Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil

RECORD OF BUILDING AND CONDITION ASSESSMENT REPORT, WITH REPAIR PROPOSALS

(449)2503-GWP-A-HIS-P01
Date: 05.03.25
Prepared by: AD
Checked by: RT

gwparchitecture

Foundation for Jewish Heritage

CONTENTS

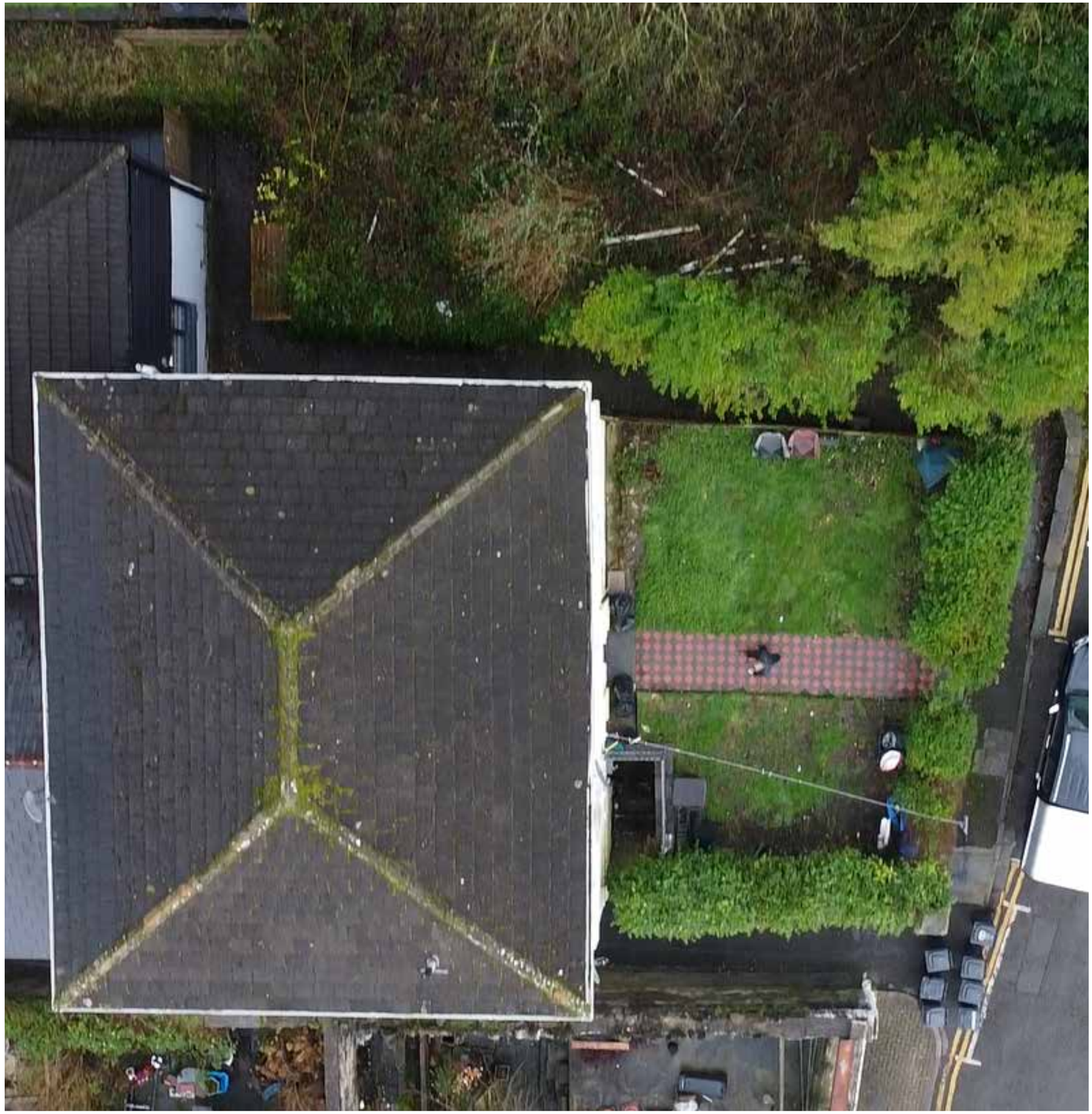


Image from Drone (source: Mann Williams)

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES OF REPORT

1.1 Introduction and Purpose

This Record of the Building and Condition Assessment is written by GWP Architecture on behalf of the anticipated owners of the site and the heritage asset, the Foundation for Jewish Heritage.

The building is located at the top, north east, end of Church Street, at the point that the road turns southwards and becomes Brynteg Terrace. The building is immediately north west of the old Synagogue building.

Built in the early-to-mid 19th century, the building is of three full storeys plus a half lower ground floor / basement. Its principal elevation - an attractive smooth rendered symmetrical Classical-style facade with large timber sash windows looks out onto the road (and the Synagogue).

The purpose of this report is to comprise a full record of the building - externally and internally - and summarise the condition of the respective elements of fabric. The report also summarises the proposed repair, restoration and adaptation approaches.

1.2 The Inspection and the Report

The report is based on a visit undertaken on Tuesday 17th December 2024.

The inspections were purely visual and undertaken from external ground level and all accessible internal floor levels. A drone was flown over the roof, and so photographic footage from above the roof was available.

Our best endeavours were used to see as much as was reasonably possible from as good a vantage point as possible; however, we cannot guarantee that all defects have been identified, due to access, the height of the building, poor lighting in areas, furniture in areas and the inability to see some areas properly. Some issues will only become evident when scaffolding, or other direct access, is set up. As a result, we would recommend that any costings allow a robust contingency for defects yet to be established.

No intrusive investigations were undertaken nor any intervention with mechanical tools. We have also undertaken no assessment of the ground conditions nor the foundations for the building. Likewise, we did not undertake a level assessment of the walls for their verticality.

The assessment and this report are not intended to establish every defect or issue, but to provide a preliminary review of what is readily apparent and visible, given access and visibility constraints. Prior to rectifying defects, a more detailed assessment of the specific aspect may be deemed beneficial, by a suitable specialist / conservator.

The report, along with the photographs within this report, seek to give an appreciation of the areas of the fabric which would require, or benefit from, attention. It is possible that not all examples of each particular defect type have been identified, however, those defects which were most evident should have been identified.

Should works proceed to repair and restore aspects of the building, more detailed appraisals of some aspects of the building fabric may be necessary, including some opening up, and a design and detailed specification may need to be produced, upon which this report may, if relevant, guide.

During any repair works, once access is improved with scaffolding installed, and paintwork etc has been stripped, then a more detailed assessment can be made of certain aspects. However, using the specifications within the report, it should be clear to those engaged in any detailed design and physical repair work what the nature of repair proposed is for each defect, once its full extent is discovered.

Following description of each defect, suggestions have been given as to ways in which the defects might be remedied.

1.3 Statutory Designation - Listing

Primrose Hill is protected by a grade II listing, which was designated on 22 August 1975, and was last amended on 13 January 1988.

The listing (with a Cadw ID No. of 11425) states:

History

Early to mid C19.

Exterior

3-storey, 3-bay cement-rendered elevation, ground-floor rusticated. Hipped tiled roof. Smaller pivot windows without glazing bars to second-floor; sashes with glazing bars to lower floors. Simplified pilastered doorcase with modern door and fanlight. Small enclosed forecourt with right-hand gatepiers.

1.4 Authorship

This document has been produced by Ashley Davies, an RIBA-accredited Specialist Conservation Architect, following a visit to, and appraisal of, the site in January 2025.

Ashley is also a Chartered Architect, a member of the RIBA Conservation Register National Steering Group; a Supporter of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation; has twice been the conservation specialist on the RIBA Regional Architecture awards panel; has lectured in 'Conservation Principles' at University; has presented at conferences on the theme of building conservation; and has appeared on a few television programmes talking about his passion for restoring historic buildings. He has undertaken several Building Conservation courses, including at SPAB and the RIBA. He has delivered dozens of heritage-led projects over his career involving the repair, restoration and adaptation of many grade I, II* and II listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monument.

In addition – and often, in parallel - Ashley has assessed and written over 140no. Historic Building Reports for over 90no. historic buildings and sites, including over 40no. Detailed Condition Assessments.

1.5 Summary of Building Condition and Approach to Repairs

There is a mix of quality to the interior of Primrose Hill. The ground floor entrance lobby is very attractive and in seemingly good condition. The single staircase is a little tight, but, again, that appears to be in a reasonable condition. To the west of the entrance lobby, the flat is well decorated and appears to be in a reasonable condition. However, to the east of the entrance lobby, the finishes within the flat are in an extremely poor condition. Some of the wall surfaces are wet and many of them are coated in black mould. Around the fireplace on the east external wall, the walls are stained orange. The first floor flat above is also in a reasonable condition; although there are two areas where damp is a problem. The second floor flat is, likewise, in a reasonable condition; although, again, there are some signs of damp and cracking in the plaster. There is a storeroom at the rear of the stairs at ground floor, which also has damp on the walls. It was not possible to access the matching storeroom at first floor, however, it must be assumed that this is also suffering from damp.

Why is the one flat coated with staining and wet - to walls and ceilings - with large areas of mould growth, whilst the matching flat on the other side is not. The windows are all double glazed, and new, so this is not a factor. The proposals involve removing all the plaster and investigating the masonry behind. There could be defects in the walls; there could be cold bridges; there could be damp coming in from outside and, unable to escape through the cement render, it has saturated the walls, causing damp conditions internally. However, the level of condensation in this flat is extremely high, and one feels that part of the problem may be with the tenant's living habits and the poor services. There appears to be no background heating on (we were advised that the boiler did not always work); it does not look like the windows were often opened to ventilate the space; insulation had been applied to the inside face of walls (thereby stopping any warmth getting into the walls and drying them out); and it looked like washing was regularly dried in the space and cooking a regular thing, with questionable hood ventilation.

There may well be an issue with the walls; they may well be holding moisture unable to escape due to the cementitious render and gypsum plaster; there may well be gaps in the construction and/or cold bridges. This will all need to be investigated once the render and plaster is off. However, there is also poor heating (maybe none), poor ventilation (arguably none) and a lot of moisture-producing activity inside. We are also aware that the tenants regularly clean down the walls. This may also be adding moisture into the plaster.

The staining is awful around the fireplace particularly, on the east wall. It is orange in colour. It appears the fireplace is blocked up at this point, which is not ideal. However, to make this worse, at some time in the past, the chimneys appear to have been removed. This means that there may be no air movement / ventilation within the chimney breast and flue. As a result, the stale and stagnant air within the flue, holding old soot and 'nasties', is not ventilated out of the fabric, as intended; and so, it sits there, reacts with moisture within the masonry, and is drawn, hygroscopically, through the masonry to the surface and stains the plaster an orange colour, and potentially leads to mould growth and noxious odours. The more moisture the wall holds, the worse the reaction. This soot can also badly damage the masonry itself. Once the plaster has been removed and the wall allowed to dry out, the proposals involve incorporating a vent in the face of the fireplace and a vent at the top of the wall, where the chimney used to be. Thus, some ventilation can be reintroduced into the flue.

Also, to the right of the fireplace is a recess. This is caked in black mould deposits. It is probable that this is so bad because the thickness of the wall in this area is much less than the rest of the wall; and so, there is a greater cold bridge to the outside and, hence, this is a coldest part of the wall, which condensation would immediately move towards.

There is more mould on the walls and ceilings within the bathroom, lobby and kitchen; where there appears to be a lot of moisture being produced, little heat and little ventilation.

Whilst the first and second floors are not too bad, one area of damp, mould and crystallised salts appears on the wall directly above where the problem below exists, suggesting there could be an issue with the fabric, particularly in the recess with the cold bridging. It is an area of wall where the render externally is looking especially dark, stained and damp; and it is the area where there is a rain water downpipe, which might have been leaking; and an area where the old chimney breast may not be suitable vented.

To another room in the same first floor flat, there is water-staining, dampness, spalled plaster and crystallised salts on the external front wall. There is a significant amount of cracking render on the outside just above this point. This might explain how the inside face of the wall is damp - water has been getting behind the render, cannot evaporate externally and so is finding its way to the inside face of the wall, and drying, leaving salt crystals. The plaster needs removal and a new lime plaster applied.

This leads onto the main problem externally. The front elevation has been applied with a cementitious render. The substrate behind the render (i.e. the masonry with which the walls were built) appears to be red brick; however, there could also be stone. Given the age of the building, this render would initially have been a lime and sand render, not cementitious.

Clearly apparent across the elevation are numerous cracks in the render. This is a problematic issue. Traditional buildings made of solid masonry walls are designed to be slightly flexible. Lime mortar and render provides that flexibility, which allows the walls to expand and contract nominally without cracking. Cement render is not flexible, and so any expansion or contraction in the walls cannot be absorbed by the coating. The result is often the appearance of cracks within the cement render. Once cracks occur, water enters the wall through the cracks and is held between the render and the masonry. Lime render is vapour-permeable, whilst cement render is impermeable. So, if the render was lime, not only would there be many fewer, if any, cracks; but also, the moisture absorbed into the wall fabric would be drawn out of the wall (hygroscopically) through the joints and render, would sit on the surface of the wall, and be evaporated by the sun and wind. With cement render, it is not possible for the moisture to escape through the coating, and hence to evaporate on the surface. As such, a cement rendered wall, once cracks occur, holds onto the moisture. This can result in various defects – the breaking down of the masonry itself; the widening of cracks (as moisture held, freezes and expands); saturation of the masonry, which could cause damp or mould internally (especially if the internal plaster is gypsum, not lime, as it is here); saturation of timber in contact with the masonry, which could cause mould, rot or infestation; and a generally unhealthy building.

A quick response would be to repair the cracks; but this would not address the problems. More cracks will appear in time, and more water will get behind the render. In addition to this, we are aware of significant issues with water ingress to the fabric causing problematic mould growth to the internal face of the walls. The walls are, of course, not insulated (which they cannot be, being solid masonry); however, damp walls perform very badly as insulators, whilst dry walls are good insulators. The most important thing for the building is to dry out the walls and ensure they do not, again, become saturated. The only way to do this is to remove the water ingress causes (i.e. cracks in render, poor rainwater goods, lack in internal ventilation and heating) and then to ensure that the walls are vapour-permeable from both the outside face and the inside face.

To that end, we recommend very carefully hacking off the cementitious render to the external face (as well as the cementitious / gypsum plaster to the internal face), allowing as long a time as possible for the external walls to dry out, by exposing both external and internal faces of the masonry to evaporation), and then re-applying a 3-coat lime render to the outside face of the walls (and a 3-coat lime plaster to the inside faces). The external render will need to be smooth-finished with the top coat, rusticated at ground floor and incised at upper floors, to emulate coursed finished stone, to match the design of the existing stucco.

Trying to remove cementitious render, which usually bonds extremely well to masonry, can cause damage to the stone. However, sometimes it can be removed fairly easily with little damage; with the work in the right hands. This is a risk; however, given the damp conditions internally, this may be a risk which needs to be taken.

To this west side elevation, the render is roughcast. It is not known whether this is cementitious; however, it is assumed to be. There are 'scars' in the render where previous pipework has been removed, and there is the occasional crack in the render; however, apparently where recent smooth repairs have been applied. In the main, the render is showing very few cracks and very little damage. Whilst we would prefer all renders to be lime, where the render is little damaged and appears to be keeping the rain out, then we would suggest that it remain in place - at least for now. Any cracks should be made good, and the whole wall should be re-painted; but we might suggest this render is not hacked off at this stage. There is a crack in the window cills which also requires a local repair.

To the east side elevation, the render is also roughcast; however, here it is a mixture of off-white and light grey with dark grey and green environmental and organic staining. It is not known whether this is cementitious; however, it is assumed to be. This elevation comprises several soil drainage pipes, surface water drainage pipes and condensate pipes. It is assumed that, over time, leaks from one of more of these pipes has stained the render. It is also of concern that the rainwater pipe spills out onto concrete, which them runs into a gully. This means that the water splashes off the concrete and probably splashed back onto the wall.

The worst of the mould growth inside is on this elevation, at ground floor, and also at first floor. It is not possible to determine if there are any defects in the masonry of the wall which would have caused this issue; or whether there are problematic cold bridges; or that it is simply a case on internal condensation; however, the worst issues are within a recess in this wall.

We recommend that the internal plaster is removed and the masonry investigated from inside. This may remove the need to expose the masonry from the outside; however, it may not. So, for now, we also recommend that the render is also removed from the outside face and, once the wall has dried out, and any defects in the masonry addressed, then the walls should be re-rendered with a roughcast lime render. We also propose that the drain is provided with a shoe which dresses into the gulley cover to stop the chance of splashback.

All of the windows to the front elevation comprise sealed double-glazed units. However, it appears as though, rather than each glass pane being individual, each sash is a full glass pane, and the timber glazing bars are planted on, externally and internally. All 8no. windows appear to be modern and are likely to have been recently installed. With this in mind, they are generally in a good condition.

The windows on the east elevation are double glazed; however, those on the east and north elevations are still single glazed. We proposed these are re-glazed with Slimline double glazing.

The roof is a simple rectangular hipped roof, covered in concrete tiles and rounded concrete ridge and hip tiles. The surface of the tiles is heavily mossed on the ridge and some hips. However, there do not appear to be any lost tiles, nor slipped tiles, and only a small number of broken tiles. In this regard, the roof covering appears to be in a reasonable condition. The roof would benefit from a clean of all the moss, and the edges of the roofing membrane cut back; but no significant work is suggested to the roof covering.

It is noticeable that there are no chimneys penetrating the roof. With several fireplaces inside, there would have been at least two chimneys, possible four, penetrating the roof. These have all been removed. It does not appear as though the tops of these flues have been vented since the chimneys were removed, which is a worrying sign. It is recommended that a vent is added into the external wall at each floor, to ventilate the flue.

Covered by ivy and other vegetation, to the side of the path, east of Primrose Hill, is a retaining wall, approximately 3m high, made of rubble stonework. It is assumed that the stones are bedded on a lime mortar (albeit not confirmed) and that it used to be pointed in a lime mortar; however, it is apparent that the wall has more recently been pointed in a cementitious mortar, using a buttering / part rendering which has covered much of the stonework. The wall is covered in vegetation, to face and top, and so the wall could barely be inspected; however, there is concern about the use of cement for the pointing and for the restriction this will have put to the passage of moisture through the wall.

A 'makeshift' drainage hole was apparent at the base in one location; however, it is not clear whether there is a full drainage provision to this wall. That being said, percolation tests undertaken to the ground above suggests a good level of natural drainage in the ground above this wall.

1.6 General Views of Primrose Hill

View of Frontage from Garden to South

View of Frontage from Synagogue Steps to South East

View from South West, with access lane down to left

View from road from South

1.7 General Views of Primrose Hill and its relationship with the Synagogue

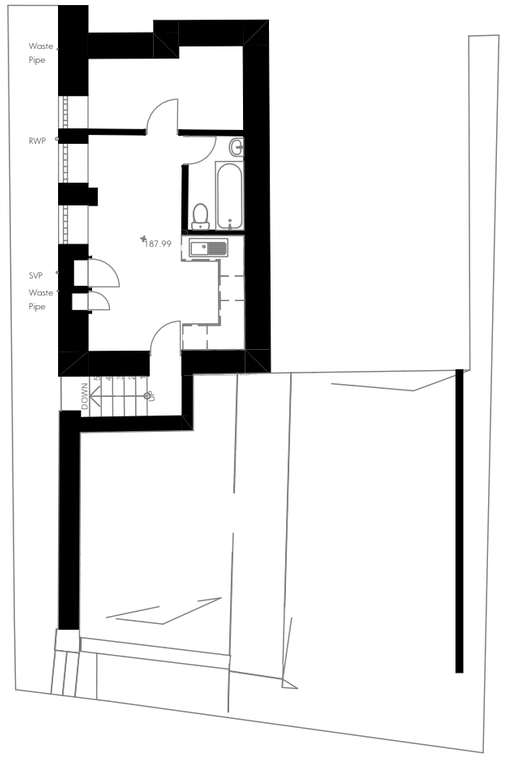
View from South of Primrose Hill to left and Synagogue to right

View of Synagogue from Primrose Hill Front Garden

View of Primrose Hill from Synagogue Front Steps to South East

View of Synagogue from 'Right of Way' Path to East of Primrose Hill

1.8 Building Plans



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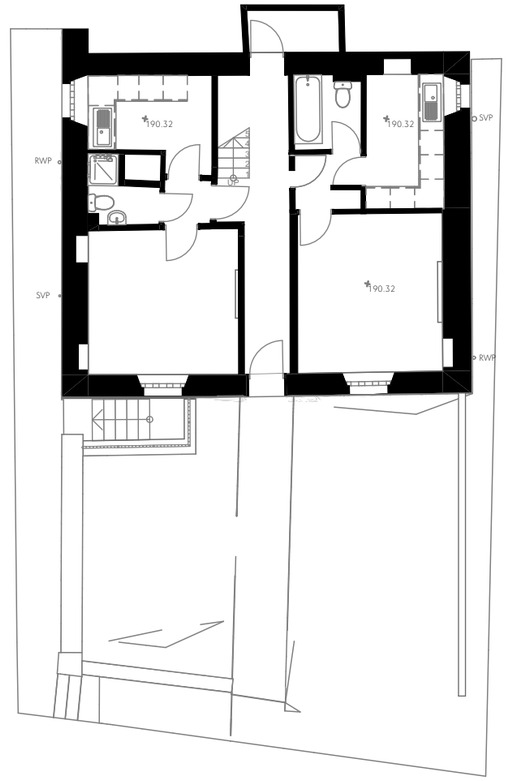

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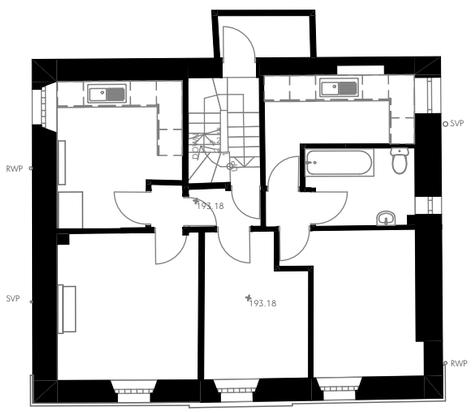

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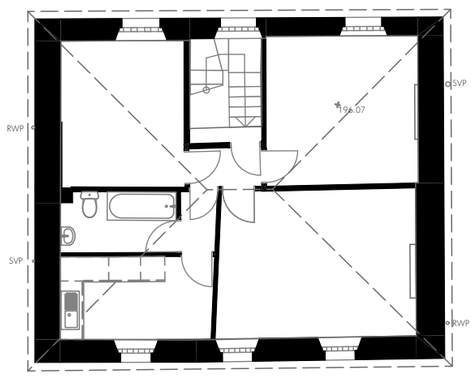

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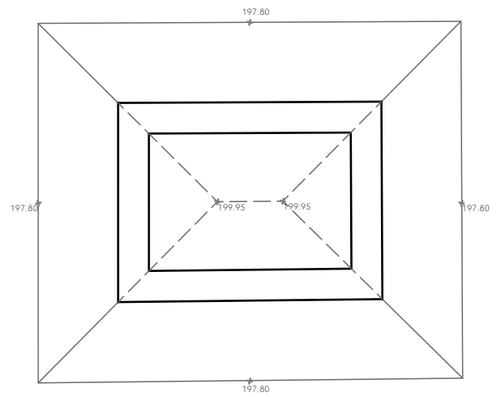

Existing Roof Plan
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GWP Architecture

All drawings and specifications should be read in conjunction with the project health and safety plan, any possible conflicts should be presented to the Planning Coordinator.

All work to be carried out in accordance with current Building Regulations.

Contractors must verify all dimensions at the job before commencing any work or making shop drawings.

Written dimensions should be taken.

Do not scale off drawing.

Do not take digital dimensions from this drawing.

Any discrepancies to be reported to the Architect.

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Rev	Date	Comment	Dr	Ch
P02	07.02.25	Updated to suit comments	MH	BP
P01	30.01.25	First Issue	MH	BP

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GWPA Ref
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Job Title
Primrose Hill House

Client
Foundation for Jewish Heritage

Existing Plans

Name	(449) 2503-GWP-01-B1-D-A-(00)-0001		
Scale	1:150@A3	Revision	P02
Drawn/Checked	MH/BP	First Issue	07.02.25
Drawing Status	S0 - Drawing		

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1.9 Building Elevations

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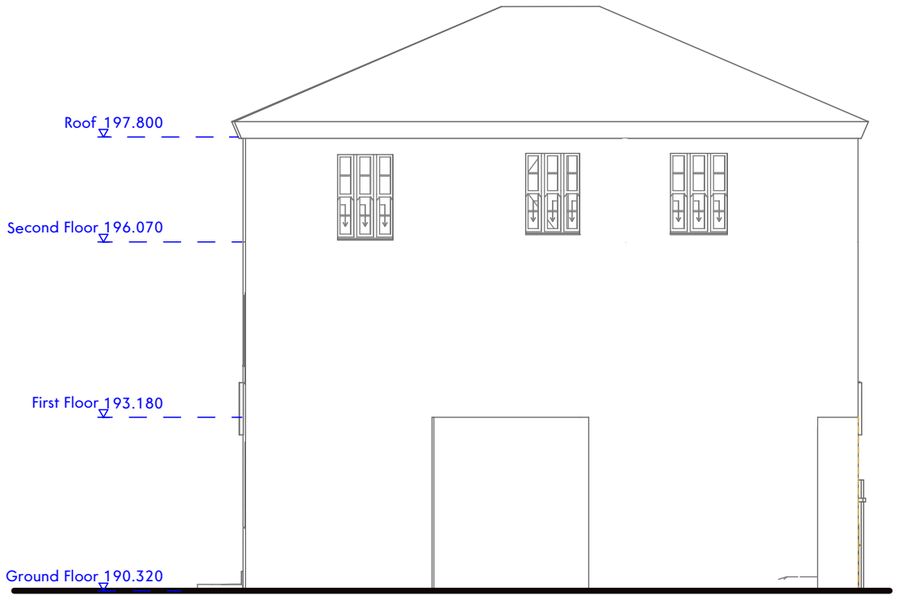

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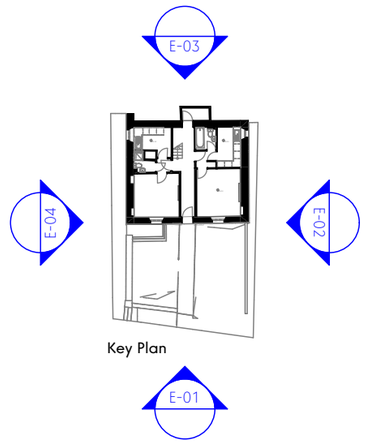

Key Plan

Rev	Date	Comment	Dr	Ch
P01	31.01.25	First Issue	MH	BP

GWP Architecture

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(449) 2503

Job Title

Primrose Hill House

Client

Existing Elevations 1.2

Name	(449) 2503-GWP-01-ZZ-D-A-(00)-0007		
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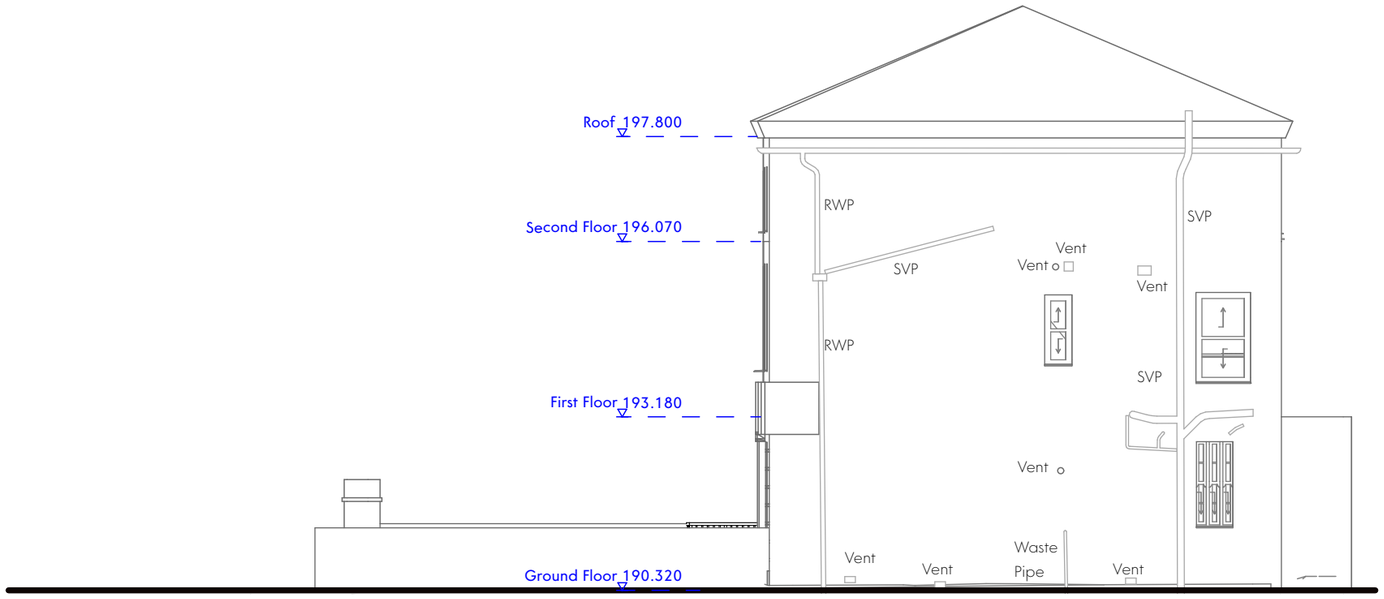
1.9 Building Elevations



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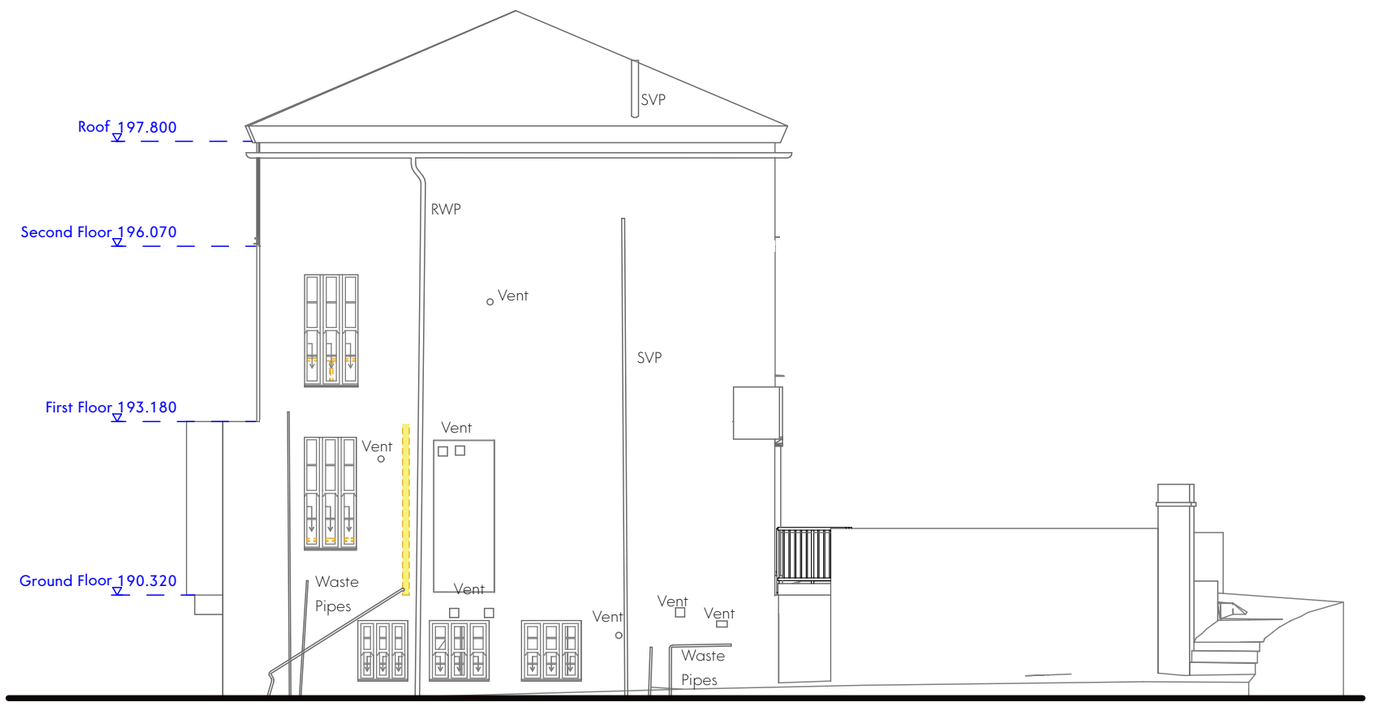

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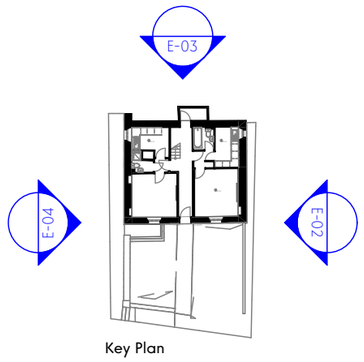

Key Plan

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GWPA Ref

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Job Title

Primrose Hill House

Client

Existing Elevations 1.1

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Drawing Status	S0 - Drawing		

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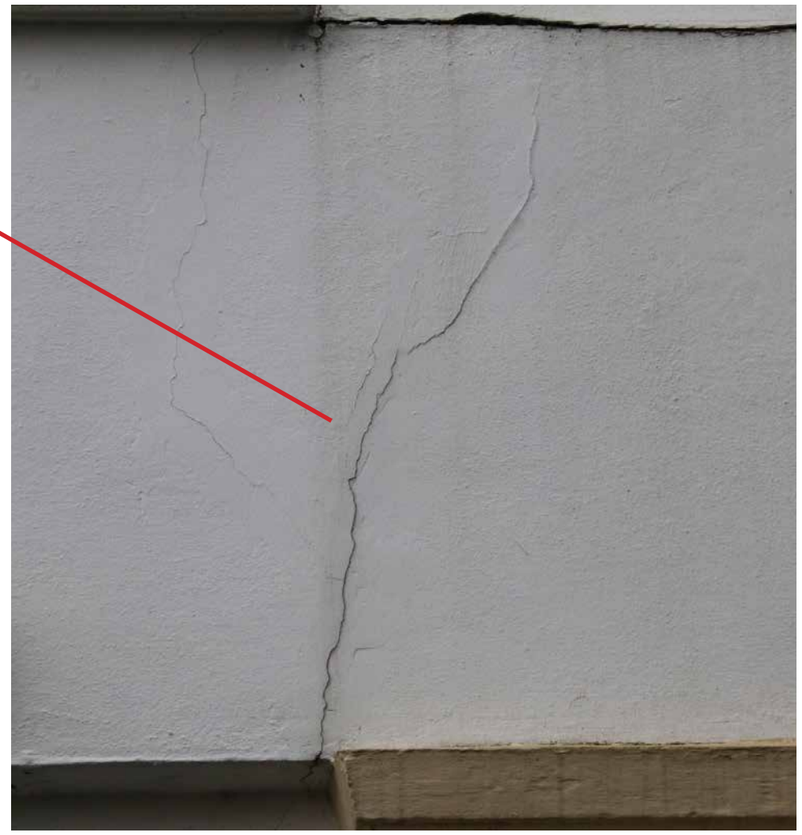
2.1 Front Elevation - Cementitious Render

The front elevation has been applied with a cementitious render, sometimes known as 'stucco'. To the upper two floors, the render has been incised to emulate coursed finished stone. Below the flat deep band underneath the first floor window cills, the render has been rusticated. The substrate behind the render (i.e. the masonry with which the walls were built) appears to be red brick (as suggested by the one view in the bottom right photo on the next page); however, there could also be stone. Given the age of the building, this render would initially have been a lime and sand render, not cementitious.

