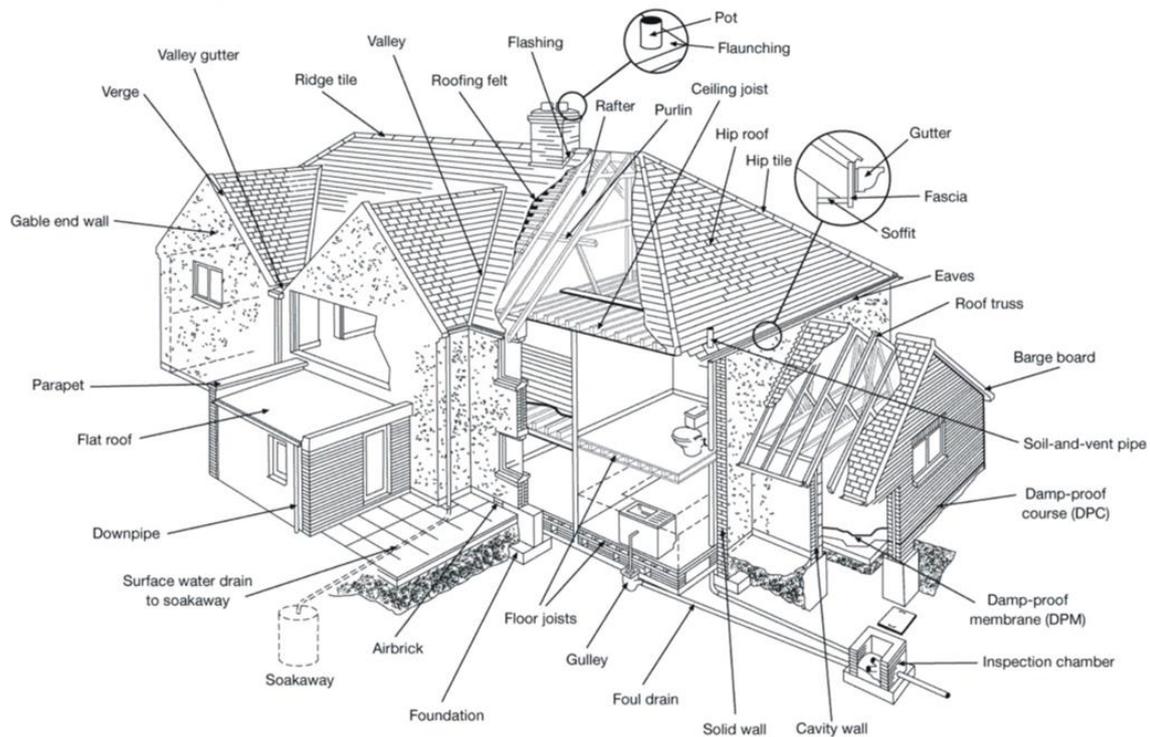
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B. Typical house diagram

This diagram illustrates where you may find some of the Building Elements referred to in the Report.



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C. Condensation

We include this information in all our Survey Reports as condensation, often with accompanying black mould, is a very common issue in the modern domestic environment.

Note: this information is included in the final report.

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D. Asbestos

This information is included as even relatively modern dwellings may have asbestos-containing materials within them.

Note: this information is included in the final report.

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E. The Party Wall Act

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/party-wall-etc-act-1996-guidance#introduction>

The [Party Wall etc Act 1996](#) provides a framework for preventing and resolving disputes in relation to party walls, boundary walls and excavations near neighbouring buildings.

A building owner proposing to start work covered by the Act must give adjoining owners notice of their intentions in the way set down in the Act. Adjoining owners can agree or disagree with what is proposed. Where they disagree, the Act provides a mechanism for resolving disputes.

The Act is separate from obtaining planning permission or Building Regulations approval.

What is a party wall?

