

Confidential to:

Name

By Email:



Surveyor's Name

I R Johnson MRICS, Chartered Building Surveyor

Inspection Date

The property was inspected on

Our Reference

IRJ/AH/S1147/FBS

Introduction to the Report

Instructions received are to carry out a Full Building Survey of the property which were accepted and confirmed in my letter of the

This service is delivered in accordance with Home Survey Standards (First Edition) RICS Professional Statement and is equivalent to a Level 3 building survey.

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors requires me to inform you that the report has been written for you to see and if you decide not to act on the advice in the report you do this at your own risk. The report is also confidential to yourself and may not be reproduced or passed on without the written prior approval of both surveyor and yourself.

Weather

The weather at the time of the inspection was cloudy with sunny intervals.

1. INSPECTION GENERALLY

- 1.1. The property was fully furnished at the time of inspection which has restricted examination.
- 1.2. I would refer you to the limits of my inspection as outlined in the Survey Conditions of Engagement, in that no exploratory work has been conducted and that the inspection is not intended to be a Schedule of Condition itemising minor defects. There will be items of normal routine maintenance that will not be covered.
- 1.3. Whilst endeavours have been made to determine the condition of all concealed areas, the comments in the report can only be conclusive for those areas inspected. Unseen areas will not be inspected, and no destructive testing, x-rays or thermal images are carried out.
- 1.4. The service does not include an asbestos inspection and falls outside *The Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012*. However, the report will highlight any suspected presence of asbestos-containing materials where possible.
- 1.5. The photographs included in the report sometimes do not clearly indicate the defect e.g. where cracking is only slight. In these instances, the photographs are included to indicate the area of damage rather than the actual damage in question.
- 1.6. For ease of identification all descriptions given in the report will be as though facing the front of the property, with rear left and right being described accordingly.
- 1.7. Where the expressions immediate, short term, medium term, long term, and very long term are used they generally mean the following:

Immediate	Within 1 year
Short term	Within the next 1 to 3 years
Medium term	Within the next 4 to 10 years
Long term	Within 11 to 20 years
Very long term	Over 20 years

- 1.8. Where relating to structural damage and cracking width the expressions negligible, very slight, slight, moderate, severe, and very severe are used they generally mean the following:

Category 0	Negligible/Hairline	< 0.1mm
Category 1	Fine	0.1mm - 1mm
Category 2	Slight	> 1mm but < 5mm
Category 3	Moderate	> 5mm but < 15mm
Category 4	Severe	> 15mm but < 25mm
Category 5	Very severe	> 25mm

2. BRIEF HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION

- 2.1. The property is a Grade II listed, detached, two-storey dwelling house, built I would anticipate in the region of approximately 300 years ago with later additions approximately 200 years ago. The exact date of construction may be confirmed by examination of the Title Deeds.



Photograph 1



Photograph 2



Photograph 3



Photograph 4



Photograph 5

"Heritage Category: Listed Building

Grade: II

List Entry Number: 1121744

Date first listed: 30-Sep-1987

Statutory Address 1: FORMER FARMHOUSE AT WEST FARM

Details

*STREATLAM AND STAINTON STAINTON VILLAGE NZ O1 NE 13/216
Former farmhouse at West Farm*

II

Farmhouse, cottage and stable, now storage building. Early C18 probably incorporating earlier house, with early C19 extension and mid C19 addition. Sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings and some quoins; stone-flagged roof with stone gable coping and stone, brick and rendered chimneys; Welsh slate roof on addition, pantiled and corrugated asbestos on rear outshut. 2 low storeys, 5 bays and right set-back one-storey, 2-bay stable addition. First 2 bays have renewed door at right in plain stone surround and similar surrounds to square late C19 ground-floor and 4-over-8 first-floor sashes. 3 right bays project slightly, with left corner re-built almost to eaves level, and have similar surrounds to 4-over-8 sash in first, below 2-light horizontal sliding sash; second bay has flat stone lintel over 3-pane overlight and blocked door flanked by small blocked square windows with plain stone surrounds; similar lintel and projecting stone sill to sash with glazing bars at right above. possibly replacing loft door. Additional third bay has boarded vehicle doors below 4-over-8 sash in plain stone surround. Right set-back stable has pierced boarded vehicle doors at left, and boarded Dutch doors at right. Roof has left gable coping on moulded kneeler: banded brick chimneys at left, and at left projection, and rendered chimney at right; massive external rubble stack truncated on left return gable. Rear 4-bay, one-storey outshut, mostly pantiles, with central open porch.

Interior shows wide segmental keyed fire-arch, papered over, in left ground-floor roomy run-off chamfers to beams and joists; horizontal plank screen and 2-panel door to foot of rear stair; similar doors, with L-hinges, throughout; another screen on landing of second stair; cornices over windows in third bay, the upper richly carved; cambered beams, above window in one case, with 3 pegs to principal rafters which are pegged and cut at apex to receive ridge; 2 levels of purlins. Walls very thick.

Derelict at time of survey.

Listing NGR: NZ0682018615"

- 2.2. As a listed building, any alterations, extension or repairs, other than minor repairs on a like for like basis would require listed building consent.
- 2.3. The vendor has occupied the property for 15 years, undertaking general maintenance in that time.
- 2.4. Complete restoration was undertaken by previous owners in the early 1990s.

- 2.5. The property has been extended to the left side to provide a boot room, garage and garden room and an infill extension to the front (to the left side of the front entrance door).
- 2.6. The extensions will have required planning permission, listed building consent and building regulations approvals. All relevant documentation should be obtained by your legal adviser.
- 2.7. The property is of traditional construction comprising load bearing masonry walls supporting timber framed pitched roofs.
- 2.8. The accommodation briefly comprises:-

Ground Floor

Front entrance lobby with study to the left side, front-left cloakroom, front-right utility room and pantry, rear-right kitchen, rear living room, rear-left dining room, left-side boot room, garden room and attached garage.

First Floor

Right-side bedroom, bathroom, middle bedroom, front-left bathroom and rear-left bedroom.

- 2.9. The property occupies a sloping site with gardens to the front and rear and off-street parking to the front left outside the garage.

3. EXAMINATION

External

3.1. Roofs

- 3.1.1. The roofs have been viewed from ground level with the aid of a pair of binoculars where appropriate.
- 3.1.2. The main roofs are of duo-pitched construction with ridges running parallel to the front elevation.
- 3.1.3. There is a lean-to roof over the single-storey part of the building to the front.
- 3.1.4. The main roof is covered with natural sandstone slates laid to diminishing courses and has mortar bedded and pointed round stone ridges. There is a ridge vent close to the centre chimney stack serving the extractor fan in the bathroom.



Photograph 6

- 3.1.5. There are numerous re-fixed slates and isolated damaged stone slates which should be programmed for replacement.



Photograph 7



Photograph 8



Photograph 9



Photograph 10

3.1.6. The slates are nail fixed to the battens and consequently will be difficult to replace. Traditional methods are to fix the slates with pegs hung over the battens.

3.1.7. Mortar bedding and pointing to the ridges is in reasonable condition, suffering isolated minor cracking.



Photograph 11

- 3.1.8. There is slight undulation to the main roof, not unusual for a property of this age and type of construction.
- 3.1.9. The lean-to roof has natural non-interlocking clay pantiles and the single-storey roof over the garage and boot room has natural interlocking clay pantiles with mortar bedded and pointed angular stone ridges.
- 3.1.10. There are mortar pointed verges to the roofs. Isolated cracked mortar and some patch repairs have been previously undertaken.
- 3.1.11. No repairs are currently required.
- 3.1.12. There is a stone water table bed to the right side of the main roof and left and right sides of the front lean-to roof.



Photograph 12



Photograph 13

- 3.1.13. The water tables are mortar bedded and pointed and seen to be in satisfactory condition.
- 3.1.14. To the rear right there is a missing mortar table to the corbel stone at eaves level and consideration should be given to the fitting of a replacement.



Photograph 14

- 3.1.15. The pointing/bedding to the front right has been replaced but to the rear there is cracked and eroding mortar which will require replacement.



