EarlKendrick
Building Surveyors

Defect Advisory Report

For the Property Known As:
93 Mountview Road
London N4 4JA

For:

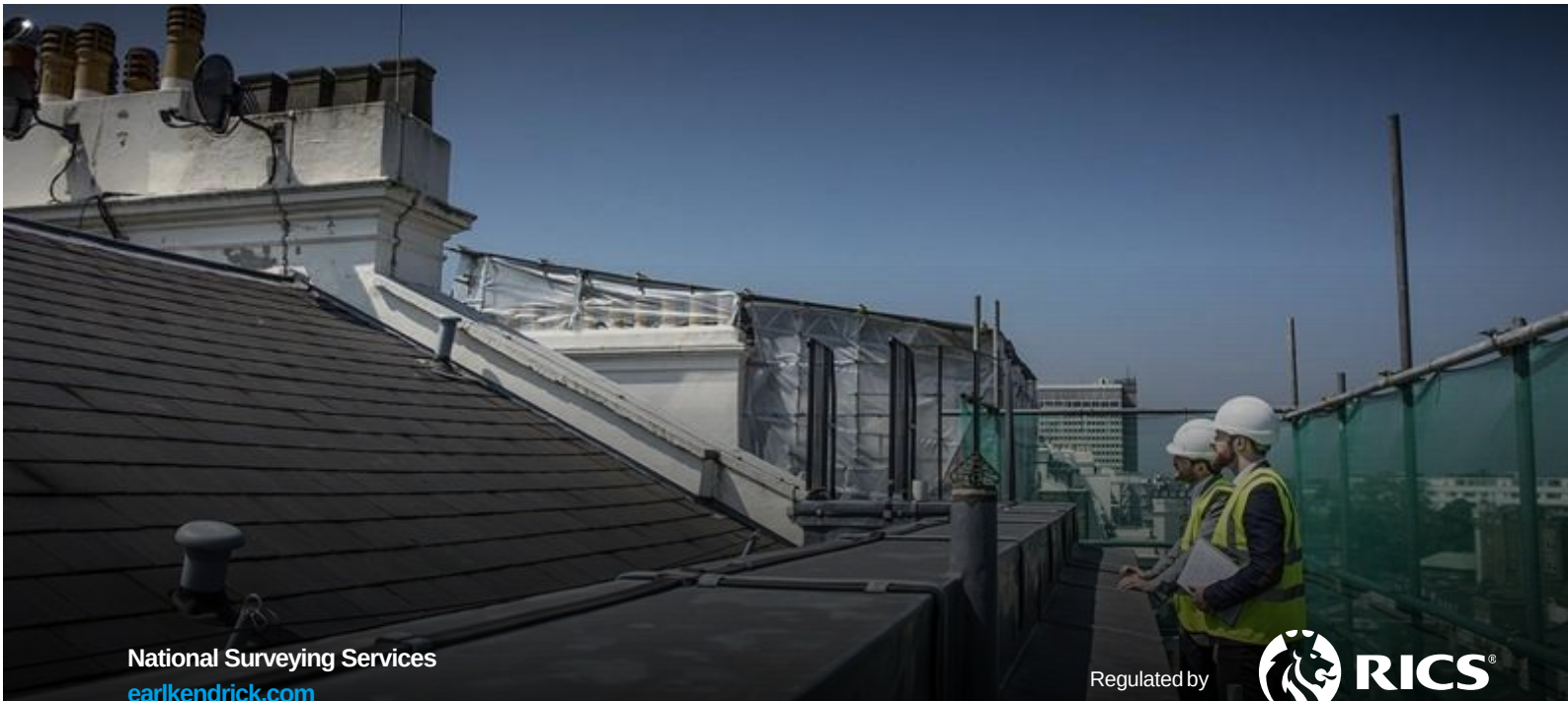
93 Mountview Road N4 Ltd

On Behalf of:

ERA Property Services Ltd

Date:
28 July 2022

Reference:
EKA220563



National Surveying Services
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Regulated by RICS

Report Revision Record

07/08/22	Report issued for internal QA by Chris Stansell MRICS, MAPM
19/08/22	Report issued to Client

Report issued by:

Yours sincerely,

Sarah-Faye Pigrem BSc (Hons)
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Approved by: CS