The main types of party walls are:

- a wall that stands on the lands of 2 (or more) owners and forms part of a building - this wall can be part of one building only or separate buildings belonging to different owners
- a wall that stands on the lands of 2 owners but does not form part of a building, such as a garden wall but not including timber fences
- a wall that is on one owner's land but is used by 2 (or more) owners to separate their buildings

The Act also uses the expression 'party structure'. This could be a wall or floor partition or other structure separating buildings or parts of buildings in different ownership, such as in flats.

What the Act covers

The Act covers:

- new building on or at the boundary of 2 properties
- work to an existing party wall or party structure
- excavation near to and below the foundation level of neighbouring buildings

This may include:

- building a new wall on or at the boundary of 2 properties
- cutting into a party wall
- making a party wall taller, shorter or deeper

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- removing chimney breasts from a party wall
- knocking down and rebuilding a party wall
- digging below the foundation level of a neighbour's property

Explanatory booklet (download free <https://tinyurl.com/yxm9w97a>)

This provides detailed guidance on the Party Wall etc. Act 1996. The guidance explains how the Act may affect a building owner who wishes to carry out work covered by the Act or an adjoining building owner who receives notification under the Act of proposed work.

The guidance has been further updated in May 2016 to take account of amendments to the Act to allow the electronic transmission of notices and other documents, required under the Act, where both the giver and receiver of the notices and documents agree.

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F. Useful weblinks

[The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors \(RICS\)](#)

RICS is the world's leading professional body for qualifications and standards in land, property and construction.

[The Independent Surveyors Association](#)

An association of independent surveying and valuation practices with members throughout England and Wales

[Environment Agency](#)

Government advice on flooding and other environmental issues.

[National Housebuilders Registration Council \(NHBC\)](#)

For advice on new housing.

[The Health Protection Agency \(HPA\)](#)

Government advice on radon, electromagnetic fields, radio masts etc.

[Powerwatch](#)

An "outside" view on electromagnetic fields, radiation and associated issues.

[The Coal Authority](#)

For advice on coal mining issues.

[Planning Portal](#)

A very useful UK Government "interactive" guide as to when Planning Permission and Building Regulations approvals are required for alterations, extensions etc.

[Competent Persons Register](#)

Competent Person Schemes (CPS) were introduced by the UK Government to allow individuals and enterprises to self-certify that their work complies with the Building Regulations as an alternative to submitting a building notice or using an approved inspector. A Competent Person must be registered with a scheme that has been approved by The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Schemes authorised by the DCLG are listed on its website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk>

[The Property Care Association](#)

The PCA is the trade association representing structural repair, timber, damp and waterproofing specialists across the United Kingdom. Members of the PCA can be trusted to rectify problems with affected buildings, by employing industry certified surveyors and technicians to uphold challenging standards.

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G. Glossary

We try to avoid using technical building jargon in our Survey Reports, at least without an explanation as to what a term may mean, but if there is something you don't understand you may find it here:

https://www.edwardsgenesis.co.uk/attachments/Common_Building_Terms.pdf

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H. Maintenance notes

General Matters

We have prepared these notes as a guide to help you plan for routine maintenance and also to enable you to inspect your new home from time to time so that you can identify areas where expenditure may be required on repair works. You should remember that all building materials deteriorate with time and even the most modern property will require repair in the future. Regular maintenance inspections will help identify repair liabilities at an early stage so that they can be dealt with before they become serious or result in additional defects requiring more expensive and disruptive remedial works. Furthermore, a well-maintained house can be expected to preserve its value and saleability whereas a neglected property could prove difficult to sell.

The list of items to be checked is not intended to be exhaustive but our aim is to highlight some of the more common areas where domestic buildings (although the same principles apply to many commercial buildings) may require periodic maintenance. Some of the inspection and repair works can be carried out on a DIY basis but you should never compromise your own safety in attempting to undertake repairs and a competent building contractor should be employed if you are in any doubt. If you notice any apparently serious items of disrepair – such as cracking, timber decay or severe dampness – professional advice should be sought immediately from a Chartered Surveyor, and we would be pleased to assist.