Photograph 15

3.2. Chimney Stacks and Flashings

- 3.2.1. There are three chimney stacks serving the property, one to each end of the main ridge, built off the gable apex and one part way along the main ridge.
- 3.2.2. The left-side stack is stone built and the other two brick-built.



Photograph 16

- 3.2.3. There are some eroded mortar joints to the brickwork stacks requiring re-pointing.

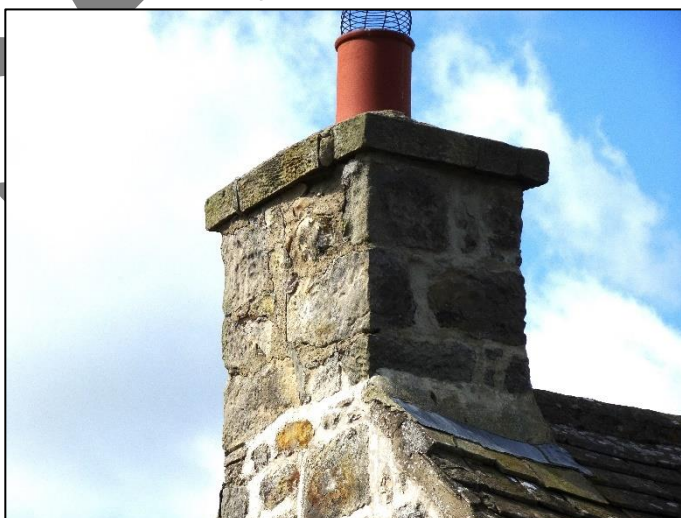


Photograph 17



Photograph 18

3.2.4. There is some cracked and loose mortar pointing to the left-side stone-built stack, requiring replacement.



Photograph 19

- 3.2.5. Old chimney stacks can suffer extensive erosion from the flues which is not visible externally and potential re-building cannot be ruled out in the future.
- 3.2.6. The right-side stack has two stainless steel vent terminals, the centre stack two clay pots and the left-side stack a single clay pots.
- 3.2.7. The clay pots have wire bird cages.
- 3.2.8. The pots are mortar bedded and flaunched.
- 3.2.9. There is some deterioration of the flaunching around the stainless steel flue terminals, requiring replacement.



Photograph 20

- 3.2.10. There are mortar flaunchings and some lead flashings to the base of the stacks.
- 3.2.11. Mortar flaunchings are inclined to shrink and crack and will require replacement from time to time. The flaunchings appear to have been replaced relatively recently.
- 3.2.12. As part of future repairs and maintenance, consideration should be given to the fitting of lead flashings as a more durable, long-term solution, although this will require listed building consent.
- 3.2.13. At the abutment of the lean-to roof there is a mortar flaunching taken up to the underside of the stone slates above.
- 3.2.14. There is an area of cracked/loose mortar which will require replacement in the future.



Photograph 21

- 3.2.15. There are lead flashings around a roof window in the lean-to roof which are in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 22

- 3.2.16. To the front slope of the single-storey roof there is a mortar flaunching detail which is currently in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 23

- 3.2.17. To the rear slope there is a lead flashing which is in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 24

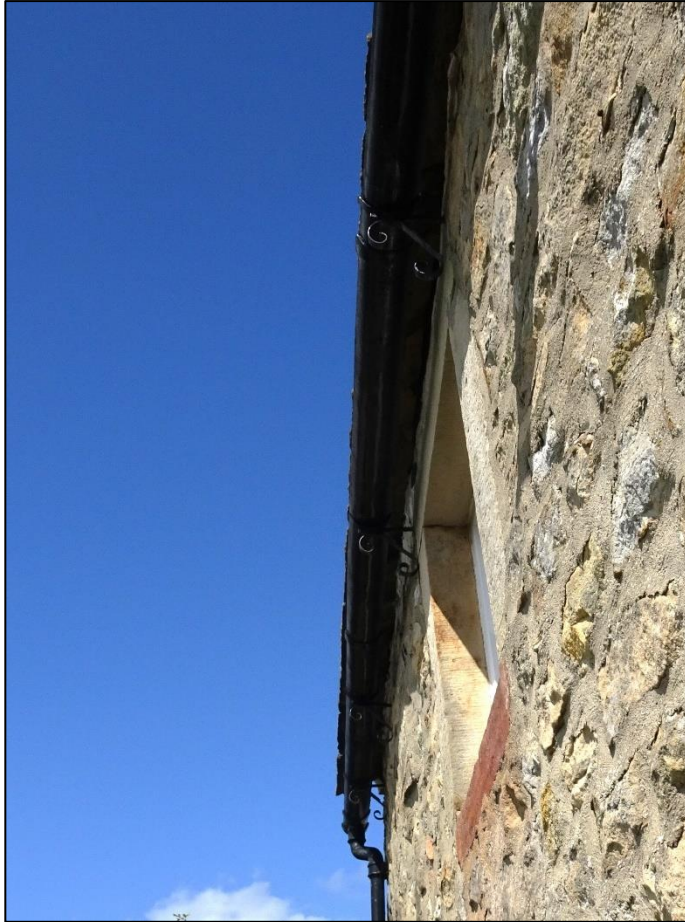
3.3. External Plumbing and Rainwater Goods

- 3.3.1. The roof slopes discharge to eaves gutters which are half-round, cast iron to virtually all areas.
- 3.3.2. There are white ogee, profiled, plastic gutters to the garden room.
- 3.3.3. The cast iron gutter to the rear left of the garage has standing water, as it slopes away from the outlet and requires adjustment.



Photograph 25

- 3.3.4. The cast iron gutters discharge to cast iron rainwater downpipes and the plastic gutters to a plastic downpipe.
- 3.3.5. The weather remained dry during the survey and therefore the gutters were not seen under operational conditions.
- 3.3.6. To the rear right, the roof slates project beyond the gutters and therefore rainwater will miss the gutters.



Photograph 26

- 3.3.7. The gutters are also positioned significantly below the level of the roof slates and I would recommend that these are adjusted accordingly.
- 3.3.8. There is no evidence of any leaks to the rainwater gutter joints.
- 3.3.9. The cast iron gutters are fixed on traditional drive-in brackets to the main roof and fascia brackets to the single-storey roofs.
- 3.3.10. There is a lead lined abutment gutter where the garden room roof abuts the rear of the garage and boot room.



Photograph 27



Photograph 28

- 3.3.11. The lead lining was seen to be in satisfactory condition, however it does not appear to have been installed in accordance with The Lead Association, Guide to Good Site Practice and will have limited life expectancy.
- 3.3.12. Inadequate disposal of rainwater can cause serious defects within a building, including damp, timber decay and structural movement. It is therefore important that gutters are kept in a well-maintained condition. In particular, it is recommended that gutters are kept clear and cleaned of any leaves, silt and rubbish on a regular basis. In addition, joints and brackets should be checked periodically.
- 3.3.13. There is a black plastic soil and vent stack to the front left with plastic branch connections.
- 3.3.14. To the front and rear right there are plastic waste pipes serving the kitchen, utility and cloakroom which were in satisfactory condition.
- 3.3.15. The soil and vent stack and waste pipes are in satisfactory condition.

3.4. External Walls

- 3.4.1. Our inspection of the external surfaces of the main walls was made from ground level and from within readily accessible windows.
- 3.4.2. The foundations to the property have not been exposed; therefore you must accept the risk of unseen defects. However, there was no evidence to those parts readily visible that would indicate problems with the foundations, nor where there any above ground level defects that would normally have an adverse effect on the foundations.
- 3.4.3. External walls are of solid stone masonry construction to the original part of the house and of cavity construction to the garage, boot room, garden room and study.

- 3.4.4. The old walls will comprise two leafs of stone masonry with a mortar and rubble filled heart, built off footing stones at relatively shallow depth. Consequently, these types of wall are more prone to changes in the below ground conditions leading to problems of settlement/subsidence. There are no such problems evident of an ongoing nature.
- 3.4.5. There is no thermal insulation to the old stone walls.
- 3.4.6. There is general bowing, bulging and distortion to the external walls, not unusual for a property of this age and type of construction and not considered to be a progressive structural defect at present.



