

EXAMPLE DAMP SURVEY
DAMP REPORT
for XXXX
2 February 2020

RECOMMENDATIONS	3
SUMMARY FINDINGS	4
W.H.O. GUIDELINES FOR INDOOR AIR QUALITY	6
TIPS TO KEEP PROPERTIES MOULD FREE	9

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

Our damp surveys are designed to provide a holistic diagnosis that identifies and deals with causes rather than a focus on symptoms. Symptoms will disappear over time, once damp is stopped at source. Our reports:

- identify root cause(s) of major unwanted dampness within the property,
- identify major symptoms of unwanted dampness,
- identify major structural damage caused by dampness,
- recommend actions and estimated costs to stop damp at source and mitigate its effects,
- recognise that treating damp is often a staged approach, treating obvious causes first.

Note neither condensation nor rising damp are causes. They are symptoms.

INDEPENDENCE AND METHODOLOGY

Our only income is through damp survey fees. We are independent of contractors and never profit from remedial work. We do not receive or pay any fees or other inducements. Our motivation is peace of mind and practical, durable solutions. We use an array of equipment to identify the root cause of damp within walls. Our damp surveys follow guidance from [“RICS Historic England joint methodology”](#) and support RICS’s highest standard, level 3 [“Home Survey Standard”](#) (HSS).

UNDERSTANDING DAMP

For survey purposes, damp or dampness is defined as unwanted water. Water brings life. We need it. Unfortunately, fungus and insects also thrive in water. While a damp wall can cause decoration to spoil, it is not the moisture, but the life it brings that causes the greatest concern in the home environment. 85% of residential damp problems are caused by vapour.



SURVEYOR'S DECLARATION AND CONCLUSION

I confirm that I inspected XXXX on 2 February 2020. I conclude that there was excess humidity (condensation caused by insufficient ventilation) in addition there were hygroscopic salts on an internal bedroom wall. All buildings can be exposed to unvented vapour and external dampness to some degree. You will mitigate the risk of damp if you follow all our recommendations. This report is intended to be read in full with links off it. Observations and opinions must not be taken in isolation. Like any building, you need to be aware of the risks of damp arising in the future and plan a programme of prevention and maintenance accordingly.

REASONING

The key concerns were: a) Is the property suffering from rising damp? This is highly unlikely as the risk of the building being in contact with ground water (the source of water in rising damp) is remote and the profile of damp is quite unlike rising damp. b) What is the cause of the internal dampness? There are signs of condensation therefore by definition there is insufficient ventilation and the starting point for resolving the damp is through improved ventilation. c) What is causing the dampness of the internal bedroom wall? This is more complex to explain. The damp is caused by hygroscopic salts, almost certainly the result of the historic burning of fossil fuel. These cause deliquescence, that is condensation often at normal humidity levels. The solution is to cover these salts. This can be done by replacing the plaster with thermal insulating plasterboard, thermal lining paper or simply gloss paint.



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RICS Qualified Expert Witness (Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors)

ABBE Certificated Surveyor of Timber & Dampness in Buildings

PCA Certificated Surveyor of Dampness in Buildings (Property Care Association)

ICAEW and Property Mark Qualifications

[Member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings \(SPAB\)](#)

Report 10 February 2020

RECOMMENDED REMEDIAL ACTIONS

Remedial actions necessary to keep the property dry and mould free	
Cook with tops on pots and pans to reduce production of vapour from cooking by 80%.	
Allow air to flow around external walls, by minimising clutter.	
Keep a small amount of heat late at night, when it is cold outside.	
Dry clothes in vented room with door closed.	
Keep some ventilation in occupied rooms, such as using the safety locks.	
Keep bathroom door closed with the vent running or a window slightly open, until humidity has dropped.	
Cover hygroscopic salts: replacing the plaster with thermal insulating plasterboard with vapour will cost about £1,000 for the wall, thermal lining paper such as Wallrock or Semtatap will cost about £50 for materials and take about 1 day in total or gloss paint will cost about £20 and take a few hours, but it may need reapplication after about 5 years.	£50 - £1,000
Remedial actions – estimate of total costs	

Optimal actions to improve the home environment	
Consider instructing an electrician to install quiet, light switch operated extractor fan to bathroom with 30 minute overrun (hole in place so should reduce cost).	£200
Consider instructing a general builder to duct out kitchen extractor fan (suitable hole appears to be in place).	£250
Optional action actions – estimate of total costs	£450

This is not a quote. This estimate is based on approximate time, costs and competence needed to complete repairs. Most work can be completed by a general builder. CheckaTrade.com, trustatrader.com and trustedtraders.which.co.uk are good sources of general builders. Once the recommended remedial actions are completed and the walls allowed to dry, dampness will not have a material impact on the value of the property.

