



Damp Inspection

In respect of:



Sheffield



For: 

**Report produced by Simon
Hollis MRICS**

**FOR AND BEHALF OF
Simon Hollis Limited
11th January 2022**





Damp Inspection Report

Address: [Redacted]
Sheffield
[Redacted]

Surveyor: Simon Hollis

Date of Survey: 10TH January 2022





Table of Contents

- 1.0 About this Report.....4
 - 1.1 Address of the Property Inspected (The Property)4
 - 1.2 Brief and Report.....4
 - 1.3 Date of Inspection4
 - 1.4 The Surveyor5
 - 1.5 Client5
 - 1.6 Comments on our Inspection Equipment.....5
 - 1.7 Diagram of a Typical House6
 - 1.8 Abbreviations Used6
- 2.0 Floor Plans 7
- 3.0 Observations and Recommendations8
 - 3.1 Roof, Chimneys and Flashings and Roofspace 9
 - 3.1.1 Roof9
 - 3.1.2 Chimneys and Flashings 15
 - 3.1.3 Roofspace..... 17
 - 3.2 Rainwater Goods and Drainage22
 - 3.2.1 Rainwater Goods.....23
 - 3.2.2 Drainage.....24
 - 3.3 External Walls25
 - 3.4 Internals32
 - 3.4.1 Porch34
 - 3.4.2 Kitchen36
 - 3.4.3 W.C.....38
 - 3.4.4 Living Room.....39
 - 3.4.5 Bathroom42
 - 3.4.6 Bedroom One43
 - 3.4.7 Bedroom Two.....45
 - 3.4.8 Bedroom Three47
 - 3.4.9 Hallway48
 - 3.5 External Areas50
 - 3.6 Services..... 51

Signature:  For and on behalf of Simon Hollis Limited

Date of Report: 11th January 2022

1.0 About this Report

1.1 Address of the Property Inspected (The Property)

██████████
Sheffield
██████████

1.2 Brief and Report

Instructions were received from ██████████ on 6th January 2022 to undertake a pre-purchase damp inspection and produce a brief report detailing our findings. We hope that the report helps you to make a reasoned and informed decision on the purchase of the property and subsequent repairs and maintenance. We detail the prioritisation of works in our Observations and Recommendations section (3.0). Where works are recommended, you should obtain quotations or further advice before you enter into a legal commitment. If you decide not to act on the advice in this report, you do so at your own risk.

1.3 Date of Inspection

The property was inspected on Monday 10th January 2022, 09:30 – 12:20. The weather conditions were fine and dry. Thermo-hygrometer readings of the external conditions at 09:40 were as follows:

Temperature:	7.3°
Relative Humidity:	67.3 %
Dew Point:	1.6°
Absolute Humidity:	5.33 g/m ³

At the time of the inspections, the property was unoccupied with fitted floor coverings and some built-in furniture present. There was no electricity or heating on.



1.4 The Surveyor

On behalf of Simon Hollis Limited, the survey was carried out by Simon Hollis.

Simon holds a HND in Estate Agency, a Bachelor's with Honours degree in Urban Land Economics, a Master's Degree in Building Surveying and is a Member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, membership number 1222795.

Simon is Dyslexic, please excuse any spelling or grammar errors in this report. Specialist software is used, unfortunately, it is not as clever as the developers would have you believe. If anything is unclear, or if you would like to discuss the report and future maintenance of the property, please do contact Simon:

Email: surveying@simonhollis.com Mobile Telephone: 07947 255 270

The survey is carried out on behalf of Simon Hollis Limited of 156 Murray Road, Sheffield S11 7GH.

1.5 Client

This survey report and any associated correspondence is for your personal use only and no responsibility can be or will be taken to others who may see it or wish to depend on it.

1.6 Comments on our Inspection Equipment

A Vaisala HM42 thermo-hygrometer is used to measure the ambient temperature, dew point temperature and relative and absolute humidity. This is fitted with a 4mm probe to investigate areas of suspected moisture ingress, and where possible, the sub-floor area. The external readings are noted above, and in the below tables to aid with the comparison of the external and internal atmosphere. These readings are of most use in occupied properties. In vacant properties where the internal doors are open and there is little heating or ventilation, a lot of the rooms become air dry.