Photograph 29

- 3.4.7. There is a very old small built-in window opening to the rear elevation.



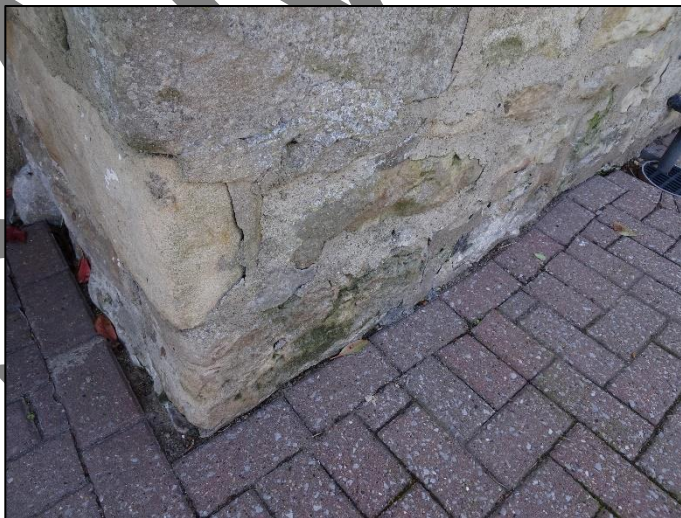
Photograph 30

- 3.4.8. There are sandstone heads and cills to window openings, some of which have stone jambs also.
- 3.4.9. There is distortion of some of the window openings to the rear extension as a result of previous historical movement to the walls.

- 3.4.10. There is an ashlar stone door surround to the rear entrance door to the kitchen.
- 3.4.11. The entrance doors to the front have stone heads.
- 3.4.12. The external walls have been completely re-pointed using a cement-based mortar.
- 3.4.13. Cement-based mortars are hard and impervious and can lead to or exacerbate dampness problems and erosion of stonework.
- 3.4.14. There is some isolated deterioration of stones and cracked mortar as a result.



Photograph 31

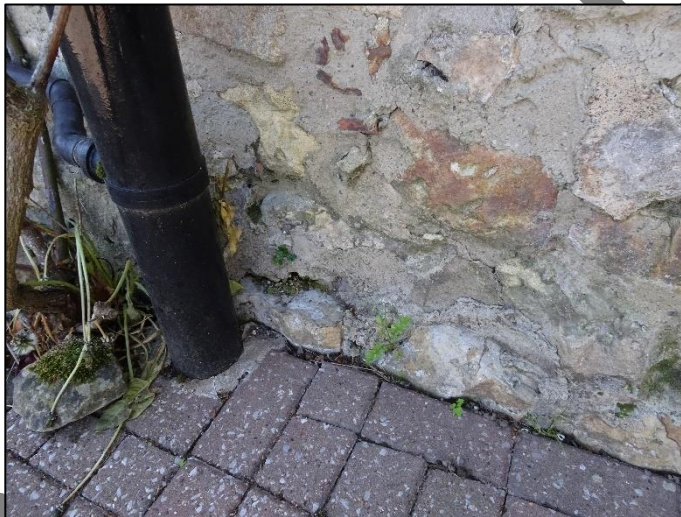


Photograph 32

- 3.4.15. There are isolated areas of open and loose mortar joints requiring re-pointing.



Photograph 33



Photograph 34



Photograph 35

- 3.4.16. Any re-pointing in the future should be undertaken using a traditional lime mortar.
- 3.4.17. The extension walls have a damp-proof course to the base and the old walls have had injected chemical damp-proof course.

- 3.4.18. The injection has been into the stonework rather than the mortar joints which unfortunately renders the damp-proof course relatively ineffective. The remedial work therefore is reliant on the internal render applied as part of the system.
- 3.4.19. The damp-proofing contractor has injected some of the extension walls which is unnecessary as they have a polyethylene damp-proof course as part of construction.
- 3.4.20. A small section to the rear left has been re-built with a polyethylene damp-proof course visible to the base of the wall.
- 3.4.21. The extension walls comprise an inner block leaf and outer stone leaf tied together at intervals using metal ties.
- 3.4.22. The ground levels to the left side of the garage are higher than the internal floor levels.
- 3.4.23. The positioning of the damp-proof course should have taken account of this and there is no evidence of any dampness internally.
- 3.4.24. The cavity walls were noted to be in satisfactory condition.
- 3.4.25. The damp-proof course to the study is close to ground level. This can result in dampness internally if the cavities are bridged.
- 3.4.26. There are stone cills to the garden room which have open mortar joints, requiring re-pointing.



Photograph 36

- 3.4.27. Window and door reveals are mortar pointed.
- 3.4.28. There is isolated cracking to some of the pointing which will require replacement as part of future maintenance and repairs.



Photograph 37



Photograph 38



Photograph 39

- 3.4.29. The cavity walls comprise an outer stone skin and inner block skin with a space in between. The two skins should be connected at intervals with metal wall ties.

3.4.30. Given the time of construction the cavity walls are likely to contain thermal insulation.

3.5. External Joinery

3.5.1. The windows, doors and external joinery were inspected from ground level and from within accessible windows.

3.5.2. Our comments can only be of a general nature, as the presence or the extent of some defects can only be fully identified during the course of re-decoration, or following disruptive investigations.

3.5.3. There are timber fascias at eaves level to the extensions and which, where visible, are seen to be in satisfactory condition.

3.5.4. Windows and doors are timber double-glazed, a mixture of vertical sliding sash, horizontal sliding sash and casement windows.

3.5.5. The vendor has replaced the windows and for which listed building consent would have been required.

3.5.6. Legislation introduced in April 2002 requires all double-glazed windows and doors to have building regulations approval or be installed by a FENSA registered contractor.

3.5.7. Your legal adviser should confirm that any replacement windows and doors which may have been fitted since 2002 have the relevant accreditation and listed building consent.

3.5.8. It is common for seals between the two panes of glass in a sealed double-glazing unit to break down, typically after about ten years. When this happens, condensation forms between the panes. Replacement of the sealed unit (but not always of the frame) is then necessary. You should expect this to happen in due course.

3.5.9. The garden room is of timber framed construction above a traditional cavity dwarf wall.



Photograph 40

- 3.5.10. There is decay to the timberwork which requires repair, although I anticipate replacement will prove to be necessary.



Photograph 41



Photograph 42

- 3.5.11. Numerous glazed units have failed and should be replaced.
- 3.5.12. The roof is of timber frame construction with double-glazed units.
- 3.5.13. Flash band has been installed over the timbers to prevent water penetration.



Photograph 43



Photograph 44



Photograph 45

- 3.5.14. The front entrance door and boot room door are vertical boarded, hung in timber frames and with a single-glazed vision panel.



Photograph 46



Photograph 47

- 3.5.15. The doors are currently in satisfactory condition.
- 3.5.16. The garden room door is a panelled and glazed door which has evidence of decay.
- 3.5.17. The door binds in the framework and has been planed numerous times and has not been re-decorated.
- 3.5.18. The handles/latch are defective.

- 3.5.19. The kitchen entrance door is a panelled and single-glazed door, hung in a timber frame and is in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 48

- 3.5.20. The door has been previously planed and the wood has not been re-decorated.
- 3.5.21. If left undecorated, the wood will expand and require adjustment again.
- 3.5.22. There are two pairs of vertical boarded garage doors which are in good condition.
- 3.6. **External Grounds and Boundaries**
- 3.6.1. The property occupies a sloping site with gardens to the front and rear.
- 3.6.2. Access is via a private drive from the public highway which has a tarmacadam surface.