Clearly apparent across the elevation are cracks in the render - see photos on this page and the next page. This is a problematic issue. Traditional buildings made of solid masonry walls are designed to be slightly flexible. Lime mortar and render provides that flexibility, which allows the walls to expand and contract nominally without cracking. Cement render is not flexible, and so any expansion or contraction in the walls cannot be absorbed by the coating. The result is often the appearance of cracks within the cement render. Once cracks occur, water enters the wall through the cracks, and is held between the render and the masonry. Lime render is vapour-permeable, whilst cement render is impermeable. So, if the render was lime, not only would there be many fewer, if any, cracks; but also the moisture absorbed into the wall fabric would be drawn out of the wall (hygroscopically) through the joints and render, would sit on the surface of the wall, and be evaporated by the sun and wind. With cement render, it is not possible for the moisture to escape through the coating, and hence to evaporate on the surface. As such, a cement rendered wall, once cracks occur, holds onto the moisture. This can result in various defects – the breaking down of the masonry itself; the widening of cracks (as moisture held, freezes and expands); saturation of the masonry, which could cause damp or mould internally (especially if the internal plaster is gypsum, not lime, as it is here); saturation of timber in contact with the masonry, which could cause mould, rot or infestation; and a generally unhealthy building.

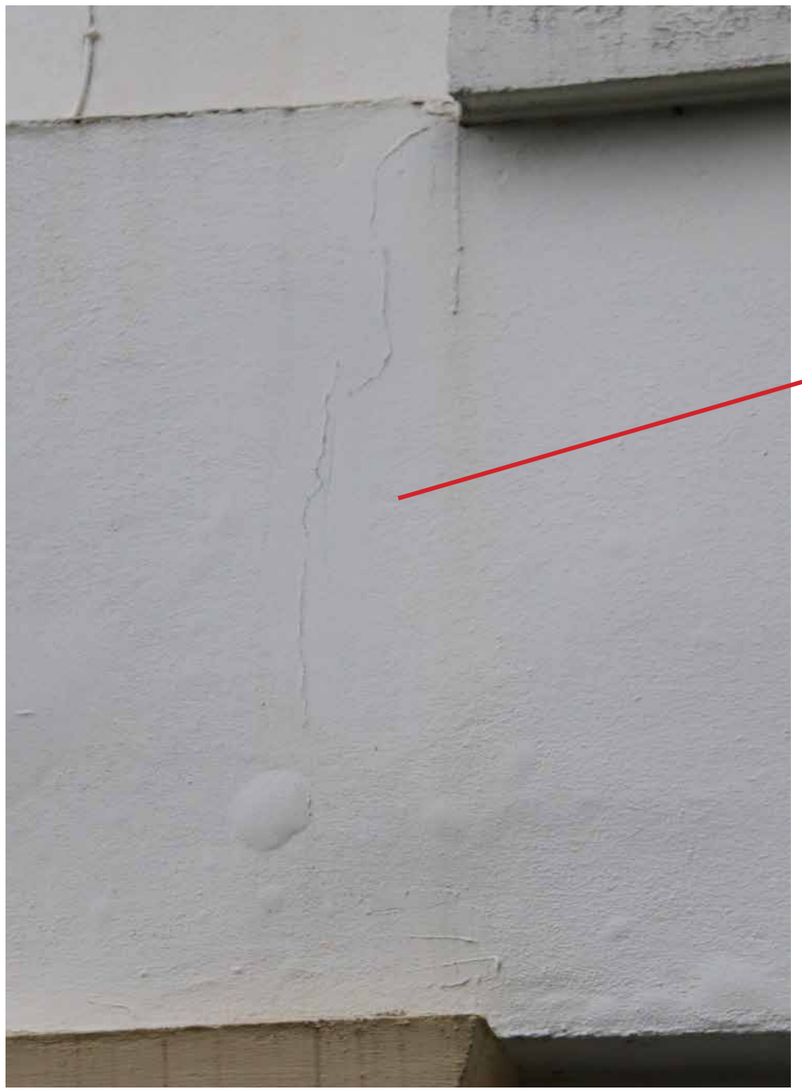


2.1 Front Elevation - Cementitious Render

A quick response would be to repair the cracks; but this would not address the problems. More cracks will appear in time, and more water will get behind the render. In addition to this, we are aware of significant issues with water ingress to the fabric causing problematic mould growth to the internal face of the walls. The walls are, of course, not insulated (which they cannot be, being solid masonry); however, damp walls perform very badly as insulators, whilst dry walls are good insulators. The most important thing for the building is to dry out the walls and ensure they do not, again, become saturated. The only way to do this is to remove the water ingress causes (i.e. cracks in render, poor rainwater goods, lack in internal ventilation and heating) and then to ensure that the walls are vapour-permeable from both the outside face and the inside face.

To that end, we recommend very carefully hacking off the cementitious render to the external face (as well as the cementitious / gypsum plaster to the internal face), allowing as long a time as possible for the external walls to dry out, by exposing both external and internal faces of the masonry to evaporation), and then re-applying a 3-coat lime render to the outside face of the walls (and a 3-coat lime plaster to the inside faces). The external render will need to be smooth-finished with the top coat, rusticated at ground floor and incised at upper floors, to emulate coursed finished stone, to match the design of the existing stucco.

Trying to remove cementitious render, which usually bonds extremely well to masonry, can cause damage to the stone. However, sometimes it can be removed fairly easily with little damage; with the work in the right hands. This is a risk; however, given the damp condition internally, this may be a risk which needs to be taken.



2.2 Front Elevation Ground Floor Windows

All of the windows to the front elevation are of 6-over-6 timber sashes, painted off-white. The glazing panes are sealed double-glazed units. However, it appears as though, rather than each glass pane being individual, each sash is a full glass pane, and the timber glazing bars are planted on, externally and internally. All 8no. windows appear to be modern and are likely to have been fairly recently installed.

With this in mind, they are generally in a good condition. One window - that being the ground floor bottom right (the room with particularly bad condensation and internal mould growth) is in need of some re-painting - see bottom right hand photo. Also, the left hand side of the cill to this window is showing signs of saturation, and potential loss of timber strength, due to being unprotected by paint in this area.

With the proposals, we recommend lightly rubbing down all windows and providing them with a couple of coats on new paint, matching the existing off-white colour. The timber cill to the ground floor right hand window may require some localised removal of timber with a new spliced repair inserted, before re-coating.

2.3 Front Elevation First and Second Floor Windows

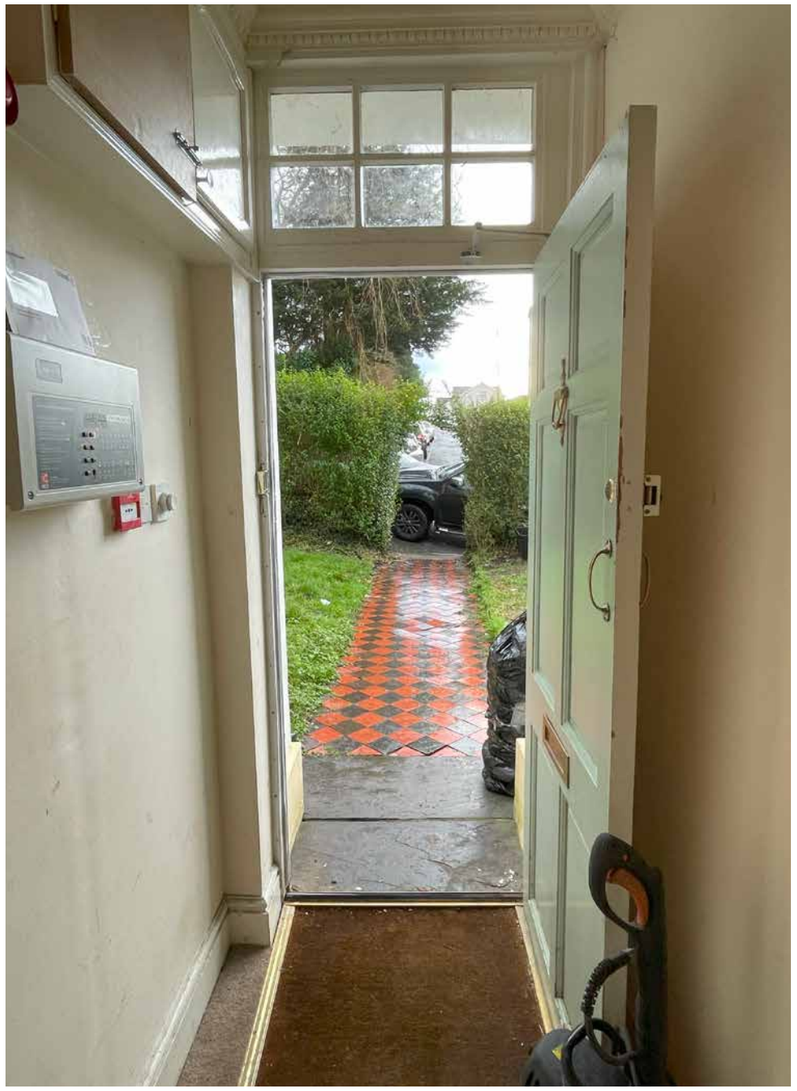
On this page are photos of the 6no. upper floor front elevation timber sash double-glazed windows. The top left window appears to have a section of planted-on glazing bead missing - see within red box. A replacement section should be formed and re-planted. Aside from that, a light rub down and re-coated is probably all that is required.

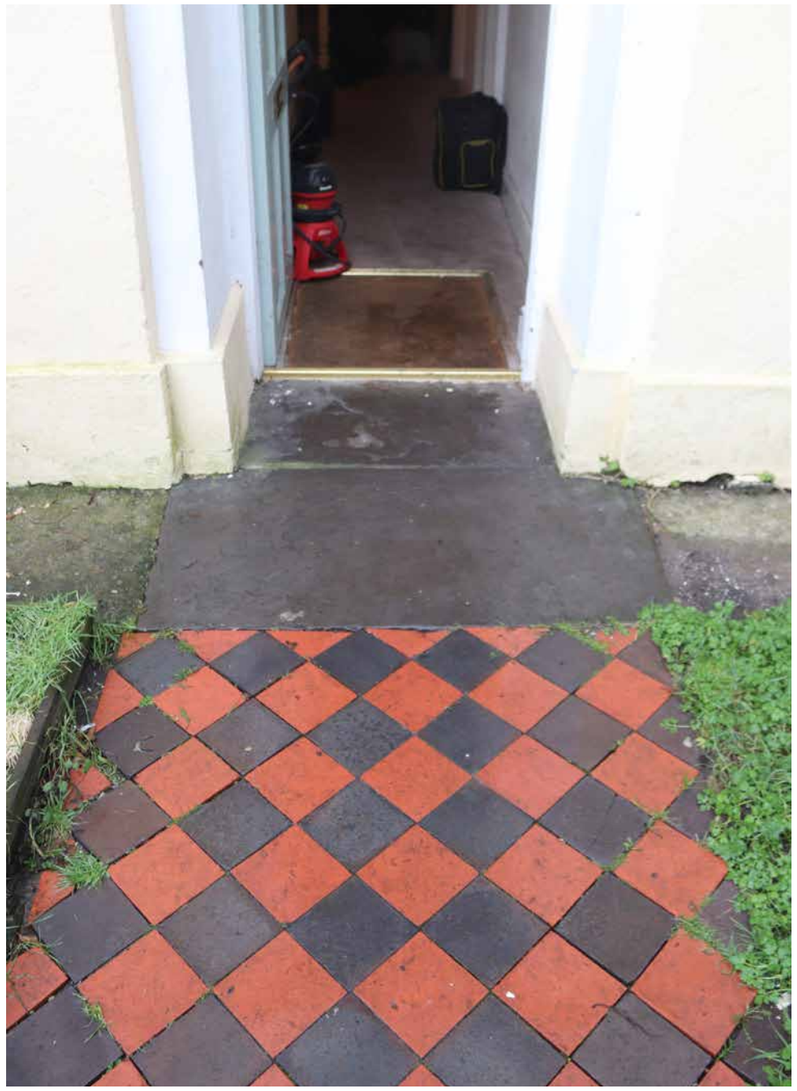
2.4 Front Elevation Front Door

The 6-panelled timber front door does mot appear to be original. It appears to be in a relatively good condition and, like the windows, may only need a light rub down and a re-coat.

The 6-paned glazed over-panel is, however older. It still possesses single glazed individual panes, all of which are intact, with consistent painted putty to all panes.

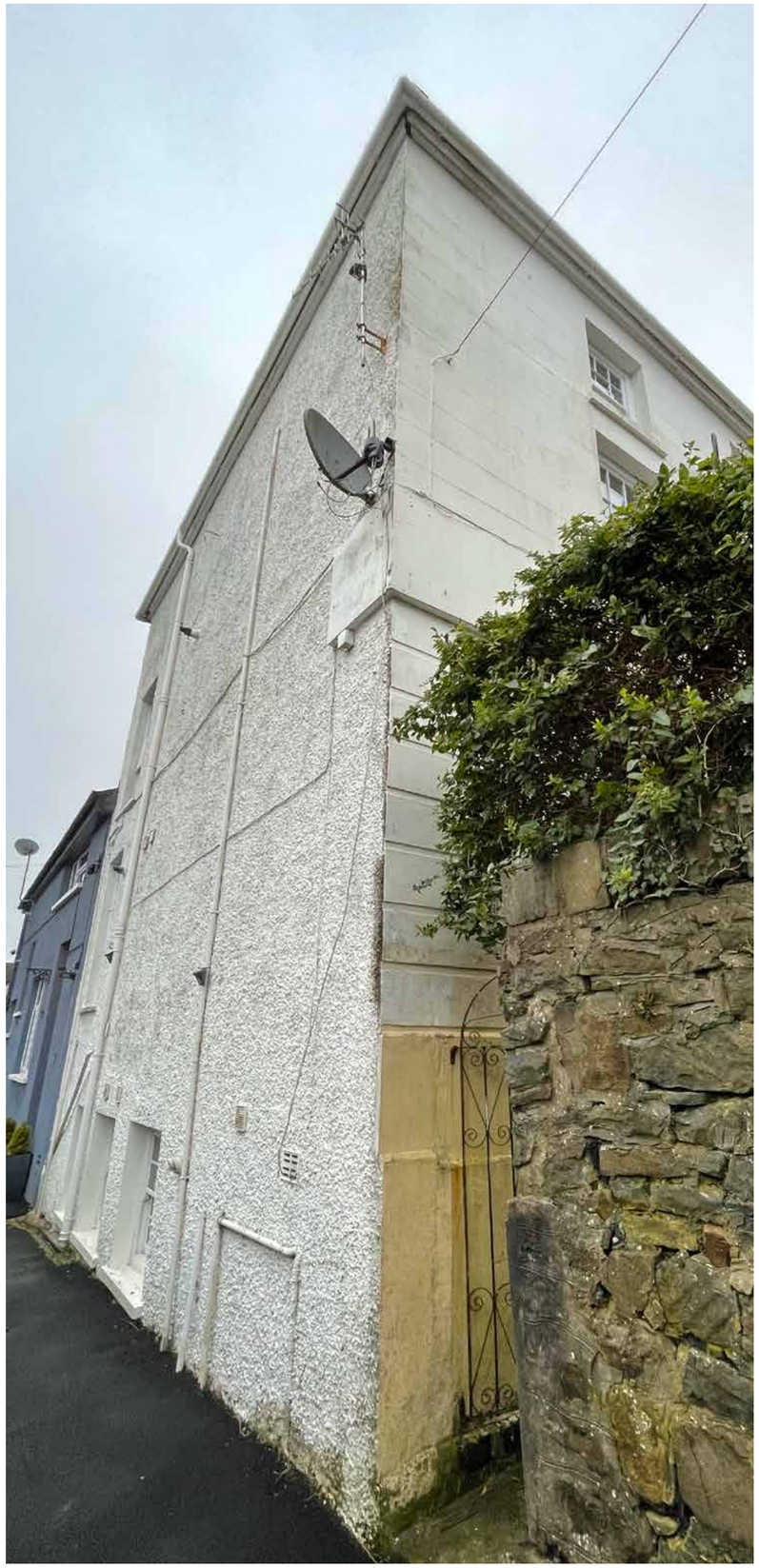
The frame around this over-panel should also be rubbed back and re-coated; after which a silicone mastic seal should be applied around the edges of the door and over-panel.





3.0 Side (West) Elevation

To this side elevation, the render is roughcast, also painted off-white. It is not known whether this is a cementitious; however, it is assumed to be. There are 'scars' in the render where previous pipework has been removed (see yellow box below), and there is the occasional crack in the render; however, apparently where recent smooth repairs have been applied (see red box below). In the main, the render is showing very few cracks and very little damage. Whilst we would prefer all renders to be lime, where the render is little damaged and appears to be keeping the rain out, then we would suggest that it remain in place - at least for now. Any cracks (such as that in the red box) should be made good, and the whole walls should be re-painted; but we might suggest this render is not hacked off at this stage. There is a crack in the window cills - see red box - which also requires a local repair. There is a drainage channel at the base of the wall - see photo below - which appears to be in a reasonable condition; however, it contains some surface cracks which should be repaired; and the drain cleaned out.

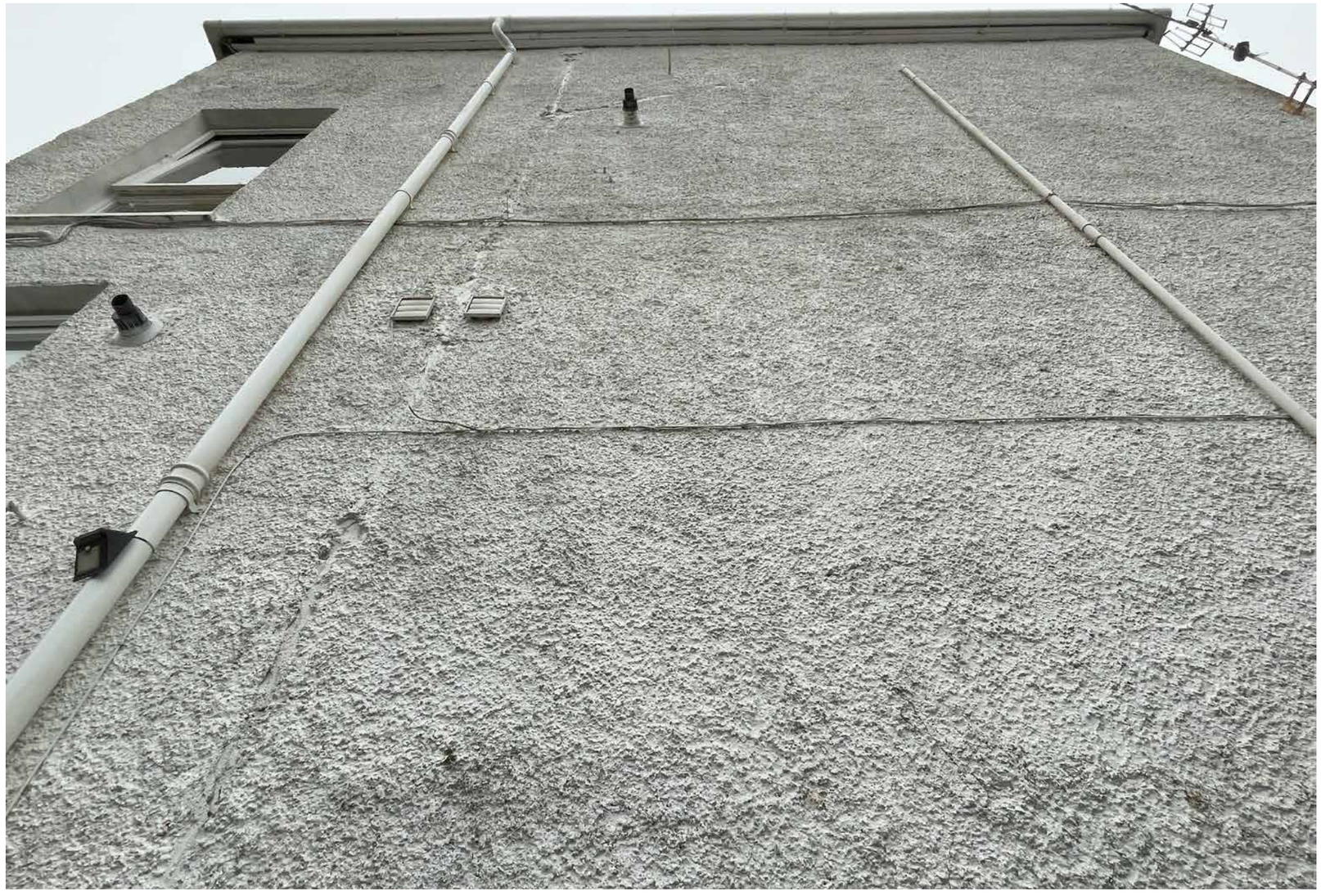


3.0 Side (West) Elevation

The 3no. 6-over-6 timber sash windows at the base of this elevation, and the 2no. central-pivotted windows down the side, at ground and first floor, are all timber windows, painted off-white. The panes to all 5no. windows are single-glazed. In the main, they appear to be in a reasonable condition, some having recently been re-painted; however, the timber cill to the middle low window has suffered from water ingress and is showing signs of loss of body. This should be rubbed back and, if any of the wood is soft, or 'gives' to the penetration of a sharp object, then the soft central should be cut out and a new section of timber spliced in, and the cill painted.

Indeed, it is proposed that all windows and cills are lightly rubbed back and re-painted a matching off-white.

It is also proposed that the glazing to all 5no. of these windows are replaced with 'Slimline' double-glazed units with white spacers.



4.0 Side (East) Elevation

To this side elevation, the render is also roughcast; however, here it is a mixture of off-white and light grey with dark grey and green environmental and organic staining. It is not known whether this is a cementitious; however, it is assumed to be. This elevation comprises a number of soil drainage pipes, surface water drainage pipes and condensate pipes. It is assumed that, over time, leaks from one of more of these pipes has stained the render. It is also of concern that the rainwater pipe spills out onto concrete, which them runs into a gully. This means that the water splashes off the concrete and probably splashed back onto the wall.

The worst of the mould growth inside is on this elevation, at ground floor. It is not possible to determine if there are any defects in the masonry of the wall which would have caused this issue; or whether there are problematic cold bridges; or that it is simply a case on internal condensation; however, the worst issues are within a recess in this wall.

We recommend that the internal plaster is removed and the masonry investigated from inside. This may remove the need to expose the masonry from the outside; however, it may not. So, for now, we also recommend that the render is also removed from the outside face and, once the wall has dried out, and any defects in the masonry addressed, then the walls should be re-rendered with a roughcast lime render. We also propose that the drain is provided with a shoe which dresses into the gulley cover to stop the chance of splashback.

4.0 Side (East) Elevation

The 3no. windows on this elevation are timber-framed and all incorporate double-glazed panes. There is a sash window to the ground floor and two part-top-hung casements part-fixed windows to the first floor. All would benefit from a light rub back and re-coat.

It is recommended that all joints in all pipework is checked and any issues with either pipes or joints addressed.

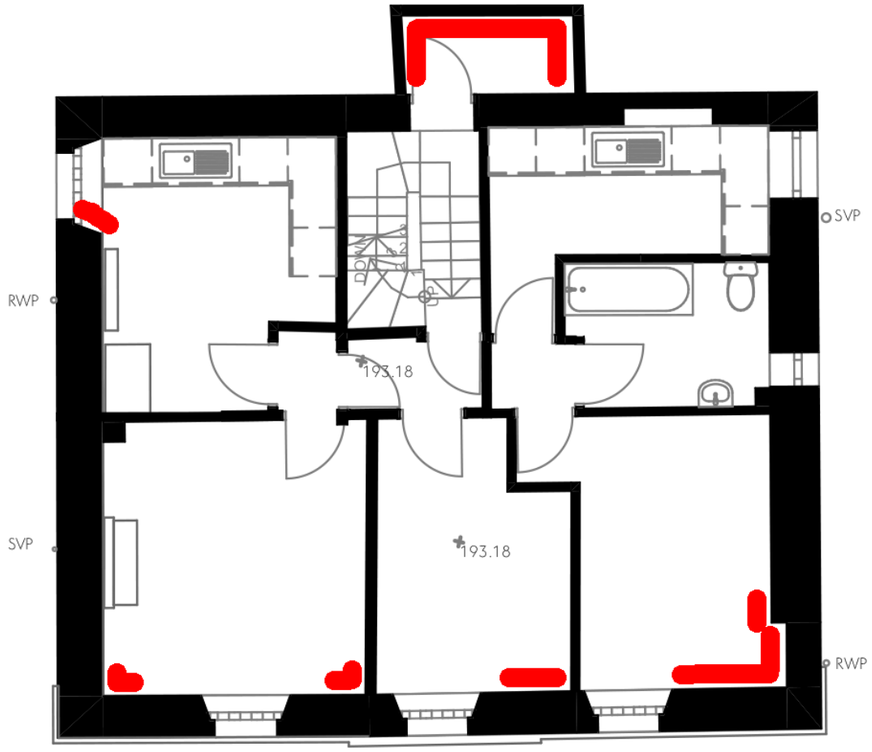
5.0 Rear (North) Elevation

The majority of the north external wall is not internal, apart from the top section. The view of the top section of this rear elevation is so limited that no assessment can be made on it. The one thing that is apparent is that there has been some patch repair work undertaken to the render.

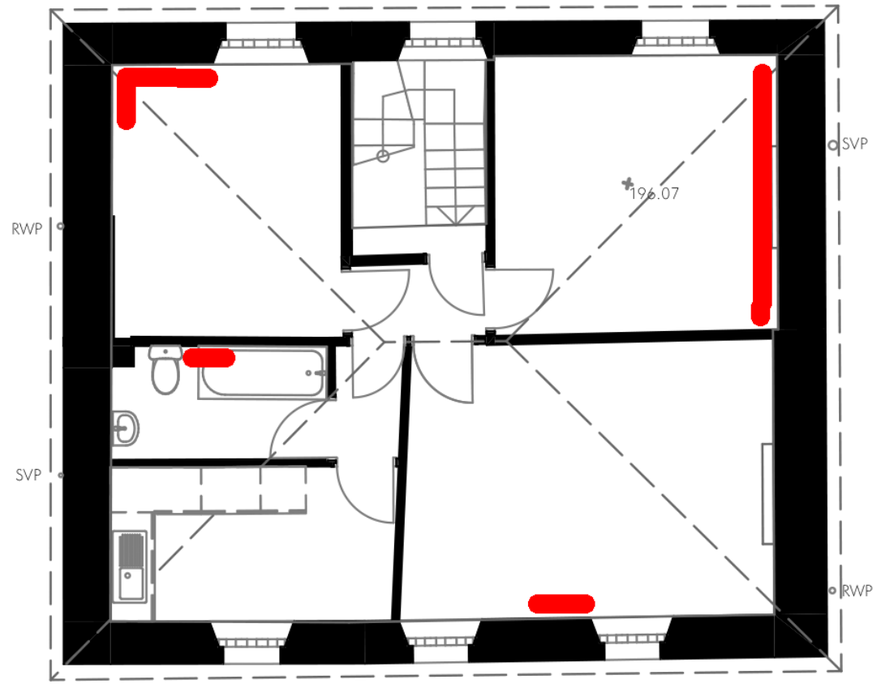
Images from Drone (source: Mann Williams)

6.0 Obvious Signs of Internal Damp on Walls

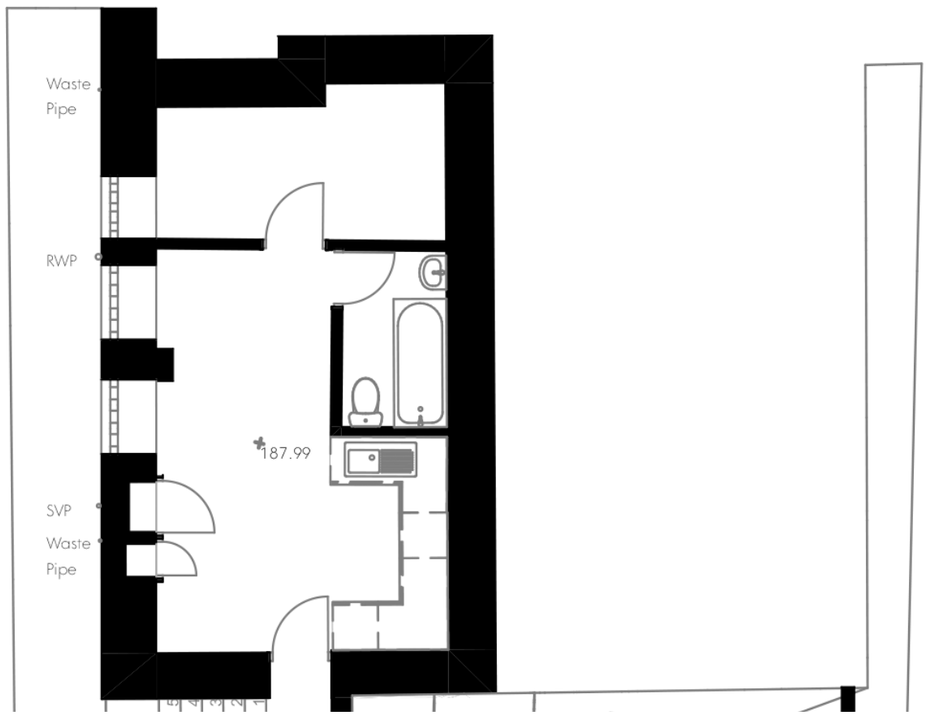
Insofar as it might help determine where likely damp ingress issues are, on this page, in red on the plan below, we identify where damp is clearly apparent on the internal face of the external walls.



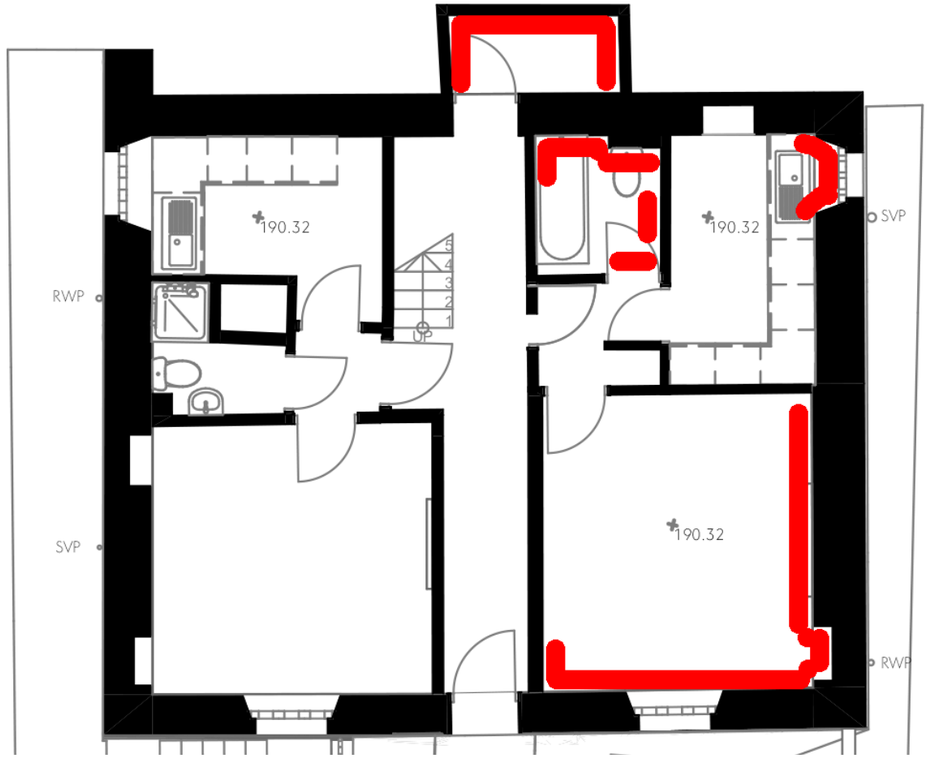
First Floor



Second Floor



Lower Ground Floor



Ground Floor

7.0 Roof Covering

The roof is a simple rectangular hipped roof, covered in concrete tiles and rounded concrete ridge and hip tiles. The surface of the tiles is heavily mossed on the ridge and some hips. However, there do not appear to be any lost tiles, nor slipped tiles, and only a small number of broken tiles. In this regard, the roof covering appears to be in a reasonable condition. To the north pitch, it appears as though the bottom four courses have been replaced in the more recent past. One of those 'new' tiles is broken down the middle - see red box on next page.

There is a membrane underneath the tiles which dresses into the gutters. In some cases, the membrane extends too far and is subject to flapping in the wind.

There is one soil and vent pipe penetrating the roof covering on the south west corner. This has a lead collar.

It is noticeable that there are no chimneys penetrating the roof. With a number of fireplaces inside, there would have been at least two chimneys, possible four, penetrating the roof. These have all been removed. It does not appear as though the tops of these flues have been vented since the chimneys were removed, which is a worrying sign.

The roof would benefit from a clean of all of the moss, and the edges of the roofing membrane cut back; but no significant work is suggested to the roof covering.

Images from Drone (source: Mann Williams)

View from South West

View from South

7.0 Roof Covering

Images from Drone (source: Mann Williams)

View from East

View from West

View from South

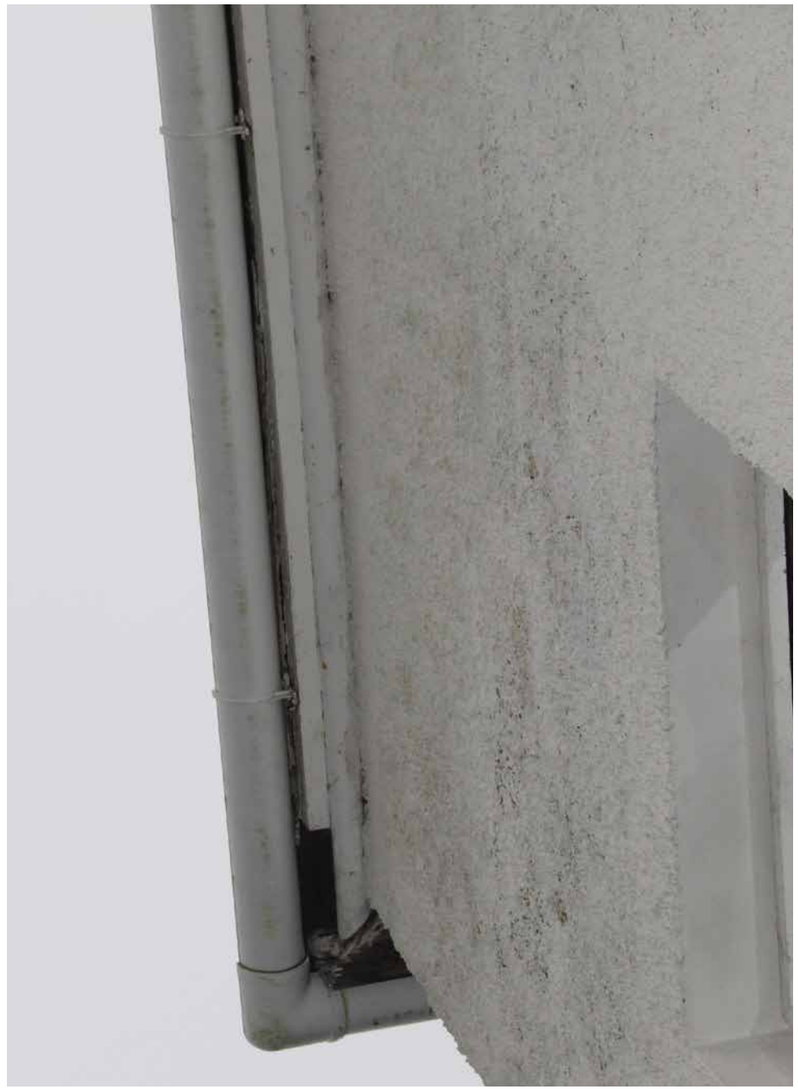
View from North

7.1 Eaves

The eaves are made up of thick timber fascia and a curved timber soffit, both painted. There is not a continuous ventilation gap at the base of the eaves, which is unfortunate; however, there appears to be a gap at each corner of the soffit, presumably providing ventilation to the roof build-up.