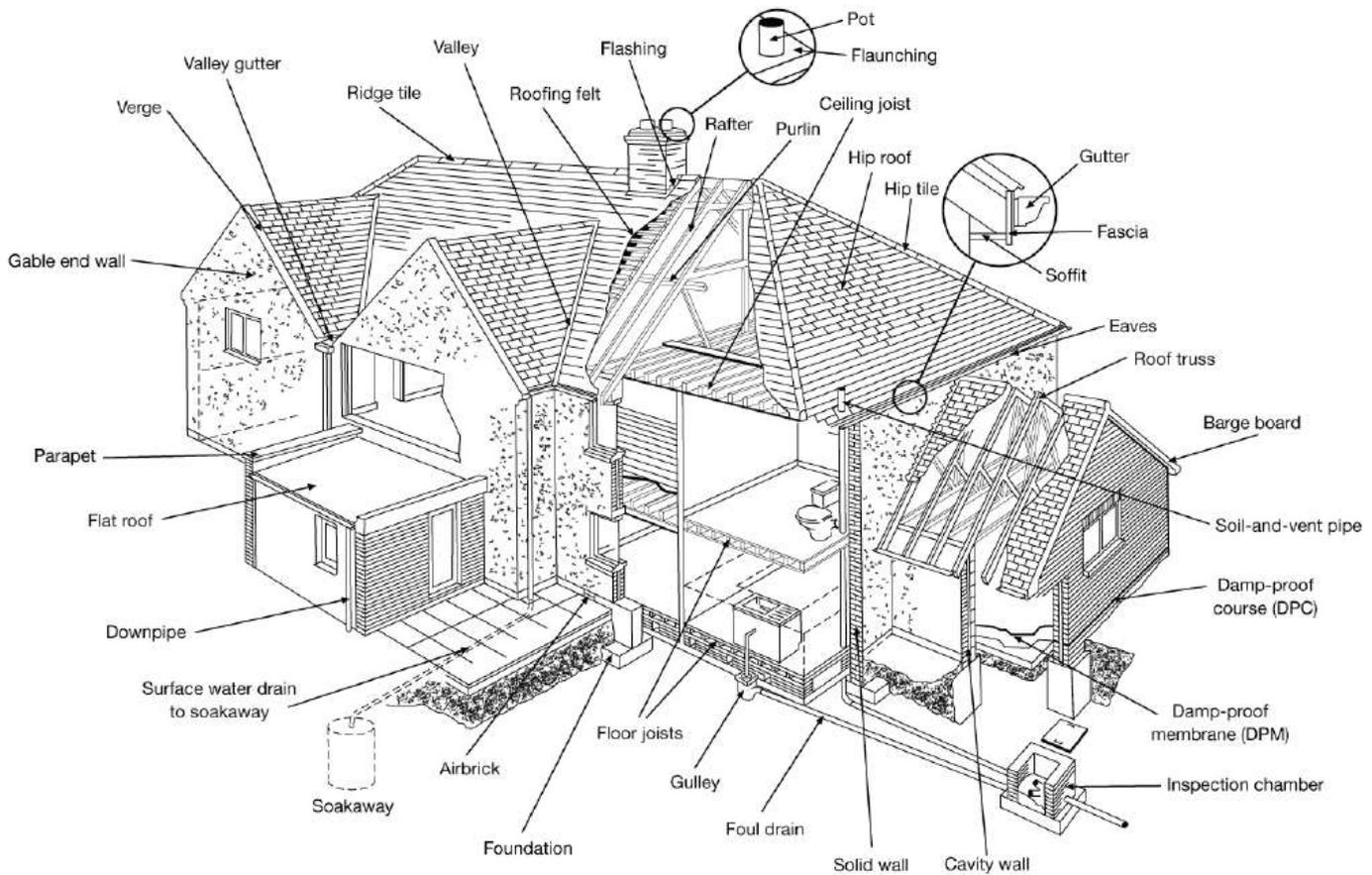
A FLIR E6-XT thermal imaging camera is used to analyse inconsistency in surface temperatures and areas where there is cold bridging, which may indicate the presence of moisture trapped in the building fabric. In the thermal imaging photographs in this report, the temperature at the centre target point is shown on the top left of the photo. The temperature range of all areas in the photo is shown on the right. Again, the camera works best when used in an occupied property where there is a temperature difference between inside and outside e.g., a heated house in winter.

Electrical conductivity meters, sometimes incorrectly referred to as 'damp meters' are only suitable for measuring the moisture content of clean untreated timber and are therefore only used to check if timber is dry as opposed to confirming the presence of moisture.

Where it is safe to do so, a drone is used to inspect high-level areas that we cannot inspect from inside the property.

1.7 Diagram of a Typical House

Below is a diagram of a typical house. This is included in the report so that the reader can easily identify the different areas being referred to in the report on the subject property.



Typical House. Credit: RICS

1.8 Abbreviations Used

The following is a list of abbreviations that we may use in our report. This is a generic list that we use for all buildings.

AH	Absolute Humidity	L&P	Lath and Plaster
CA	Conservation Area	MM	Moisture Meter
CDPC	Chemical Injection Damp Proof Course	PP	Planning Permission
CO	Conservation Officer	PV	Photo Voltaic (electricity)
CWI	Cavity Wall Insulation	RH	Relative Humidity
DG	Double Glazed/Glazing	SF	Second Floor
DPC	Damp Proof Course	SG	Single Glazed/Glazing
DPM	Damp Proof Membrane	ST	Solar Thermal (hot water)
FF	First Floor	TH	Thermo-Hygrometer
GF	Ground Floor	UFH	Under-Floor Heating
LBC	Listed Building Consent	WME	Wood Moisture Equivalent

2.0 Floor Plans

The floor plans are not a completely accurate representation of what is on-site, however, they are a good reference point for the reader. They should not be used to scale from.



Credit: Blundells



3.0 Observations and Recommendations

Our observations are made as if stood at the front of the property with the left-hand side being the driveway.

We only see the property during the course of one day in one season, usually only in one weather condition. It, therefore, may be necessary for you to observe and monitor some items when you move in. If you become concerned about any of the areas, we have recommended that you monitor, please do contact us.