SUMMARY FINDINGS

Symptoms of main issue: condensation.

Profile of main issue: Condensation profile



Surveyor tips

Visible effects: condensation, condensation was visible to the front corridor and around the property.

Conditions during survey

Relative humidity 66.9%RH

Temperature 16.9°C

Mould point 13.2°C

Dew point 10.7 °C See mouldpoint.co.uk

Temperature of damp wall 12°C

Relative humidity of wall was 92%RH

Weather: dry

External low at night: 7°C, the conditions were ideal for condensation on the day of the survey.

About the property

The property is a semi-detached Victorian ground floor flat with a solid wall made of two brick widths (225mm). The front door faces south.

Changes to the property's original design

Properties are not designed and built with damp problems. Understanding changes to a property since first inhabited is the starting point for tracing damp back to its root cause.

Key changes are; conversion into flats, central heating and lifestyle changes including more frequent showers and clothes washing.

Ventilation assessment

Bathroom extractor (nearest damp wall). The extraction rate was **46.7 M³/min** (ideally it should be over **30 M³/min**). The bathroom extractor fan is essentially manual. It was reasonably strong, but should be kept running for 30 minutes after a shower.

Kitchen ventilation

There is no functioning extractor fan in the kitchen The kitchen does not have an externally ducted extractor fan..

Ventilation improvements

Ideally install a quiet, strong light switch operated extractor fan in the bathroom, with 30-minute overrun after lights are switched off. Keep the bathroom door closed. In addition, dry clothes in a vented room or vented tumble drier (externally ducted). Install an externally ducted extractor fan to the kitchen. Keep heat balanced across the property and across the day and night so that the wall temperature doesn't drop below the dew point. Consider retrofitting trickle vents into double glazed windows.

Ventilation overall

The ventilation is essentially manual, that is you should monitor humidity and open windows, close doors and heat the property so as to keep relative humidity to normal levels (50%RH - 60%RH).

Penetrating damp assessment

The exterior appeared to be OK from a damp perspective. There are no obvious signs of significant penetrating damp.

Timber assessment

There are no suspicions of significant timber decay.

Leak assessment

There are no obvious signs of a significant mains or wastewater leak.

Rising damp assessment

Elevation is: 17M above sea level.

The flood risk is: no risk.

Sub-soil rocks are: Rocks with essentially no groundwater there are no signs of groundwater.

Therefore the risk of rising damp is a remote possibility.

LIMITATIONS

Damp Surveys Ltd reports are designed to provide you with an informed independent expert opinion as to the condition of the property together with any recommendations for further investigation or remedial work. We do not warrant any findings in this report unless we enter into a separate warranty agreement with you.

The survey was conducted during daylight hours. Damp will be more noticeable at night and when the weather is colder and more humid. Gutters are more likely to fail when full of leaves and during periods of prolonged rain and adverse wind. We make best endeavours but cannot guarantee being able to identify all forms of damp, rot and insect infestation affecting the property. We are happy to return and update our observations and advice at any time.

We carried out a careful and thorough inspection of as much of the property as was accessible. However, when it is not possible to make a full inspection, we make a professional judgement about the likelihood of a defect being present. In certain circumstances, this may lead to a recommendation for further action to open up an area for further investigation. We are unable to see the whole roof, all the guttering and some of the drains. We were unable to inspect woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible, and are therefore unable to report that such parts of the property are free from defect. There were no obvious signs of damp resulting from these limitations.

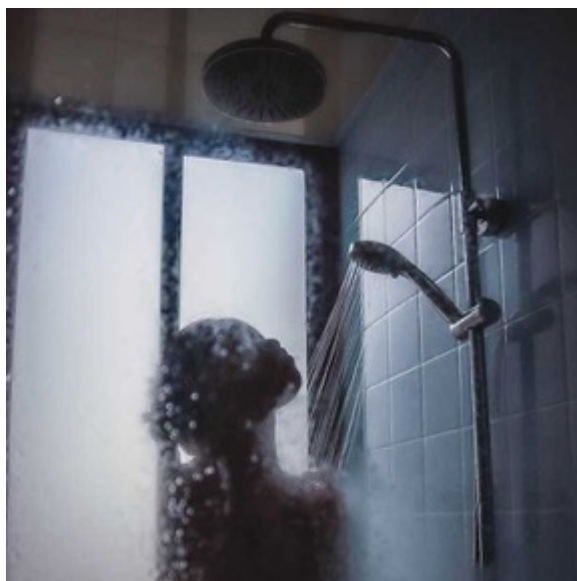
This report is for the sole use of XXXX for whom the survey was undertaken and can only be relied upon for 90 days from the survey date. Unless expressly stated otherwise in this report, nothing in this report confers or is intended to confer any rights on any third party pursuant to the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999.