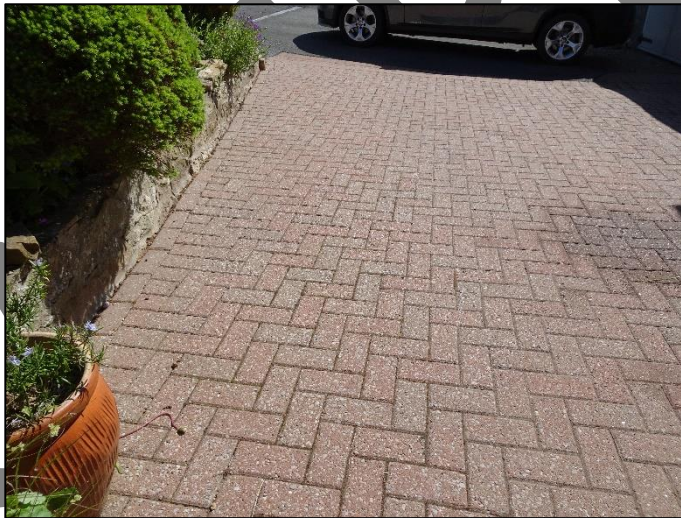


Photograph 49

- 3.6.3. The ownership of the drive, rights of access and maintenance liabilities should be confirmed by your legal adviser.
- 3.6.4. There is a tarmacadam surface parking area in front of the garage and concrete block paviours across the front of the property, all of which are in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 50



Photograph 51



Photograph 52

- 3.6.5. There is a stone-built boundary wall to the front right which is in satisfactory condition.
- 3.6.6. There is a small stone-built retaining wall to the front left which is in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 53

- 3.6.7. To the rear there are stone-built boundary walls which, where visible, are considered to be in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 54



Photograph 55

- 3.6.8. The ownership of the boundaries should be ascertained in order that repairing liabilities are known.
- 3.6.9. There are random stone flagged paths and terraces to the rear which are in reasonable condition, suffering isolated erosion of mortar pointing which should be replaced.



Photograph 56



Photograph 57



Photograph 58

- 3.6.10. There is a timber personnel gate hung on a timber post to the rear left giving access over a small style through the wall.



Photograph 59

3.6.11. The gate is hung to self-close and requires re-decoration.

3.6.12. The gate requires re-decoration.

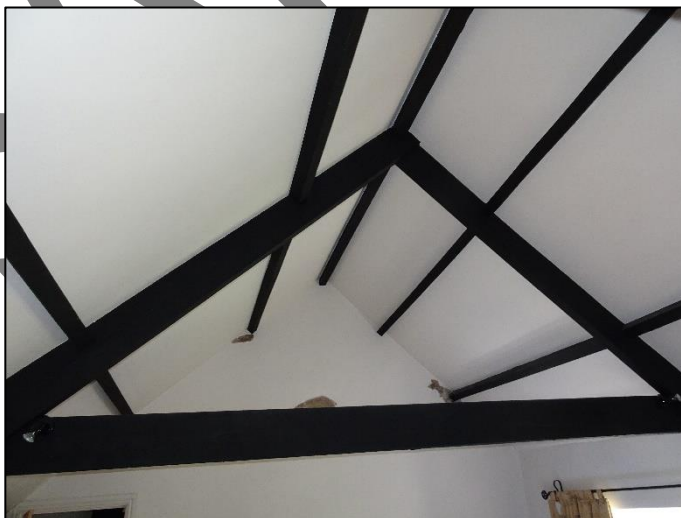
Internal

3.7. Roof Void

3.7.1. The vendor advised that woodworm treatment has been undertaken to the old roof timbers, for which there is a guarantee.

3.7.2. Within the front-right bedroom the ceilings follow the line of the roof slopes.

3.7.3. The roof structure comprises two principal trusses supporting two rows of purlins to each roof slope which will support common rafters.



Photograph 60



Photograph 61

- 3.7.4. The visible roof structure was seen to be in satisfactory condition.
- 3.7.5. The amount of insulation within above the sloping ceilings is not known.
- 3.7.6. Access to the main central roof space is via a hatch located within the middle-left bedroom ceiling.
- 3.7.7. The roof structure comprises principal trusses supporting two rows of purlins to each roof slope.



Photograph 62



Photograph 63

- 3.7.8. There is evidence of significant woodworm infestation to some of the principal roof timbers, although none of this was noted to be active.
- 3.7.9. Strengthening has been undertaken and numerous rafters have been replaced.



Photograph 64

- 3.7.10. The lower ties to trusses are visible in the habitable accommodation.



Photograph 65



Photograph 66



Photograph 67

- 3.7.11. There is a bitumen-based roofing underfelt draped over the rafters.
- 3.7.12. Underfelts provide a secondary barrier to water penetration.

- 3.7.13. Bitumen underfelts used in construction prior to the early 1990s are likely to contain asbestos fibres although these are bound up in bitumen and risk to health is minimal but I would recommend not to access the roof space unnecessarily and a particle mask should be worn.
- 3.7.14. There is approximately 300mm thickness of insulation quilt laid between and over the ceiling joists which is to a good standard.
- 3.7.15. The main left-side roof void is accessed by a hatch in the rear-left bedroom.
- 3.7.16. The roof structure comprises a principal truss supporting two rows of purlins to each roof slope.



Photograph 68

- 3.7.17. There is a metal channel section forming a tie between the principal rafters of the truss.
- 3.7.18. Numerous rafters have been replaced and a section of ridge has been replaced, although the joint is not structural.



Photograph 69

- 3.7.19. There is old woodworm infestation noted to the timbers.
- 3.7.20. There is a bitumen-based roofing felt draped over the rafters which has a hole to one area and ideally would be patch repaired, although this is difficult.



Photograph 70

- 3.7.21. There is approximately 300mm thickness of insulation quilt laid between and over the ceiling joists.
- 3.7.22. The access hatches have draught seals and insulation.
- 3.7.23. The right-side roof structure is of much more recent construction than to the centre or left sides, although this is the oldest part of the house.
- 3.7.24. The front-left lean-to roof void is accessed via a hatch in the cloakroom.
- 3.7.25. The structure comprises a single purlin supporting common rafters over which there is a bitumen-based roofing underfelt.



Photograph 71



Photograph 72

- 3.7.26. The roof structure has been replaced at the time of restoration and is in good condition.
- 3.7.27. To the front right, the roof void is accessed via a hatch in the pantry.
- 3.7.28. The roof structure is a simple rafter roof with metal ties between the rafters and old stone wall.



Photograph 73

- 3.7.29. There is a bitumen-based roofing underfelt draped over the rafters.
- 3.7.30. The rafters are in satisfactory condition.
- 3.7.31. Insulation within the roof void is spread unevenly and is missing to some areas and the loft access hatch is uninsulated.

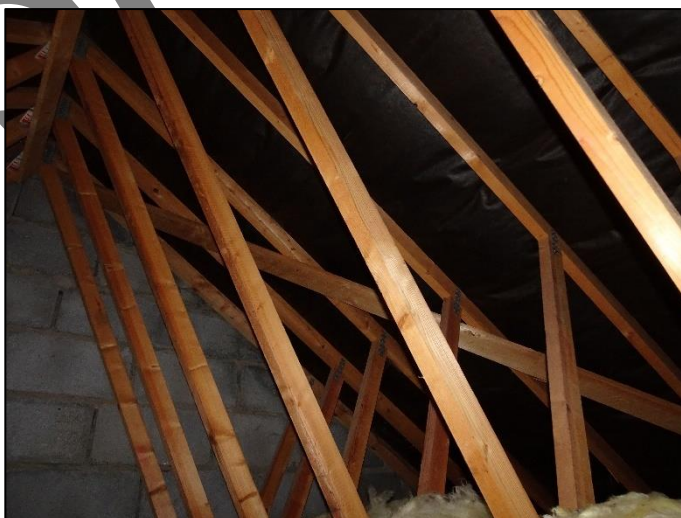


Photograph 74

- 3.7.32. Within the garage there is a hatch in the ceiling giving access to a void above.
- 3.7.33. The roof structure comprises pre-fabricated trussed rafters over which there is a bitumen-based roofing underfelt.