It is not possible to determine the condition of the fascia and soffit from this distance; and so it will be necessary to review them in more detail once scaffolding is up.

This being said, they appear to be in a reasonable condition, and may only be in need of a rub down and re-paint.



8.1 Side Path

The side path has a concrete surface which appears to be in a reasonable condition.

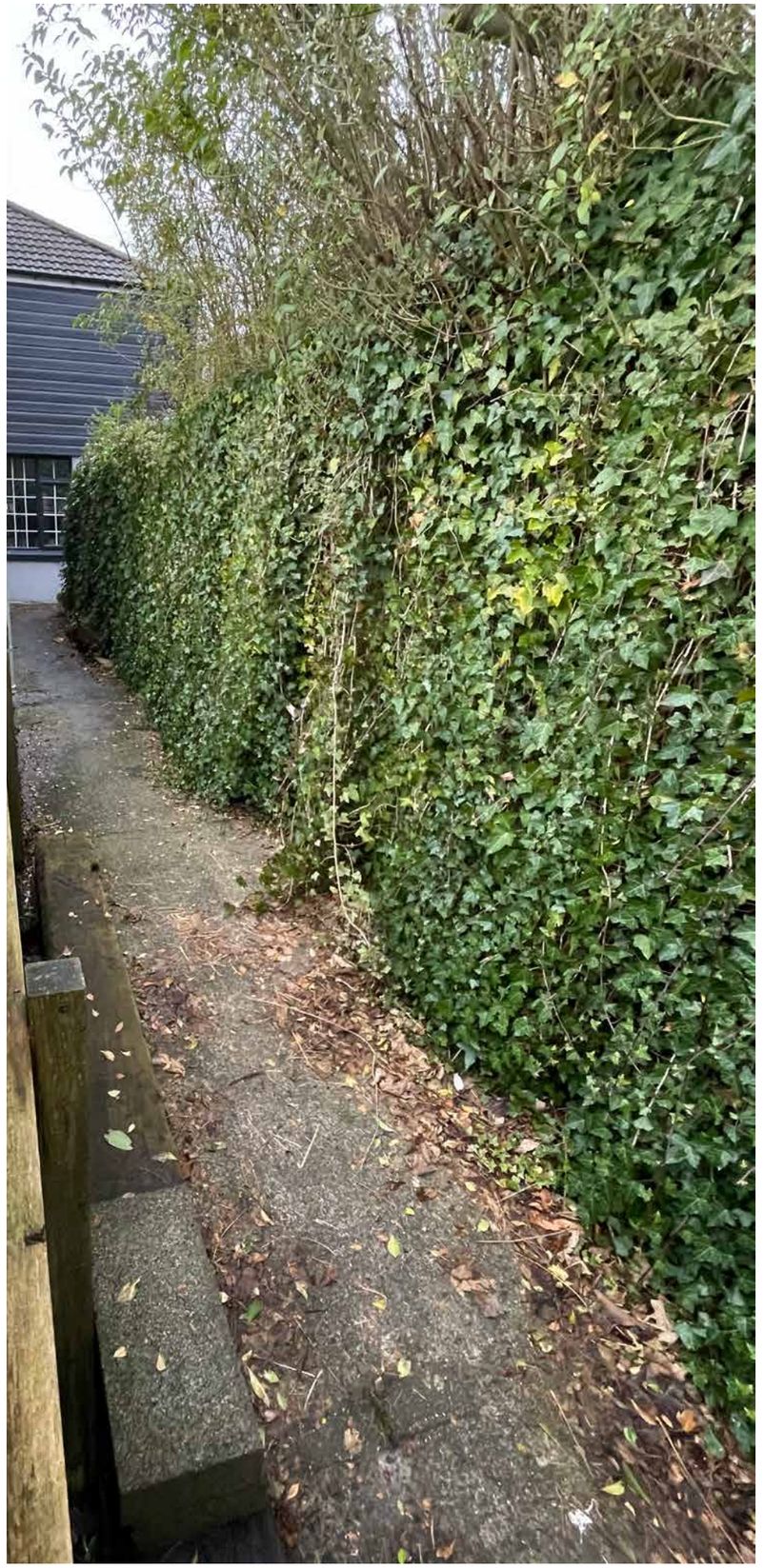
There is a timber boarded fence between the path and the front garden to Primrose Hill.

This path constitutes a 'Right of Way' to the property behind and to the north of Primrose Hill, which is accessed via a timber boarded gate - see top right photo.

8.2 Retaining Wall

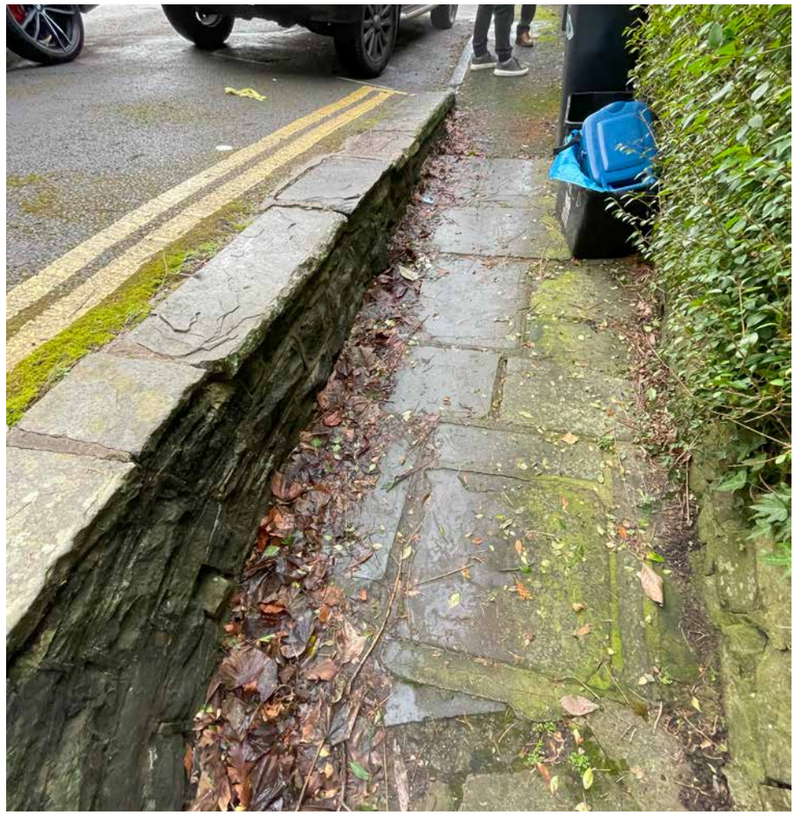
Covered by ivy and other vegetation, to the side of the path, east of Primrose Hill, is a retaining wall, approximately 3m high, made of rubble stonework. It is assumed that the stones are bedded on a lime mortar (albeit not confirmed) and that it used to be pointed in a lime mortar; however, it is apparent that the wall has more recently been pointed in a cementitious mortar, using a buttering / part rendering which has covered much of the stonework. The wall is covered in vegetation, to face and top, and so the wall could barely be inspected; however, there is concern about the use of cement for the pointing and for the restriction this will have put to the passage of moisture through the wall.

A 'makeshift' drainage hole was apparent at the base in one location; however, it is not clear whether there is a full drainage provision to this wall. That being said, percolation tests undertaken to the ground above suggests a good level of natural drainage in the ground above this wall.



9.1 Front Pavement

Between the tarmac road and the front wall to Primrose Hill's front garden there is a row of coping stones and then a drop to an area of stone flag paving. The tarmac is sloped, whilst the flagging is level, with the stone-capped wall acting as a retaining wall for the sloped road. The retaining wall then curves around at the top, leading towards the Right of Way path. At the bottom of the path is a set of three stone steps faced on the risers in blue-black engineering brick.



9.2 Front and Side Walls

To the west and south of the front garden is a pennant rubble stone enclosure wall, part retaining on the west. On the corner is a square, tall gate-post.

The stonework is bedded in lime mortar. In the past, it has been re-poined in cement mortar; however, a fair bit of that has broken up and fallen away. Many of the joints are recessed and in need of pointing.

The proposals involve raking out the joints and removing what remains of the cement pointing, and re-poring the whole wall in a lime mortar.

9.3 Front Garden

The front garden is turfed on both sides of a terracotta and black diamond-pattern quarry tiled path, running from the opening in the front wall to the entrance door.

The tiling is in a reasonable condition; however, there are a small number of damaged tiles and most of the grouting has been lost.

It is proposed that those damaged tiles are replace like-for-like and the whole area is re-grouted.

During any construction works, it is very important that this path is protected from further damaged.

10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - Entrance Corridor

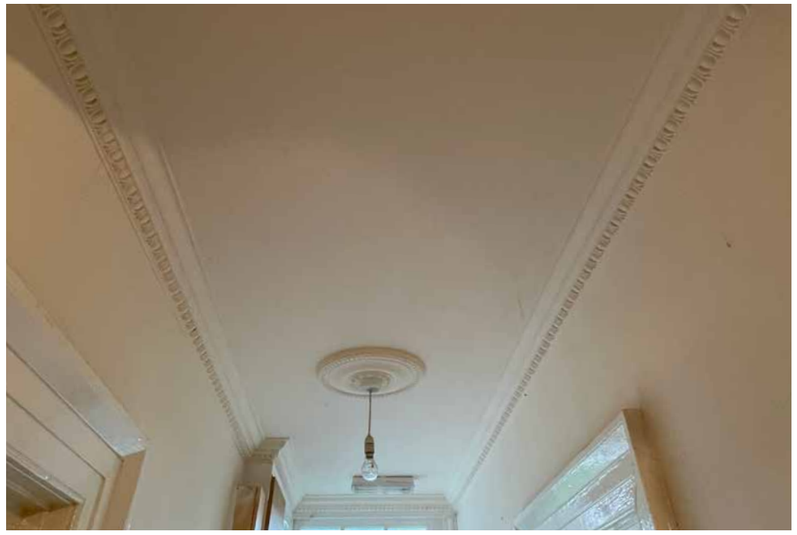
The walls and ceiling are plastered and painted cream, with an egg-and-dart cornice at the wall/ceiling junction and a decorated lighting rose in the centre. The walls are presumed to be built of masonry. It is not clear what the plater is, but it is assumed to be gypsum.

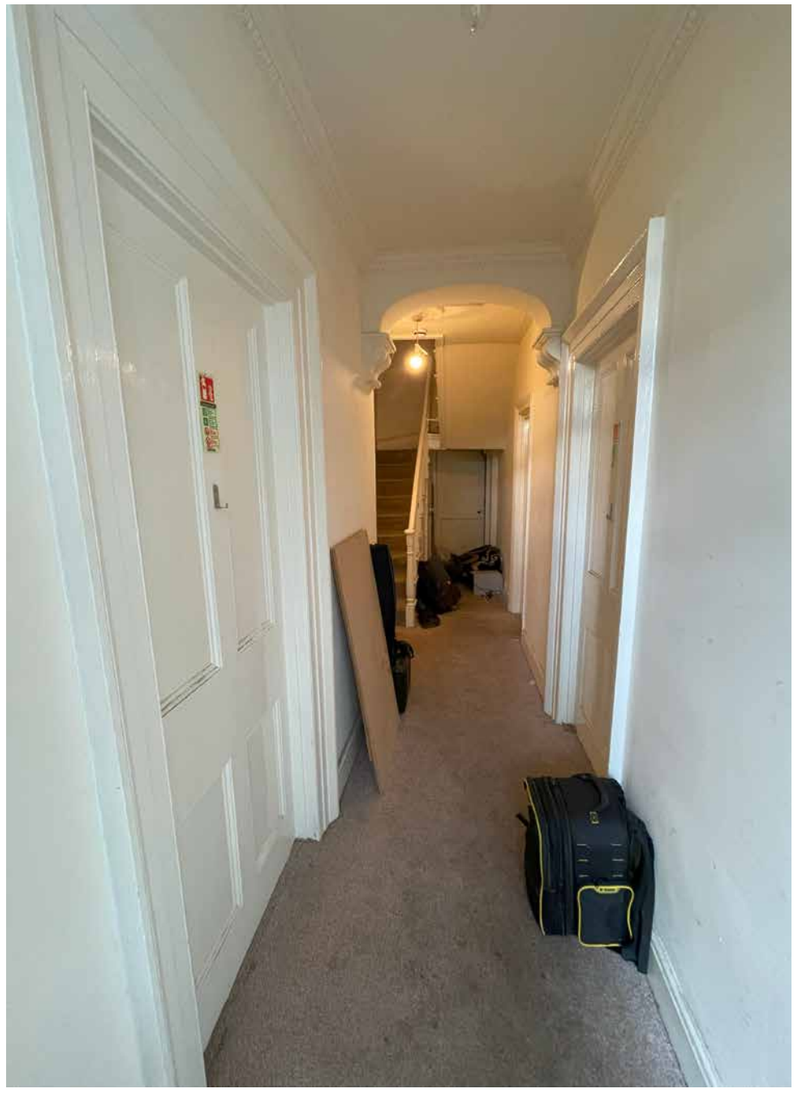
The doors are four-panelled timber doors with deep timber architraves. The skirtings are also timber and are torus in profile. All are painted off-white.

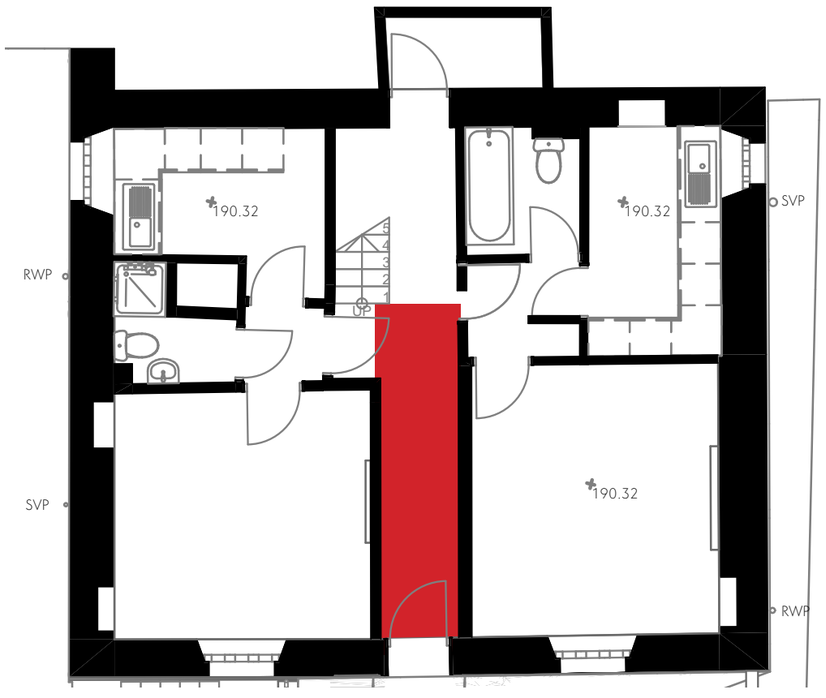
There are a number of scars on the paintwork; however, generally, the fabric and finishes are in a reasonable condition.

The floor is carpeted, which is a little worn, and there is a matwell at the front.

This is an attractive entrance lobby / corridor. In all regards, this is the most attractive aspect of the interior. The proposals do not change this.

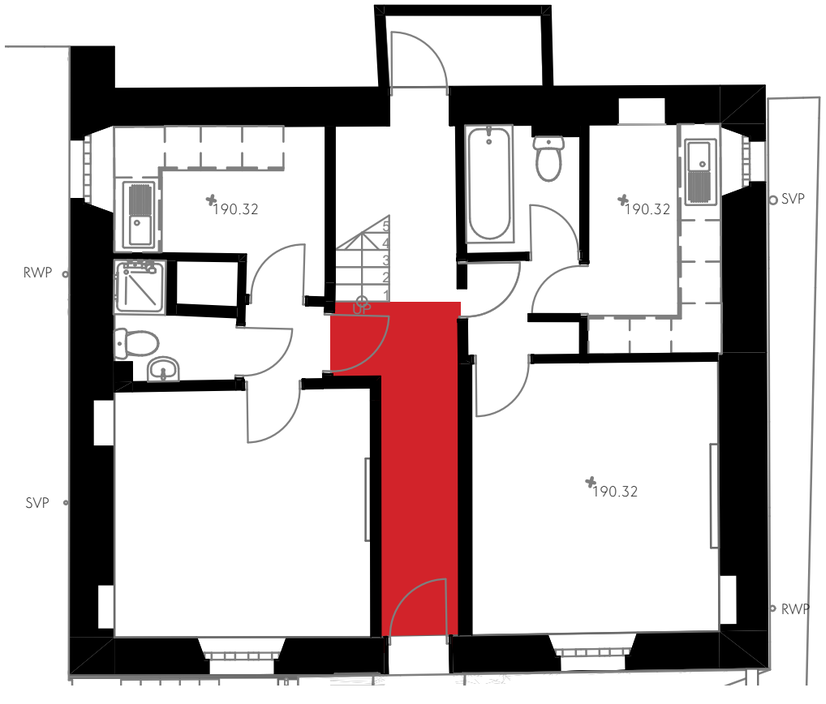


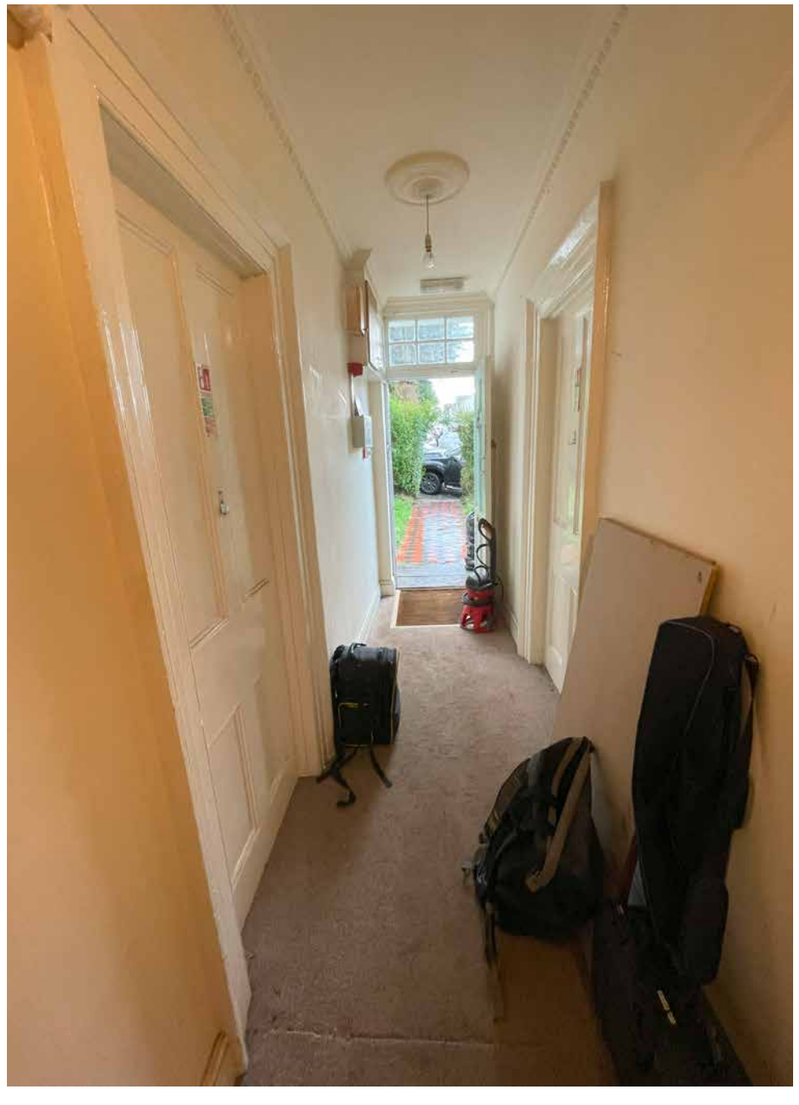




10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - Entrance Lobby

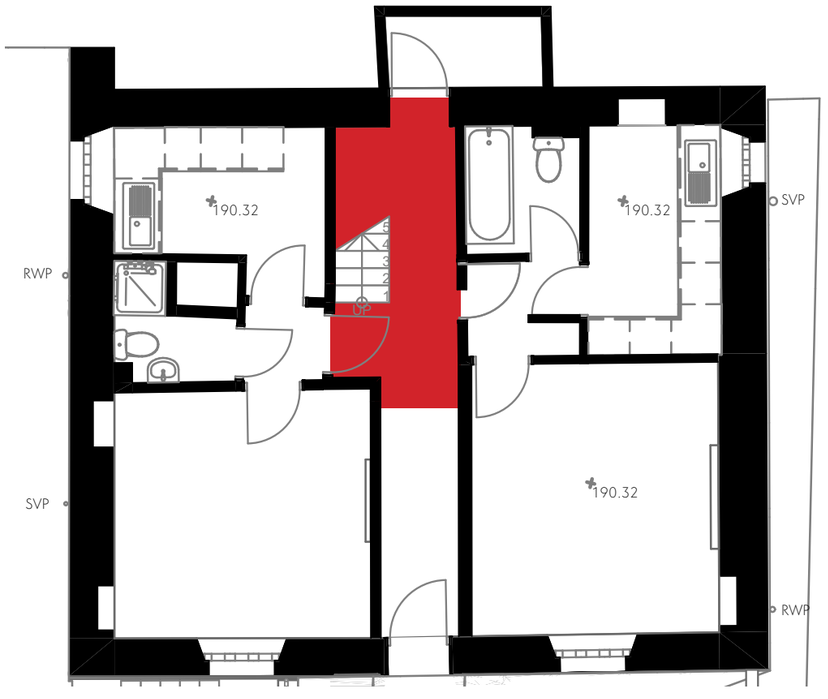
Where the entrance corridor becomes the stair lobby, an interesting arch flies over the junction, springing from twinned swirled corbels. The egg-and-dart cornice continues over the top.

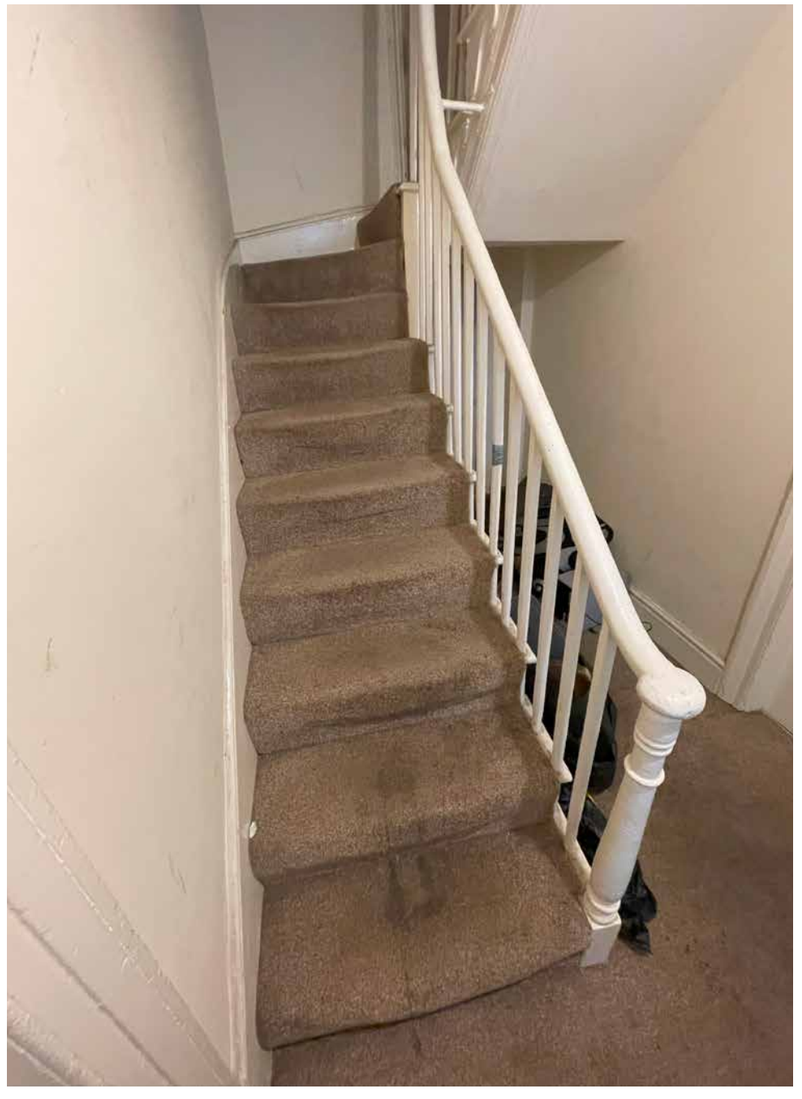


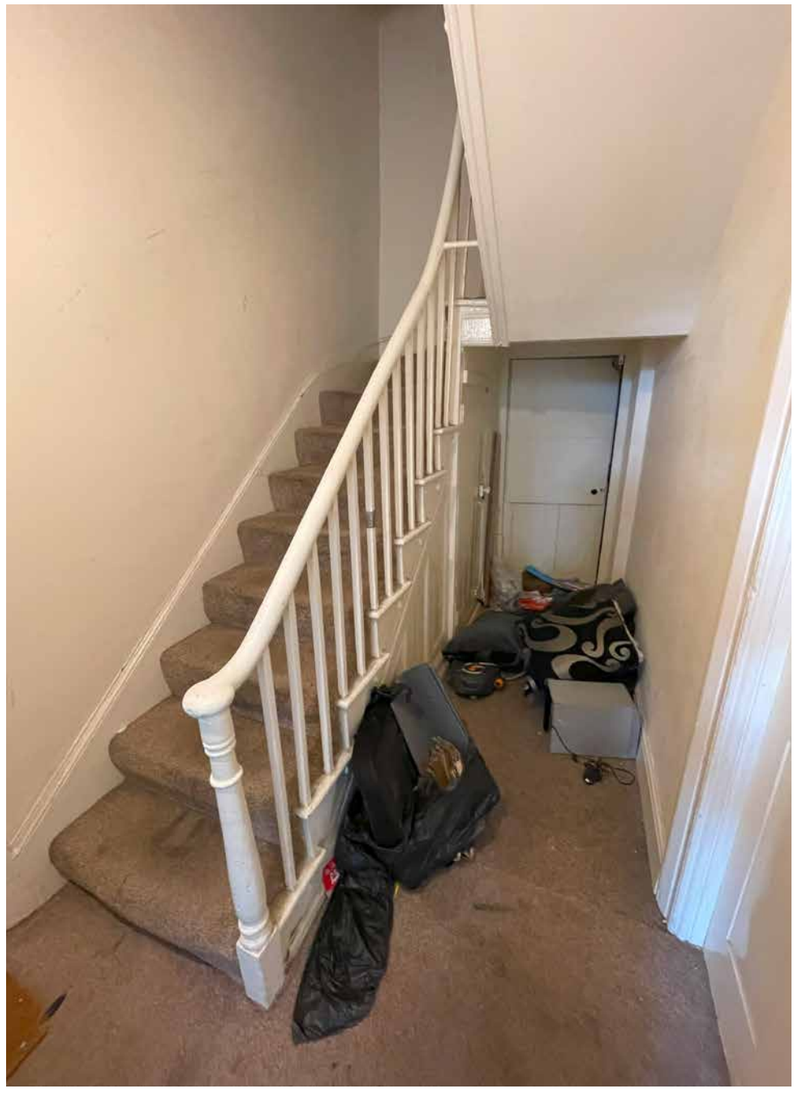


10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - Staircase

The single staircase is a timber staircase, carpetted; with an ovular handrail, square balusters and a turned round newel posts; all painted white. Aside from the wear on the carpet, this appears all to be in reasonable condition





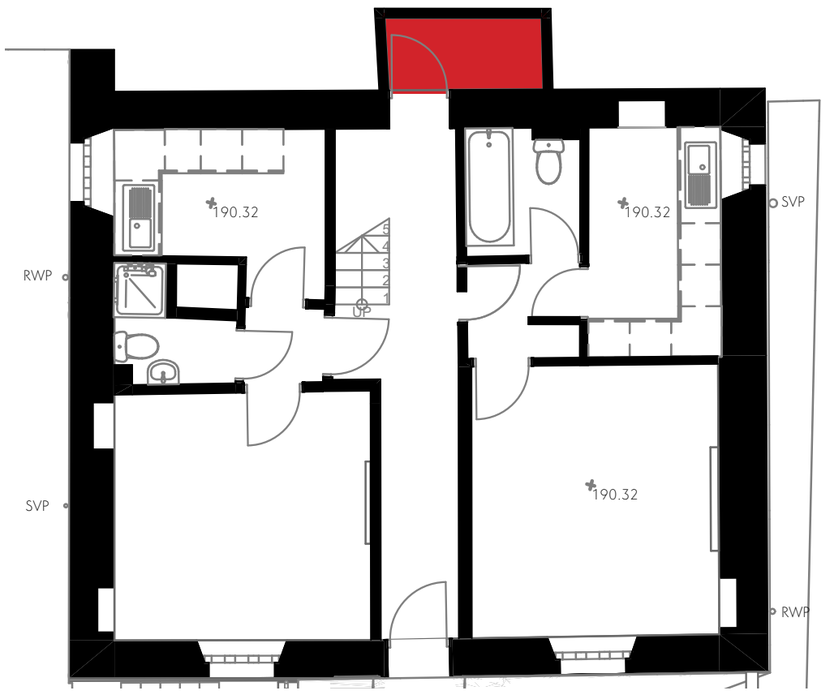


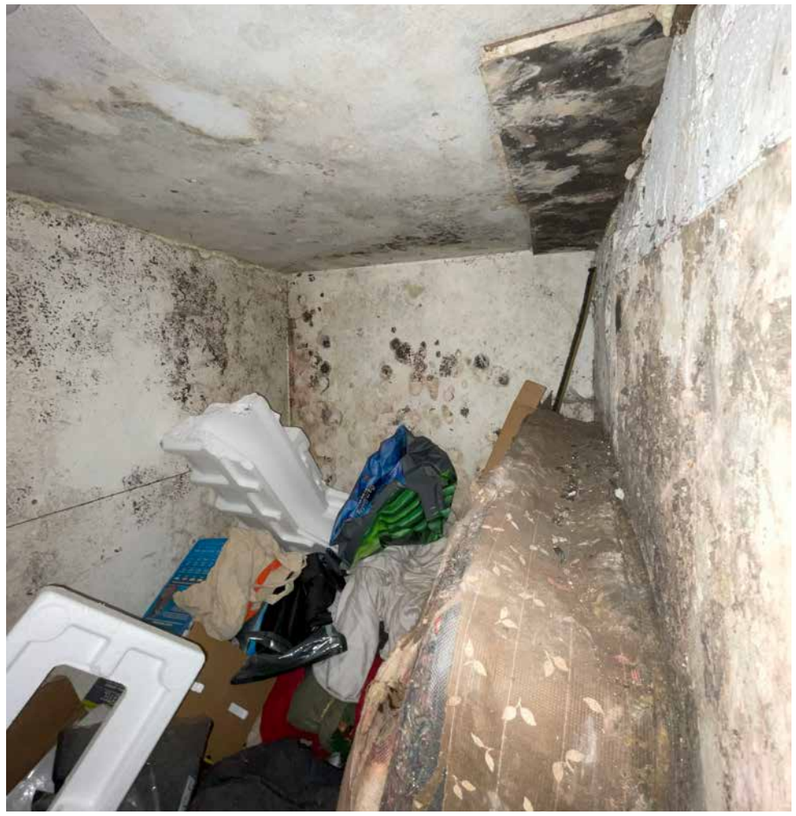
10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - Rear Store Room

The masonry enclosure store at the back of the corridor is 'landlocked' with the building behind and the matching store above. It is suffering from damp and mould growth on all four walls and the soffit. Containing various elements, an completely dark inside, it is difficult to get a good appreciation for its detailed condition.

There appears to be no ventilation at all to the space, and no heating. To that end, condensation and mould growth, with cold bridging to the envelope, is inevitable.

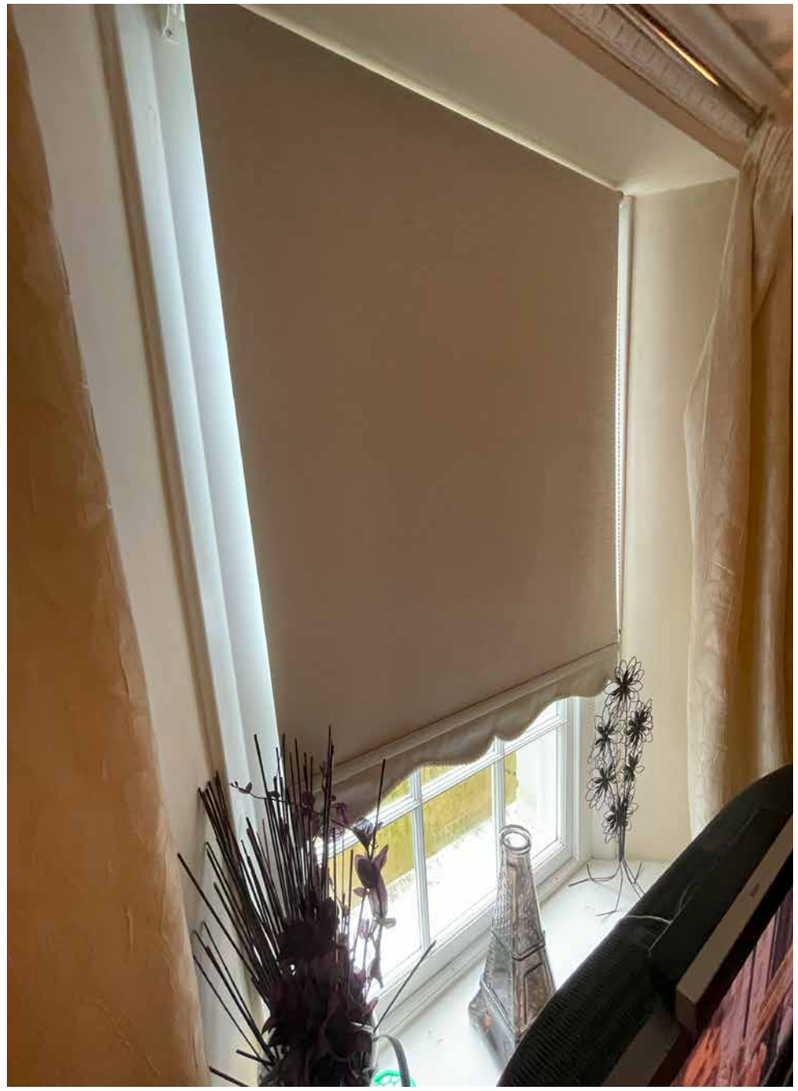
The proposals involve adding a heating source to the space and providing ventilation. This is likely to be in the form of a door transfer grille at the bottom and top of the door, in order to encourage some cross ventilation. However, given that this will be used as a store, and it is within a fire escape route, the grilles will need to be intumescent fire-rated grilles. This intervention will need to be discussed with the Building Control Officer.