When we note that works are required, we will usually advise that these are required:

Straight away – works should be undertaken without delay to stop the defect from having an immediate detrimental effect on the property.

When you move in – within the first year of ownership.

The short to medium-term – end of the first year to year five.

Long term – post year five.

Record and monitor – photograph/measure the defect and check it with the change in seasons to see if it gets any worse. If it does get worse, further action may need to be taken.

3.1 Roof, Chimneys and Flashings and Roofspace

Limitations to our Inspection

The roofs have only been inspected from ground level. We have used a drone where possible however we have been unable to physically get close to the roof covering. We have detailed our findings below, however, this should not be considered a full roofing survey and where there are multiples of the same defect, we have included examples.

3.1.1 Roof

Roof Structure

The roof is of traditional purlin, hip and rafter construction, the purlins socketed into the right-hand wall and onto the load-bearing internal walls.

Whilst the timber is generally free from decay and insect attack, the majority of the timbers forming the left-hand pitch are covered in white roof mould and softening. This needs addressing as soon as possible to prevent more serious problems. Only once the timber has dried out can a full assessment be made.

We have not been able to inspect the inside of the flat roof areas.

Roof Covering

The main roof is covered with clay tiles which are undertorched with mortar.

Generally speaking, the roof is in poor condition and repairs are long overdue. We have not detailed individual defective tiles below as there are so many. We would estimate that at least a third of the tiles are missing/damaged and most areas of detailing require attention.

In the roofspace, an attempt has been made to retro-fit roofing felt to large areas of the front and rear pitches, presumably to address rainwater penetration issues. We have not been able to inspect the underside of this area.

The roof needs immediate attention to prevent further deterioration. All of the damaged and missing tiles need to be replaced, and most of the detailing needs repairing/replacing.

Front pitch and dormer window.



Hip and ridge pointing – this is coming away in places along the length of the hip and ridge. The defective pointing needs to be removed and replaced, preferably with a hot lime-based mix to maintain flexibility.



Dormer window – the roof covering is in poor condition, pointing is missing from the ridge and the valleys are becoming blocked with debris.



The timber around the front of the dormer window is saturated and looks to be starting to decay.



The fascia is beginning to rot and needs replacing.



Moss is building up on the inside of the window in the roofspace. This demonstrates the prolonged period of time that the timber has been saturated.



The lead flashing under the dormer window is too long to be in a single piece and has split down the middle.



This should be replaced as soon as possible. Two sections of lead should be used.

Torn lead viewed from inside the roofspace.



The bay window roof covering is at the end of its useful life. Detailing between pieces and where it is detailed to the wall is poor and areas look to have been overcoated with bituminous paint.



Canopy – the covering is coming to the end of its useful life. There are cracks in the detailing with the front elevation.

Note the damaged roof tiles from the front pitch.



Side pitch



Rear Pitch



Pointing missing from the ridge – this should be replaced as soon as possible.



Pointing missing around the hip. This should be replaced as soon as possible.



Close-up photo of the general condition of the roof covering.



The tiles do not project far enough over the guttering and an eaves board has been added to try to compensate for this.



Flat roof – there does not look to be enough fall on the flat roof as there are areas of ponding.



3.1.2 Chimneys and Flashings

The property has two chimney stacks, a left stack serving the living room and a right stack serving bedroom three.

Left-hand stack – the stack is in poor condition and needs immediate attention. The pot does not have a vented cap, the flaunching is cracked all over and needs replacing, render is falling off and flashband has been used to re-dress the stack. All of these points need addressing. The debris in the back gutter should also be cleared out as soon as possible.



Close-up of the flaunching.



Right-hand stack – the stack is in poor condition and maintenance is long overdue. There is no vented cap on the pot, the flaunching is cracked and the render is in a precarious state. This needs immediate attention to prevent it from falling off and causing further damage to the roof covering.



3.1.3 Roofspace

There are many areas where daylight is visible through the roof covering. We have included some photos below, however, these are only some of the areas. Most of the main pitches are covered by the retro-fitted roofing felt.

As detailed above, the roof needs urgent attention to prevent further deterioration of the fabric of the building.



Thermo-hygrometer – ambient readings.

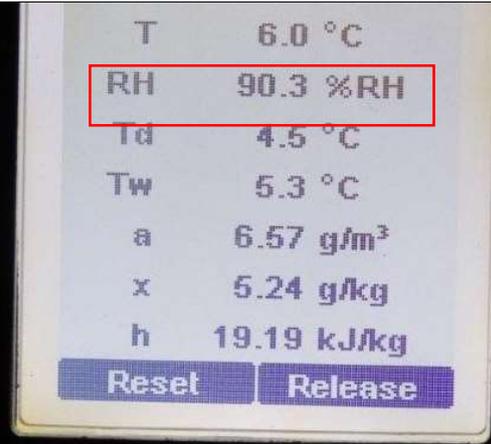
The air in the roofspace is nearly at saturation point. The leaks in the roof urgently need to be addressed, the insulation pulled back from the eaves/ventilator tiles/ridge added to create an adequate cross flow of ventilation to exhaust moisture externally.

If this is not addressed, timber decay and insect attack will likely begin to affect the timbers.



Thermo-hygrometer – behind retro-fitted felt.