Photograph 75



Photograph 76

- 3.7.34. There are no lateral restraint straps to the gable and ideally these would be provided.
- 3.7.35. The roof structure is braced to a reasonably good standard but not full in accordance with current guidelines.
- 3.7.36. The bitumen underfelt will have decayed where it is draped into the gutters and consideration should be given to the fitting of plastic eaves trays.

3.8. Ceilings

- 3.8.1. Ceilings are plasterboard to most areas, although I suspect there may be some old lath and plaster ceilings to the middle bedroom and bathroom at first-floor level and utility room to the ground floor.
- 3.8.2. There is 'V' jointed timber boarding in the study around the roof window area which is in satisfactory condition.



Photograph 77

- 3.8.3. There is some undulation and cracking to the lath and plaster ceilings, in particular the bathroom ceiling.



Photograph 78



Photograph 79

- 3.8.4. There are hangers within the roof space above, providing additional support to the ceiling joists.



Photograph 80

- 3.8.5. The ceiling joists could not be inspected due to the insulation laid between and over them.
- 3.8.6. Lath and plaster ceilings deteriorate over time due to corrosion of the nail fixings holding the laths to the joists and plaster becoming debonded from the laths. It is almost inevitable that replacement or overboarding of the ceilings will be necessary in the future.
- 3.8.7. To the living room there is plasterboard between exposed first-floor joists.



Photograph 81

- 3.8.8. The plasterboard ceilings have some isolated cracks to board joints which is not unusual and is not a structural problem.
- 3.8.9. The vendor advised that a section of the dining room ceiling has been recently replaced as a result of a leak from the bathroom above.
- 3.8.10. There is cracking to the garage ceiling as a result of stored goods.



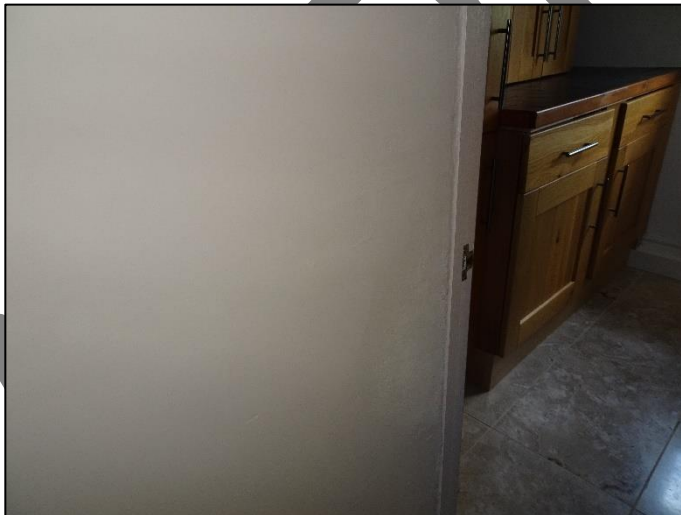
Photograph 82

- 3.9. Walls
- 3.9.1. Internal separating walls are a mixture of lightweight timber stud partitions and solid masonry construction.
- 3.9.2. The stud partitions have plasterboard linings.
- 3.9.3. The internal surface of the external walls and internal separating walls are directly plastered.
- 3.9.4. The walls were noted to be free from any significant structural cracking.

- 3.9.5. There is exposed pointed stonework to the living room, kitchen wall and study walls.
- 3.9.6. There is some minor deterioration of paint finishes in the cloakroom, the arched doorway into the cloakroom, kitchen and pantry.



Photograph 83



Photograph 84



Photograph 85



Photograph 86

- 3.9.7. Tests undertaken using an electronic moisture meter to skirtings in contact with the walls showing evidence of dampness recorded slightly higher readings but there was no decay noted.
- 3.9.8. There is corrosion of a screw fixing in the skirting to the pantry as a result of dampness.



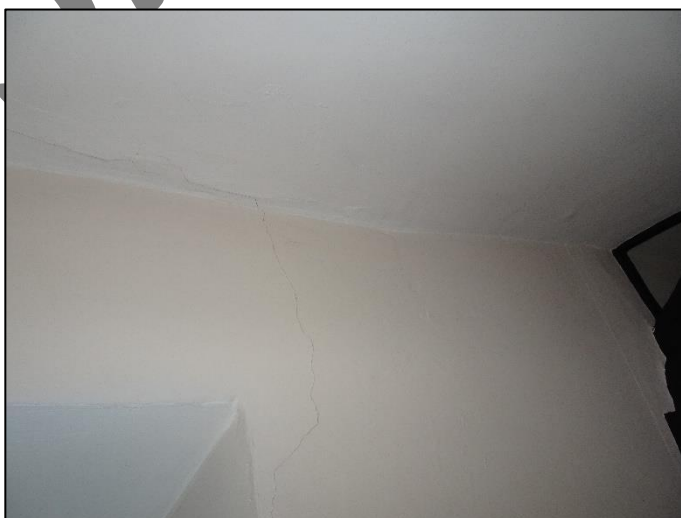
Photograph 87

- 3.9.9. There is some damp staining either side of the kitchen entrance door.



Photograph 88

- 3.9.10. There is a stone jamb in this area and the wall is reduced in thickness, consequently the dampness will be very difficult to eliminate.
- 3.9.11. There is no significant smell of dampness in the property and I do not consider that remedial works are essential, particularly given that it is a Grade II listed building and technically listed building consent should be obtained for damp-proofing.
- 3.9.12. Problems of dampness within properties of this type are difficult to fully eradicate, but can be reasonably well controlled by the use of vapour permeable materials such as lime mortars and plasters and ensuring adequate heating and ventilation.
- 3.9.13. However, some mortgage lenders may insist that damp-proofing remedial works are carried out for lending purposes, although in recent years an element of dampness in old properties has become more acceptable.
- 3.9.14. There is hairline cracking above the landing window which extends into the ceiling as a result of deflection of the floors onto which the stud partitions are constructed.



Photograph 89



Photograph 90

- 3.9.15. I do not anticipate that this will become significantly worse, but it is likely that if the crack has filled, it will re-open.
- 3.9.16. There is some deterioration of the paint finishes in the landing window due to penetrating dampness and which will prove difficult to eradicate.



Photograph 91

- 3.9.17. There is an old stone door surround between the utility room and kitchen which would formerly be an entrance door.
- 3.9.18. The head has fractured but replacement is not considered to be necessary.



Photograph 92

- 3.9.19. There are truss feet supported over the window openings in the rear left and middle bedrooms and a beam supporting the first floor above the living room and kitchen.
- 3.9.20. There will be internal timber backing lintels to the heads over window and door openings. The condition of these cannot be confirmed without exploratory work. Given the age of the property there is a risk that there may be woodworm infestation or decay to the backing lintels, however there is no evidence to suggest that any of these had failed.
- 3.9.21. The garage walls have a plasterboard on dabs lining.
- 3.10. **Floors**
- 3.10.1. First floors are suspended timber with carpet, vinyl and laminate coverings.
- 3.10.2. The floors to the centre section of the building are deflected and slope down towards the rear of the house. I do not anticipate that this will become any worse.
- 3.10.3. The floor joists are visible within the room below, where there is also a large timber beam which was seen to be free from any active woodworm infestation.
- 3.10.4. There are exposed beams within the kitchen which are seen to be in satisfactory condition.
- 3.10.5. Where carpets could be peeled back, tongued and grooved softwood boards were noted which vary in age between the rooms.
- 3.10.6. Ground floors are solid with carpet, tiled and woodblock flooring.
- 3.10.7. Within the garage, the surface of the concrete is visible and has a paint finish.