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1.0 Survey Information

Property Address(es)	93 Mountview Road London N4 4JA
Inspection Date(s)	30th June 2022
Weather	Partly sunny
Surveyor(s)	Sarah-Faye Pigrem BSc (Hons)
Client	93 Mountview Road N4 Ltd
Brief	Following a report from the managing agents, ERA Property Services Ltd, of cracks and possible subsidence occurring within 93 Mountview Road, London, N4 4JA, Earl Kendrick (London) Limited were instructed to undertake inspection of the flats and building, and advise of possible defects and if necessary recommend any suitable remedial works. Earl Kendrick (London) Limited received instruction on 17th June 2022 to arrange access and review the current situation.
Extent of Survey	At the time of our survey we carried out a visual inspection of the external areas of the Property from the available vantage points at ground level. At the time of our inspection on 30th June, we had access to Flats A, B, C, D and E. All of the Flats were furnished and occupied during our inspection. Any areas not listed above were not accessed/inspected at the time of our inspection. The inspection and report has been undertaken in accordance with RICS Practice Standard Guidance Note – Building surveys and technical due diligence of commercial property.
Listed/Conservation Area	93 Mountview Road is not listed but is situated within the Stroud Green Conservation Area.

2.0 Executive Summary

A high level of cracking and ground movement has been reported to the building and flats within 93 Mountview Road.

The question of whether these have been caused by subsidence requires further investigation as detailed in this report.

3.0 Description

93 Mountview Road is a converted semi-detached Victorian house which now provides residential accommodation across 3 levels, and includes a loft conversation.

The 4 flats at ground level and above are accessed via a single communal staircase and lobby.

The property has been built with traditional construction methods with suspended timber floors supported by solid masonry brickwork external walls, the windows are timber sash, the roof coverings are pitched with a tiled covering (albeit we did not have sight of the pitched elements during our inspection and thus we cannot make comment of the condition of them at the time of our survey) and one chimney serves the Property.

The flats have individual heating and hot water services. Flats are supplied with Electricity, Gas and Water by way of separate meters.

4.0 Background

The managing agents have advised that cracks have been appearing over the years to the main property and inside flats A, B, C, D and E. Access was provided by the managing agents into flats A, B, C, D and E.

The front external steps and porch appear to have visibly shifted, with cracks appearing over the years. A local builder rebuilt the steps, installing wooden props in the cellar area beneath the steps, in order to provide temporary support. However, we were advised these have been in situ for some years.

Front external pathway and garden has cracking to concrete slabs, which has opened up significantly over the past 20 years, but no repairs have been undertaken.

The rear garden wall has several areas of cracking. Sloping to patio flagstones was also observed in some areas.

A ‘Lean-to’ was installed circa 1987 to the rear of the ground floor flat. Areas of the structure have become detached.

Also possible subsidence, which was investigated via a claim 10 years ago. The reported findings from the surveyor were unclear, which has resulted in a high building insurance premium and the inability to approach another insurance provider.

Various patch repairs have been undertaken over the years, but cracks keep reappearing. No monitoring has taken place.

5.0 Results of Inspection

Constructed circa 19th century of solid masonry brickwork, and converted into flats in 1987.

5.1.1 Flat A - Internal Inspection

Flat A is a ground level flat spanning the full width of the property, with an overall tired and aged appearance. Appears to have been the most affected, with heavy cracking noted throughout the apartment.

There are 2 narrow hallways running either side of the entrance, which allows access to 3 bedrooms, bathroom, kitchen and living room.

Hallway Areas:

Photo 1: Overview of entrance hall

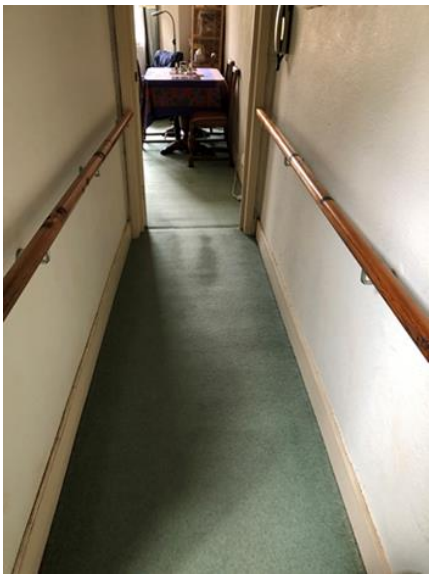


Photo 2: Overview of hallway leading to living room

Photo 3: Overview of hallway leading to front bedroom

Photo 4: Fine vertical cracks above entrance to front bedroom

Photo 5: Horizontal cracking across top of entrance to rear bathroom

Photo 6: Fine horizontal cracks above entrance to Cellar

Photo 7: Fine diagonal cracks above entrance to kitchen

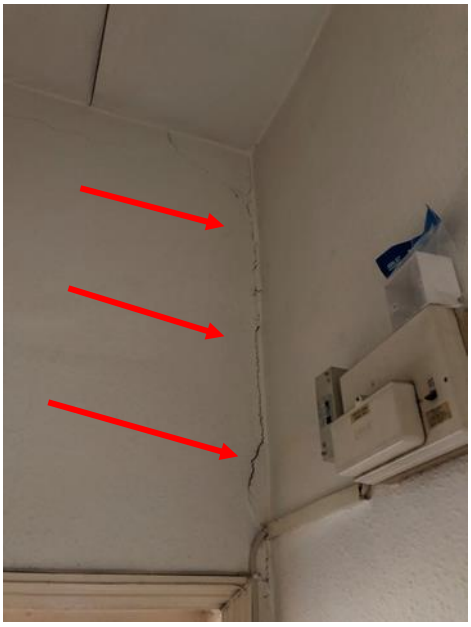


Photo 8: Vertical cracks above entrance to living room

Front bedroom:

Photo 9: Overview of front bedroom

Photo 10: Fine diagonal cracks to ceiling / front elevation

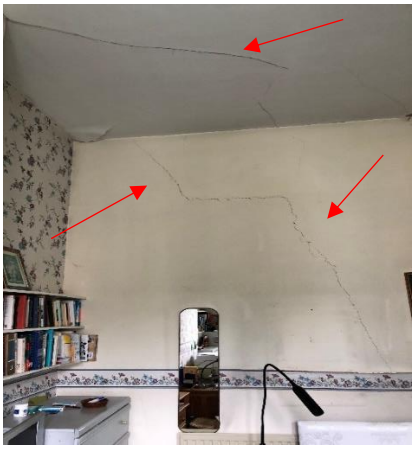


Photo 11: Diagonal fine cracks to partition with bedroom 2

Photo 12: Crazed fine cracks to ceiling / rear of room

Bedroom 2 (left hand side of bathroom):

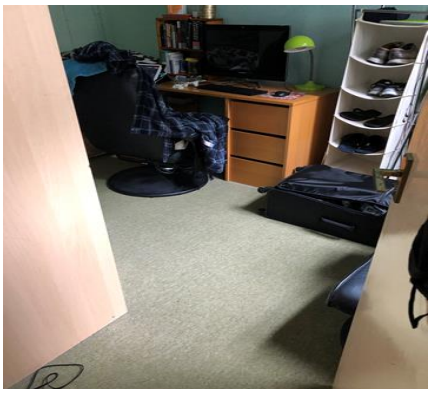


Photo 13: Overview of bedroom 2

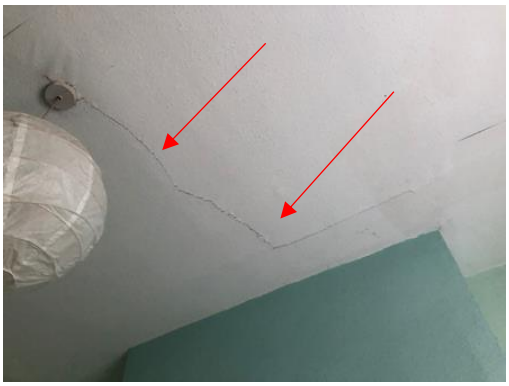


Photo 14: Fine cracks to ceiling

Photo 15: Fine vertical cracks to rear wall / partition with front bedroom

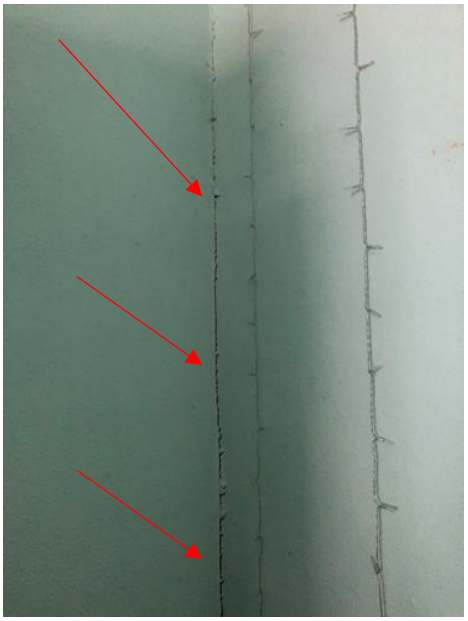


Photo 16: Closer view of the same area

Bedroom 3 (right hand side of bathroom):