The air behind the felt is also nearing saturation point.



T	6.0 °C
RH	90.3 %RH
Td	4.5 °C
Tw	5.3 °C
a	6.57 g/m ³
x	5.24 g/kg
h	19.19 kJ/kg
Reset Release	

Areas where roofing felt, has been retro-fitted to the front, dormer and rear roof pitches. As this is a pre-purchase survey, we have not been able to inspect behind this.



Decay to a rafter head underneath the dormer window.

This will need to be replaced or sistered.



There is white roof mould covering most of the timbers on the left-hand side of the roof.

Once ventilation to the roofspace has been addressed, condensation will reduce and the timbers should start to dry out.

The mould can be cleaned off and the timbers reassessed when they have dried out.

It is likely that at least some timber will need to be replaced, however, it is not possible to determine this until the timber has dried out.



We removed some of the insulation pushed up against the ceiling joists. Moisture is getting trapped in the insulation against the timber and in the debris below.

All of the debris should be cleaned away and the insulation taken up until all of the timber has dried out.



Not all of the water system has been drained down.

Joints are either leaking or condensation is forming on the areas of uninsulated pipework carrying cold water.

See photos below of pipes covered in condensation.



This tank is part full of water and is either leaking or there is a significant amount of condensation building up on the sections of pipe that are not insulated.

Water is dripping down onto the pump below.

Water was dripping from the elbow circled in red on the photo below left.

Corrosion is building up on the pump in the right-hand photo, red box.



Left-hand chimney stack – parts of the pointing are missing completely. Along some of the perp joints, the knife goes straight through into the flue.

If the fire was used below, smoke and fumes would likely enter the roofspace.

This must be addressed before the fire is used.



Stained timber underneath the right-hand stack.

This is in poor condition as noted above.

Once the stack has been repaired, the impurities can be cleaned off the timber.





3.2 Rainwater Goods and Drainage

Limitations to our Inspection

We do not perform or comment on drainage design calculations or test installations. We have not had sight of any drainage plans or maintenance records and would recommend a CCTV and mapping type survey if you require assurance as to their condition, capability and safety. Contractors should be familiar with the requirements of Approved Document H.

At the time of our inspection, the weather was dry and we were unable to observe the functionality of the rainwater goods and drainage. You should observe the fittings during heavy rainfall and repair any leaks as soon as possible. It is also possible that due to climate change, and more persistent heavy rain that the capacity of the guttering, fall pipes and drainage will need to be increased.

3.2.1 Rainwater Goods

The timber guttering to the front and part of the left-hand elevation is at the end of its useful life and needs replacing as soon as possible.

The lap joint to the left-hand side of the front door is leaking.

This needs addressing as soon as possible.

It is likely contributing to the saturated internal wall in the living room.



Front left-hand corner – you can see daylight through the guttering. This needs addressing as soon as possible.

It is likely contributing to the saturated sub-floor area.



The boot at the base of the fall pipe is not directing rainwater into the gully. This should be addressed as soon as possible.



3.2.2 Drainage

We have not inspected the drainage; however, note that a substantial bush has been growing against the front elevation next to the gully handling the rainwater discharge from the front pitch.

We consider it likely due to its size and proximity that this bush will have affected the drainage run. Further investigation is required.



3.3 External Walls

The walls are of cavity brick construction. At some point in the recent past, cavity wall insulation has been installed. Most of the cavity vents have been blocked up. As cavity wall insulation (and loft insulation) affect a thermal element, they should both have building control approval. A search of the Local Authority website shows that there has been no application for this.

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Building Control Applications (0)

Building Control Contraventions (0)

an idox solution

Most of the property above floor level is rendered. The render is generally in poor condition with lots of cracks and areas that have debonded. Attempts have been made to repair and repaint areas, but this has been done to a poor standard and these repairs are failing. The render needs to be removed and replaced, preferably with a non-hydraulic lime-based render as this offers a degree of flexibility and breathability.

Any timber that is in the wall is likely to be decaying under the render.

Defective render, blocked ventilation and cavity wall insulation is not a good combination. There are numerous areas where moisture is getting behind the render, saturating the bricks and cavity fill and bridging through to the inner leaf and into the rooms. To compound this problem, there are also areas where moisture is getting in around wall penetrations.

To address this, the cavity fill will likely need to be vacuumed out, blown plaster removed internally and the house left to dry out before any refurbishment works take place. Trying to rush this process will likely lead to moisture being trapped in the brickwork. See our further comments in 3.4.



Front Elevation

Examples of where the cavity vents have been blocked up with silicone. Any moisture that finds its way into the cavity can no longer escape.

These vents need to be unblocked as soon as possible.



Examples of cracks and blown render.



Bedroom 3 – there are gaps around the window frame and the reveal. This will allow driving rain to penetrate the wall, soak the cavity fill and bridge to the inner leaf.

If there are any timbers in the wall, this will cause them to decay.



Living room window – the detailing around the window is poor and likely allowing rainwater penetration around the cracks. On the right-hand side, the render is stained from moisture, this is likely to be caused by splashback from the roof.



The large bush on the right-hand side should be removed as it will affect the evaporation cycle of the wall and its roots may undermine the structure.



Side Elevation

The render is in poor condition and failing.