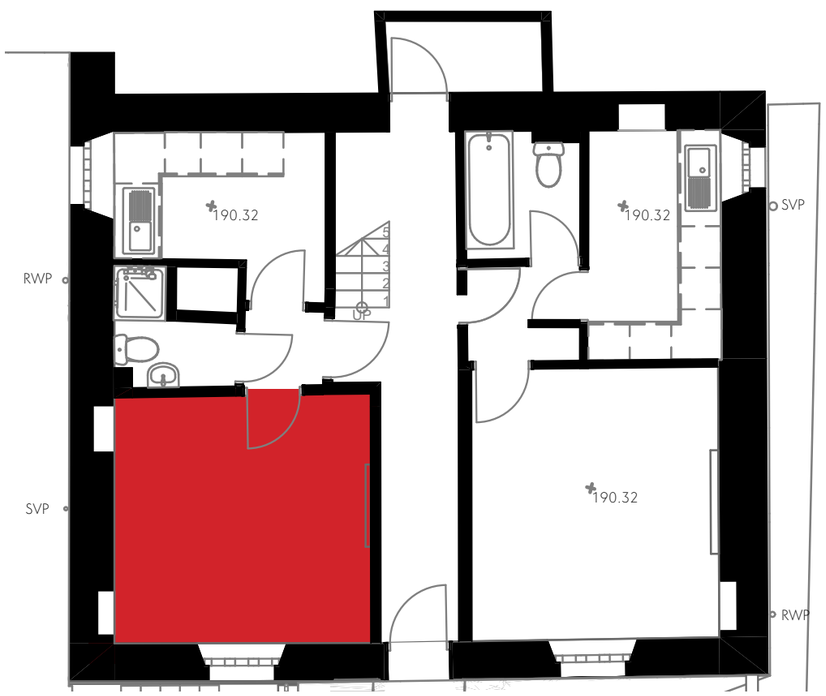




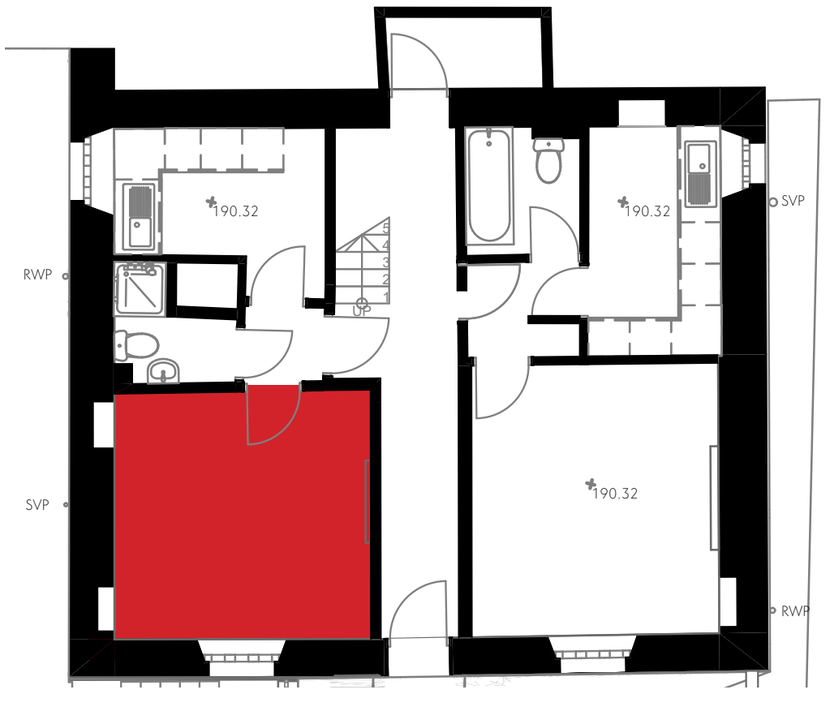
10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - West Flat Front Room

Much as the central entrance lobby, the front room to the West Flat is of painted plastered walls and ceilings with an egg-and-dart cornice and a ceiling rose. The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window a painted timber window with double glazing. All appear to be in a good condition.



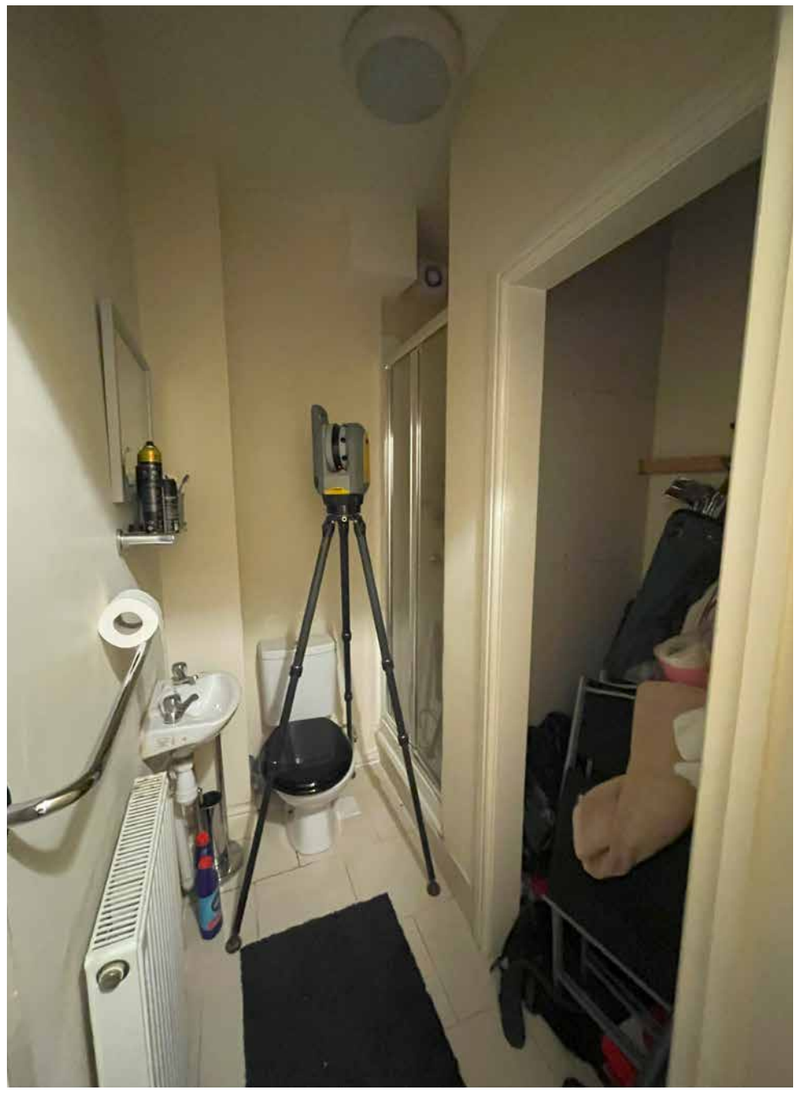


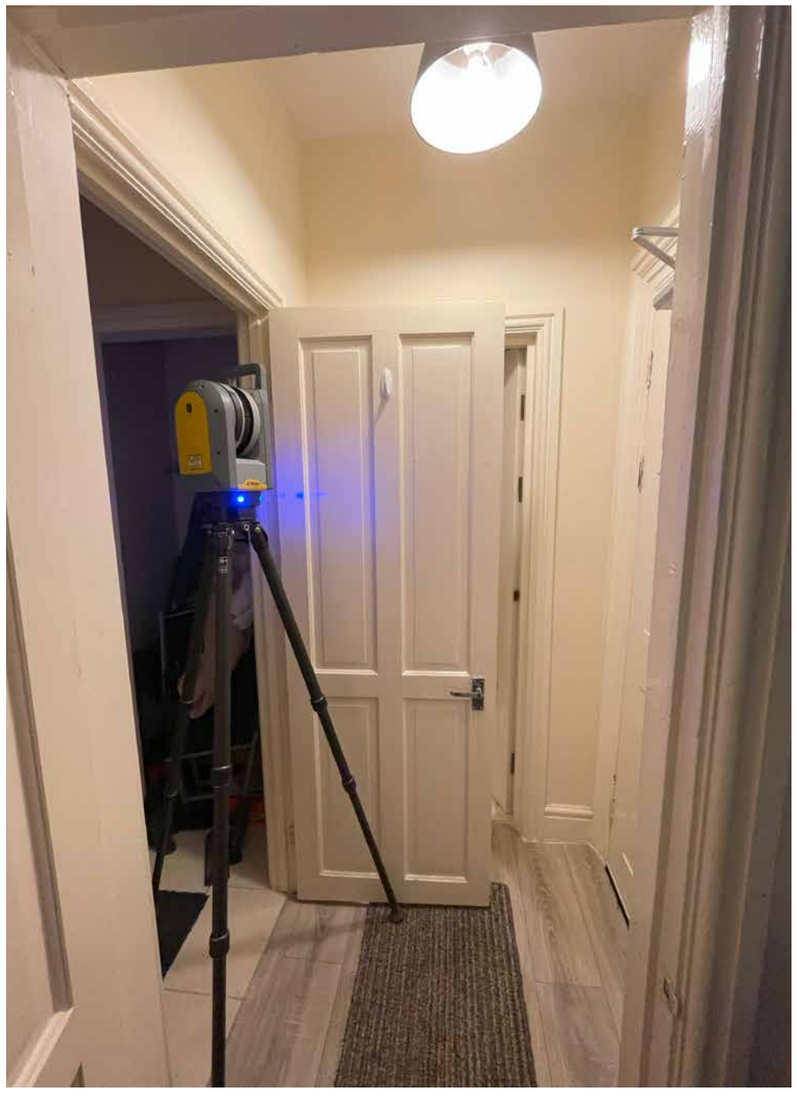
10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - West Flat Front Room

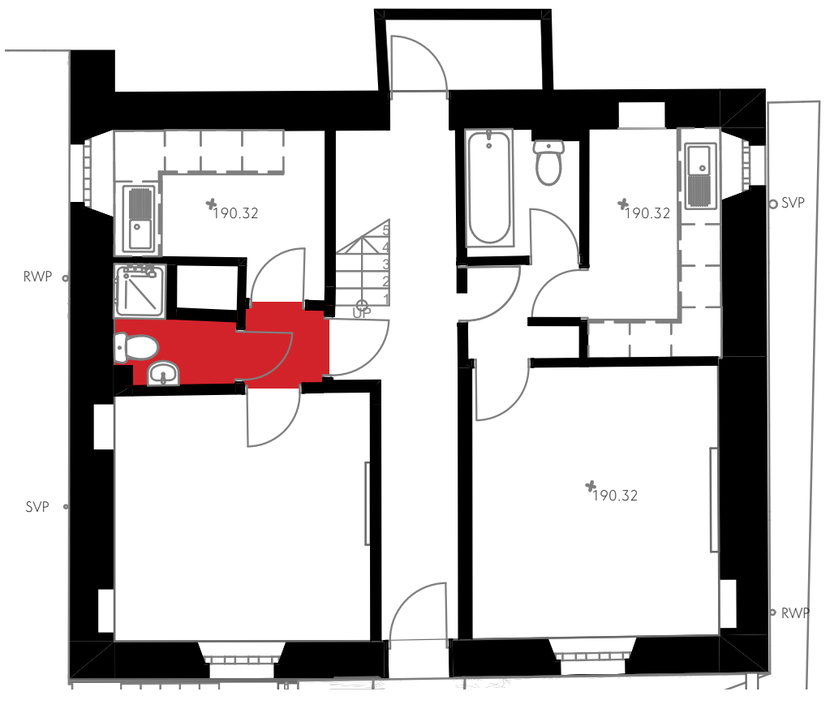


10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - West Flat Bathroom and Lobby

Also with painted plastered walls and ceilings (this time with no cornice), and timber four-panelled painted doors, the floor to the bathroom is of ceramic tiling and, to the lobby, of vinyl. All appears to be in a reasonable condition.



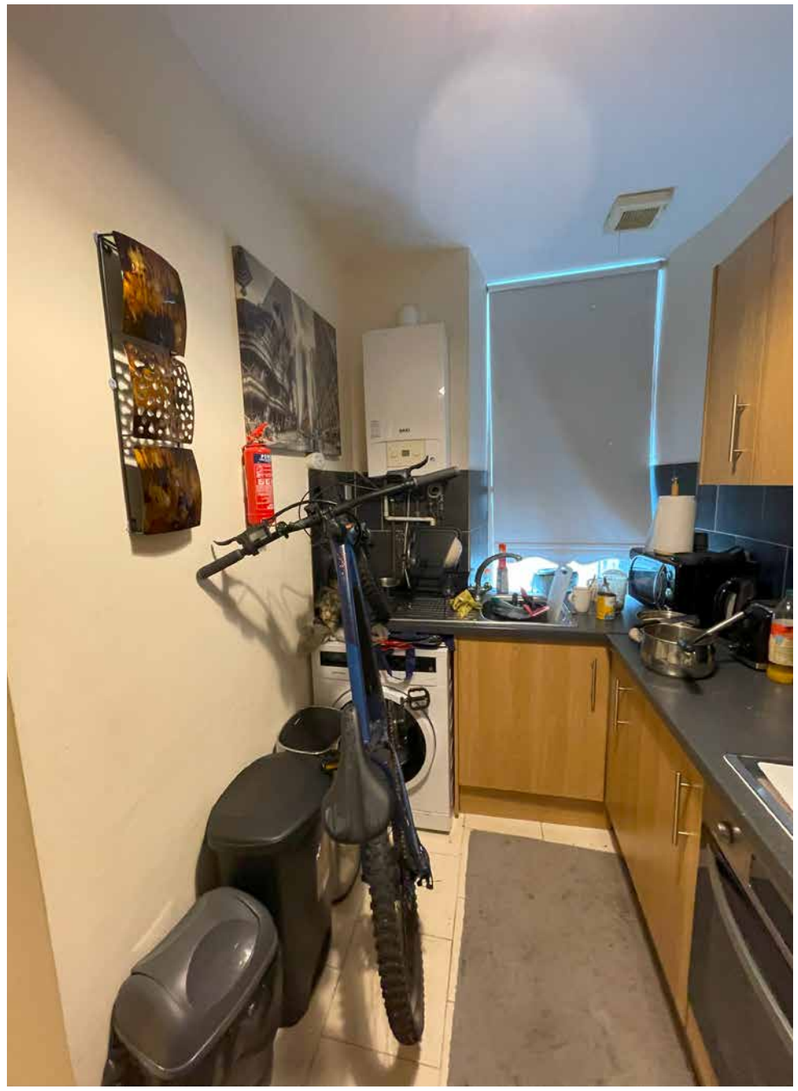


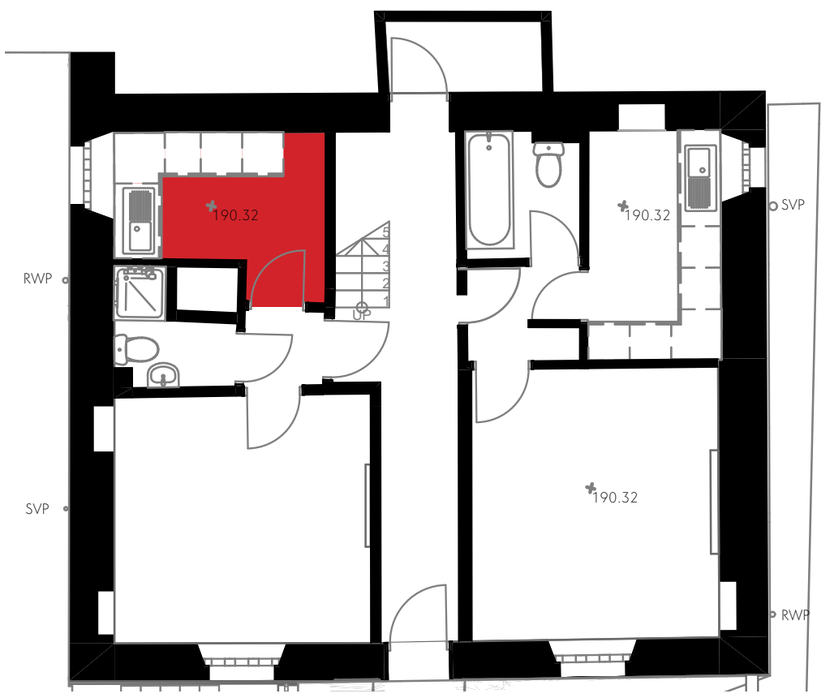


10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - Kitchen

With painted plastered walls and ceilings (again with no cornice), with some splashback tiling above the kitchen units, and a timber flush painted door, the floor to the kitchen is of ceramic tiling; and the window is timber-frame, single glazing. All appears to be in a reasonable condition.

The proposals replace the glass in the window with Slimline double glazing.

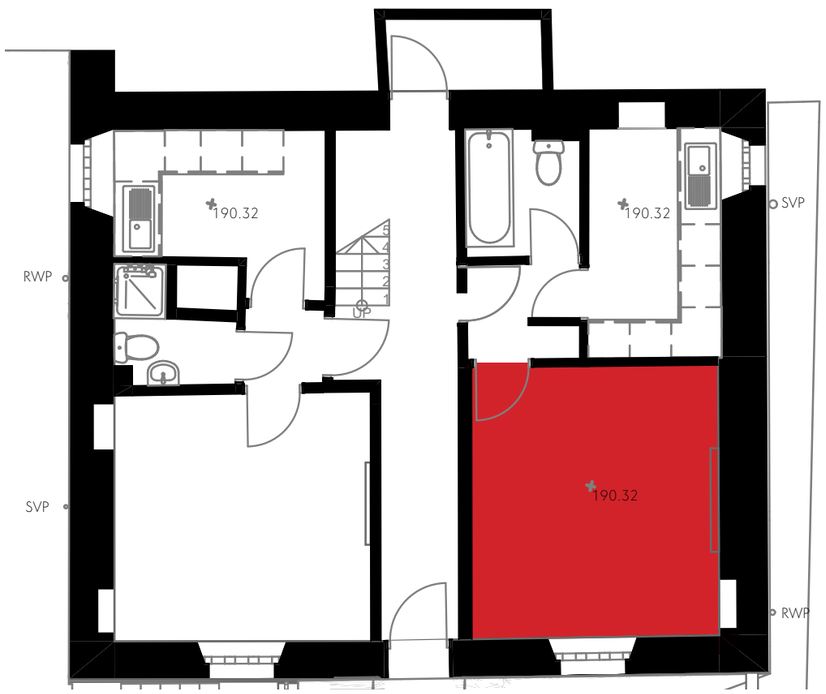




10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - East Flat Front Room

Whilst, also of painted plastered walls and ceiling, with egg-and-dart cornice and ceiling rose; this room and flat is coated with staining and wet - to walls and ceiling - and large areas of mould growth. One questions why this flat is so bad, whilst the matching flat on the other side is not. Indeed, the window is double glazed, and new. The proposals will involve removing all of the plaster and investigating the masonry behind. There could be defects in the walls; there could be cold-bridges; there could be damp coming in from outside and, unable to escape, it has saturated the walls, causing damp conditions internally. However, the level of condensation in this flat is extremely high - note the water streaming down the window, which is new and double-glazed. One feels that part of the problem may be with the tenant's living habits. There appears to be no background heating on (we were advised that the boiler did not always work); it does not look like the windows were often opened to ventilate the space; insulation had been applied to the inside face of walls (thereby stopping any warmth getting into the walls and drying them out); and it looked like washing was regularly dried in the space and cooking a regular thing, with questionable hood ventilation.

There may well be an issue with the walls; they may well be holding moisture unable to escape due to the cementitious render and gypsum plaster; there may well be gaps in the construction and/or cold-bridges. This will all need to be investigated once the render and plaster is off. However, there is also poor heating (maybe none), poor ventilation (arguably none) and a lot of moisture-producing activity inside. We are also aware that the tenants regularly clean down the walls. This may also be adding moisture into the plaster.

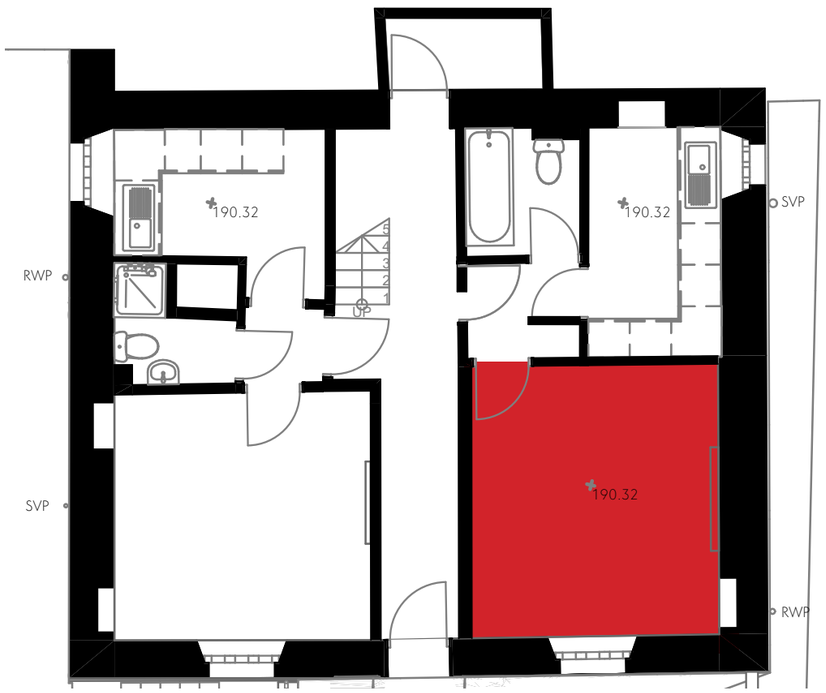


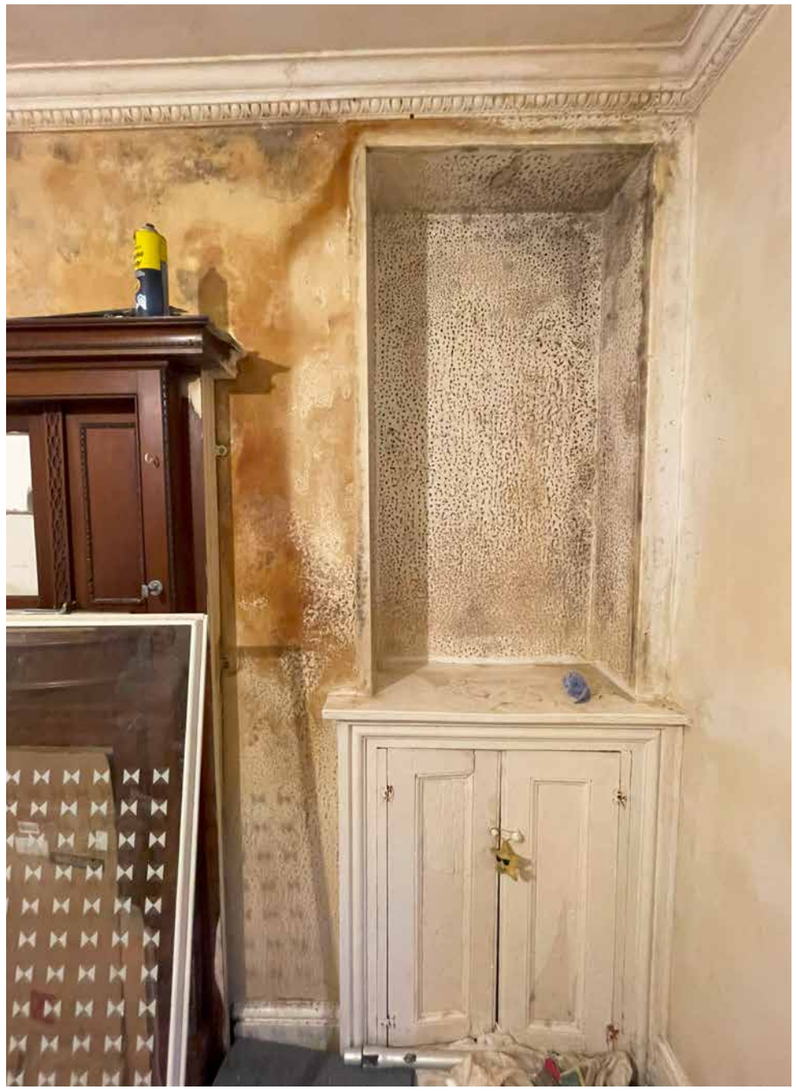
10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - East Flat Front Room

These photos are of the west wall to the room, facing the 'right of way' path, one the wall with roughcast cement render. The staining is awful around the fireplace particularly. It is orange in colour. It appears as though the fireplace is blocked up at this point, which is not ideal. However, to make this worse, at some time in the past, the chimneys appear to have been removed. This means that there may be no air movement / ventilation within the chimney breast and flue. As a result, the stale and stagnant air within the flue, holding old soot and 'nasties', is not ventilated out of the fabric, as intended; and so it sits there, reacts with moisture within the masonry, and is drawn, hygroscopically, through the masonry to the surface and stains the plaster an orange colour, and potentially leads to mould growth and noxious odours. The more moisture the wall holds, the worse the reaction. This soot can also badly damage the masonry itself.

Once the plaster has been removed and the wall allowed to dry out, the proposals involve incorporating a vent in the face of the fireplace and a vent at the top of the roof, where the chimney used to be. Thus, some ventilation can be reintroduced into the flue.

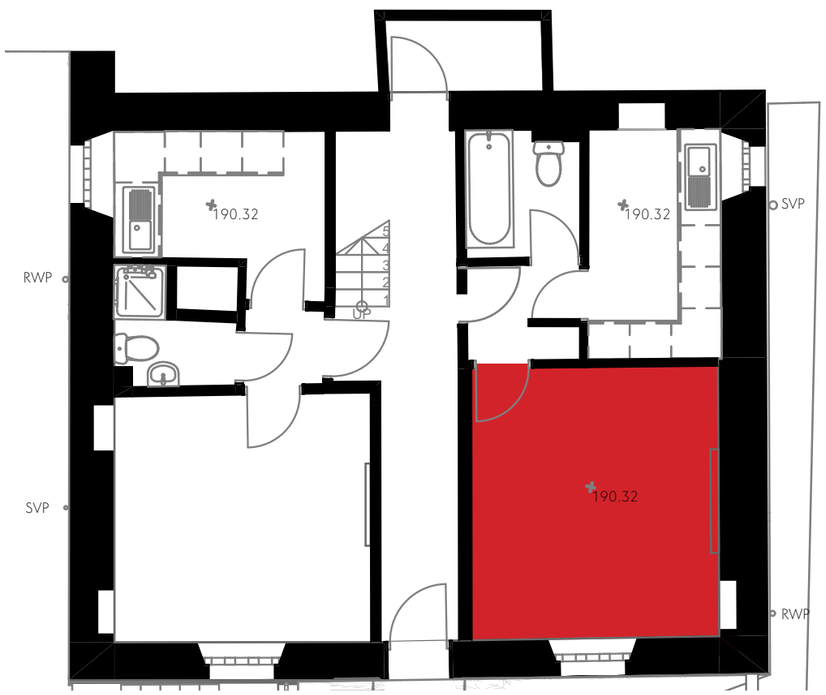
Also, to the right of the fireplace is a recess. This is caked in black mould deposits. It is probable that this is so bad because the thickness of the wall in this area is much less than the rest of the wall; and so there is a greater cold-bridge to the outside and, hence, this is a colder part of the wall, which condensation would immediately move towards.





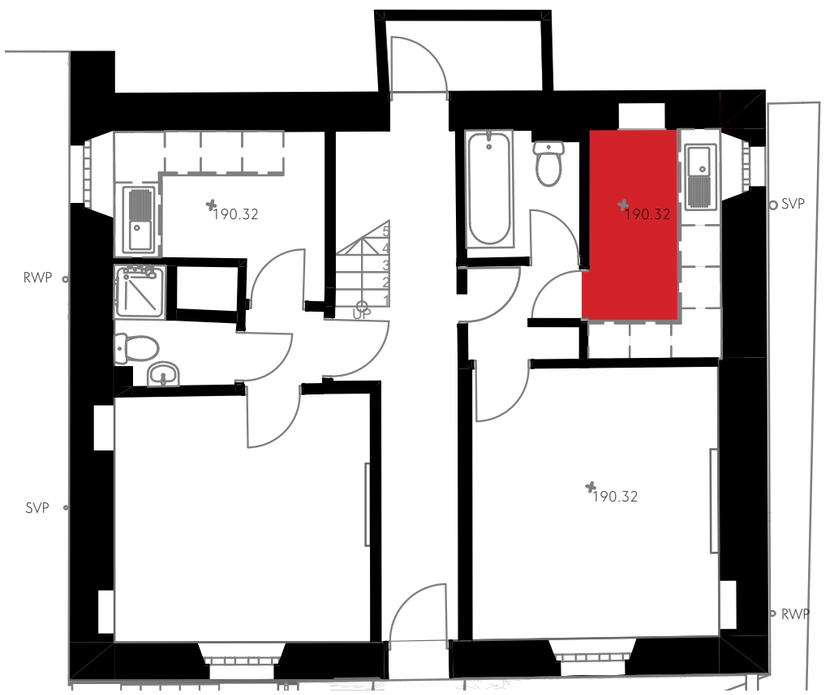
10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - East Flat Front Room

The floor to this room is a vinyl.



10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - East Flat Kitchen

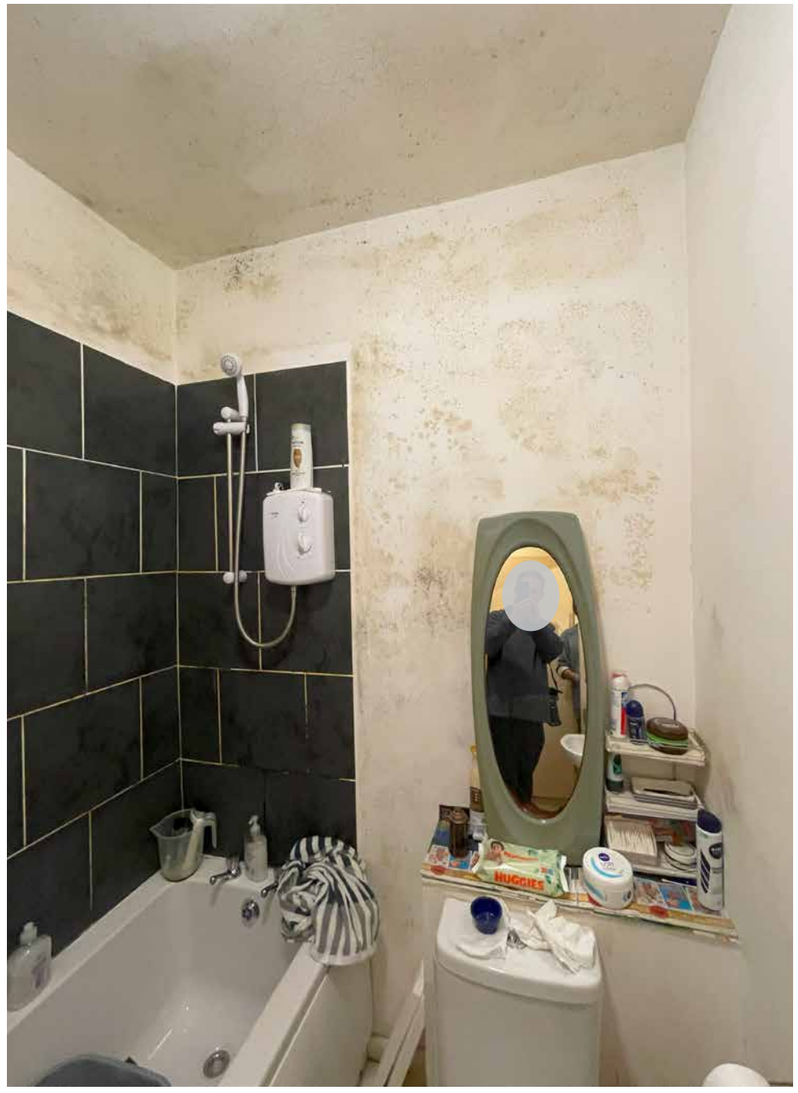
The kitchen is of the same painted plastered walls and ceiling (with no cornice), a ceramic tile floor and a flush timber door. The kitchen walls are also covered with ceramic tiling and kitchen units, which means that it is not possible to see whether there is also bad mould and saturation behind the tiles and units. However, there is clearly mould around the window head (which used to be a door), which suggests a cold-bridge at the lintol.