3.10.8. The floors were noted to be free from any significant heave or settlement.

3.10.9. The surface of the floors could not be inspected other than to the garage due to the coverings.

3.11. Internal Joinery

3.11.1. Internal doors are predominantly 6-panelled solid doors with a paint finish to the ground-floor accommodation.

3.11.2. The doors to the cloakroom and between the boot room and dining room have been cut down from a standard door.

3.11.3. There is a fully glazed arch door between the living room and cloakroom.

3.11.4. The door to the garage is a flush fire door.

3.11.5. To the boot room there is a multi-paned single-glazed and panelled door.

3.11.6. There is a vertical boarded, ledged and braced door between the kitchen and utility room.

3.11.7. To the first-floor accommodation there are vertical boarded, ledged and braced doors with Suffolk latches.

3.11.8. The doors throughout the property have been fitted as part of refurbishment and are in satisfactory condition.

3.11.9. There are painted skirting and architraves with a torus profile and which are in satisfactory condition.

3.11.10. To the door frame between the boot room and dining room there are self-adhesive draught seals fitted and similarly to the door into the garden room.

3.11.11. The staircase is a wide timber constructed stair with turned newels and balustrading with continuous hand rail and has been installed at the time of refurbishment in the 1990s.

3.11.12. There is slight creaking to the stairs which is not a structural problem but will be very difficult to eliminate.

3.12. Kitchen and Bathroom Fittings

3.12.1. Within the kitchen there is a small bespoke fitted base unit with granite worktop and small Belfast sink.



Photograph 93

- 3.12.2. There is a granite worktop supported on stone pillars to the right side of the Aga.



Photograph 94

- 3.12.3. There is a gas fired Aga cooker set within an original stone fire surround and which was on at the time of the survey.



Photograph 95

- 3.12.4. Within the utility room there is a range of bespoke fitted wall and floor units with granite worktop and single drainer porcelain sink with mono-block mixer tap.



Photograph 96

- 3.12.5. Within pantry there is a range of fitted shelves, cupboards with tiled worktop and granite worktop.



Photograph 97



Photograph 98

- 3.12.6. The cloakroom contains fitted units to the lobby area with tiled worktop, a vanity top travertine bowl wash hand basin and granite worktop and a WC pan with close coupled cistern.



Photograph 99



Photograph 100



Photograph 101

- 3.12.7. The door to the tall cupboard binds on the worktop, requiring adjustment.
- 3.12.8. The right-side bathroom contains a corner WC pan and close coupled cistern, acrylic bath with electric shower over and shower curtain and two semi-mounted vanity units with built-in cupboards. The bathroom is dated.



Photograph 102



Photograph 103



Photograph 104

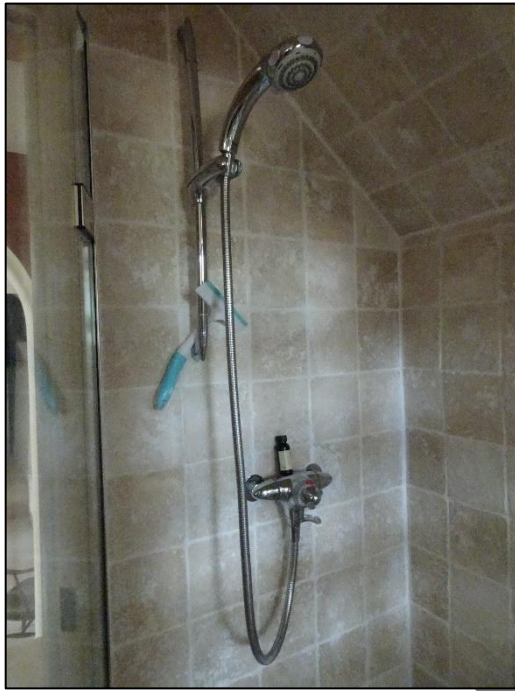
- 3.12.9. The left-side bathroom contains a WC pan with close coupled cistern, pressed steel enamel bath with mixer taps and shower fitting, vanity top, wash hand basin with cupboards below, shower tray and thermostatic shower with glass pivot door and tiled glass blocks to the wall.



Photograph 105



Photograph 106



Photograph 107

- 3.12.10. The bathroom walls are tiled to half height with travertine tiles and to the shower area completely including the ceiling.
- 3.12.11. The left-side bathroom and cloakroom have been re-fitted by the previous owners and are in good condition.
- 3.12.12. Sanitaryware was generally in satisfactory condition throughout and operating at the time of the survey.

SERVICES

Services are generally hidden within the construction of the property. This means that we can only inspect the visible parts of the available services, and we do not carry out specialist tests. The visual inspection cannot assess the services to make sure they work efficiently and safely and meet modern standards.

3.13. Hot and Cold Water Supply

- 3.13.1. The property is connected to mains water which is an unmetered supply.
- 3.13.2. The external stop tap is located at the bottom of the tarmac drive in the footpath close to one of the neighbouring properties.



Photograph 108

- 3.13.3. There are two internal stop taps; one within the cloakroom and one in the boot room.



Photograph 109



Photograph 110

- 3.13.4. Hot water is provided from the combination boiler.

- 3.13.5. Service pipework is copper and there was no evidence of any leaks.
- 3.13.6. There is an external tap to the right side of the boot room door, to the left side of the garden room and a redundant tap beneath the dining room window.



Photograph 111



Photograph 112

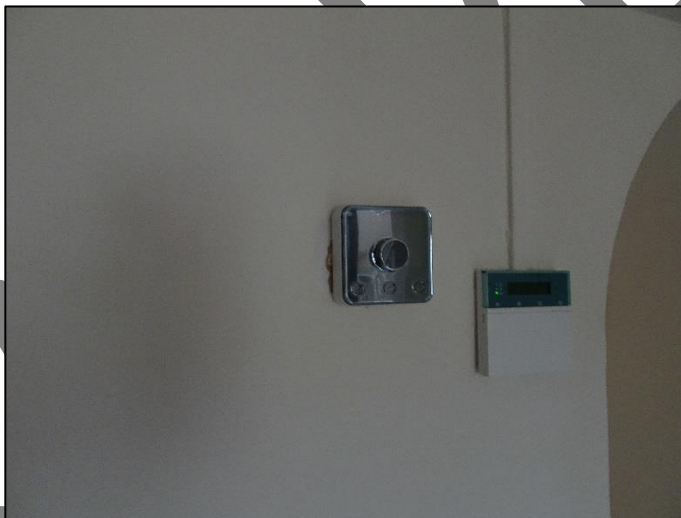
3.14. Space Heating

- 3.14.1. All gas and oil appliances and equipment should regularly be inspected, tested and maintained and serviced by a registered "competent person" and in line with the manufacturer's instruction. This is important to make sure that the equipment is working correctly, to limit the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning and to prevent carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases for leaking into the air. For more advice contact the Gas Safe Register for gas installations, and OFTEC for oil installations.
- 3.14.2. The property has central heating which comprises a British Gas wall-mounted, gas-fired boiler with balanced flue located within a cupboard in the boot room connected to pressed steel radiators with small bore copper pipework.



Photograph 113

- 3.14.3. The heating system was installed in the early 1990s.
- 3.14.4. Control is now via a Hive system and there are thermostatic radiator valves fitted to radiators.



Photograph 114

- 3.14.5. The vendor advised that the boiler is approximately 15 years old and is serviced annually. The boiler was operating at the time of the survey.
- 3.14.6. The boiler is at the end of its design life expectancy but may continue to operate for years to come, however you should anticipate to have to replace it at any time.
- 3.14.7. There is an open fire in the living room which has a coal-effect gas fire in a Georgian grate.
- 3.14.8. The flue has been lined.



Photograph 115

- 3.14.9. There is a woodburning stove in the living room which was installed during the time the vendor has owned the property and which also has a lined flue.
- 3.14.10. There may be an installation certificate for the stove and this should be obtained by your legal adviser.
- 3.14.11. The right-side bedroom has a fireplace with an electric stove in the opening.
- 3.14.12. There are redundant flues where chimney breasts have been infilled to the centre and left side of the property.
- 3.14.13. The flues are vented externally but not internally however there is no evidence of any dampness and internal vents are not considered to be essential.
- 3.14.14. There are radiators in the garage.

3.15. **Electrical Installation**

- 3.15.1. The property is connected to mains electricity.
- 3.15.2. The meter is located within a proprietary housing built into the study wall within the open porch area.



Photograph 116

- 3.15.3. The property was completely re-wired as part of refurbishment in the early 1990s.
- 3.15.4. There are two consumer units, one within the boot room and one within the front entrance lobby.