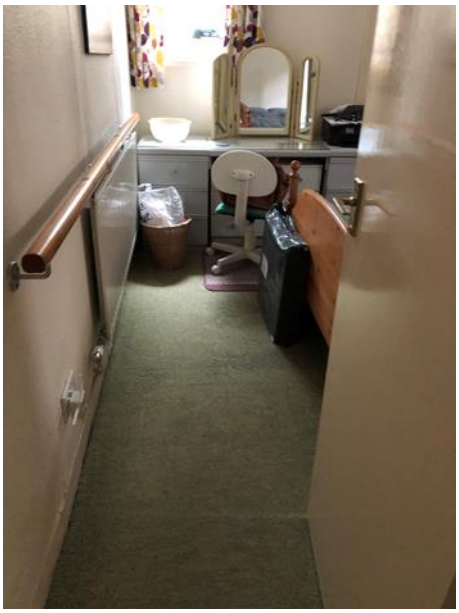


Photo 17: Overview of Bedroom 3 to Rear

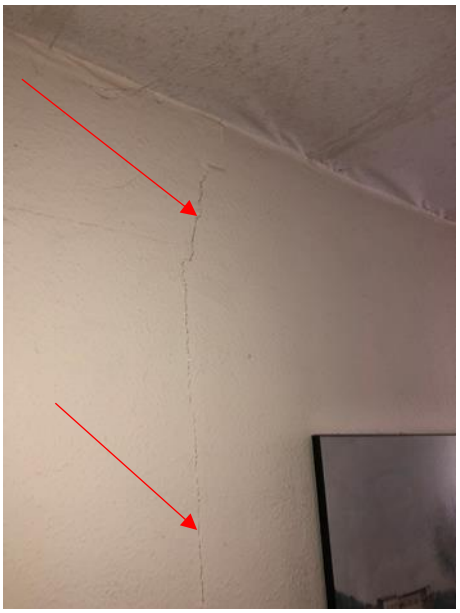


Photo 18: Vertical fine cracks to partition with bathroom

Photo 19: Separation cracks above door

Kitchen to rear:

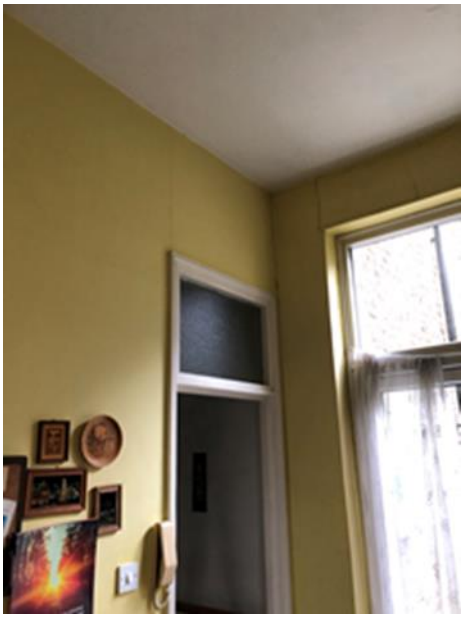


Photo 19: General overview of area

Photo 20: Vertical fine cracks above door & surround to garden

Photo 21: Close up view of cracks

Living Room to front of property:

Photo 21: Overview of Living Room

Photo 21: Close up view of fine diagonal and horizontal cracking / left hand side of bay window

Photo 22: Fine diagonal crack above entrance door

Photo 23: Close up view of diagonal crack above entrance door

Cellar:

Photo 24: Area beneath front elevation/ steps

Temporary wooden props installed to stabilise front elevation steps.

5.1.2 Flat B - Internal Inspection

Flat B is a first floor flat.

Minor cracks noted to bedroom and open plan kitchen/living room. Hallway flooring appeared to be sloping to the left.

Bedroom:

Photo 25: Overview of rear bedroom

Photo 26: Area of vertical and diagonal hairline and fine cracks to flank wall

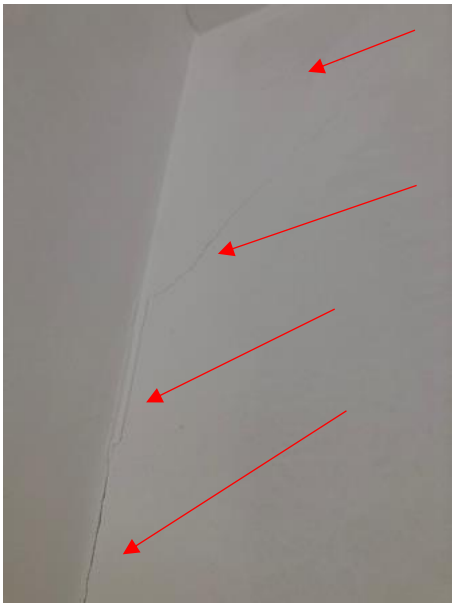


Photo 27: Closer view of hairline and fine cracks

Open plan kitchen/living room to front elevation:

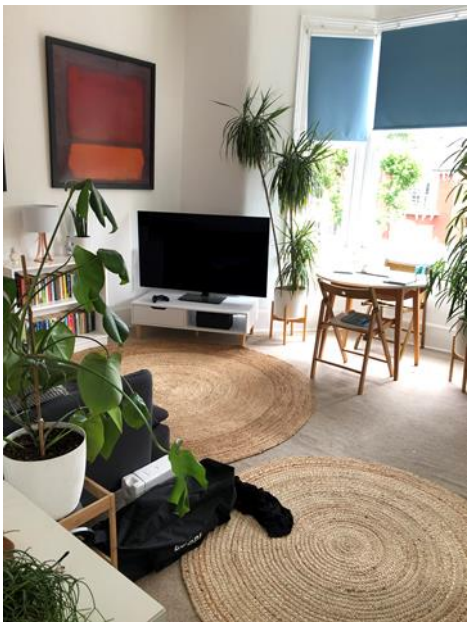


Photo 28: Overview of living room area

Photo 29: Overview of kitchen area

Photo 30: General cracks to ceiling throughout

Photo 31: Hairline cracks to corner of partition wall with bathroom/flank wall

5.1.3 Flat C - Internal Inspection

Flat C is a first floor flat.

Main area of cracking noted to hallway around stair area to rear of property, on approach to bathroom and kitchen. Minor hairline cracks observed to bedroom and kitchen. Living room flooring appeared to be sloping left to right.

Photo 32: Overview of entrance hall

Photo 33: Overview of stairs leading to bathroom and kitchen to rear. Fine cracks to both sides of stairwell

Photo 34: Closer view of fine vertical crack

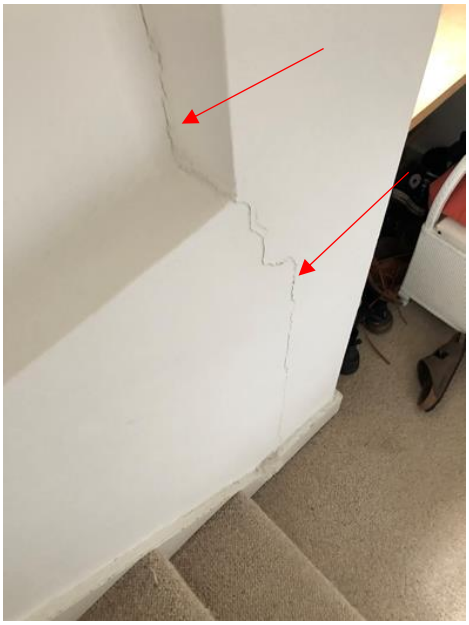


Photo 35: Closer view of vertical cracks to left hand side

Kitchen to rear elevation:

Photo 36: Overview of kitchen

Photo 37: Minor vertical hairline crack to partition with communal area

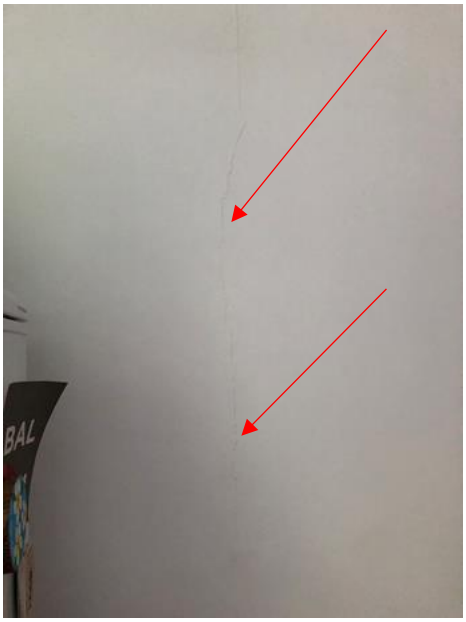


Photo 38: Closer view of hairline crack to right hand side of fridge

Bedroom:

Photo 39: Overview of bedroom

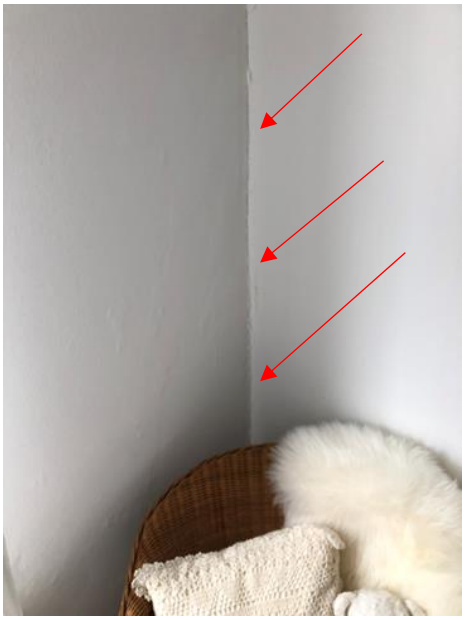


Photo 40: Vertifcal hairline crack to left hand side of window

Living Room:

Photo 41: Overview of living room, floor noted as sloping left to right

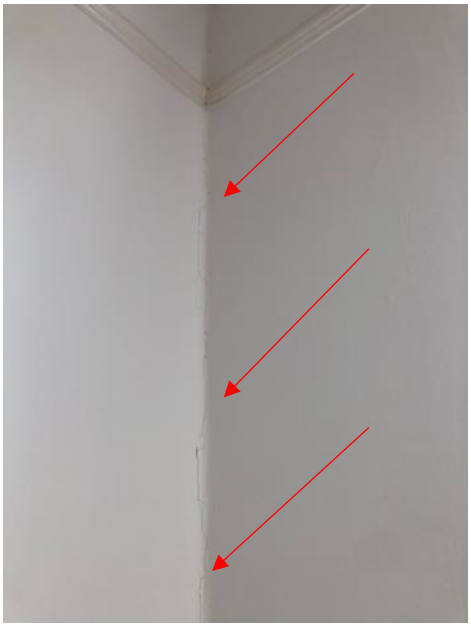


Photo 42: Fine cracks running from ceiling to low level left hand side of window

Photo 43: Close view of fine cracking left hand side of window

5.1.4 Flat D - Internal Inspection

Flat D is a top floor loft conversation, spanning the full width of the property. Movement cracking noted throughout apartment, mainly to junctions of ceilings/walls.

Entrance / stairs / landing / half landing:

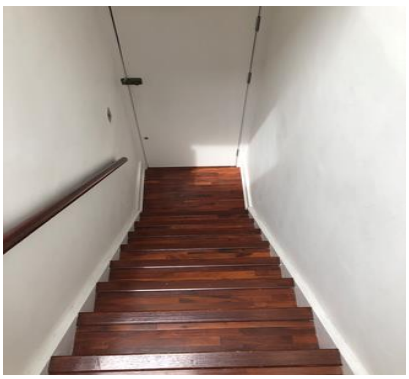


Photo 44: Overview of entrance stairs

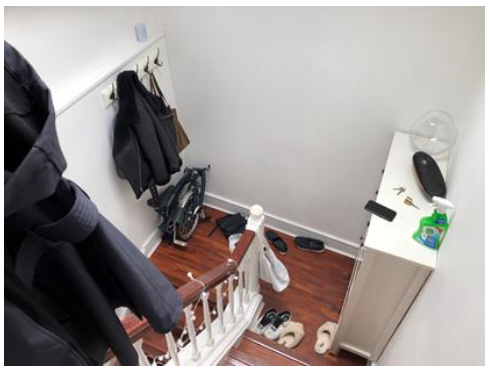


Photo 45: Overview of half landing leading to top floor flat

Photo 46: Overview of landing

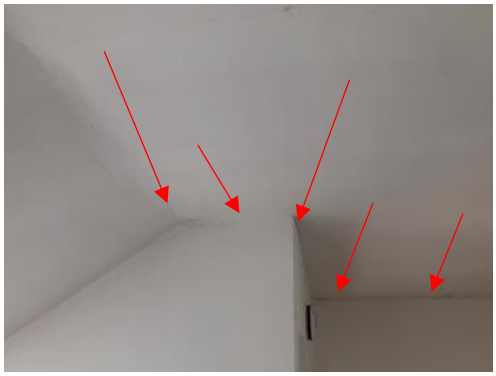


Photo 47: Fine cracking to junction of ceiling/walls throughout stairs, half landing and landing

Photo 48: Fine cracking throughout

Photo 49: Close view of fine horizontal cracks above door to living room

Bedroom to front elevation:

Photo 50: Overview of ceiling with general hairline cracks to boards

Photo 51: Closer view of hairline cracks above window, opposite entrance door

Kitchen to rear:

Photo 52: Overview of kitchen

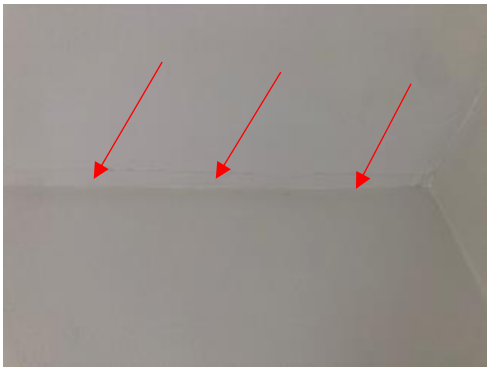
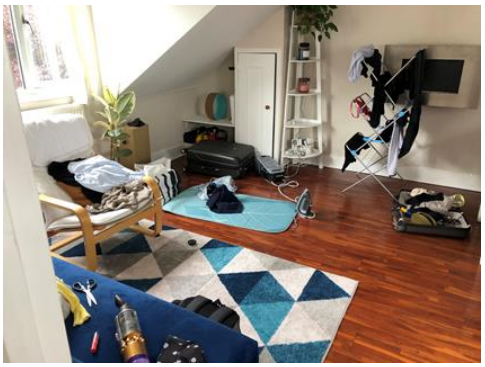