A poor job has been made of detailing the upper section of the side door.



Rear Elevation

Examples of blocked cavity vents and blocked passive vent to the W.C.



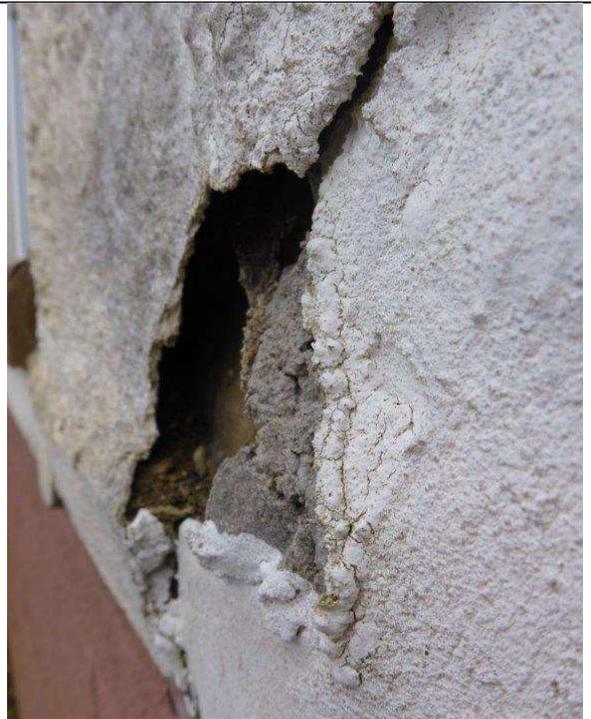
Examples of poor quality repairs to the render.



Examples of where damaged render has not been repaired/repairs have failed.



Areas of render have debonded and been left to deteriorate further.



Bedroom 1 – poor detailing around the window frame. This should be addressed as soon as possible.



Bedroom 2 – poor detailing around the window frame. The silicone has shrunk and there is now a gap around the window. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible as it is contributing to internal moisture problems.



Hairline cracks around the pointing. Likely occurred when the cavity wall insulation was being installed.

These all need raking out and repointing to prevent rainwater ingress.



3.4 Internals

The most efficient way to manage moisture in a property is to keep on top of routine maintenance and to keep the property properly heated and ventilated. This property has not been adequately maintained and it does not look like there has been any heating or ventilation over the winter months. There are now symptoms of and problems created by moisture in every room which we have detailed further below. Until the property is properly heated and ventilated, it is not possible to determine the definite causes of all of these problems.

Thermo-hygrometer readings were taken in each room as per the below table. Acceptable base readings are 15° with a relative humidity of 50% and absolute humidity of <7 g/m³. As there is no heating or ventilation, these readings are somewhat less scientific. When the heating is turned on, some of this moisture will come out of the fabric and into the air so conditions are likely to get worse for a while. With properly managed ventilation, this moist air will be exhausted externally and the difference between areas of penetrating damp and condensation will become clearer. We have used a thermal imaging camera during our inspection, however, with the property being air dry, few conclusions could be drawn bar how close many of the surfaces were to their respective dew points.

The drying out process needs to be managed – if big heaters and dehumidifiers are used, this may well dry out the surface, but will leave moisture trapped in the walls which will then be very difficult to extract once it has lost its connection to the surface. Removing the saturated materials from the walls will speed this process up. Now the property has gotten so wet, I would have thought a minimum of eight months would be required to fully dry some areas out.

Note that any proposals to use tanking type products are merely masking these problems from the surface finish. We do not recommend these be used under any circumstances.

	Temperature °C	Relative Humidity %	Dew Point °C	Absolute Humidity g/m ³
External reading (09:40)	7.3	67.3	1.6	5.33
Ground Floor				
Porch	5.7	73.3	1.3	5.25
Kitchen	5.6	75.2	1.6	5.35
W.C.	5.5	76.4	1.7	5.39
Living Room	5.5	81.9	2.6	5.77
Bathroom	5.9	80.7	2.8	5.84
Bedroom One	5.9	79.1	2.5	5.71
Bedroom Two	5.6	77.4	1.9	5.48
Bedroom Three	6.1	80.1	2.9	5.86
Living Room Chimney Flue	6.8	83.9	4.2	6.42
Bedroom Three Chimney Flue	5.8	82.8	3.1	5.95

The air in most rooms and the chimney flues is getting close to saturation point. Once the heating is turned on, the air is likely to reach saturation point and condensation will begin to form when surfaces reach their dew points. Note that it is colder inside all of the rooms than



it is outside. This is likely because moist air cannot hold heat well and the wet fabric of the building has lost much of its thermal mass.

Ventilation

Roofspace – some ventilation will be happening in areas where the undertorthing is missing, however, this is inadequate considering the eaves have been blocked with mineral wool. Ventilator tiles or a ventilated hip and ridge could be considered.

Bathroom and W.C. – there is no passive or mechanical ventilation in the bathroom or W.C. mechanical ventilation should be installed to both, preferably humidity-controlled.

Kitchen – the mechanical ventilation in the kitchen has been blocked over. This should be reinstated before the kitchen is used.