The Local Environment

The orientation of a property (i.e. the way it faces) and its resultant exposure to wind, rain, frost and sunlight can result in some parts of the building weathering and deteriorating in a different way due to different climatic conditions; or the same materials will deteriorate at different rates depending upon their position on the building and their exposure to the elements. For example, the prevailing winds in the British Isles are generally from the south west and tend to be relatively warm and wet. These winds are more likely to result in south and west facing parts of a building being facing wind-blown rain over long periods to the extent that they will generally weather more quickly and can become saturated with resultant risks of damp penetration and timber decay. South facing elevations in particular can suffer damage due to prolonged exposure to sunlight, which can accelerate deterioration of paintwork, joinery and plastic materials, and high temperatures during the summer can cause thermal stresses and cracks in masonry. Winter winds are often from the north and east and tend to be relatively dry but very cold making building elements exposed to these winds more prone to frost damage. The internal areas on the north and east sides of a building will also be more prone to condensation problems. North and east facing parts of a building also tend to become more weather-stained, and moss and lichen growth can flourish on walls and roof areas.

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Local environmental factors can also cause particular problems. Slightly acidic rainfall in industrial areas can accelerate deterioration of some parts of a building fabric, such as pointing to brickwork and some more porous types of sandstone, and properties in coastal areas will be exposed to salt-laden winds, which will tend to accelerate corrosion of any metallic components such as steel lintels. Properties on busy roads may suffer from vehicle splash and this can cause damage to boundary walls and fences, or to lower walls where houses are built flush to the pavement, especially during the winter when roads are “gritted” during freezing weather. Nearby trees and other vegetation will increase routine maintenance liabilities as leaves will block gutters and gulleys, and there is also the possibility of falling branches causing damage, or underground roots damaging drains and foundations.

Older Buildings

It must be appreciated that the structure and fabric of older buildings are unlikely to perform as they would in modern structures. Building Regulations and construction standards are regularly updated and improved and even buildings that are little more than 10 years old will fall below current specifications. If you are purchasing an older property you should be aware that there is likely to have been some deterioration due to weathering of the external parts and everyday occupation of the interior, and that older buildings will generally require more regular maintenance and be less energy efficient so that annual maintenance and running costs will be higher than on a more modern property of similar size. A Building Survey report will consider the condition and performance of a building in relation to its peers but will also note areas where it may be reasonably possible to improve the building’s performance.

Extensions and Alterations

If you are proposing to extend or alter your new home you should ensure that any necessary Local Authority planning permission and/or Building Regulations approvals or other statutory consents are obtained. Not all works will require such approvals, but a failure to obtain appropriate consents may cause you problems if you wish to sell the property in the future or want to raise mortgage finance using the property as security.

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk> is a useful way to check whether the works you are planning may require approvals, and the Local Authority will also offer advice.

Hazardous Materials

If you discover suspected hazardous or toxic materials, such as asbestos, during extension, alteration or other building works you should seek appropriate specialist advice.

Maintenance Inspection Notes

A. External

1. Roofs and other high-level areas

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A periodic check should be made to ensure that all tiles and slates are in sound condition, particularly after periods of high wind or heavy snow. Any cracked, damaged, missing or dislodged slates/tiles should be replaced by a competent contractor. Ridge and hip tiles will require periodic lifting and re-bedding and the verge pointing to roof edges should be checked and kept in sound condition.

On flat roofs, any reflective limestone chippings should be kept evenly laid with additional chippings applied from time to time to replace those washed away. Alternatively, roof surfaces should be treated periodically with a proprietary solar reflecting paint. Flat roof areas should be regularly cleaned of leaves, moss and other debris. The most common flat roof covering in domestic construction is mineral felt which does have a limited life, rarely much in excess of 10/15 years. Minor splits and blisters can usually be patch repaired but more serious areas of damage, probably allowing rainwater penetration, will mean that the roof will require stripping and recovering immediately.