Photo 53: Fine horizontal cracking to ceiling

Living Room:

 Photo 54: Overview of living room	Photo 55: Fine cracks to ceiling plasterboard

5.1.5 Communal Area – Inspection

The communal area is accessed via a single entrance door to the front elevation, allowing access to the ground floor flat. A single stair core serves the first floor flats. Creaky flooring underfoot and sloping towards walls was noted on both sides.

Walls and ceilings have been lined with a woodchip paper. Rippling and tears to paper, with wide cracks noted to the walls and ceiling in the landing area. Historic patch repair to cracks in this area.

Photo 56: Overview of communal entrance, sloping flooring as shown by arrows

Photo 57: Communal stairs leading to 1st floor

Photo 58: Overview of top of stairs/landing

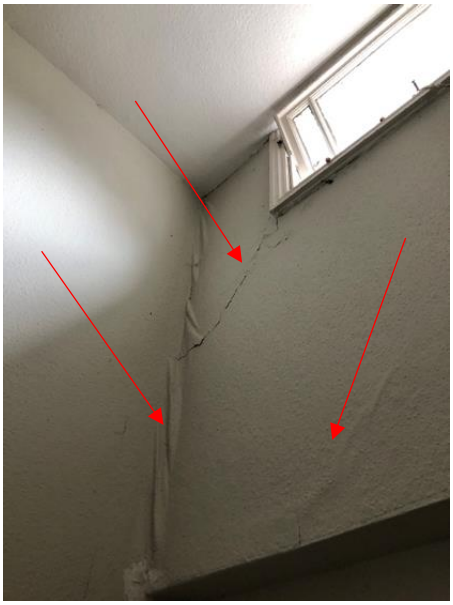


Photo 59: Closer view of diagonal cracks beneath paper and rippling to wallpaper

5.1.6 External Inspection

The external walls are brick built, with front porch, stone steps leading to communal entrance, concrete front garden and concrete paved pathway leading to the rear of the property.

The flank elevation is brickwork with a paved patio area, garden and 'lean-to' built at the rear and fixed to the ground floor flat.

Front steps, garden and front elevation:

Photo 60: Overview of front steps

Photo 61: Close view of steps

Photo 62: Porch ceiling – crazed cracking

Photo 63: Stepped cracks to brickwork

Photo 64: Gap to top top of stairs

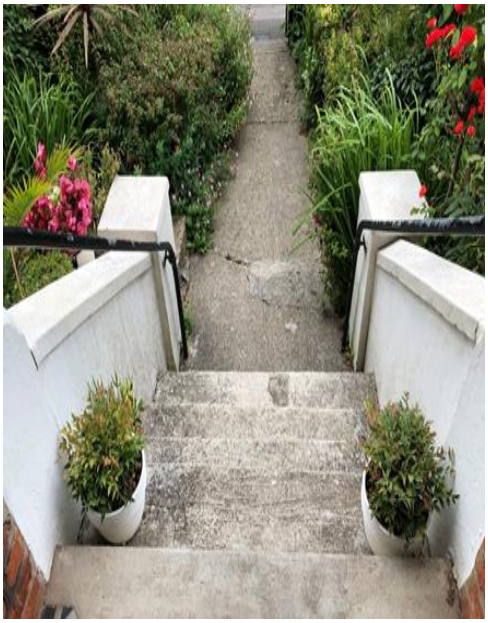


Photo 65: Overview of stairs

Photo 66: Overview of paved front garden

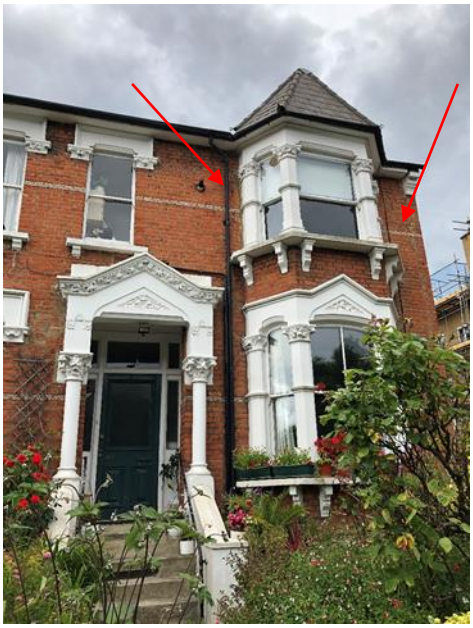


Photo 67: Overview of front elevation

Photo 68: Patch repairs

Photo 69: Patch repairs to stepped cracking

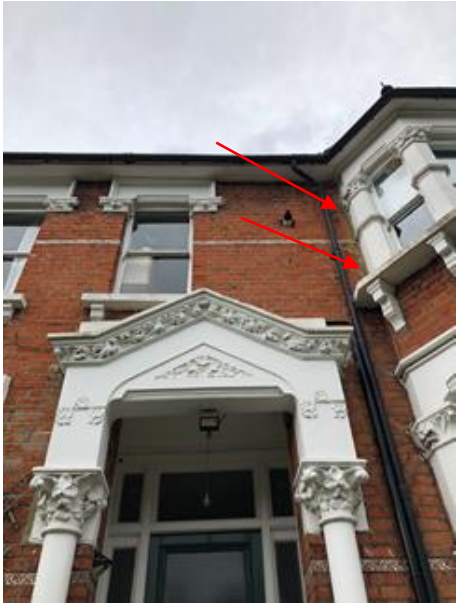


Photo 70: Patch repairs

Photo 71: Closer view of patch repair

Garden and Rear Elevation:

Photo 72: Overview of rear elevation

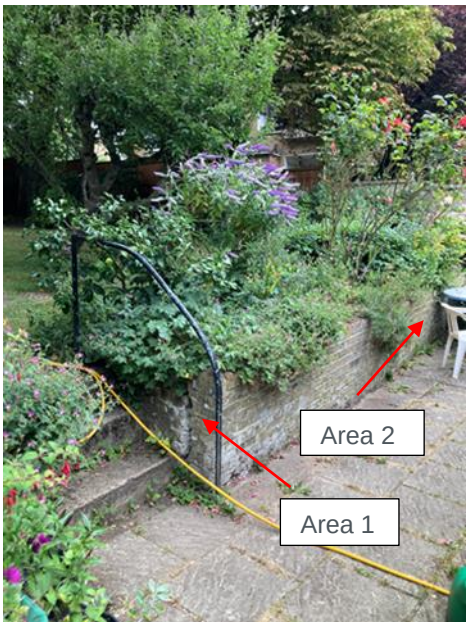


Photo 73: Overview of garden wall

Photo 74: Opened up crack to garden wall - Area 1

Photo 75: Stepped opened up cracking to garden wall – Area 2

Photo 76: Rear elevation

Photo 77: Lean-to

Photo 78: Lean-to / deached areas

Photo 79: Rear patio area – floor slanting

6.0 Summary of Facts and Assumptions

Although cracks were noted throughout the building and inside flats, the ground floor apartment appears to have been the most affected.

To front elevation, historic stepped crack repairs running vertically, to left hand side and right hand side of first floor bay window were noted.

Front external steps and porch have visibly shifted, with cracks to porch and stair areas. Temporary wooden props are keeping the stairs stable, with front external concrete pathway and garden significant cracked.

The rear garden and patio areas have also been affected, with stepped cracking to garden wall and sloping flagstones, close to building proximity.

‘Lean-to’ structure to rear of ground floor flat, has become detached.

Finally, although patch repairs have been undertaken to the property it has been reported that these continue to reopen.

7.0 Opinion and Recommendations

The appearance of cracks in a building is the most common sign of subsidence, but other indicators can include; clay shrinkage, tree roots and uneven ground.

Whilst we have observed a high level of internal cracks and ground movement to the ground floor of the property and external cracking to the front elevation, in order to answer definitively whether there is a subsidence issue at this property, we recommend the following:

- Drain survey - to determine if there are any issues with the drains which may have softened the soil
- Soil analysis
- Instructing a Structural Engineer to carry out further investigations, which may include digging trial pits, to ascertain the extent of foundations etc.

8.0 Conclusion

Earl Kendrick (London) Limited were instructed to undertake an inspection of the flats and building, and advise of possible defects and if necessary recommend any suitable remedial works, in relation to the cracks and possible subsidence occurring within the property.

Whilst there is a high level of cracks to the building, a degree of ground movement, and external cracking, further investigations are required to establish if this is in fact subsidence.

Earl Kendrick can help arrange for the required intrusive investigative works to be carried out, as well as the appointment of a structural engineer, should this be of interest.

EarlKendrick
Building Surveyors

Chartered Surveyors & Property Consultants
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RICS