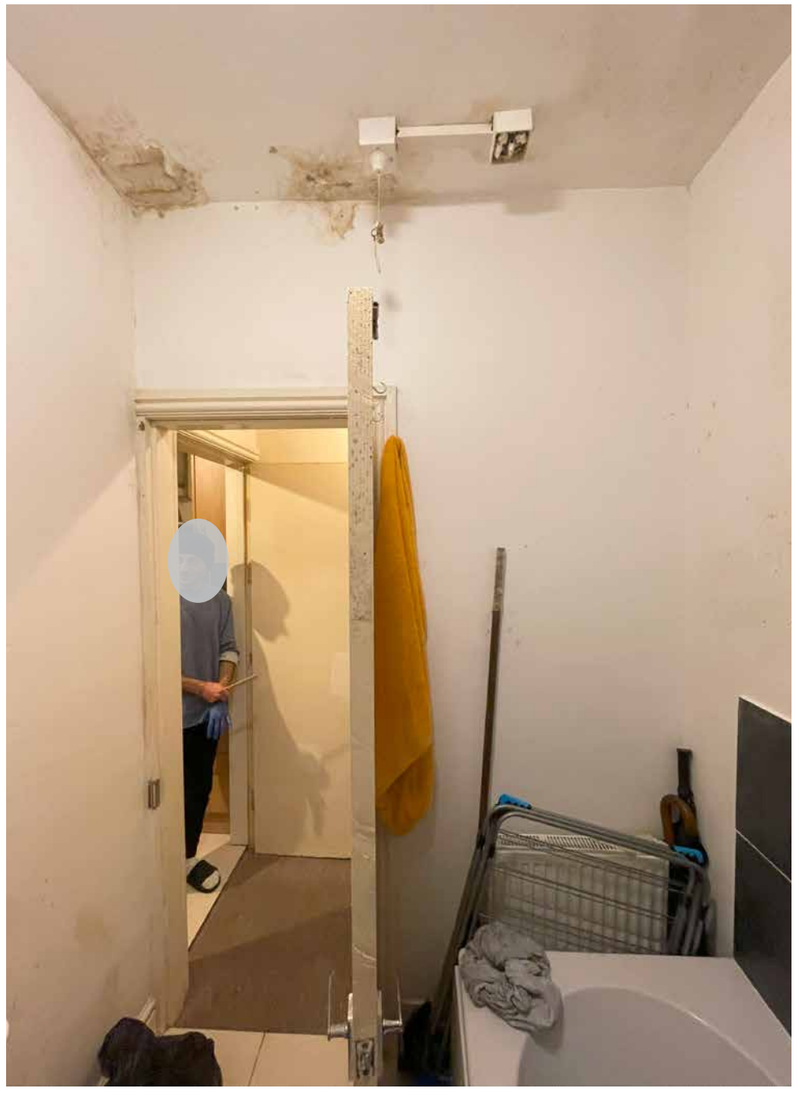


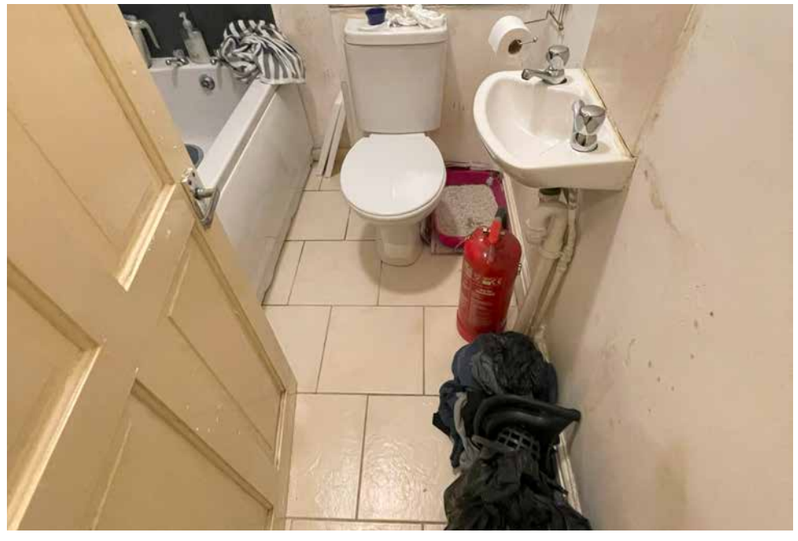
10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - East Flat Bathroom

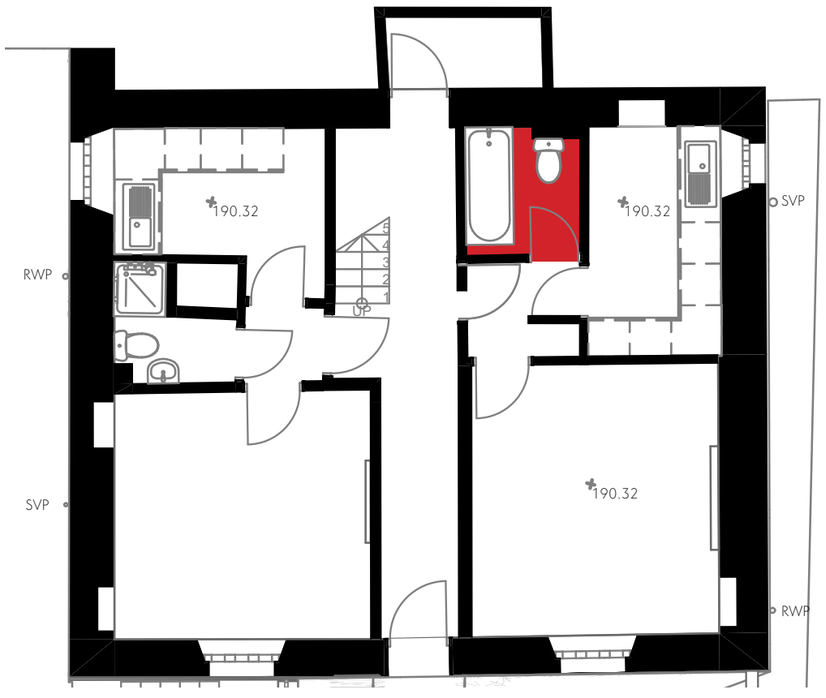
The bathroom is of the same painted plastered walls and ceiling (with no cornice), a ceramic tile floor and a timber four-panelled door. The walls are also covered, in part, with ceramic tiling, which means that it is not possible to see whether there is also bad mould and saturation behind the tiles. However, there is clearly mould to all of the walls and the ceiling.

There is a vent in this room; however, that it inefficient and insufficient for removing the moisture produced in this room. As a result, the moisture is condensating on the walls and causing mould and staining.



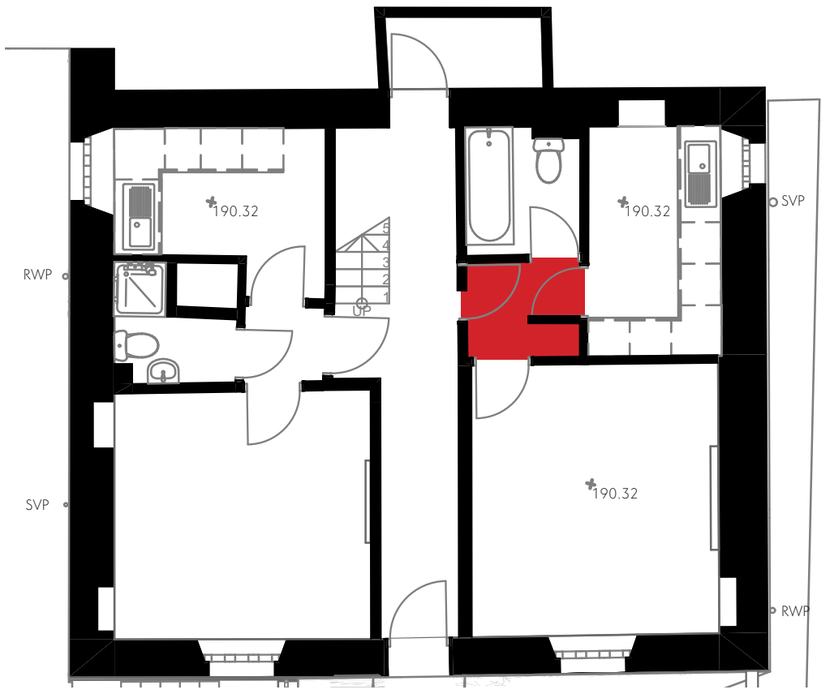


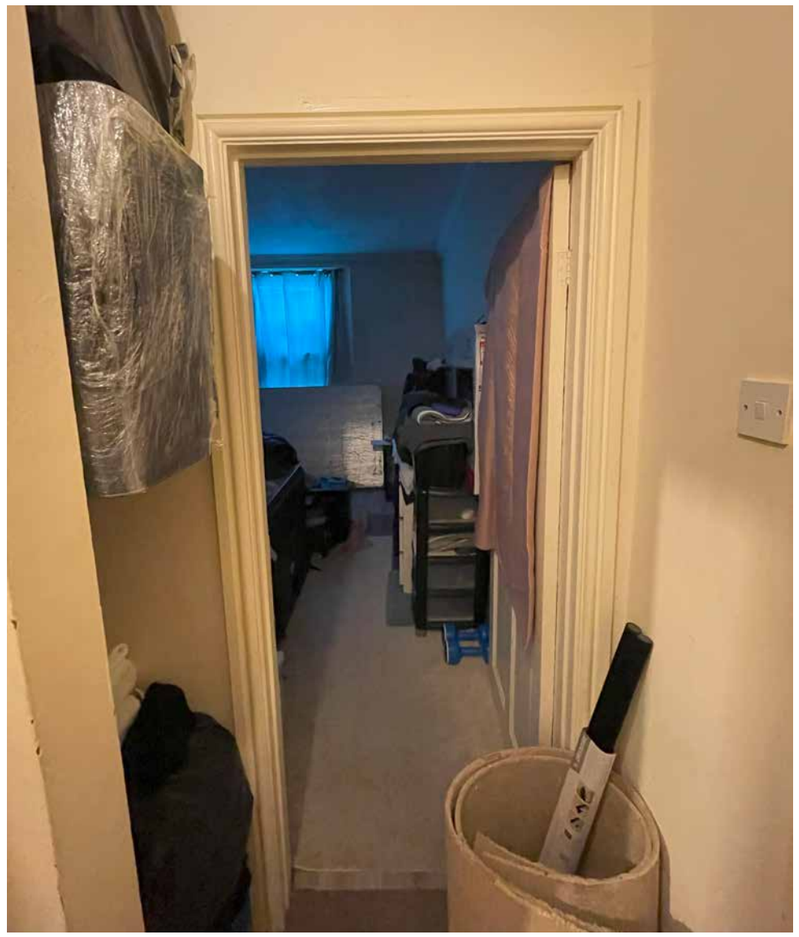


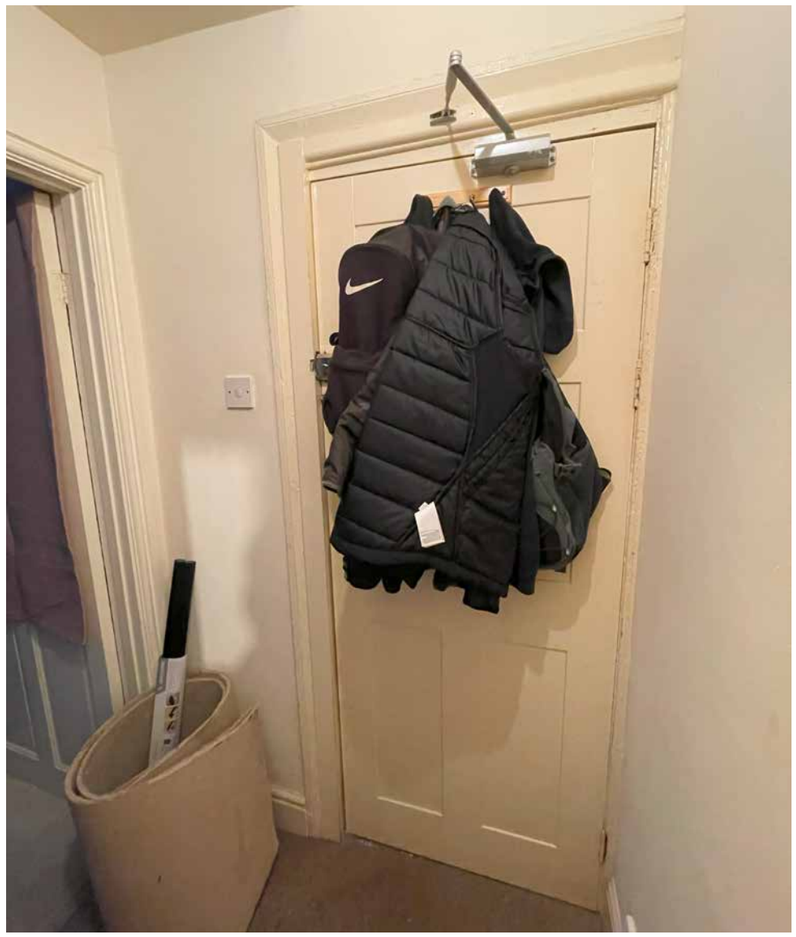


10.0 Interior - Ground Floor - East Flat Lobby

There is no obvious sign of significant staining and mould on the plastered walls to the lobby; however, it is very bad at the plastered ceiling. There is no means of ventilation in this space (which collects moisture from the bathroom, kitchen and bedroom) and no apparent means of heating. As a result condensation is not controlled.



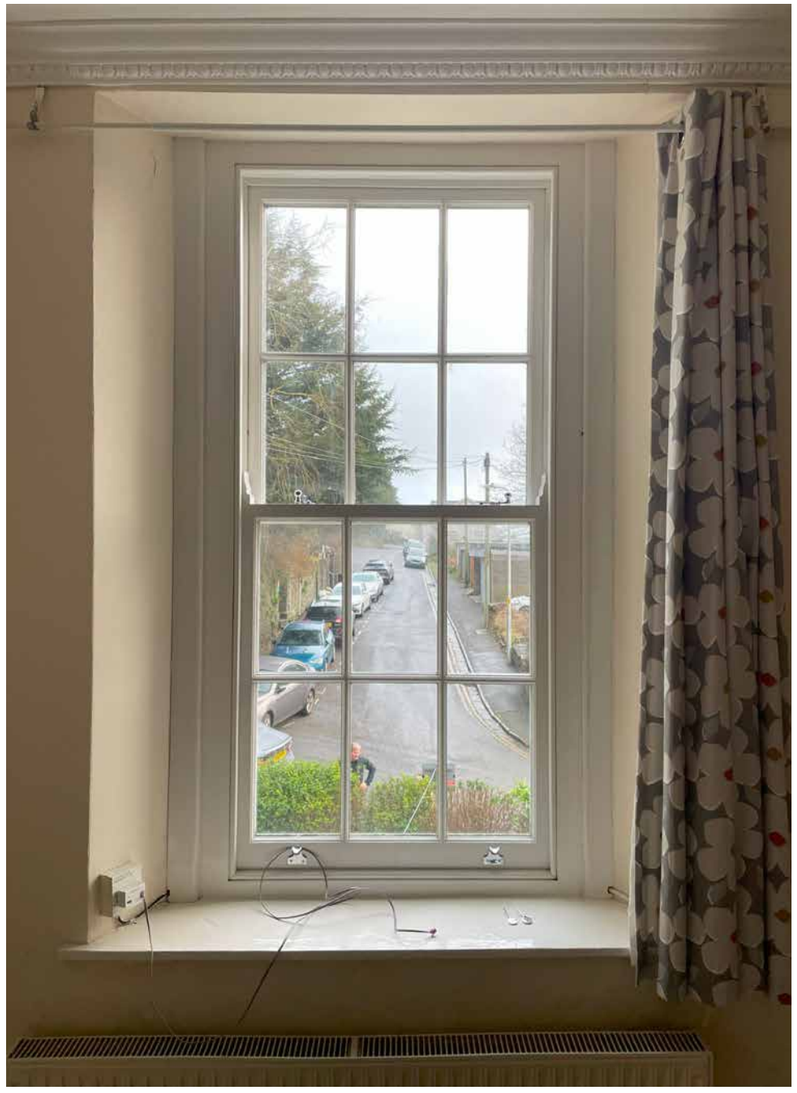


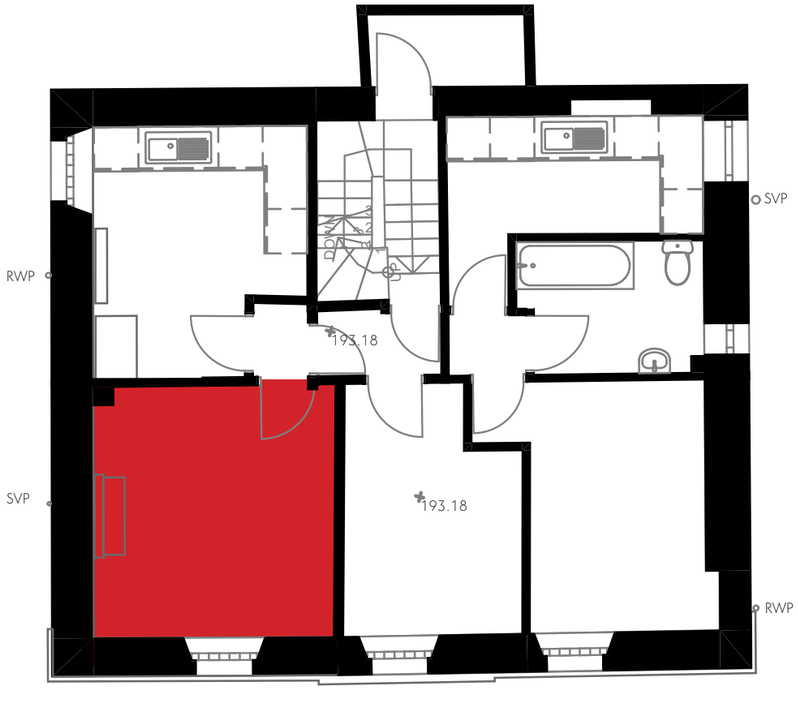


11.0 Interior - First Floor Flat - South West Room

This front room is of painted plastered walls and ceiling with a moulded cornice and a ceiling rose. The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window a painted timber sash window with double glazing. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork. There is a timber and metal fireplace surround and marble hearth. The brickwork of the wall is apparent within the fireplace.

All appear to be in a reasonable condition.

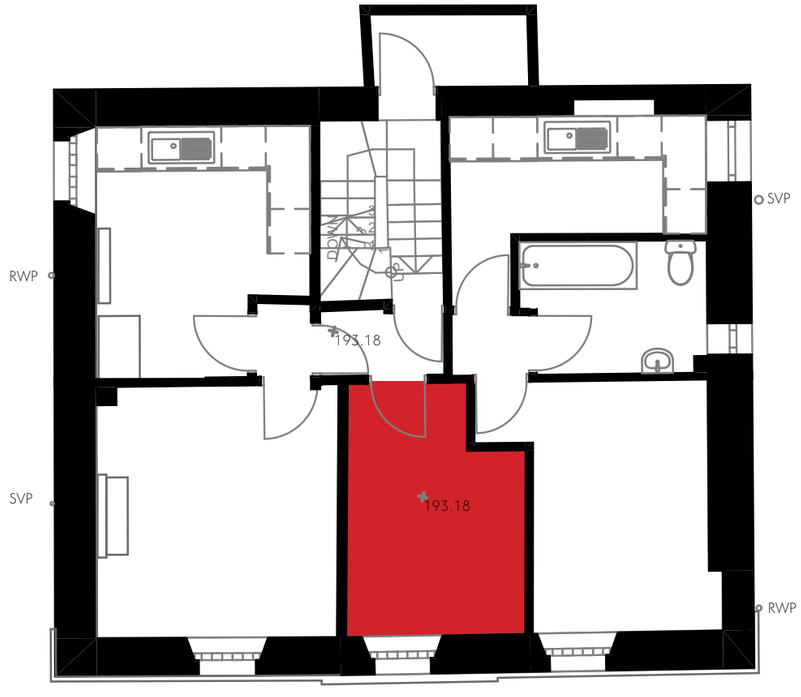




11.0 Interior - First Floor - Central Room

This front room is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with a moulded cornice and a ceiling rose. The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window a painted timber sash window with double glazing. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

There is water-staining, dampness, spalled plaster and crystallised salts on the external front wall to the left of the window (see photo below). There is a significant amount of cracking render on the outside just above this point. This might explain how the inside face of the wall is damp - water has been getting behind the render, cannot evaporate externally and so is finding its way to the inside face of the wall, and drying, leaving salt crystals. The plaster needs removal and a new lime plaster applied.

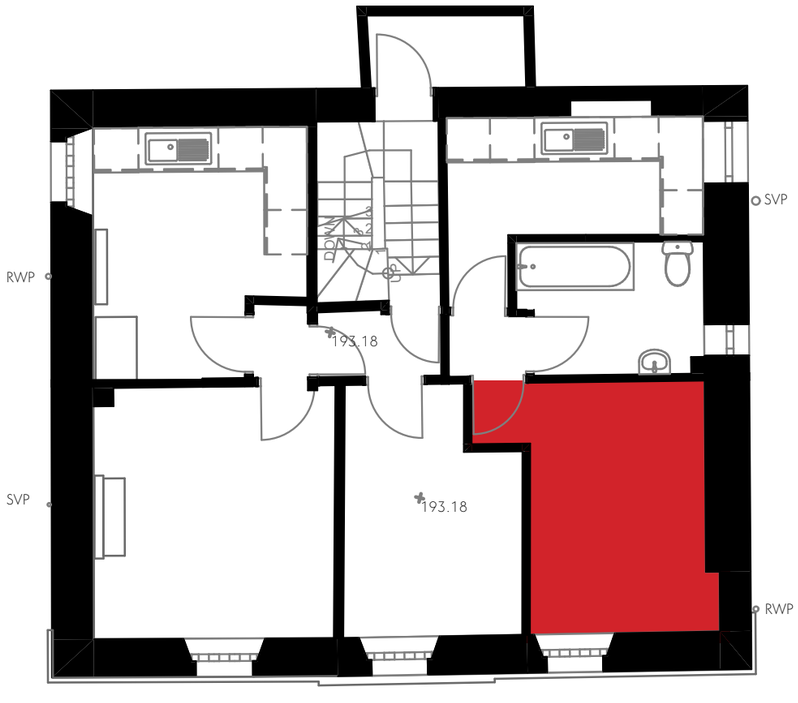


11.0 Interior - First Floor - South East Room

This front room is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with a moulded cornice and a ceiling rose. The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window a painted timber sash window with double glazing. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork. There is a vent in the wall where it is presumed a fireplace used to be. This must be venting the flue within the wall.

In the south east corner of the room - which is the external corner - there is a large area of peeling paint, cracking plaster and damp. There has recently been some cementitious plaster repairing of this area. This is where the wall thins out to form this recess, and hence forms a greater cold-bridge. The surface of the thicker wall (where the fireplace used to be) is also showing signs of dampness. This is the corner and side wall of the building where the wall is at its dampest in the ground floor below. This certainly suggests that there is a damp build-up to this part of the wall. It is an area of wall where the render externally is looking especially dark, stained and damp; and it is the area where there is a rain water downpipe, which might have been leaking; and an area where the old chimney breast may not be suitable vented.

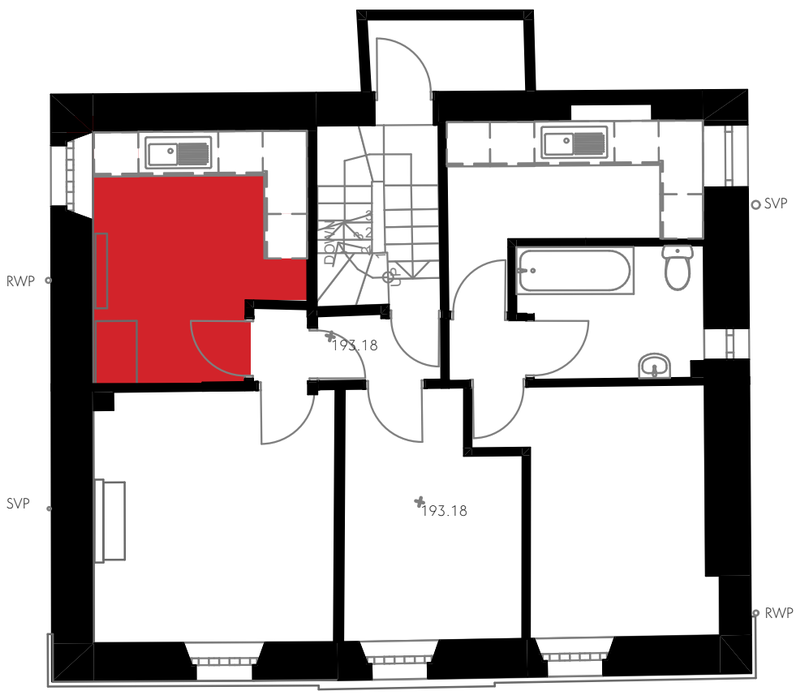
The proposals involve the removal of the internal plaster and, probably, the removal of the external render. The chimney flue is to be vented at top and bottom, and in the middle; and the rainwater downpipe is to be replaced.



11.0 Interior - First Floor - Rear Kitchen

This rear kitchen is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with no cornice. There is a run of kitchen units on two walls. The floor is of ceramic tiling. The door is a flush painted timber. The window is painted timber, with a top-hung casement. The glazing is single-glazed. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork. There is a timber and metal fireplace surround, with both brickwork and stonework of the wall apparent within the fireplace.

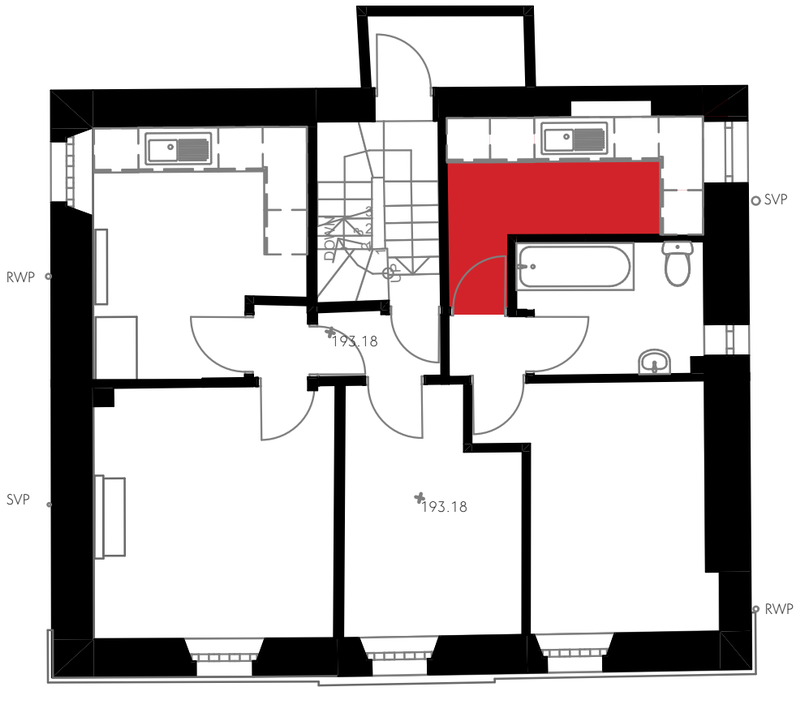
The condition of this room is reasonable; however, there is mould growth around the window, which suggests cold-bridging and condensation. This is not helped by the fact that the window is single-glazed. As such, the proposals replace this with Slimline double-glazing.



11.0 Interior - First Floor - Rear East Room

This rear room is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with a no cornice. The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window a painted timber top-hung casement window with double glazing. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

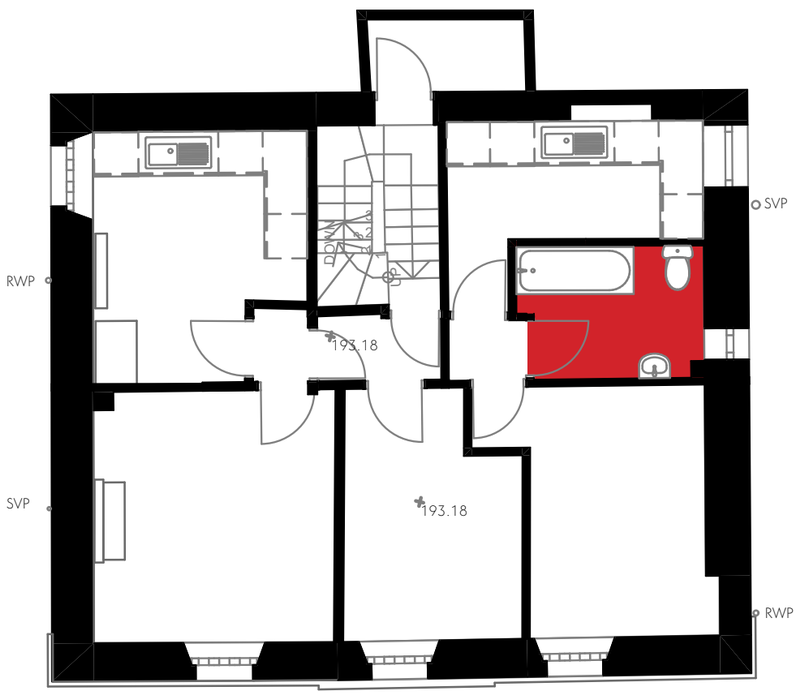
The condition of the room is reasonable; however, it was noted that there was a bit of a slope to the timber floor. A more detailed inspection of this, and all floors, is recommended in due course, when the carpet can be taken up.

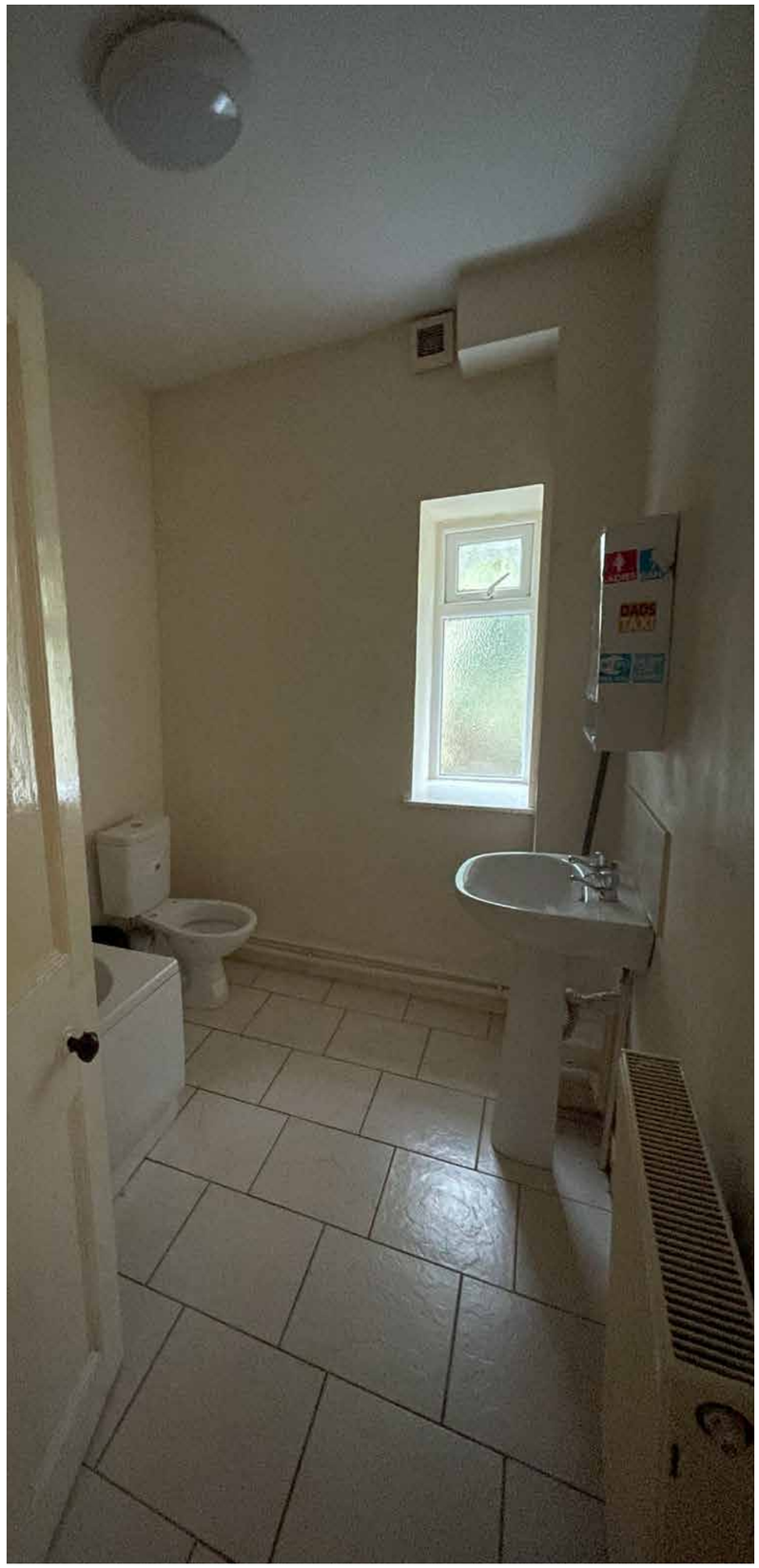


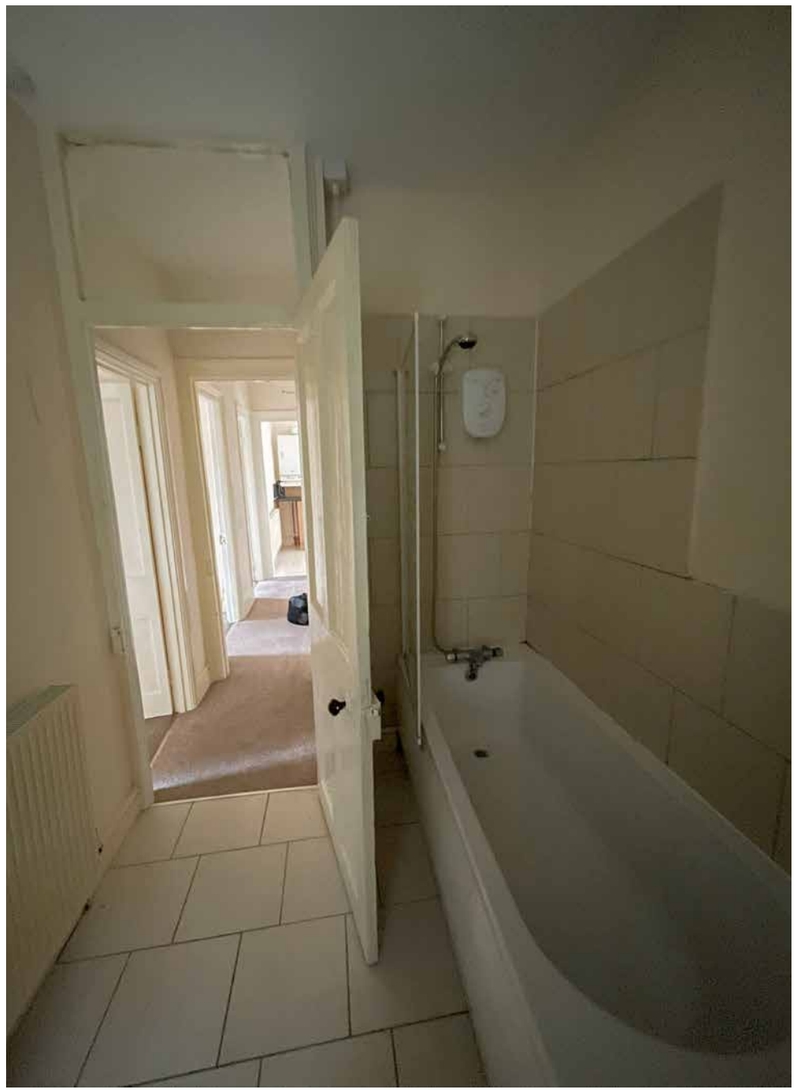
11.0 Interior - First Floor - Bathroom

The bathroom is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with a no cornice. The floor is ceramic tiled; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window a painted timber top-hung casement window with double glazing. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

The condition of the room is reasonable.