Photograph 117



Photograph 118

- 3.15.5. The units have mini circuit breakers fitted.
- 3.15.6. Power outlet sockets and switches are flush fitting and have white plastic covers.
- 3.15.7. The provision of sockets throughout the property is to a reasonable standard by current expectations.
- 3.15.8. Sockets installed in damp walls are at risk of corrosion to the metal back boxes.
- 3.15.9. There is an external socket to the rear right beneath the kitchen window.



Photograph 119

- 3.15.10. There are mechanical extractor fans in the bathrooms.
- 3.15.11. Within the kitchen there is no fan and a fan should not be installed where there is an Aga, otherwise flues from combustion can be drawn into the room.
- 3.15.12. There is no mechanical extractor fan to the utility room and consideration should be given to the installation of one.
- 3.15.13. There is a battery-operated smoke detector in the boot room and landing areas and I would recommend that mains-wired, interconnected smoke detectors are fitted.
- 3.15.14. Mains-wired carbon monoxide detectors are also recommended where there are gas and solid fuel appliances such as the dining room, living room and kitchen.
- 3.15.15. The Electrical Safety Council recommends that you should get a registered electrician to check the property and its electrical fittings at least every ten years, or on change of occupancy. All electrical installation work undertaken after 01 January 2005 should have appropriate certification. For more advice contact the Electrical Safety Council.

3.16. **Gas Installation**

3.16.1. The property is connected to mains gas.

3.16.2. The meter is located within a proprietary cabinet to the front left of the property.



Photograph 120

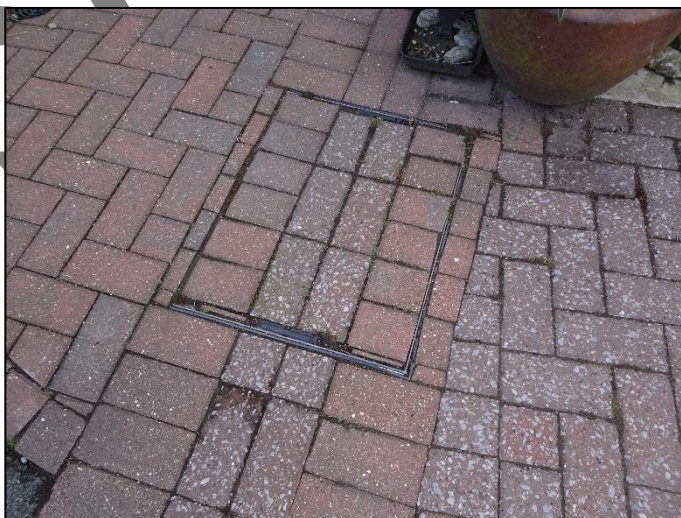
3.16.3. Gas service pipework is copper and connected to the central heating boiler, Aga cooker and gas coal-effect fire.

3.17. **Below Ground Drainage**

3.17.1. Drains can only be inspected at the point of access. Drainage surveys can be arranged separately.

3.17.2. The property is connected to mains below ground drainage.

3.17.3. There is an inspection chamber to the front left which has a cover inset with block pavements and could not be lifted.



Photograph 121

- 3.17.4. To the rear there is a chamber with light duty cast iron cover and frame.



Photograph 122

- 3.17.5. The chamber is pre-formed plastic and was noted to be clean and running freely at the time of the survey.



Photograph 123

- 3.17.6. There are numerous plastic gullies taking waste water and rainwater, all of which were noted to be in satisfactory condition where possible to inspect.
- 3.17.7. To the front of the property there is a channel drain across the parking area which has galvanised steel slotted grating.



Photograph 124

3.17.8. The grating is beginning to corrode.

3.18. **Energy Matters**

3.18.1. The property is a listed building and is therefore exempt from requiring an Energy Performance Certificate.

3.19. **Matters For Legal Adviser's Attention**

3.19.1. Within this section of the property specific matter will be highlighted with additional information provided in Appendix A.

3.19.2. Obtain relevant planning permission, listed building consent and building regulations approval for the extension of the property (paragraph 2.6).

3.19.3. Obtain listed building consent and certification for window and door replacements (paragraph 3.5.7).

3.19.4. Confirm ownership, rights of access and maintenance liabilities for entrance drive (paragraph 3.6.3).

3.19.5. Confirm ownership of boundary walls (paragraph 3.6.8).

3.19.6. Obtain guarantees for woodworm treatment and damp-proofing works (paragraph 3.7.1).

3.19.7. Obtain installation certificate for stove (paragraph 3.14.10).

3.20. **Environment and Health Risk**

3.20.1. Within this section of the property specific matter will be highlighted with additional information provided in Appendix B.

3.20.2. We are not aware of the content of any environmental audit or other environmental investigation or soil survey which may have been carried out on the property and which may draw attention to any contamination or the possibility of any such contamination. In undertaking our work, we have been instructed to assume that no contaminative or potentially contaminative uses have ever been carried out in the property. We have not carried out any investigation into past or present uses, either of the property or any neighbouring land, to establish whether there is any contamination or potential for contamination to the subject property from these uses or sites and have therefore assumed that none exists.

3.20.3. The property is located in an area that to the best of our knowledge is not subject to any flooding or adverse ground conditions, although we have not carried out any soil or ground investigations. We strongly advise you to make routine enquiries via your solicitor, to establish whether or not the property is built on made up or contaminated ground.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Within the scope of the examination undertaken to this property in that it has been restricted to a visual inspection only and no exploratory work has been conducted, I conclude my findings and recommendations as follows.

4.2. The property is a detached Grade II listed two-storey dwelling house, dating back to the early 1700s with later additions.

4.3. You should be aware that any alterations, extensions, or repairs other than repairs of a minor nature on a like for like basis will require listed building consent.

4.4. At the time of listing in 1987, the property was derelict and complete refurbishment was undertaken in the early 1990s.

4.5. The general structural integrity was considered to be sound with no significant shortcomings evident.

4.6. An overhaul of the roof is required to replace any defective slates and isolated, cracked or loose pointing to ridges and flaunchings.

4.7. There are eroded mortar joints to the brick-built chimney stacks which require partial re-pointing.

4.8. The stone-built stack has isolated cracked and loose mortar requiring replacement.

4.9. There are mortar flaunchings to the base of the stacks and front roof slope abutment of the single-storey roof which are currently in satisfactory condition but will require replacement from time to time.

- 4.10. Consideration should be given to the fitting of lead flashings although this would require listed building consent.
- 4.11. There is woodworm infestation noted to roof timbers but which is not active and I understand that treatment has been undertaken by previous owners, for which there is a guarantee.
- 4.12. Repairs/strengthening have been undertaken to the older roof structures and although repairs to the ridge in the left side has not been undertaken to a good standard, there is no evidence of any problems as a result.
- 4.13. There is some bowing, bulging and distortion to the external walls which is not unusual for a property of this age and type of construction and there is no evidence to suggest that there is an ongoing problem.
- 4.14. Timberwork to the garden room is suffering decay and there are failed double-glazing units. Depending upon the extent of decay affecting the timberwork, replacement may prove a more cost-effective long-term solution.
- 4.15. There is some visible dampness of an isolated nature to the internal walls and internal face of some of the external walls.
- 4.16. This is not unusual in a property of this age and type of construction and can prove very difficult to eliminate.
- 4.17. The vendor advised that damp-proofing has been undertaken by previous owners and when they purchased the property, some remedial work was undertaken under the guarantee.
- 4.17.1. I suspect that previous damp-proofing works have been undertaken without listed building consent and have not been undertaken to a very good standard, although the vendor advised that there is a guarantee.
- 4.17.2. Problems of dampness within properties of this type are difficult to fully eradicate, but can be reasonably well controlled by the use of vapour permeable materials such as lime mortars and plasters and ensuring adequate heating and ventilation.
- 4.17.3. I do not consider that remedial works are essential and in any case would require listed building consent which may not necessarily be forthcoming.
- 4.17.4. The boiler is 15 years old and essentially at the end of its design life expectancy.
- 4.17.5. It may continue to operate for years to come, however you should anticipate to have to replace it at any time.
- 4.17.6. The electrical installation is in the region of 30 years old.