Chimneys – the chimney flue in the living room is open, however is not properly sealed in the roofspace which could aid moist air transfer between the two. The hit and miss vent in bedroom three was closed at the time of our inspection. Flues require constant ventilation to allow evaporation of moisture which if present, can track through the masonry and into the surrounding walls bringing with it impurities and leaving staining when it evaporates into the room.

Sub-floor – there is no sub-floor ventilation from the porch door around to the front door. Although there are plenty of vents on the rear elevation, without adequate vents on the side and front of the house, sufficient cross-flow will be difficult to achieve. This, combined with the raised ground levels at the front of the house is creating problems in the sub-floor that need to be addressed straight away.

3.4.1 Porch

There is black spore mould on all of the external walls in the porch and on the ceiling.

Ventilation needs to be increased as soon as possible and the black spore mould cleaned off.



Condensation is building up on the window frames as there is no ventilation in the property.

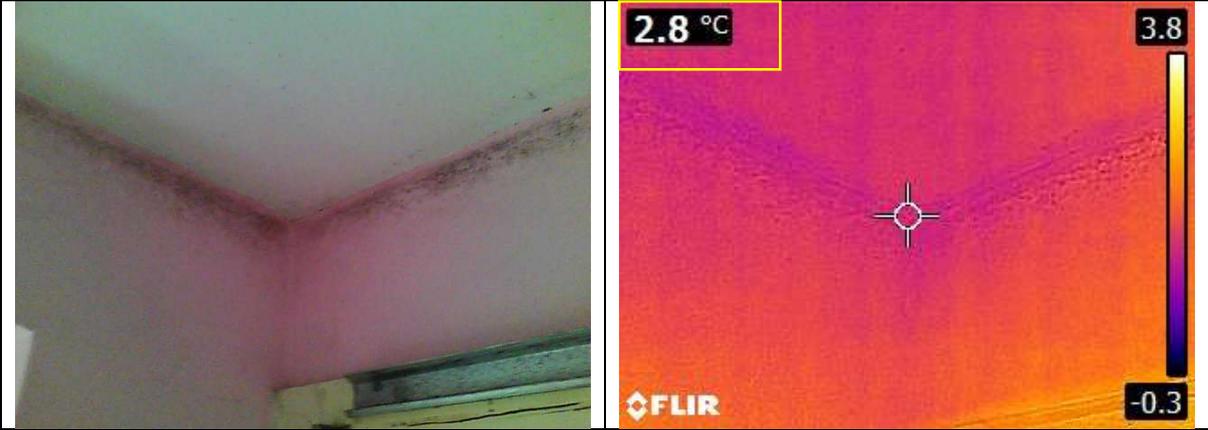


The floorboards in front of the porch door are beginning to decay.





In some areas, the surface temperature of the fabric of the building is only 1 degree above the dew point.



3.4.2 Kitchen

The mechanical ventilation has been covered over with plastic sheeting. This should be reinstated as soon as possible.



Black spore mould is building up around the kitchen extension. This needs to be cleaned off and ventilation re-instated.



Water is staining the ceiling, likely from either the roof, chimney or the plumbing above.

This is mirrored in the living room next door.



Again, in the kitchen, some areas are only 2 degrees above their dew points.



3.4.3 W.C.

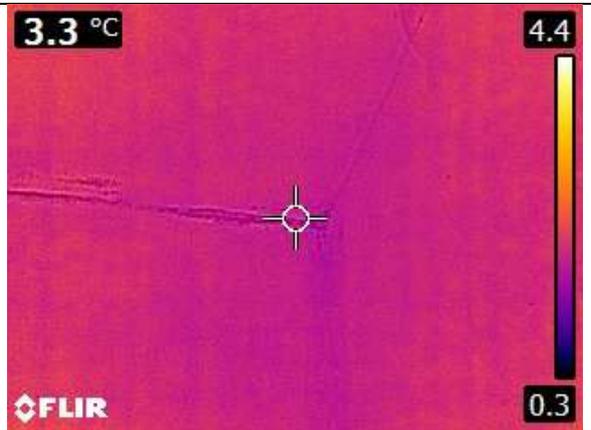
There is no mechanical ventilation in the W.C. and the passive ventilation has been blocked up.

Black spore mould on the ceiling/rear elevation abutment.

Ventilation should be re-instated.



1.5 degrees above the dew point.



3.4.4 Living Room

Condensation running down the windowpane is ponding along the junction of the frame and trim.

This ponding water is causing the timber cill to deteriorate.



Staining and mould are building up on the wall and ceiling on the right-hand side of the bay window.

The brickwork and cavity are likely to be saturated.

Externally, the guttering is defective, there is water staining on the render to the right of the window, a partially blocked cavity vent and tiles missing from the roof.



There is moisture all around the right-hand side of the bay window. Plaster is blowing and wallpaper has come off the wall.



We used the thermo-hygrometer in the area of blown plaster.

Note the relative humidity reading is 90%+, it should be between 40% and 60%.



There is staining to the wall and ceiling on the chimney breast and on the right-hand alcove.

This is mirrored on the other side of the ceiling in the kitchen.

This is likely to be a one or a combination of the chimney leaking, condensation/a leak from the pipework above or the roof leaking. See comments in 3.1.3.

Without any heating on it is not possible to determine in a non-invasive way how saturated the wall is.