Masonry and pointing to chimney stacks should be kept in sound condition to reduce the risk of damp penetration. Chimney pots, cowls or terminals should be checked from time to time to ensure that they are securely fixed. Leadwork and flashings, including those to valley/parapet gutters etc., will also need to be checked as part of routine maintenance and repaired/replaced if any damage or perforation is evident. Any high-level areas that cannot easily be seen from ground level will need to be safely accessed from time to time so that they can be checked for early signs of disrepair and repaired as necessary to ensure weathertightness.

2. Rainwater Goods and Wastepipes

Gutters should be kept to an even fall and will require regular cleaning of leaves, silt, moss and other debris; and any leaking joints should be sealed. Gullies should also be kept clear of obstruction. Failure to ensure efficient disposal of rainwater over a long period can result in damp staining and deterioration to external parts of the building, and damp penetration to the interior with resultant damage to decorations, failure of plasterwork and the potential for outbreaks of wet or dry rot. Some rain and waste water components can be regularly painted to protect them from the elements but many of the materials used particularly cast iron, asbestos, cement and timber, do have a limited life and such components will require replacement from time to time. Any rain and waste water gullies noted to be cracked should be replaced immediately.

3. Main Walls

The outside walls should be inspected from time to time. Any evidence of significant cracking, leaning or distortion of the elevations should be referred immediately to a Chartered Surveyor. Brickwork, stonework and pointing etc. should all be maintained in good condition. Badly perished or weathered individual bricks or stones will require cutting out and replacing. The cement mortar to brick and stone joints (pointing) must be kept in sound condition with any

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heavily weathered, perished and broken areas raked out and renewed. Inadequately maintained pointing can result in a rapid deterioration of brickwork and stonework and can also allow damp penetration. However, care should be taken when repointing walls to ensure that the correct type of mortar mix is used – many walls are repointed with a hard sand and cement mortar which offers little flexibility and this can result in cracks developing due to thermal and moisture movements in the masonry. Hard mortars also restrict the ability of a wall to “breathe” and the masonry may remain saturated for longer than should be the case with resultant deterioration of the brick or stonework and an increased risk of damp penetration and/or internal condensation problems on solid walls.

Where walls are rendered, the rendering should be checked periodically to ensure that it is sound and not breaking away from the surface behind. Any badly hollow, loose or cracked areas will require cutting out and replacing. Cement renders should be regularly brushed and then repainted to maintain them in good condition and to improve their appearance but care is required in the selection of decorative finishes for older types of render as the inappropriate use of modern “plastic” paints as opposed to traditional porous lime washes will prevent the render “breathing” (see above).

The joints between window and door frames and surrounding masonry should be kept watertight with cracked or perished mastic sealants or rotten timber beadings replaced when necessary. Similarly, the areas around wastepipes outlets should be kept watertight using cement.

Paving, flower beds etc. should be kept at least 150mm (6”) below the line of the damp proof course and paving should, where possible, be laid to drain water away from the bases of walls. Where the elevations incorporate sub-floor air bricks, these should be kept in good condition and should not be allowed to become obstructed by raised paving, flowerbeds, overgrown shrubbery etc; otherwise lack of air circulation beneath the floors may result in rot developing.

4. External Joinery and Glazed Areas

All external joinery should be kept in good decorative order to reduce the risk of early deterioration and also to preserve the appearance of your house. Joinery in exposed positions (for example on dormer structures and around roof perimeters) will require periodical close examination with any deteriorating sections being cut out and replaced. Window and door frames etc. should also be checked from time to time and probed with a sharp implement, such as a penknife, to check for the early stages of softening and decay. Such areas should be cut out and filled or spliced with new, preservative treated sections.

The operation of doors and window lights should be checked regularly. Any components found to be stiff or sticking should be eased by a competent joiner. Poorly fitting doors or window sashes should be re-hung and adequate draught-proofing provided. If there are old sash

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windows to the property, worn sash cords will require replacement from time to time. Window catches and locks should be kept in sound and secure condition. Any broken or cracked panes of glass and defective sealed double glazed units should be replaced.