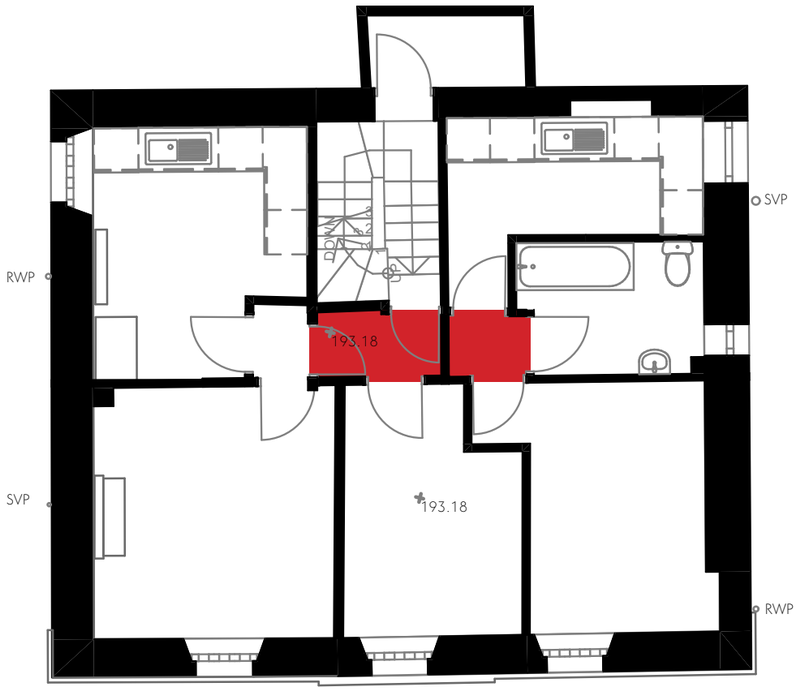


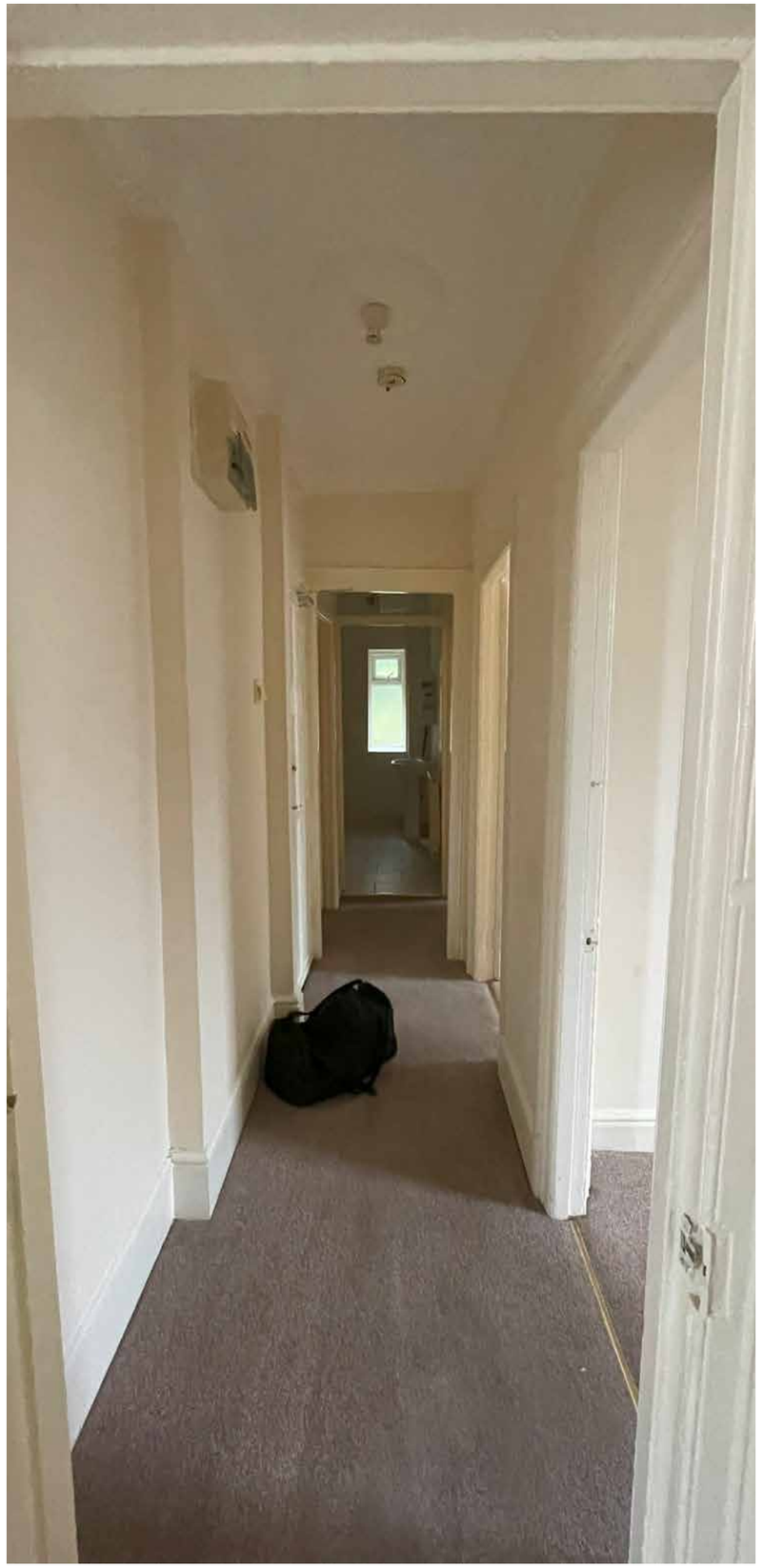


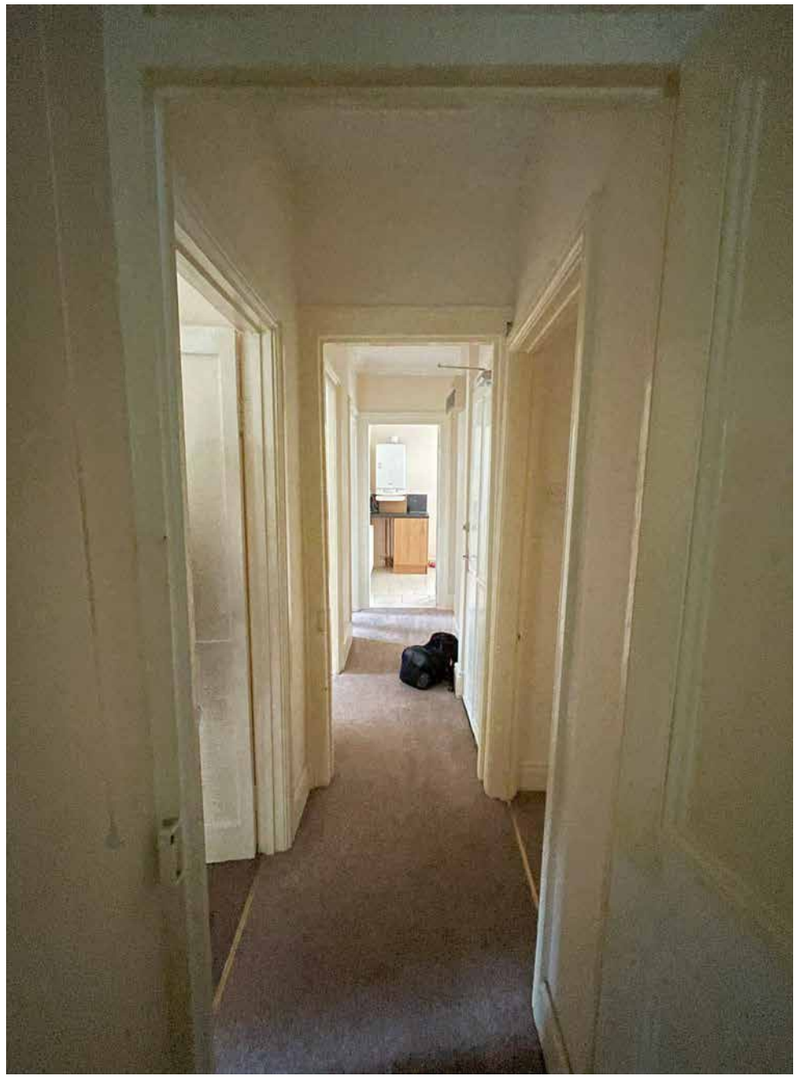
11.0 Interior - First Floor - Hall

This hall space is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with a moulded cornice and a ceiling rose. The floor is carpetted; the doors are painted four-panelled timber door. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

The condition of the space is reasonable.



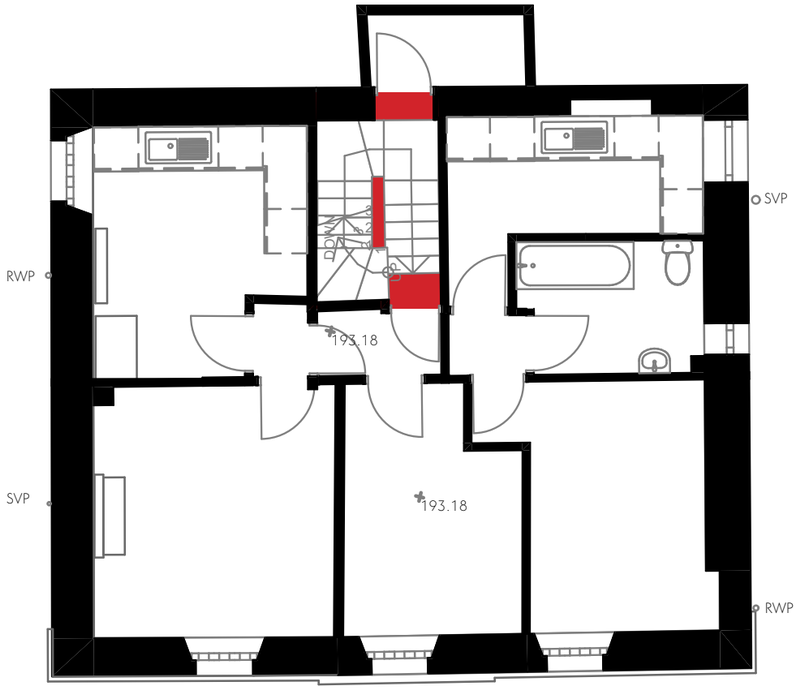


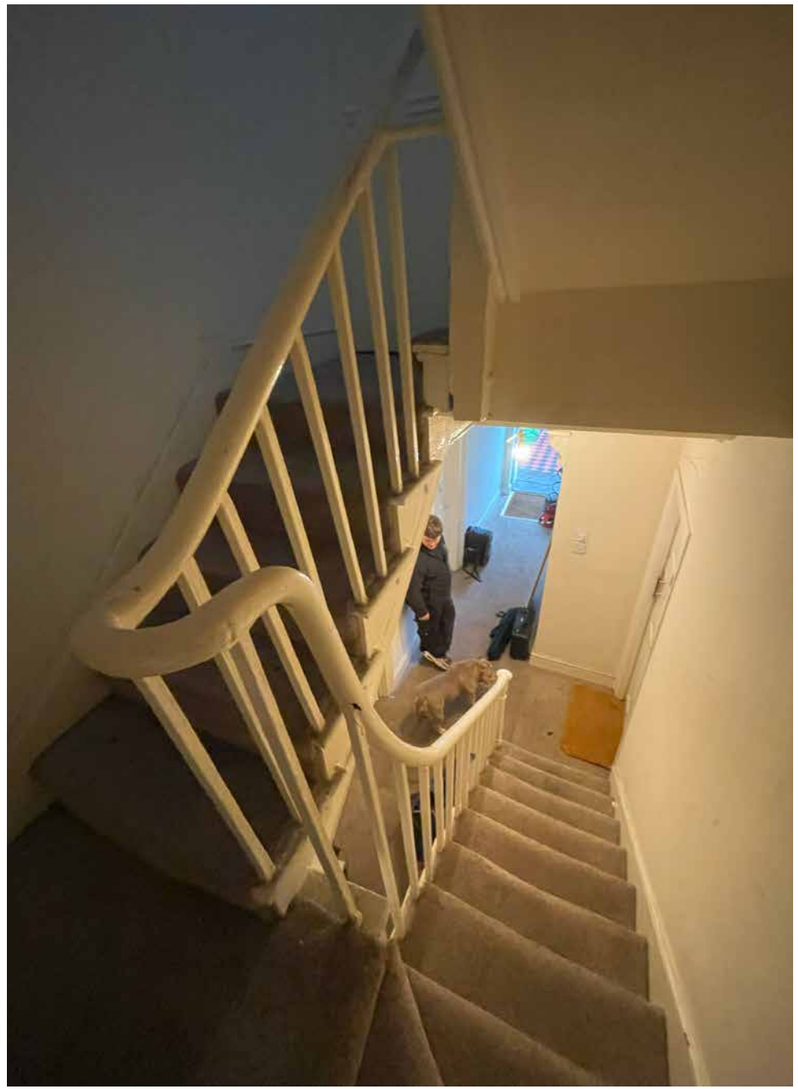


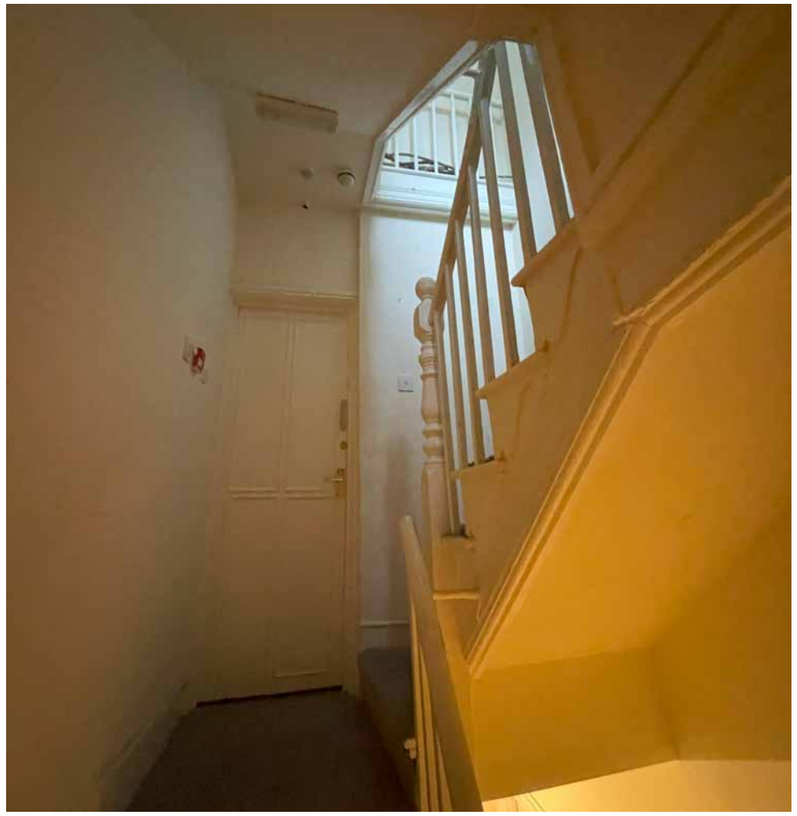
11.0 Interior - First Floor - Staircase

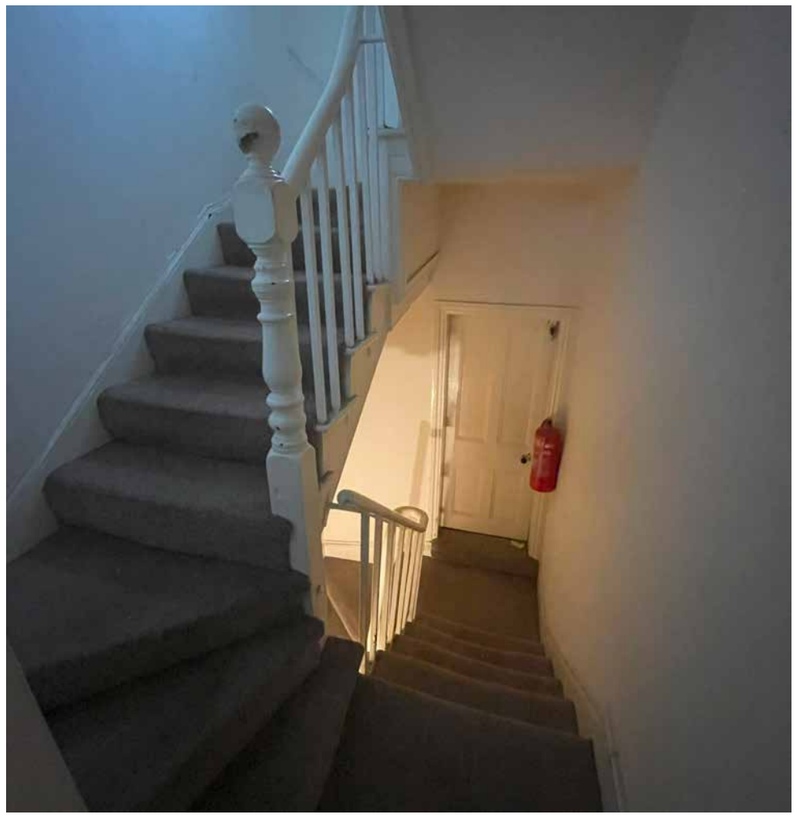
This staircase space is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling. The steps and landing are carpetted; the doors are painted four-panelled timber door. The internal walls around the staircase appear to be of masonry.

The single staircase is a timber staircase, carpetted; with an ovular handrail, square balusters and a turned round newel posts; all painted white. Aside from the wear on the carpet, this appears all to be in reasonable condition







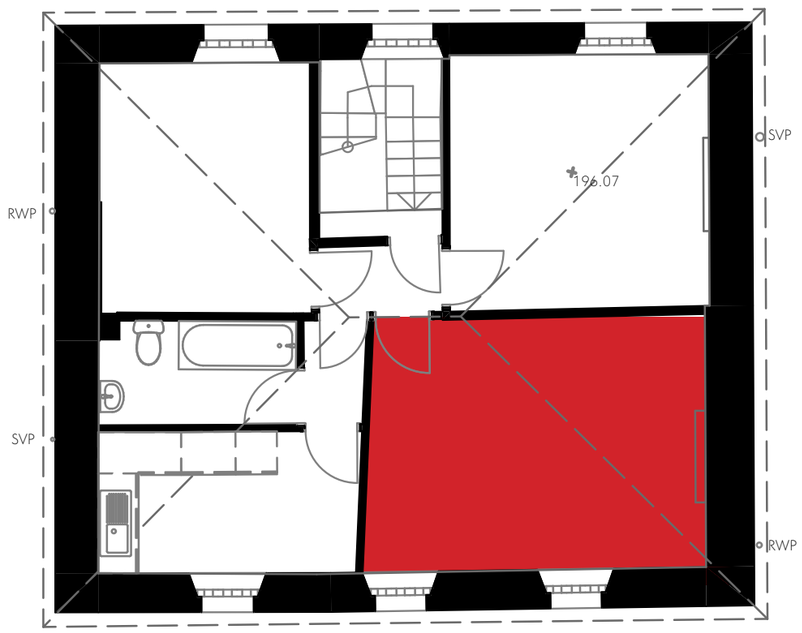


12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Front South East Room

This front room is of painted plastered walls and ceiling. The ceiling slopes around the external edge, with the roof pitch, and the timber principal rafter and hip rafter are partially exposed below the line of the ceiling, and painted. There is no cornice.

The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the windows are painted timber sash windows with double glazing. It is notable that the windows have been recently inserted and/or sealed around the edges with piped insulation, as this insulation is still on view and has not been covered. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork. There is a timber and metal fireplace surround and marble hearth to the east external wall.

There is some staining on the walls and ceiling, albeit not significant or of too much concern; and there appears to have been some areas of crack repair, fairly recently, to some of the plasterwork on the walls.

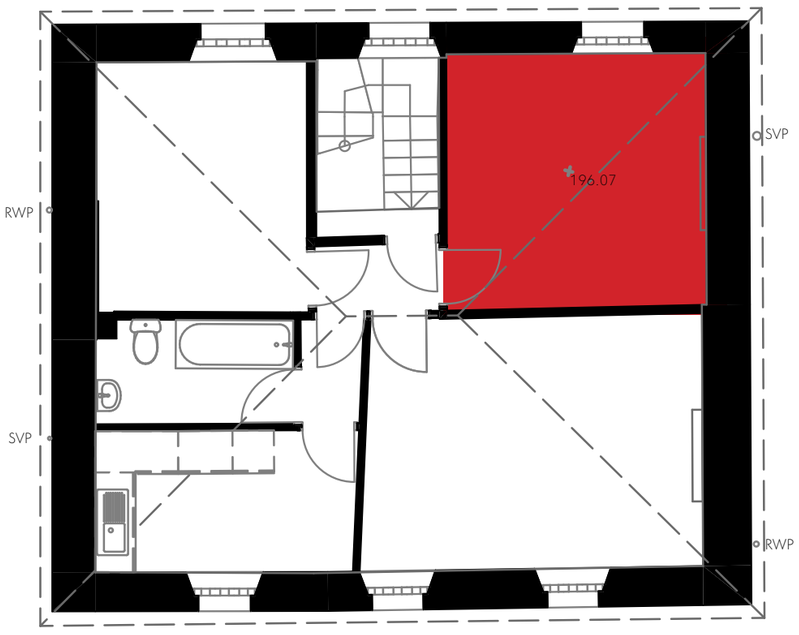


12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Rear North East Room

This rear room is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling. The ceiling slopes around the external edge, with the roof pitch, and the timber principal rafter and hip rafter are partially exposed below the line of the ceiling, and painted. Also exposed in this room are the interconneting purlins. There is no cornice.

The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window is a painted timber sash window. It is not clear whether this is single or double-glazed, as it was not possible to see. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork. There is a timber and metal fireplace surround and marble hearth to the east external wall.

There is some cracking and staining on the walls and ceiling, particularly on the external east wall; albeit not significant or of too much concern.

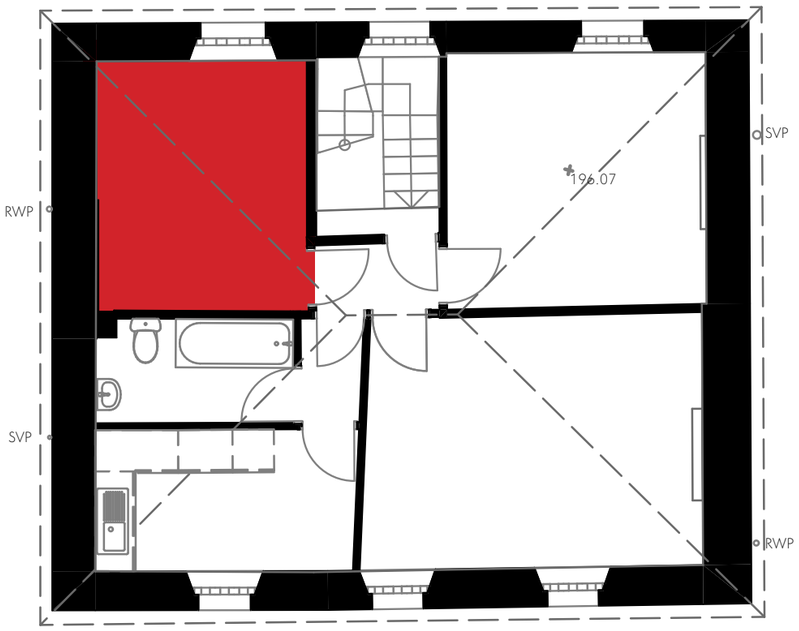


12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Rear North West Room

This rear room is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling. The ceiling slopes around the external edge, with the roof pitch, and the timber principal rafter and hip rafter are partially exposed below the line of the ceiling, and painted. There is no cornice.

The floor is carpetted; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the window is a painted timber sash window. It is not clear whether this is single or double-glazed. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork. There is a timber and metal fireplace surround and marble hearth to the west external wall.

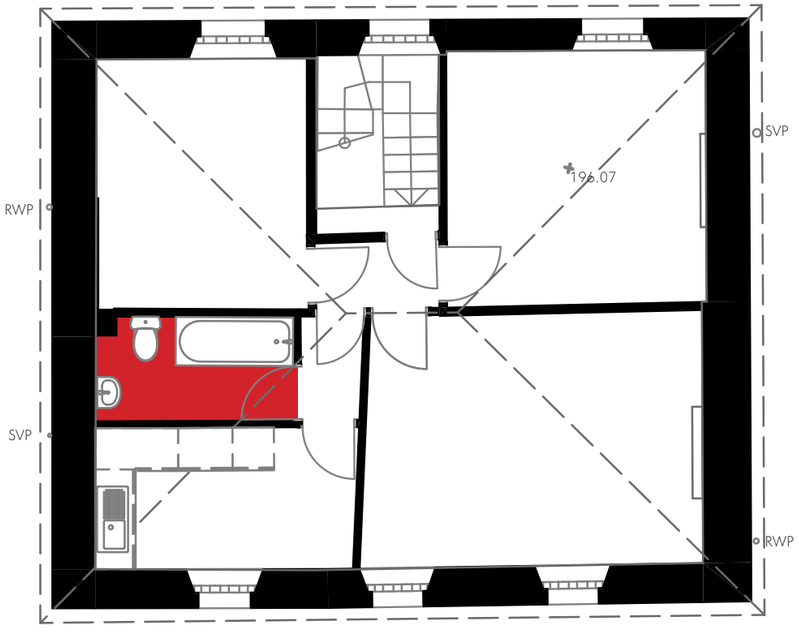
There is some staining on the walls and ceiling; and there appears to have been some areas of crack repair, fairly recently, to some of the plasterwork on the walls. The worst area of staining is to the external north west corner. This will require the plaster to be removed to see what is causing this.

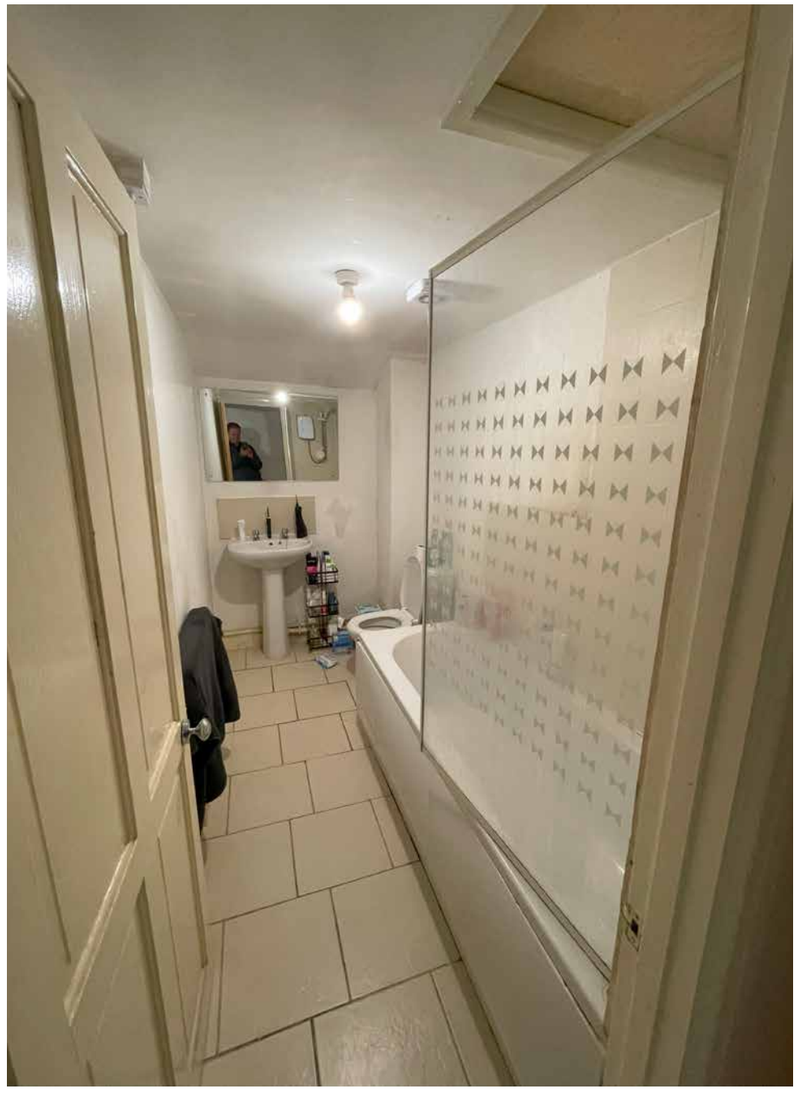


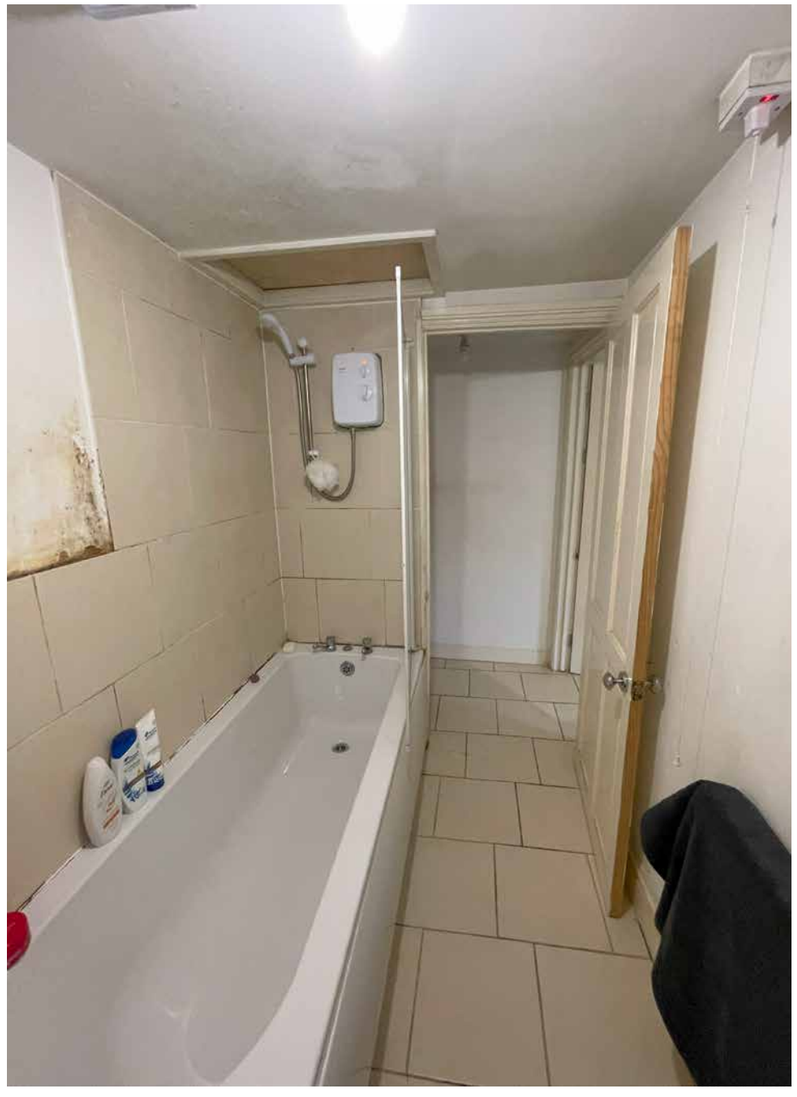
12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Bathroom

The bathroom is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with no cornice. The floor is of ceramic tiling. The door is a painted four-panelled timber door. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

There is mould on one part of an internal wall; however, this is likely to be a case of moisture build-up and insufficient ventilation.



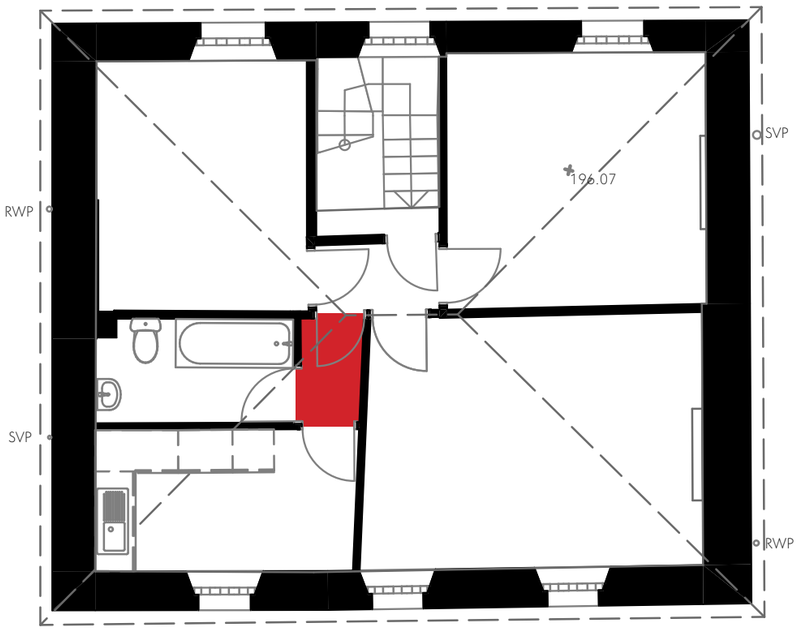


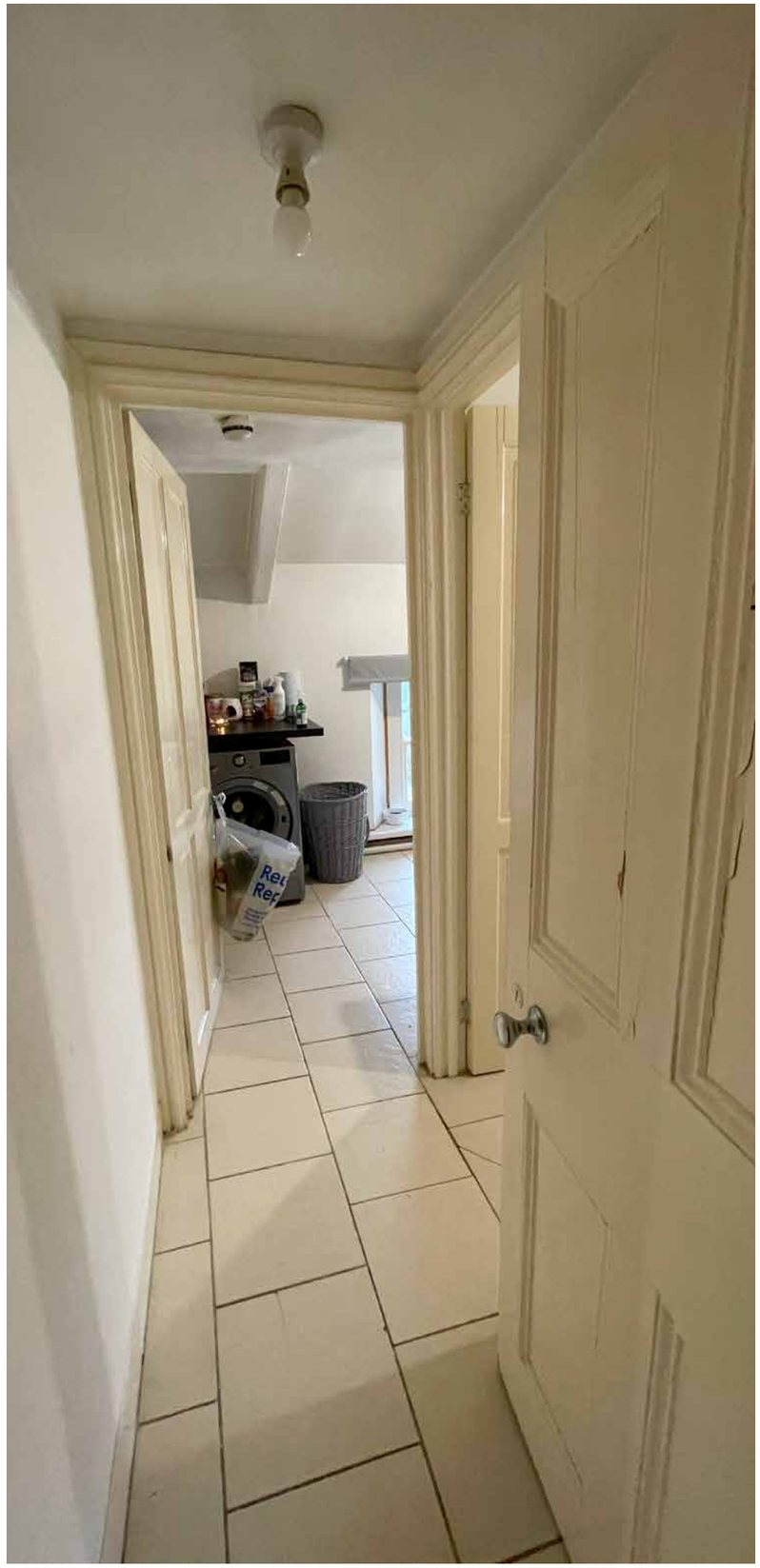


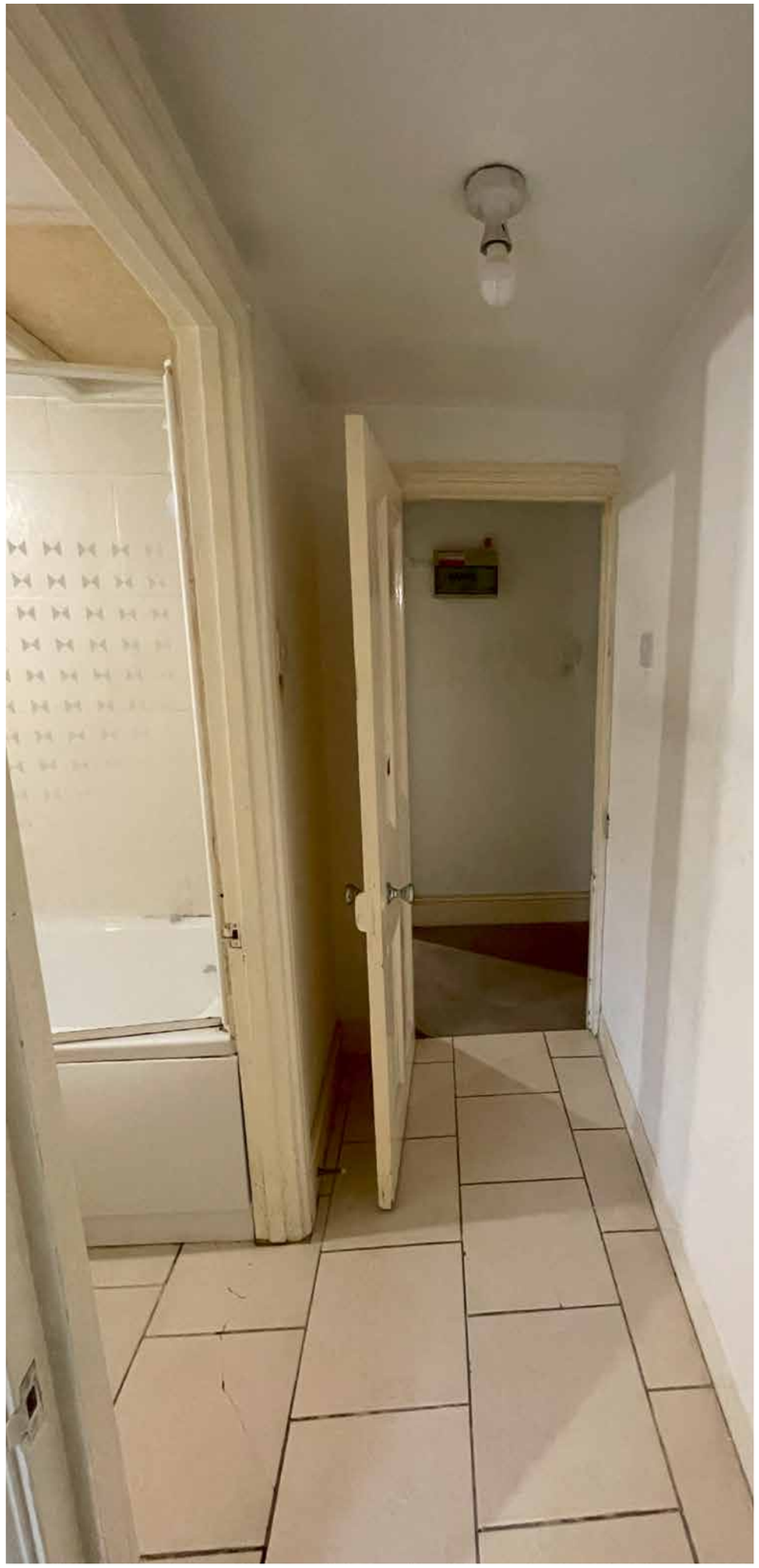
12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Lobby

The lobby is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with no cornice. The floor is of ceramic tiling. The doors are painted four-panelled timber door. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

The condition of this space appears to be reasonable.