W.H.O. (World Health Organisation) guidelines for indoor air quality

“Management of moisture requires proper control of temperature and ventilation to avoid excess humidity, condensation on surfaces and excess moisture in materials. Ventilation should be distributed effectively throughout spaces, and stagnant air zones should be avoided.”

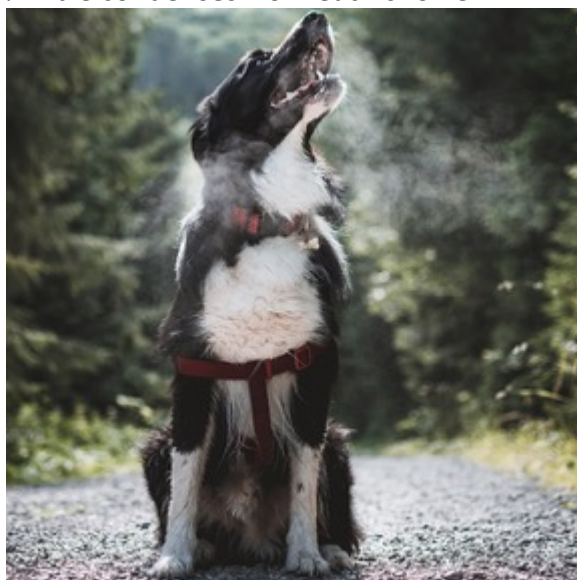
A typical house contains 30 - 40 litres of water as vapour. Each day, each occupant adds about 1.5 litres.



$\frac{1}{2}$ Litre condenses from each shower



$\frac{1}{2}$ L/day condenses from drying clothes



$\frac{1}{2}$ L from respiration each day & $\frac{1}{4}$ L at night



Cooking produces $\frac{1}{4}$ L/day each

Unvented vapour can cause condensation, mould and allergenic dust mites. The simple rule is vent out as much vapour as you add to a property every day.

UNDERSTANDING CONDENSATION AND MOULD

We intuitively know and understand condensation. But there may be surprises.

- Condensation can form on a warm summer's night, as dew on cold grass.
- Water can evaporate off ice, even when the temperature is below 0°C.
- Mould only grows when relative humidity exceeds 85%RH.
- Mould mainly forms at night between 2AM and 5AM, when it is coldest.
- Allergies people associate with mould, typically come from dust mites.

Understanding relative humidity

Warm air holds more water vapour than cold air. The warmer it is, the more air's capacity to hold water vapour. Conversely the colder it is, the less capacity, until air cannot hold any more vapour. We call that the dew point or 100%RH. As soon air reaches capacity, condensation will form on the coldest surfaces.

Mould and dust mites

Mould only grows when air is humid for over 6 hours. When it exceeds 85%RH.

Dust mites are microscopic insects that can cause allergies. They grow in similar conditions to mould. So ventilate more to avoid allergies.

Health concerns

There are no health and safety issues from damp noted. It is in the occupier's interests to keep a property properly ventilated and temperatures above the dew and mould points throughout the property, thereby reducing the health risk associated with dust mites, bacteria, protozoans, as well as decorative spoiling caused by mould.

<https://dampsurveys.com/mould-health-concerns>



TIPS TO KEEP PROPERTIES MOULD FREE

Reduce the production of vapour at source

- Keep bathroom extractor fans running, or window open for at least 30 minutes.
- Keep bathroom doors closed at all times, and bathroom windows open safely.
- When filling the bath, run the cold water first then add the hot.
- Dry clothes outside in a dryer or vented room, never on radiators or heated rail.
- Cook with tops on pots and pans, avoiding excessive boiling.
- Keep the kitchen door closed and extractor fan on where possible.
- Keep chimney breasts or passive vents open.
- Keep trickle vents open or alternatively, open windows on safety locks.

Stop mould forming

- Maintain external wall temperatures above 12°C, with low background heating.
- Declutter leaving space for warm air to circulate around cold surfaces.
- Where possible, avoid placing wardrobes and furniture against external walls.
- Avoid overfilling wardrobes and cupboards as it restricts air circulation.
- Use dehumidifiers or small wardrobe dehumidifying bags and replace regularly.
- Wipe mould and condensation off walls and clothes as soon as it appears.

MONITOR HUMIDITY

If all else fails, we suggest monitoring temperature and relative humidity with a datalogger to see what is happening.

HELP

It takes teamwork to solve damp and mould issues in properties. It isn't easy or obvious. We can help, but be patient, we are often exceptionally busy.