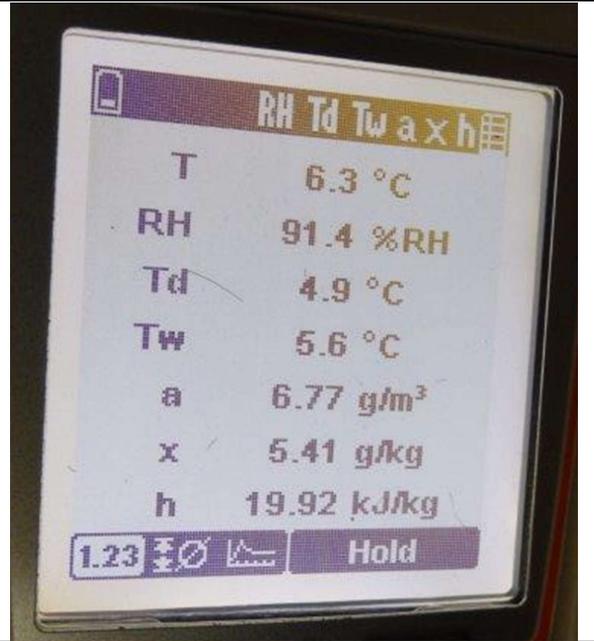
Moisture is getting up the back of the skirting boards. Note the corrosion around the ferrous metal fixings.



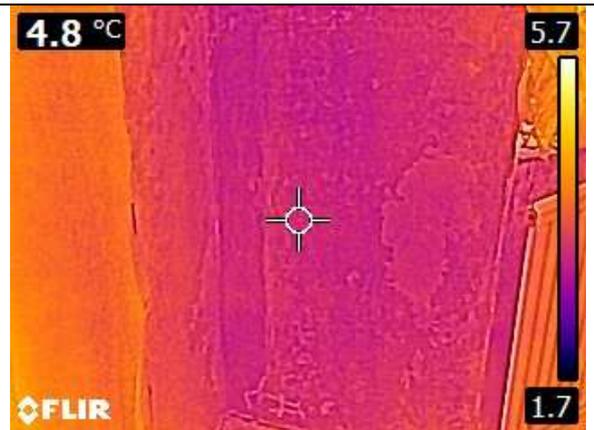
We placed the thermo-hygrometer probe through a hole in the floor in the front left-hand corner of the room. The air is nearly at saturation point and it is likely that timber will be decaying (see an example of this in 3.4.9).

When we peeled back the carpet, we found spiders, slugs and woodlice around the edges of the room.

Not also the corroded ferrous metal fixings in the floorboards.



The surface is only 2 degrees above the dew point.



3.4.5 Bathroom

There is no mechanical ventilation in the bathroom. Mechanical ventilation should be fitted before the room is used.

Black spore mould around the skirting board on the front elevation.

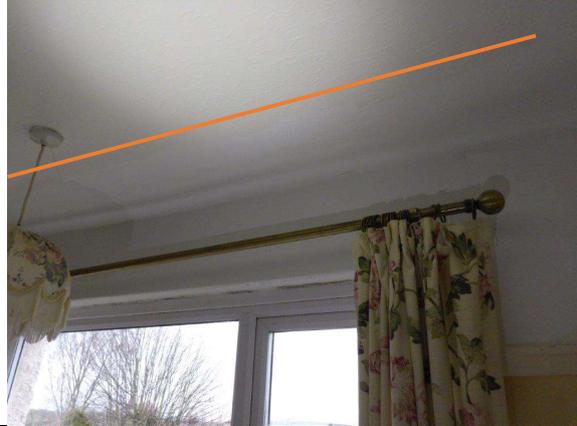


Mildew around the shower seal.



3.4.6 Bedroom One

Areas of black spore mould have been painted over with emulsion paint in some areas.



Staining to the left of the window frame.

The cavity is likely saturated and works are required as per 3.3.



Black spore mould is building up both on and around the window frame.



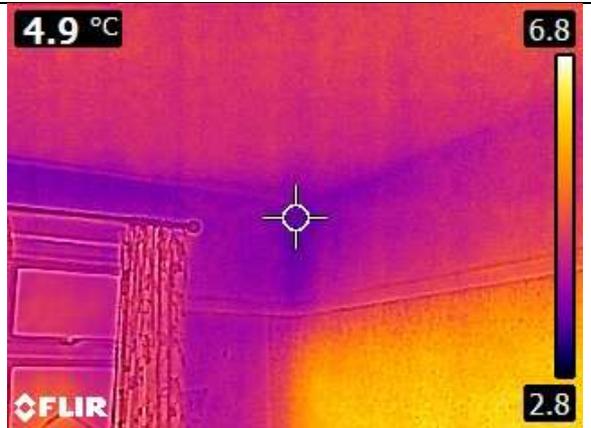
There are areas of sodden paper and patches of black spore mould in the wardrobe.



The gripper rod has completely decayed and the fixings in the gripper rod and the floorboards are corroding. This is could be one or a combination of the radiator leaking and moisture rising from the sub-floor.



2.5 degrees above the dew point. Note that the only area of heat is coming from the dividing wall with the neighbouring property.



3.4.7 Bedroom Two

Areas of the external wall and return are saturated. The paper/plaster need to be removed and both leaves of the wall and cavity need to be dried out.