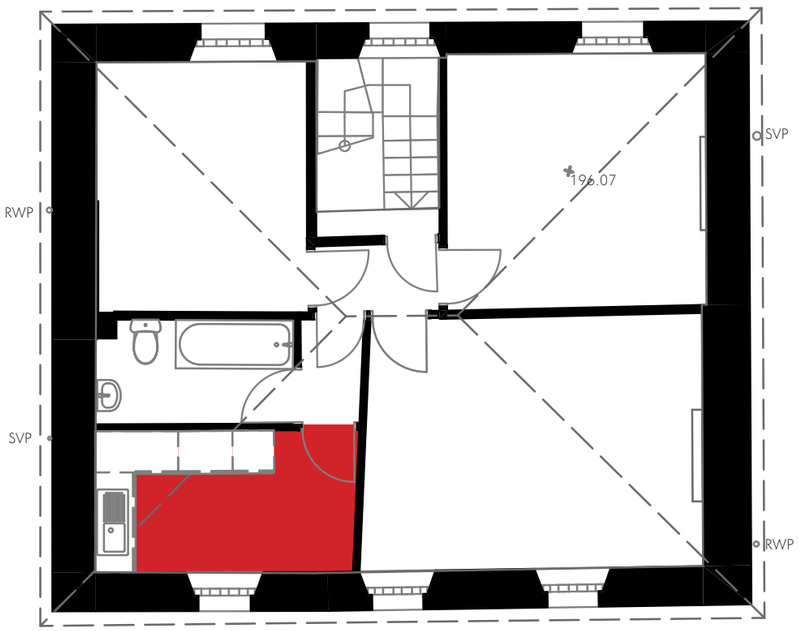


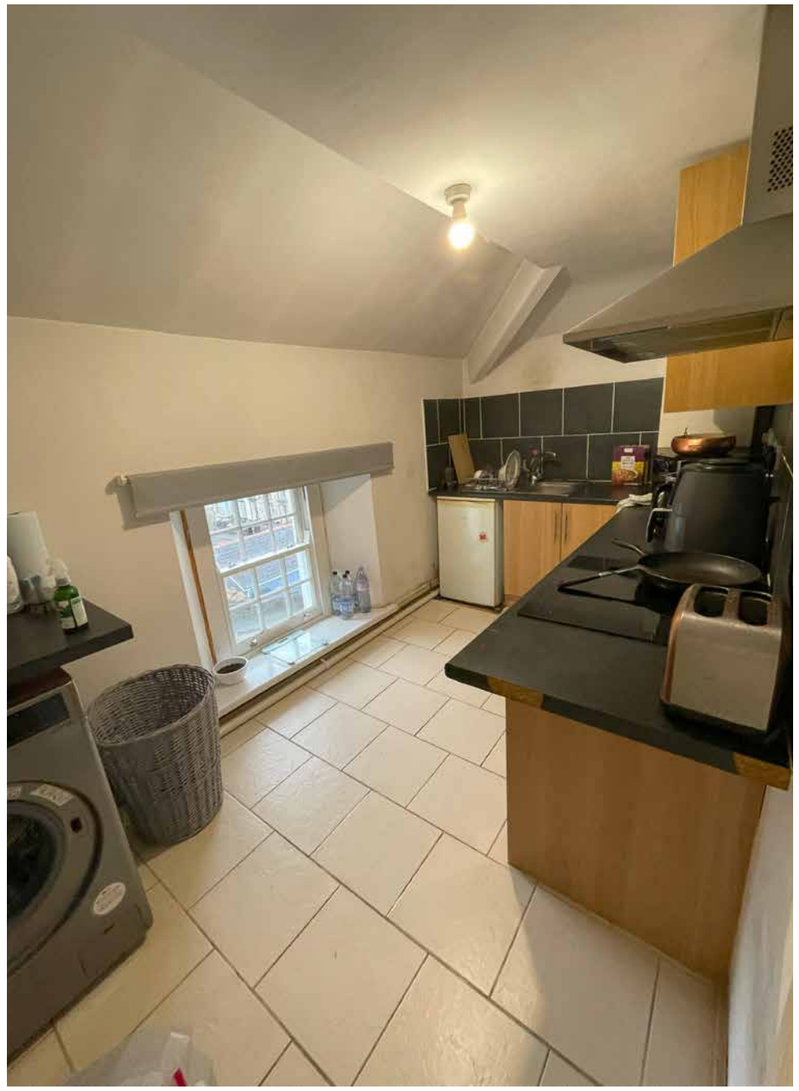
12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Front Kitchen

This front room is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling. The ceiling slopes around the external edge, with the roof pitch, and the timber principal rafter and hip rafter are partially exposed below the line of the ceiling, and painted. There is no cornice.

The floor is ceramic tiled; the door is a painted four-panelled timber door and the windows are painted timber sash windows with double glazing. It is notable that the windows have been recently inserted and/or sealed around the edges with piped insulation, as this insulation is still on view and has not been covered. The internal partitioning appears to be of plasterboarded timber studwork.

The condition of this room appears to be reasonable.

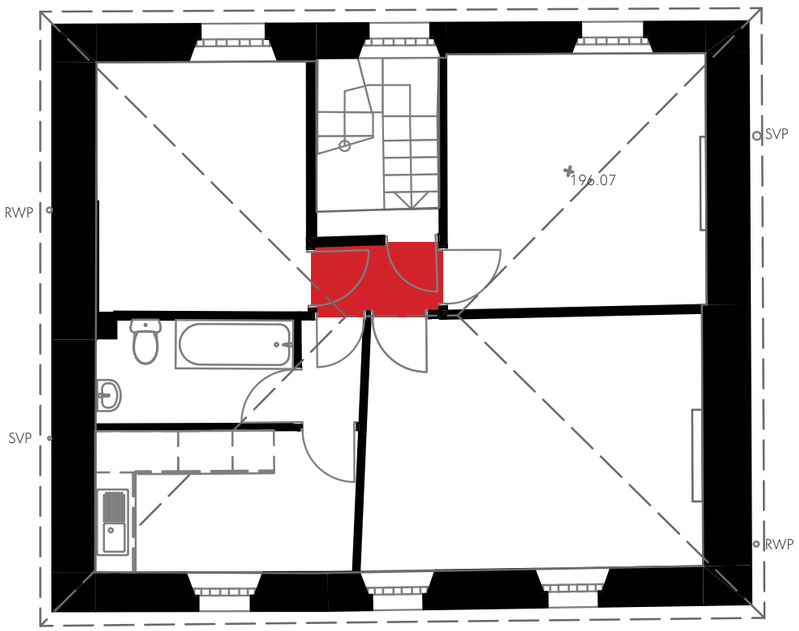


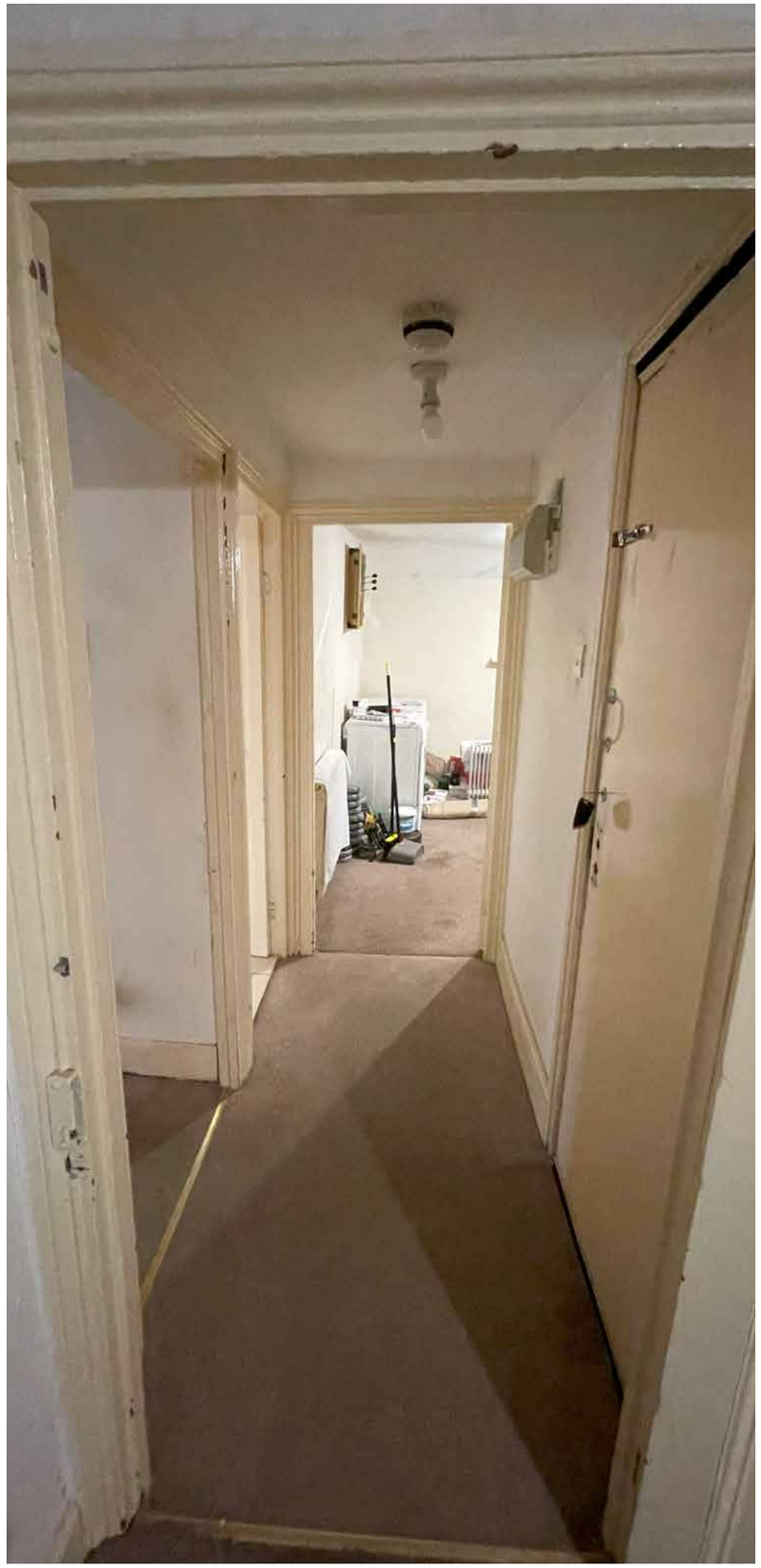


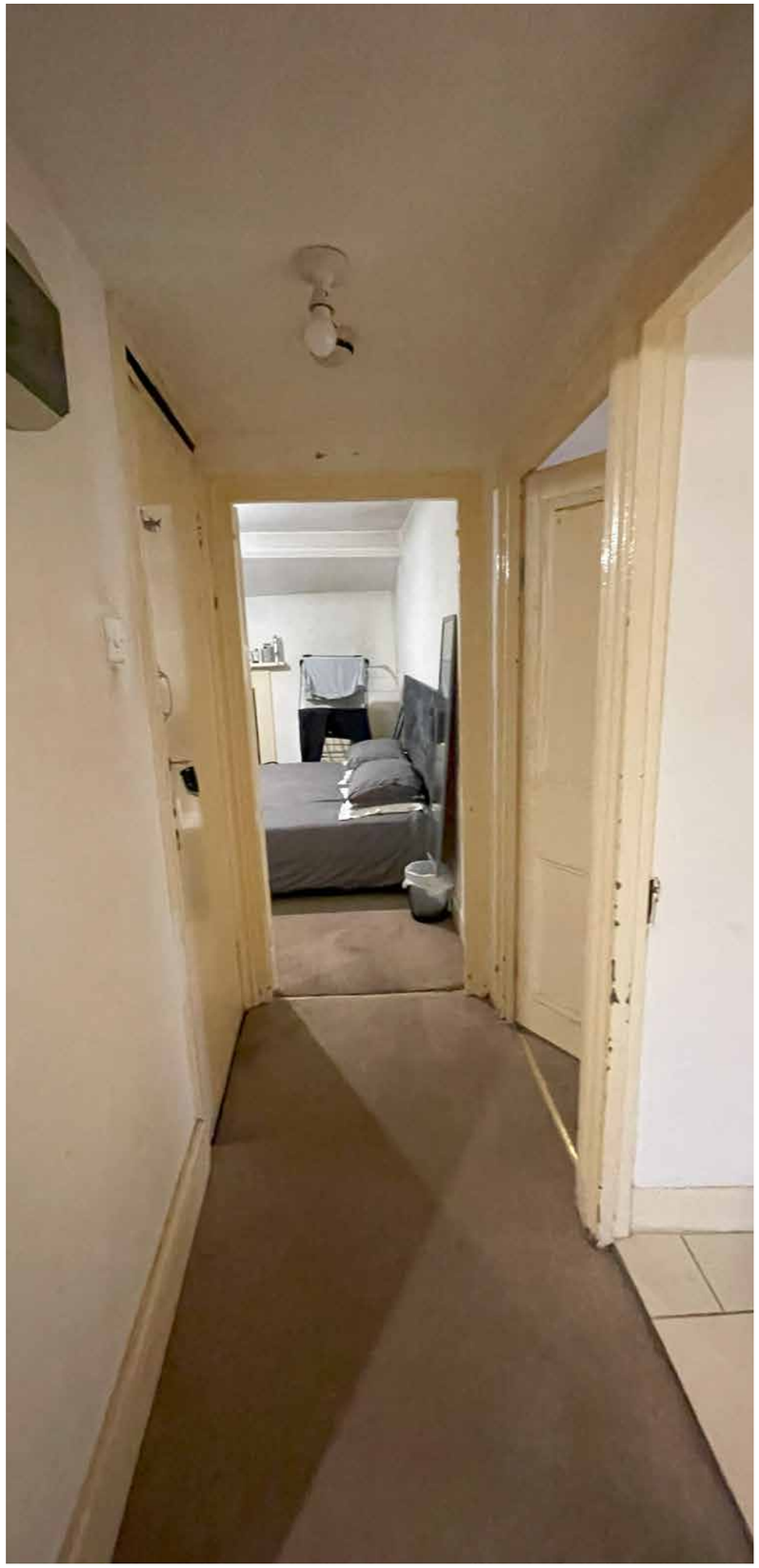
12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Corridor

This corridor is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling with no cornice. The floor is carpetted. The doors are painted four-panelled timber doors.

The condition of this area appears to be reasonable.







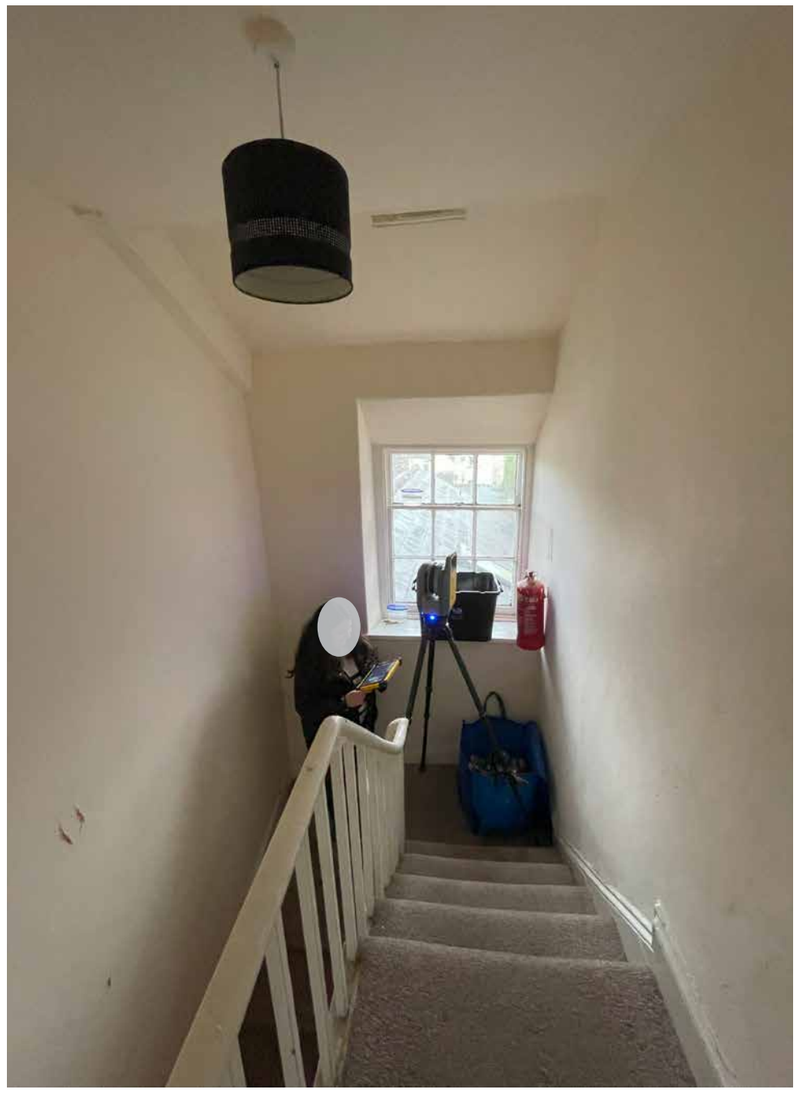
12.0 Interior - Second Floor - Staircase

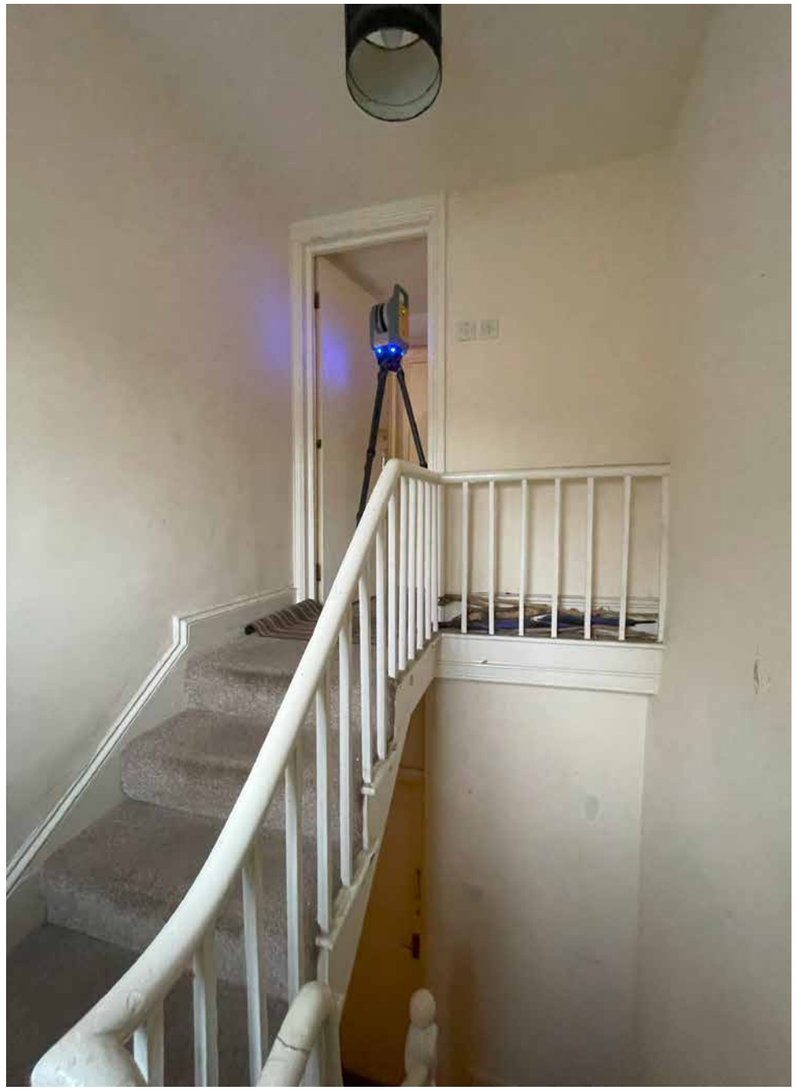
This staircase space is also of painted plastered walls and ceiling. The steps and landing are carpetted; the doors are painted four-panelled timber door. The internal walls around the staircase appear to be of masonry.

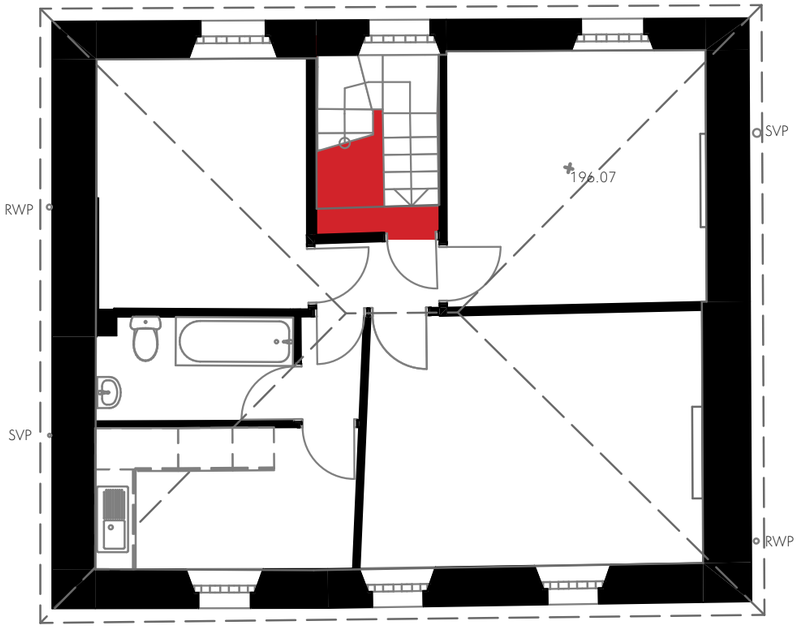
The single staircase is a timber staircase, carpetted; with an ovular handrail, square balusters and a turned round newel posts; all painted white. Aside from the wear on the carpet, this appears all to be in reasonable condition.

There is a timber sash window to the north elevation with single-glazed panes.

The condition of this area appears to be reasonable.





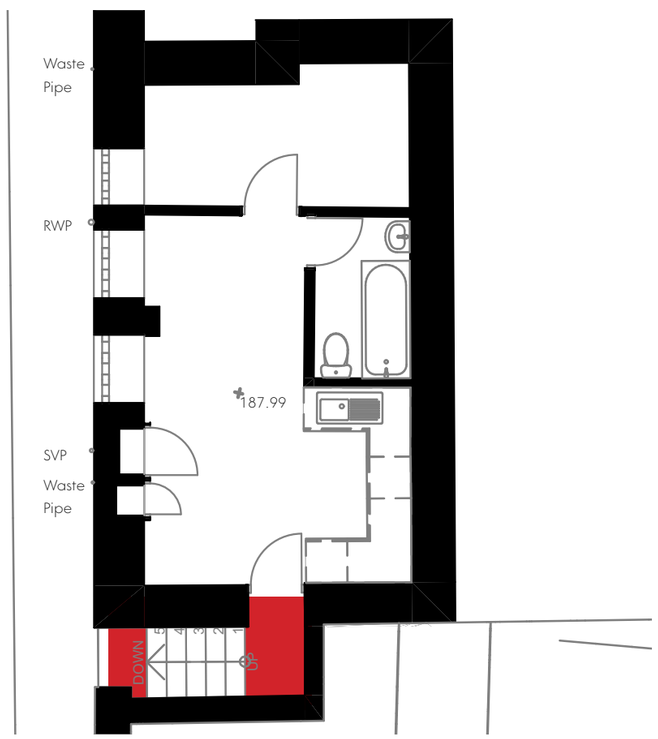


13.0 Interior - Lower Ground Floor Flat Entrance

The lower ground floor flat is entered from the side lane, down a series of four concrete steps, with cement rendered walls either side. An attractive metal gate is at the top of the steps.

The proposals involve a good clean of the steps and the application of safety nosings to each step, as they are currently potentially slippery.

The outer wall is proposed to be cleaned of the organic staining and re-painted. The inner wall is proposed - as with the rest of this elevation - to be hacked off and a new, lime render applied.

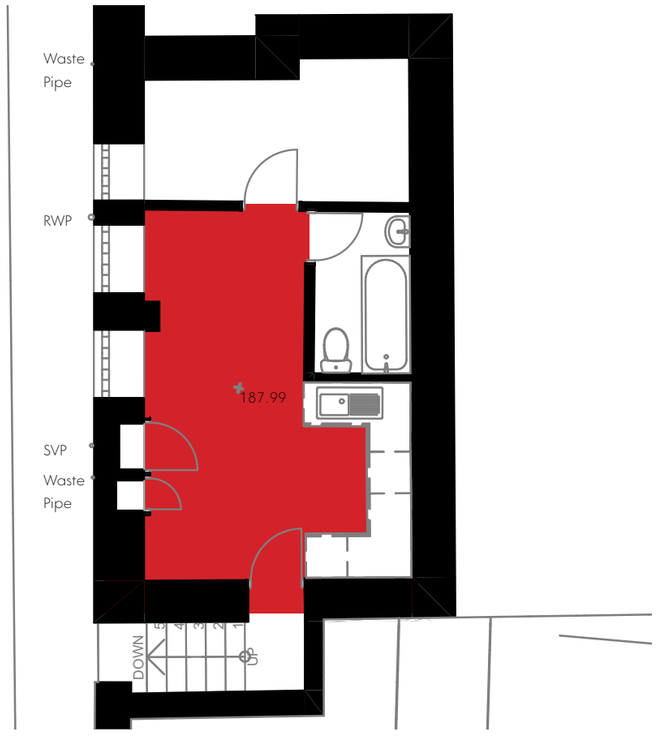


13.0 Interior - Lower Ground Floor - Main Space

On entry to the flat, the main space is an open-plan kitchen / dining room / lounge, with painted plaster walls and ceiling, with no cornice but with recessed light fittings, and a stained timber skirting. The flooring is ceramic tiled. The doors are stained six-panelled timber doors with stained timber frames. The windows are single-glazed small pane 6-over-6 timber sashes.

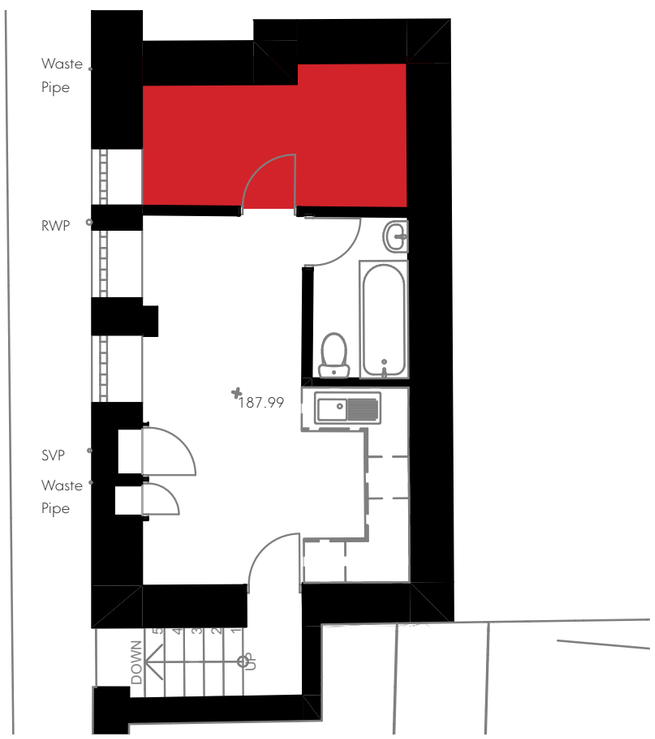
The external wall to the east is retaining. That to the west is part retaining, as is the one to the north.

The condition of the space is reasonable; however, in order to make this flat suitable for lease, the proposals seek to install new kitchen and bathroom and provide the interior with a full refurbishment, without any re-planning. It is also proposed that the small pane windows are all upgraded with Slimline double glazed units.



13.0 Interior - Lower Ground Floor - Bedroom

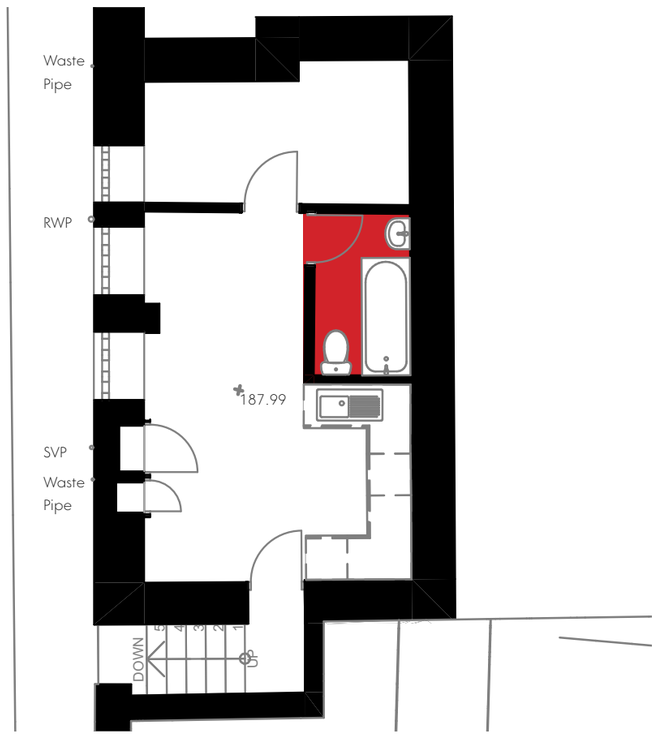
This room is the same as the main room in terms of nature and condition and proposals.

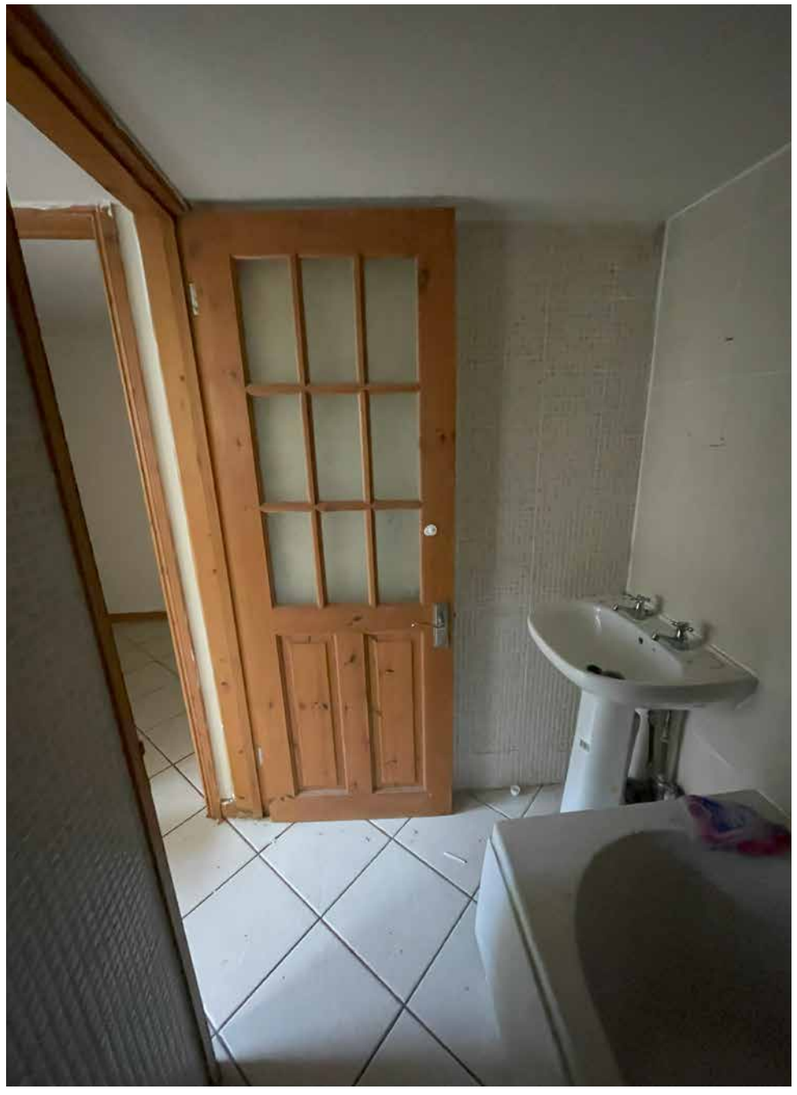


13.0 Interior - Lower Ground Floor - Bathroom

The bathroom is ceramic tiled to the walls and plastered on the ceiling, with no cornice or skirting. There is a partially glazed stained timber panelled door, a bath, toilet and pedestal basin.