5. Garden Areas and Outbuildings

All boundary walls, fences, gates etc. should be kept in sound condition bearing in mind that the householder will have legal liabilities if boundary walls are allowed to collapse onto public highways or third party land, or cause damage to property or injury to pedestrians or vehicles. Trees should be pruned on a regular basis by a suitable specialist contractor and climbing plants should not be allowed to grow too vigorously up outside walls. **Trees may be subject to Preservation Orders, in which case it is a criminal offence to undertake virtually any type of pruning etc. without Local Authority consent.**

Paths and driveways should be checked from time to time with any deteriorated areas broken up and re-laid as necessary. Outbuildings should be inspected and maintained as for the main house.

B. Internal

1. Roof Spaces

If you are able to do safely, an inspection of the loft areas should be made on at least an annual basis with a check made for any evidence of damp penetration through the roof covering or around chimneys etc. Any required repairs should be undertaken immediately as persistent rainwater ingress will lead to timber decay and damage to first floor ceilings etc. The roof timbers should be examined to check that they have not split and also for any evidence of beetle infestation (woodworm). If you are in any doubt, consult a Chartered Surveyor or a firm of timber specialists.

The brickwork to chimney breasts within the roof void should be checked with any cracked or loose areas made good by a competent builder.

Insulation should be kept evenly dressed over the ceiling areas and you should avoid covering electrical cable and fittings to avoid the risk of overheating and fire. If you find evidence of condensation and/or mould growth in the loft space during cold weather you will need to have the area provided with appropriate ventilation.

If any water storage tanks are located in the loft, check these for signs of leakage and ensure that they are adequately lagged. Make sure that overflow pipes have not worked loose.

2. Walls and Ceilings

Wall and ceiling surfaces should be redecorated on a regular basis. As part of these works, any loose or cracked areas of plasterwork found should be cut out and made good. If you notice

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any cracks showing through wallpaper decorations or any damp patches developing to walls and ceilings, consult a Chartered Surveyor.

3. Internal Joinery

Internal doors etc. should be kept in sound operative order with any which stick within their frames being eased. Hinges and handles should be lubricated from time to time. All skirting boards and door casings should be kept in good decorative condition. If you notice any decay to internal joinery, consult a Chartered Surveyor or a firm of timber specialists. Stair treads, handrails and balustrades should be kept in good condition so that they are safe to use.

4. Floors

Whenever carpets are lifted floor areas, particularly those of timber construction, should be checked. If there is any evidence of cracking or dampness in solid floors, or dampness, decay or beetle infestation in timber floors, consult a Chartered Surveyor or a firm of timber specialists immediately. If your house has a suspended timber ground floor and there is a means of access to the underside, the sub-floor void should be inspected on at least a biennial basis to ensure that the floor remains in sound condition and free from dampness, decay or beetle infestation. If there is no means of access but refurbishment or redecoration present an opportunity to lift some boards to timber ground floors then this should be done so that conditions in the sub-floor void can be checked. Sub-floor air vents can be cleaned of dust and dirt whenever there is access beneath the floors.

5. Services Installations

Plumbing pipework should be kept in good condition with any leaking joints sealed. Waste traps to baths, sinks and wash basins should be cleaned out from time to time. Dripping taps should be repaired by replacing perished washers.

The central heating boiler and gas appliances should be regularly serviced by a Gas Safe registered contractor.

The electrical installation should be tested by an NICEIC or similarly qualified electrician at least every 5 years as cables and fittings will deteriorate with age. In the event of any short circuits occurring or if electric shocks are received when operating light switches or sockets etc. specialist advice should be sought immediately.

If reasonably possible you should lift any drainage manhole covers within the garden areas from time to time to check that rain and waste water flow freely through the drainage systems. Any debris within the drainage chambers should be cleaned out with the chambers disinfected as necessary. Manhole covers should be kept in good order with any cracked, poorly fitting or badly rusted components replaced. Where drainage is to a septic tank, this should be emptied

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every 12-24 months to allow for the sludge which forms at the bottom of the tank to be removed.