Areas of black spore mould have been painted over with emulsion paint in areas.



Moisture is rising up from the sub-floor area/the radiator has been leaking. Note the corroded fixings in the floorboards and the gripper rods.

The end floorboard is decaying.



3 degrees above the dew point. The cavity fill looks cooler and is likely saturated.



3.4.8 Bedroom Three

There is moisture around both sides of the window.

The paper needs to be removed and the room properly heated and ventilated to see if this will dry out. If not, more drastic action will be required as detailed in 3.3.

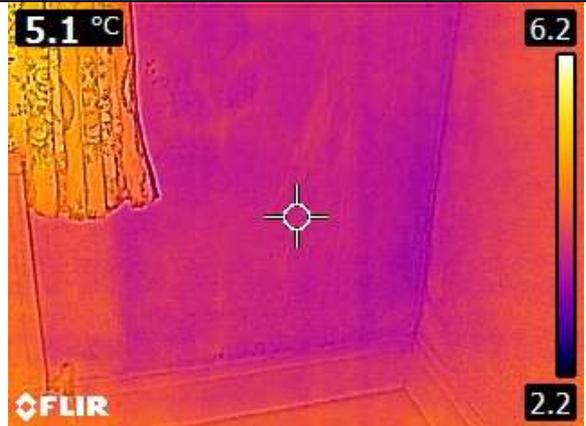


The hit and miss vent in the chimney breast was closed at the time of our inspection.

This should be left open to ventilate both the room and the redundant flue.



2.5 degrees above the dew point.



3.4.9 Hallway

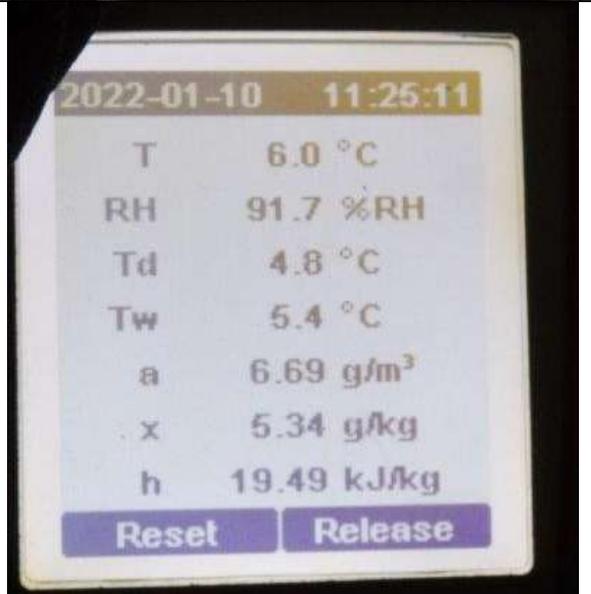
There is an access hatch to the subfloor area in the hallway.

The timber is saturated and there is mould across the underside.



The atmosphere in the sub-floor area urgently needs addressing. The air is saturated and this will cause timber decay and insect attack if action is not taken.

There was no access to the sub-floor at the rear of the property and there was not enough clearance for us to inspect the void.



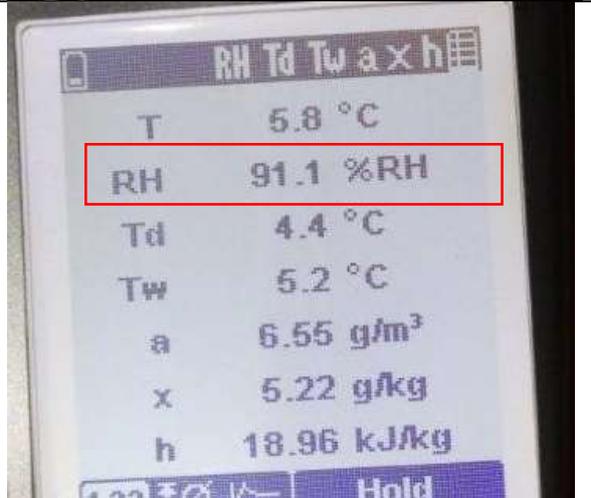
Timber socketed into the front elevation is beginning to decay. Urgent action is required.



It looks like a radiator has leaked in the hallway.

We could not take the carpet up to establish how widespread this was; however, where we peeled the carpet back, water was present on the floor.

We recommend that the carpet be taken up as soon as possible to prevent timber decay.



3.5 External Areas

Ground levels are raised from the driveway across to the front door. Ground levels need to be reduced to at least 150 mm below internal floor levels. Around the bay window, all of the subfloor ventilation has been blocked. This needs to be addressed as soon as possible.



A trench has been formed down the side of the living room in order to address the ground level issue noted above.



Porch – the ramp is bridging the damp proof course – see orange arrow.

This should be addressed as soon as possible.



3.6 Services

Limitations to our Inspection

We do not perform or comment on design calculations or test the service installations or appliances in any way. We also do not comment on compliance with current regulations. Any comments made below are to draw your attention to things that in our opinion may require further investigation, as opposed to statements of fact.

We have not inspected any of the services; however, noted that the incoming fuse board is covered in mould due to the moisture getting into the meter cupboard.