The proposals seek to replace this bathroom suite.





Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5LR T 02920 480333

Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil

Structural Condition and Appraisal Report

for

Foundation for Jewish Heritage

Project Number: 9684

Date: 16/01/25

Rev: A

GWP Architecture

Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5LR T 02920 480333

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Prepared	Checked	Approved	Date
JB	PR	PR	10/02/2025

Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil
Structural Condition and Appraisal Report

Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5LR T 02920 480333

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Mann Williams were appointed by Neil Richardson from the Foundation for Jewish Heritage to provide structural engineering services for the proposed refurbishment of Primrose Hill in Merthyr Tydfil.

1.2 Primrose Hill is a Grade II Listed Building (Cadw Ref: 11425) and is located immediately adjacent to the similarly Grade II listed Former Merthyr Synagogue.

1.3 The client is in the process of purchasing the property as part of the wider project which also includes the regeneration of the neighbouring former synagogue. Mann Williams were instructed to undertake a preliminary site walk over and structural appraisal of the property to establish the feasibility of undertaking the architects proposed alterations and assess the overall structural condition of the building for the refurbishment.

1.4 Pat Ruddock (CARE Accredited Engineer) and Joshua Bird of Mann Williams undertook a structural inspection of the building on Tuesday 14th January 2025. The weather during the visit was overcast and dry.

1.5 The inspection was predominantly visual in nature and Mann Williams were able to gain access into all of the contained flats apart from 1No. flat at ground floor level. No access was available into the roof void therefore the roof structure was not inspected. It should also be noted that three of the five flats within the building are occupied at the time of inspection and opening up works were deemed not possible or appropriate prior to the visit, therefore Mann Williams were unable to confirm exact floor buildups / span directions, wall constructions etc. None of the timber structures were visible during the inspection with regards to their condition.

1.6 Externally, a drone was utilised to provide visuals of the roof finishes, rainwater goods and elevations to help establish potential causes for any internal defects identified. The drone footage has been passed onto the architect for review.

Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil
Structural Condition and Appraisal Report

Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5LR T 02920 480333

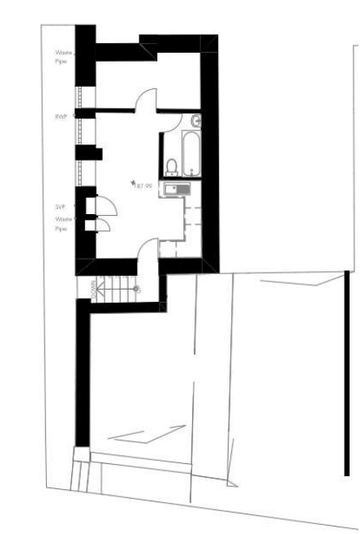
2.0 Structural Form

2.1 The building is 3 storeys high above ground and comprises external walls of 400-500mm thick solid masonry construction. The walls are rendered externally and plastered internally so their general condition is not known. Given the period of construction and location, it seems likely the external walls are of stone masonry.

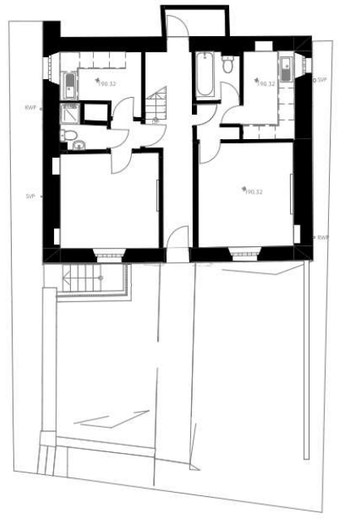
2.2 There is a basement beneath the western half of the building with masonry retaining wall on the east and north and a partially buried retaining walls on the west and south.

2.3 The internal walls at basement and ground floor level are of solid masonry construction. From first floor upwards the walls appear to be generally of timber stud construction. Walls on all sides of the stairwell are of masonry construction at all levels.

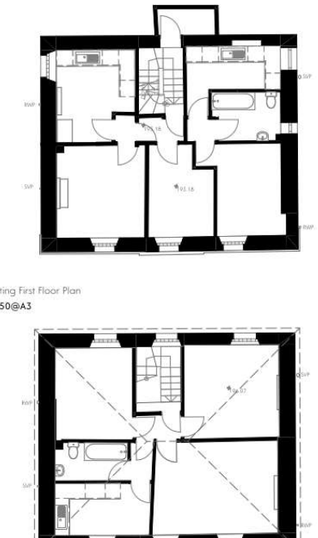
2.4 The central spine wall spanning east to west is anticipated to be load bearing.



Existing Basement Plan
1:150@A3



Existing Ground Floor Plan
1:150@A3



Existing First Floor Plan
1:150@A3

Existing Second Floor Plan
1:150@A3

2.5 Suspended floors at all levels are of timber construction which is typical of a building of this age.

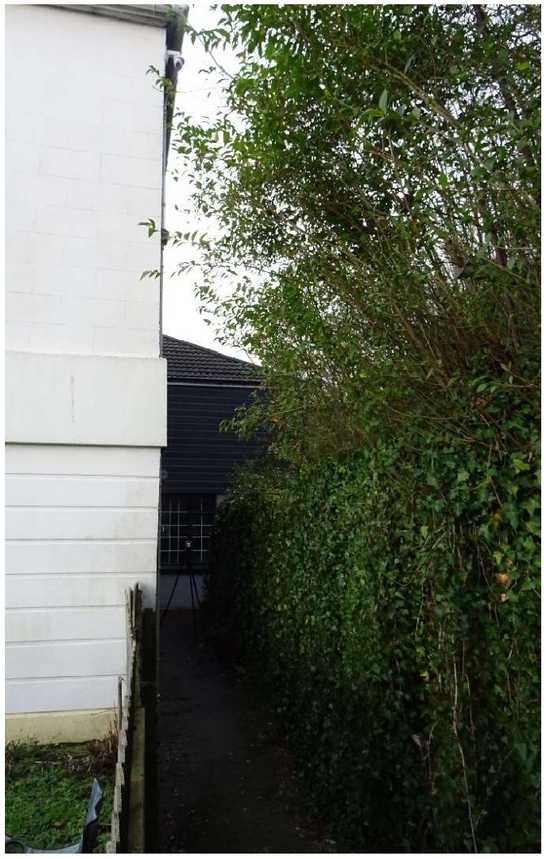
2.6 We were able to lift the carpet in 1No. room (Room 1F) at first floor which showed the floorboards spanning East to West (on plan), therefore floor joists are generally assumed to span north to south onto the spine wall.

2.7 The hipped style roof is of timber construction and supports a traditional slate tile roof buildup. There are 2No. raised tie timber trusses located centrally within the roof area, with principal hip rafters in each corner to form the hipped shape, and interconnecting purlins (Assumed 2No. per pitch) to support the roof finishes.

2.8 Externals

2.8.1 To the east of the building is an approx. 3m tall stone masonry retaining wall which is fully retaining an upper garden. The wall appears to comprise rubble stone masonry likely bound and originally pointed in lime mortar similar to the walls of the neighbouring Synagogue. The wall is currently covered with vegetation (ivy) and there is extensive vegetation / shrubs growing out of the head of the masonry therefore the wall was generally not inspectable.

2.8.2 The front elevation of the wall is heavily pointed in cement which is assumed to be a more recent repair.



Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil
Structural Condition and Appraisal Report

Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5LR T 02920 480333

3.0 Condition

3.1 Generally, the structure of Primrose Hill is in reasonable condition overall. The flats appear to be in good decorative order which has the potential to mask underlying structural defects.

3.2 Walls

3.2.1 The external walls generally appear to be in reasonable condition with no significant evidence of cracking or movement observed during the inspection.

3.2.2 Minor but extensive cracking was observed to the plaster. through the wallpaper in the rear bedroom 2F and there are signs that the walls have been replastered. This is not of immediate structural concern but warrants further investigation to confirm the condition of the underlying masonry fabric.

3.2.3 At basement level we anticipate that part of the masonry spine wall has been removed with an assumed steel lintel built into the ceiling / ground floor. The arrangement and condition of this beam are unknown.

3.3 Floors

3.3.1 Floors were generally not inspectable as no opening up works were permitted prior or during the inspection. However, floors generally felt robust underfoot with no obvious defects identified during the walkover.

3.3.2 The floor joists in the front rooms (1F) were noticeably livelier than in the rest of the building the reasons of which were not confirmed on site.

3.3.3 In room 1F where the floorboards were uncovered, there is localised evidence of minor decay to the floorboards in the southeast corner of the room. It is possible that this may also have affected the floor joists which are assumed to be built into the external wall in this location.

3.4 Roof

3.4.1 The roof structure was generally not inspectable as no access was available into the roof void. Externally there was no obvious evidence of bows or bulges in the roof shape. Where the roof structure was exposed in the second floor rooms there were no obvious defects.

3.5 Externals

3.5.1 The eastern retaining wall appears to be in reasonable condition and seems reasonably plumb where locally visible through the vegetation, however the elevation is generally covered with vegetation. The exact extent of distress / deterioration is unknown.

4.0 Conclusions

4.1 Given the age and style of Primrose Hill (early 19C, formal 'villa'), one would expect it to be well built and from what could be observed during the inspection, this appears to be the case.

4.2 It is clear that the building has been altered in its history, as evidenced by its division into multiple flats, which has resulted in localised alterations to the internal masonry walls and the introduction of modern partitions. Generally, the alterations appear to have been well built with no obvious signs of distress observed.

4.3 We would expect the floor joists to be suitably sized for the spans for domestic use. To facilitate the flats, it is likely that new services within and through the existing timber floors could have resulted in reduced capacities as a result of notching / creating service holes through the existing joists. Furthermore, given the obvious damp issues there is an ongoing risk that there will be decay to the floor joists, in particular where they rest against or bear into the external walls therefore further investigations will be required to confirm size, condition and requirements for replacement or strengthening of the existing joists.

4.4 There are no obvious structural issues with the roof structure and timber sizes where exposed below ceiling levels appear appropriate for the shape and span of the roof. However, the full roof structure has generally not been seen and is of generally unknown condition subject to further inspections.

4.5 For the existing retaining wall, ongoing vegetation growth puts the masonry fabric at risk of further deterioration if left unaddressed with the potential to cause structurally significant harm to the existing fabric. The shrubs growing out of the head of the wall have the potential to accelerate degradation and risk localised loss of masonry which could fall from height unpredictably. The wall is also heavily pointed in cement which has the potential to trap water and accelerate degradation particularly considering the wall is fully retaining the upper garden which naturally drains towards the rear of the wall.

Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil
Structural Condition and Appraisal Report

Mann Williams Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
53 Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff, CF10 5LR T 02920 480333

5.0 Recommendations

5.1 In the short term, we recommend undertaking further investigations within the building to help confirm the structural form and the condition of elements not inspectable during this preliminary inspection. These further investigations would comprise the following:

- Inspection of the existing timber floor buildups at all levels, in particular along the internal faces of the external walls where damp is most significant. This would require floorboards to be lifted in a couple of the rooms at each level by a contractor which would permit inspections by the structural engineer to confirm condition (degradation of the joists and bearings) and capacity of the existing joists to help inform future uses. Floorboards would then be reinstated following the works.
- Inspection of the assumed steel beam in the basement where we suspect the historic spine wall was removed to inform details, specification and condition of the beam.
- Inspection of roof void and structure. The existing roof hatch is located over the bath in the second floor flat however the suitability of this hatch for general access is to be confirmed. We would recommend allowing for the installation of a new hatch to permit access into the roof void for an inspection of the roof structure to be carried out.
- Inspection of internal and external masonry walls. For the external walls, we recommend removing localised patches of existing plaster to expose the face of the masonry walls to help confirm construction and condition of the underlying masonry. We also recommend undertaking removal of finishes or localised opening up works to several of the internal walls
- For the external retaining wall, allow for removing the full face of vegetation and all shrubs along the wall head including their roots. Removal of shrubs may require the localised dismantling of the upper say 400mm of the wall heads to allow full root growth therefore allow for dismantling and rebuilding the upper 400mm of masonry.

5.2 As part of the refurbishment, we recommend allowing for localised repair and replacement of timber joists if found to be in a decayed state.

15.0 Services Engineer's Condition Report

MEP Building Services Consultants

MEP

Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfill Mechanical Conditioning Report

Wayne Towell
wayne@mepbsc.com
Feb 2025

Report No – M7842/MECH/CON/M01

Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Role & purpose of this document

This document is to provide consultancy study on the condition of the existing mechanical services. This report informs members of the key findings of the study and the recommendations to be taken.

1.2 Background

The Study was commissioned by GWP Architecture and was carried out in January 2025. The report was based on a non-intrusive visual study.

1.3 The Building

Primrose Hill is located at the end of Church Street, Merthyr Tydfil. It is a Grade II listed building dating back to the 19th century. It comprises of three stories plus half basement. The property comprises of residential apartments.

2.0 Mechanical Services

2.1 INCOMING COLD-WATER MAIN

2.1.1 Description of Installation

Each apartment is provided with a single cold water mains supply with stop taps being located within chambers in the pavement to the side and front of the property, The incoming water main pipe size was not visible at the time of the survey, but it is assumed that it will be in the region of 25 - 32mm MDPE

The distribution pipework for the cold-water services (CWS) are installed using copper pipework and fittings.

2.1.2 Design Analysis

The cold-water service system and associated ancillaries appears sufficient to satisfy the needs of the property.

2.1.3 Condition of Installation

Overall, the condition of installation was found to be in a fair condition throughout.

2.2 INCOMING GAS MAIN

2.2.1 Description of Installation

Each apartment is provided with an internal single E6 electronic gas smart meters providing a maximum flow rate of 6m³/hr. The meters are currently suppling commercial gas fired combi boilers.

The distribution pipework for the gas services are installed using a combination mild steel and copper pipework and fittings.

2.2.2 Design Analysis

The gas service main appears sufficient to satisfy the needs of the property. No ventilation was visible within meter cupboards, internal gas pipe runs are not visible so it is unknown if adequate ventilation is in place where pipework could run in confined spaces.

2.2.3 Condition of Installation

Overall, the condition of the installation was found to be fair.

2.3. HOT WATER GENERATION

2.3.1 Description of Installation

Hot water generation for the apartments is via Baxi 200 combi boilers located in the kitchens. The product of combustion are discharged to atmosphere through horizontal flues to the sides of the building.

2.3.2 Design Analysis

The hot water service system and associated controls appears sufficient to satisfy the needs of the property.

2.3.3 Condition of Installation

The distribution pipework for the Hot Water Services (HWS) is installed using a combination copper pipework and fittings. The HWS distribution was in a fair conditioning throughout.

2.4 LOW PRESSURE HOT WATER (LPHW) HEATING

2.4.1 Description of Installation

Heating to the building is provided by via Baxi 200 combi boilers located in the kitchens.

The heating system serves primarily T22 steel panel radiators located throughout the apartments. The distribution pipework for the radiator circuit is installed as a two-pipe flow and return system.

The heating distribution pipework is installed using a combination mild steel and copper pipework and fittings.

Radiators are fitted with thermostatic radiator valves (TRV), and lock shield valves.

2.4.2 Design Analysis

The heating system and associated controls appears in the most part sufficient to satisfy the needs of the apartments. There are some areas that do not have radiators installed , additional radiators are recommended to avoid cold spots.

2.4.3 Condition of Installation

The distribution pipework installed using a combination copper pipework and fittings and there were no signs of leaks or corrosion at the time of the survey.

The steel panel radiators were generally in fair condition.

There were reports of intermittent issues with the boilers.

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2.5 PUBLIC HEALTH

2.5.1 Description of Installation

Above ground soil waste system for the building comprises primarily vented soil waste systems collecting discharge from each of the WC's , sink and baths / showers .Soil waste systems are installed mainly using upvc, cast iron pipework and fittings.

2.5.2 Condition of Installation

The domestic installation was in fair condition throughout.

2.5.3 Design Analysis

Both soil and waste systems appear satisfactory to satisfy maximum system discharges.

2.6 VENTILATION

2.6.1 Description of Installation

Ventilation to the building is provided by both mechanical and natural means.

Mechanical ventilation is provided to kitchens and bathrooms via wall and ceiling mounted extractor fans, There are recirculation extract hoods above hobs. Natural ventilation is provided via openable windows.

2.6.2 Design Analysis

The mechanical ventilation is insufficient for the needs of the building.

2.6.3 Condition of Installation

Mechanical ventilation generally is in very poor condition.

2.6.4 Recommendations

Replace all mechanical ventilation.

3.0 CONCLUSION

We estimate that a large amount of the mechanical infrastructure is in a fair condition. The main items of plant are nearing or past their working life expectancy and recommend they be replaced.

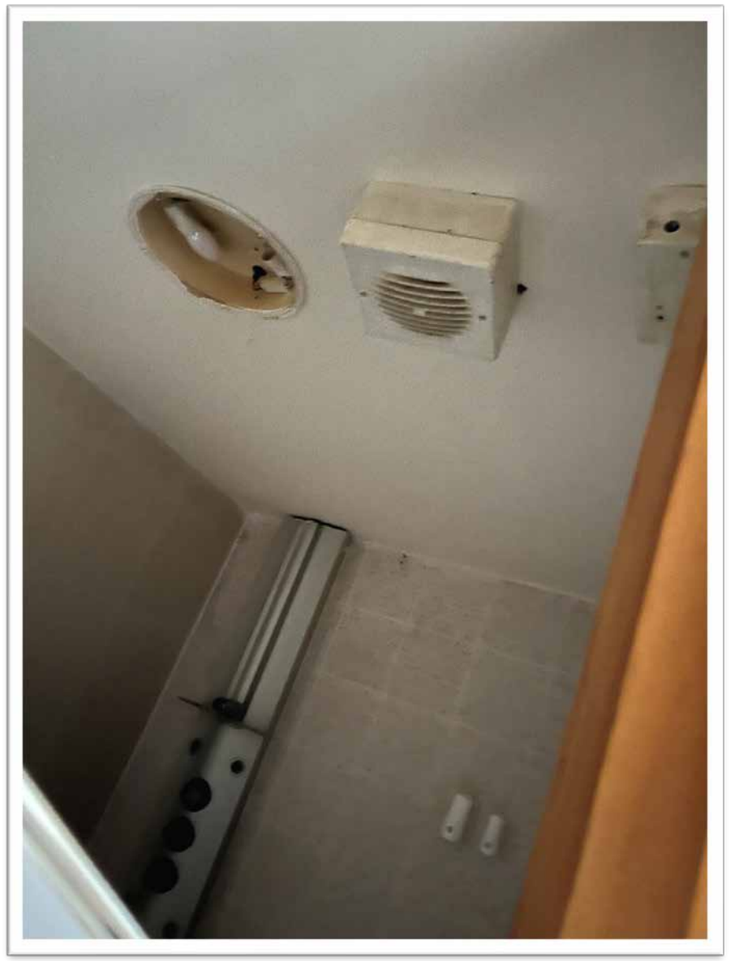
5.0 SITE PICTURES

Cold Water Mains Stop Cocks

Gas Meters

Baxi Combi Boiler

Steel Panel Radiators



Bathroom Extractor Fan

MEP Building Services Consultants

End of document

Electrical Services Condition Survey

Primrose Hill House

Primrose Hill

Merthyr Tydfil

MEP Building Services Consultants Ltd
Carmarthen Office,
Tir Eglwys, Henfwlch Rd
Carmarthen SA33 6AF.

Report No – E7847/ELEC/REP/E05

February 2025

Produced by Keith Jones MIET

Contents

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION

MEP Building Services Consultants Ltd (MEPBSC) have been commissioned to carry out a survey and prepare a report on the electrical services at Primrose Hill House, Primrose Hill, Merthyr Tydfil.

This survey and report are based on a visual inspection and was carried out during the 14th of January 2025. At the time of our survey the weather conditions were dry and cool with an approximate temperature of 7°C. Also, at the time of our survey the property was occupied with most of the electrical services being in operation. The information contained within this Report is compiled under the brief to visually inspect and comment on the condition and the quality of the electrical distribution system relating to normal good standards in the building services industry as dictated by CIBSE, IET's and British Standard current recommendations and standards.

We have not inspected parts of the Electrical Services which are built into the building structure, covered up, or otherwise made inaccessible in a normal course of construction, alteration, or fitting out. Internal inspection of equipment has not been conducted, and nowhere plant strip down would have been required. No definitive calculations have been undertaken to determine the capacity of the plant items, nor have performance tests been carried out on any of the systems or plant items. Design analysis of the systems has been undertaken using generally accepted design criteria both past and present, primarily to establish the principles of design. We have specifically excluded electrical tests. The omission of such tests might give rise to the fact that certain problems could exist which are not reflected in this report.

We would point out that during our Condition Survey we did not carry out a detailed inspection of any underground services. This report excludes any investigation into structural engineering design, compliance with legislation relating to buildings, or the unsuitable use of high alumina cement or calcium chloride, calcium silicate brickwork, alkali- silicate reaction in concrete, cavity wall tie failure, radon gas seepage, woodwork slab permanent shuttering, asbestos or PCB's or other materials considered as deleterious in construction, except insofar as such matters may come to knowledge in the normal course inspecting the materials and state of repair..

SECTION 2 – ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION

2.1 Main House Incoming Mains and Metering

2.1.1 Description of the System

The main house is supplied by an underground National Grid service cable which terminates in a Three Phase and Neutral Cut Out unit as shown in the image below:

A main DNO service head is directly connected to four digital energy meters one for each flat which is located within the Main Electrical Cupboard as shown in the image below:

The electrical supply is a 60 Ampere three phase 4-wire TN-S 400/230-volt 50Hz. PME (TN-C-S) and although installed in an untidy ad-hoc method there are no visual signs of any thermal damage or stress to the conductors.

2.1.2 Design Analysis

Based upon the visual condition of the main supply tails and the extent of the electrical loads connected to the electrical distribution equipment it would be safe to assume that the supply rated at 60 amps is sufficient to serve the current installation.

2.1.3 Condition of System

The despite being more than 25 years old incoming DNO service cut out is in a satisfactory condition, the Energy meters are in a good condition and a future life span of 15– 20 years can be expected from this equipment.

2.1.4 Comments

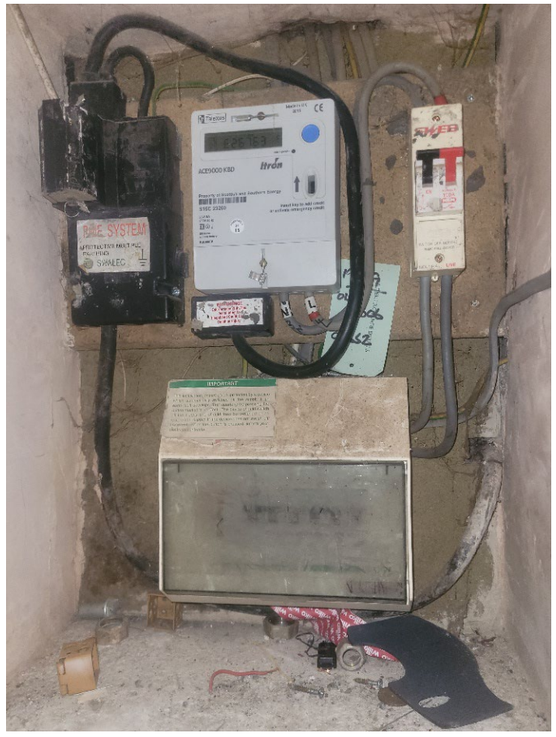
The existing supply capacity and arrangement is sufficient to serve the facility maximum electrical demand as it stands.

2.1.5 Recommendations

If the use of the building is to be changed it will be necessary to reassess the maximum demand requirements of the facility which may affect the capacity of the supply and the metering arrangement which will necessitate a change in the metering strategy.

2.2 Basement Flat Incoming Mains and Metering

The basement flat is supplied by an underground National Grid service cable which terminates in a Single Phase and Neutral Cut Out unit as shown in the image below:



The electrical supply is a 60 Ampere single phase 2-wire TN-S 230-volt 50Hz. PME (TN-C-S) and there are no visual signs of any thermal damage or stress to the conductors.

2.1.2 Design Analysis

Based upon the visual condition of the main supply tails and the extent of the electrical load connected to the electrical distribution equipment it would be safe to assume that the supply rated at 60 amps is sufficient to serve the current installation.

2.1.3 Condition of System

The despite being more than 25 years old incoming DNO service cut out is in a satisfactory condition, the Energy meters are in a good condition and a future life span of 10– 15 years can be expected from this equipment.

2.1.4 Comments

The existing supply capacity and arrangement is sufficient to serve the basement maximum electrical demand as it stands.

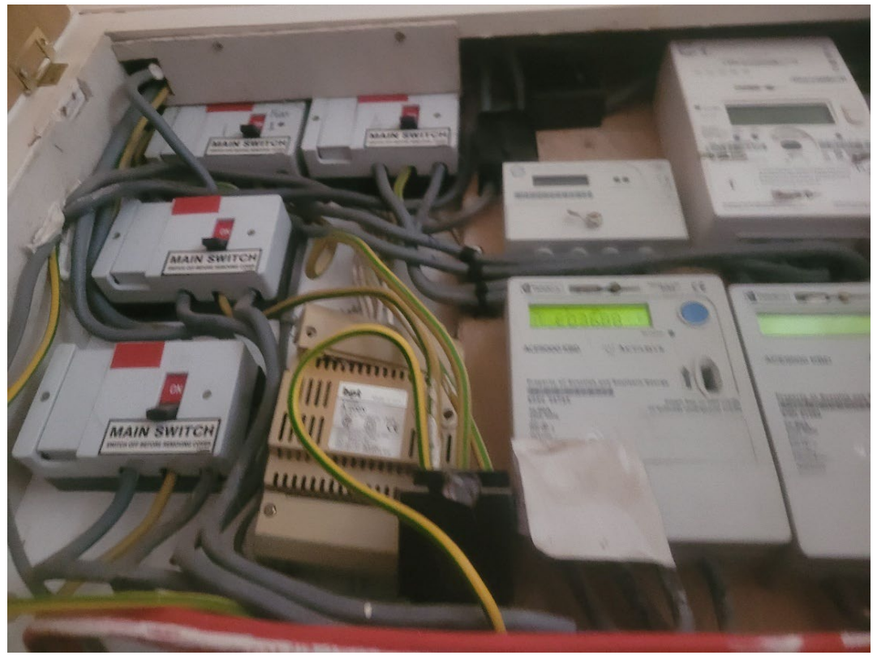
2.1.5 Recommendations

If the basement flat is to be let as a residential unit, then the existing supply can be retained. However, if the basement is to be contained within one facility along with the ground, first and

2.3 MAIN DISTRIBUTION EQUIPMENT

2.3.1 Apartment - Description of the Installation

Each apartment is supplied from its own dedicated supply meter located in the electrical service cupboard at the front door. There is a sub-main feeder cable installed to a Consumer Unit located at each apartment. This feeder cable is protected by a 60 amp Fused Switch (labelled Main Switch) as detailed in the image below:



As stated above, each apartment is fitted with a dedicated Consumer Unit. Example images are included below:

The consumer units are of the insulated type fitted with a 30milliamp Double Pole RCD Main Switch which provides additional earth fault protection which is required for all lighting circuits in a domestic type dwelling and socket outlet circuits rated at 32 amp or less. Miniature Circuit Breakers provide individual circuit protection against overload and short circuit faults between live conductors.

2.3.2 Basement Apartment – Description

The basement is provided with a dedicated consumer unit located within the basement electrical cupboard along with the DNO cutout and energy metering equipment AS detailed in the image below:

The consumer unit is of the insulated type fitted with a 30milliamp Double Pole RCD Main Switch which provides additional earth fault protection which is required for all lighting circuits in a domestic type dwelling and socket outlet circuits rated at 32 amp or less. Miniature Circuit Breakers provide individual circuit protection against overload and short circuit faults between live conductors.

2.4 WIRING SYSTEMS

2.4.1 Lighting & Small Power Circuits

The building is wired in PVC/PVC insulated cables which are generally concealed under the building fabric.

Apartment Circuits include the following:

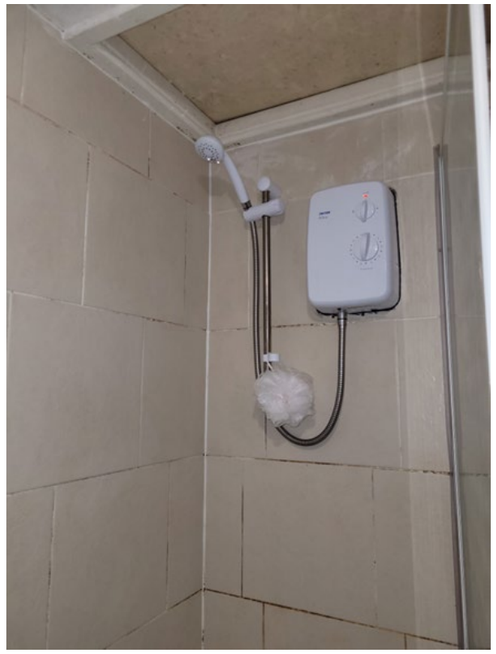
Cooker - 32 Amp
Shower - 50 Amp
Ring Final Circuit (Sockets) Kitchen – 32 Amp
Lights – 6 Amp

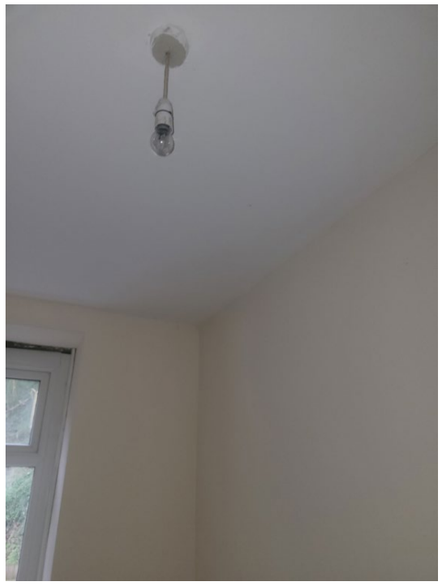
Communal/Landlord area lighting and socket outlets are connected to the adjacent apartment circuits.

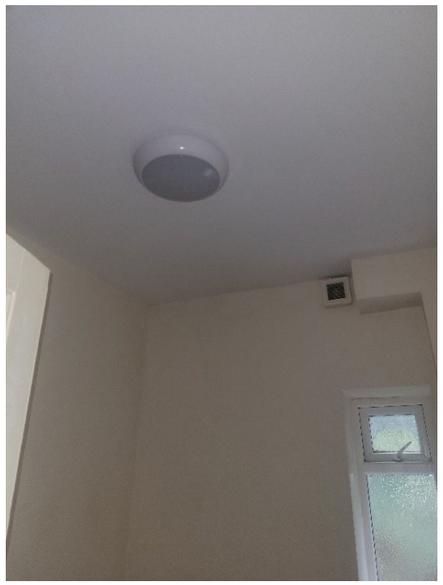
2.4.2 Accessories and Light Fittings

Accessories are compliant with the relevant British Standard and of a white finish. The condition of the accessories is generally satisfactory however some are showing signs of wear and tear.

Light Fittings consist of Pendant Drops, batten lamp holders and enclosed opal bulkhead fittings in Bathrooms.







2.4.3 Design Analysis

Although in serviceable condition the consumer units do not comply with the requirements of the current version of BS 7671:2018. IET Wiring regulations 18th Edition – Requirements for Electrical Installations.

The current regulations require that distribution equipment located in escape routes are either manufactured from non-combustible materials or contained within and enclosure constructed form non-combustible materials.

Furthermore, a front end (main switch) Residual Current Device if activated due to an earth fault can cause inconvenience and possible danger in the event of a fault as the whole apartment will be plunged into darkness.

The electrical accessories are generally in a satisfactory condition, some show signs of ageing but are fit for purpose.

The wiring system where visible is in a satisfactory state and does not show any signs of thermal damage due to overloading.

It was not possible to verify whether the electrical installations have been subjected to Fixed Wiring Inspection and Testing (EICR – Electrical Installation Condition Report) the periodic inspection labels (where fitted) on the distribution boards do not note the date of last inspection and date of next inspection.

In Wales, landlords of rented properties must ensure that electrical fixed wiring inspection and testing are carried out every five years.

SECTION 3 – FIRE ALARM SYSTEM

3.1 GENERAL

The property is fitted with a conventional Fire Alarm system and the main panel is found at the main entrance. The panel is supplied from its own dedicated supply as recommended by BS 5839 Part 1 2017 – which is the code of practice for designing, installing, commissioning, and maintaining fire detection and alarm systems in non-domestic buildings.

There is no documentation evident to verify that regular inspection and testing of the Fire Alarm System occurs.

The system is fitted with automatic detectors and manual call points and wall mounted sounder units.

There are also instances where smoke/heat detection devices have been removed. See image below:

3.2 Design Analysis

It is our considered opinion that based upon the visual survey undertaken that the Fire Alarm and Detection system does not comply with current British Standard requirements and a Fire Risk Assessment be carried out on the property as required by the Regulatory Reform Order (Fire) 2005.

SECTION 4 – EMERGENCY LIGHTING

4.1 – General

Emergency lighting is provided in the communal area and externally (above front door) by standalone non maintained bulkhead lighting, see image below:

4.2 Design Analysis

The presence of emergency lighting test switches was not evident during our visit and there was no evidence that the system is being subjected to regular inspecting and testing as laid out in BS 5266 part 1 2016: Emergency lighting. Code of Practice for the Emergency Lighting of Premises.

Again, it is recommended that the emergency lighting system be reassessed following the undertaking of the Fire Risk Assessment mentioned in Section 3.

SECTION 5 – CONCLUSION

This economic life expectancy is detailed in The Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) publication "**CIBSE Guide Part M - Maintenance Engineering & Management**" which states that 20/25 years is the general life expectance of an Electrical Installation. Ther are elements of electrical installation which are reaching this milestone and serious consideration should be given to rewiring to comply with current regulations if the building is to be retained for its current use as private rented dwellings.

Furthermore, the Fire Alarm and Emergency Lighting systems are also in need of upgrading to current standards. However, this should be undertaken following the completion Fire Risk Assessment which should be carried out by a competent Fire Engineer.

However, if the building is to be refurbished then the complete installation should be removed and new installation and systems should be designed, installed and commissioned to suit its proposed use and in compliance with all relevant British Standards and Building Regulations.

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MEP Building Services Consultants

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