- 4.17.7. There were no significant defects evident however I would recommend that the system is tested and upgraded as necessary.
- 4.17.8. I would also recommend that you consider the installation of mains-wired, interconnected smoke detectors and mains-wired carbon monoxide detectors, in accordance with current guidelines.
- 4.17.9. Consideration should also be given to the fitting of an extractor fan in the utility room.
- 4.17.10. Inspection of the drainage system was restricted in that one of the inspection chamber covers could not be lifted.
- 4.17.11. There is no evidence to suggest that there are any problems with the below ground drainage system and the chamber in the rear garden was noted to be clean and running freely.
- 4.17.12. First floors to the middle bedroom and adjacent bathroom are deflected and slope down towards the rear of the property but I do not anticipate that this would become any worse.
- 4.17.13. There is some hairline cracking to the ceiling and wall in the landing but which I do not anticipate will become significantly worse or at a measurable rate.
- 4.18. I have identified various defects within the main body of the report, the more significant of which are listed below together with approximate budget costings. This takes no account of any defects which may currently be hidden but become apparent during opening up of the building.
- 4.19. Unless indicated otherwise, the costs do not allow for any scaffolding required to undertake repairs.


Ref:	Repair	Cost (£)	Priority
1.	Replace defective roof slates.	150-250	1-2
2.	Re-point chimney stacks as necessary and replace defective flashings to pots/terminals.	300-400	2
3.	Replace defective mortar flaunching to lean-to roof abutment.	100-150	1-2
4.	Replace defective mortar to water tables.	150-200	2
5.	Replace missing water table to corbel.	150-200	3
6.	Adjust gutters to rear right.	300-400	2
7.	Re-pointing of eroded mortar joints to walls and conservatory cills.	150-200	2
8.	Repairs to garden room.	700-900	2

Ref:	Repair	Cost (£)	Priority
9.	Provide additional bracing to garage foot and fit lateral restraint straps.	250-350	2-3
10.	Fit plastic eaves trays.	500-600	3
11.	Upgrade insulation to single-storey roof spaces.	400-500	2-3
12.	Electrical testing and upgrading as necessary.	350-500	1
13.	Provide mains-wired, interconnected smoke detectors.	400-600	3
14.	Provide mechanical extractor fan to utility room.	250-350	3
15.	Provide mains-wired carbon monoxide detectors.	400-600	3

PRIORITY - How important I feel the repair is:-

1. **Urgent** – Needs immediate attention.
2. **Essential** – Should be done.
3. **Desirable** – Needs to be done but could be left.

- 4.20. The costs included within the report are for budget purposes only and represent the expected costs associated with having the works executed by a competent local builder. Competitive quotations should be obtained prior to purchase.
- 4.21. The costs make no allowance for VAT or for further professional fees which may be incurred.
- 4.22. Please note that the report is confidential to the Client and may not be reproduced or passed on without the written prior approval of both Surveyor and Client.
- 4.23. Should you wish to discuss this report, please do not hesitate to contact this office.



I R Johnson MRICS
Chartered Building Surveyor
For JohnsonClark

Mobile No. 07970 935088
e-mail: ian@johnsonclark.co.uk

Table of Appendices

Appendix A - Matters for Legal Adviser's Attention

Appendix B – Environment and Health Hazards

Appendix C - What To Do Now

Appendix D - Glossary of Building Terms

Appendix E - Maintenance Tips

SAMPLE

Appendix A

Matters for Legal Adviser's Attention

Building regulations

The building will not satisfy a variety of contemporary standards of construction and performance criteria set out in the current Building Regulations such as, for example, thermal insulation. This statement is true of the vast majority of buildings in the UK.

The statute under which the Building Regulations are made in the UK is the Building Act 1984. Neither this Act, nor the Regulations themselves are applicable retrospectively. This avoids the need for constant improvement of properties to satisfy current standards.

Planning permission

We have not been requested to investigate and set out in detail the planning history of this property. We have not been provided with any Planning documents on which to comment. Consequently, from our inspection, we cannot comment on the existence or otherwise of any infringements of any Planning Consents or conditions attached to such Consents.

We assume that this matter will be considered by solicitors.

Heritage Consents

Due to the age of the property, it may be protected by heritage legislation, necessitating the requirement to obtain statutory consents for either planned or previously completed works. We recommend obtaining confirmation from your Solicitor that any necessary heritage consents have been obtained for previously completed works, and that all works have been completed in accordance with any conditions contained within those heritage consents.

If the property is found to be protected, then listed building consent will be required for 'any works for the demolition of the building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest'. In addition, listed building consent may be required for works to ancillary buildings, objects or structures within the curtilage of a listed building, which affect the special character of the listed building (commonly referred to as curtilage listing).

If the property is found to be in a conservation area, then planning consent will likely be required for the demolition of any buildings even if unlisted building, but are within a designated Conservation Area. This consent is now addressed under Planning Consent controls.

Statutory

- Confirm all Statutory Approvals for all alteration and construction work. Obtain copies of all Approved Plans for any alterations or extensions to the property.
- Any rights or responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of jointly used services including drainage, gutters, down pipes and chimneys should be established.

- The right for you to enter adjacent property to maintain any structure situated on or near the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter on to your property.
- Any responsibilities to maintain access roads and driveways, which may not be adopted by the Local Authority, should be established.
- Obtain any certificates or guarantees, accompanying reports and plans for damp-proof course and timber treatment, which may have been carried out in the property.
- Investigate if any fire, public health or other requirements or regulations are satisfied and that up to date certificates are available.
- Investigate any proposed use of adjoining land and clarify the likelihood of any future type of development, which could adversely affect this property.
- Where there are trees in the adjacent gardens, which are growing sufficiently close to the property to cause possible damage, we would suggest that the owners are notified of the situation.
- Whilst there were clearly defined physical boundaries to the site, these may not necessarily lie on the legal boundaries. These matters should be checked through your Solicitors.
- You should obtain all guarantees relevant to the property, including matters such as replacement glazing, damp-proof course, etc. The guarantees should be formally assigned to you and preferably indemnified against eventualities such as contractors going out of business.
- The tenure is assumed to be Freehold, or Long Leasehold subject to nil or nominal Chief or Ground Rent. Your legal adviser should confirm all details.
- Confirmation should be obtained that all mains services are indeed connected.
- Confirmation should be obtained by the provision of service documentation, of when the electric and gas installations were last tested.

Rights of Way, Easements, Shared Services, etc.

Your legal adviser should check boundary positions and the responsibilities

Guarantees/Warranties

Where work has been carried out to the property previously, it is recommended that guarantees be obtained prior to a legal commitment to purchase. These should ideally be indemnified against eventualities such as the contractors going out of business, and should cover workmanship as well as materials. Confirmation should be obtained as to the residue of the guarantee and that a transfer will occur upon change in ownership.

Legal enquiries should be made to confirm if any testing of the electrical, gas and heating appliances have been undertaken, with any testing of service records being obtained prior to a legal commitment to purchase.

Thermal Insulation and Energy Efficiency

As part of the marketing process current regulations require the provision of an Energy Performance Certificate. Legal enquiries are advised to confirm that such a Certificate has been obtained. This document provides the usual information regarding advice on energy efficiency and thermal improvement, which will assist in potentially reducing heating expenditure.

From 1 April 2018, under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) 2015, it became illegal to lease a property with an F or G rating on an Energy Performance Certificate. In the residential market the regulations extend to all properties with a valid EPC on 1 April 2020. This report does not provide extended advice on Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) Regulations (2015) and is not designed to be used as evidence for the PRS Exemption Register. The responsibility for complying with MEES is allocated to the landlord and/or owner of the property.

SAMPLE

Appendix B

Environment and Health Hazards

Below we have provided advice regarding certain issues of an environmental nature. The potential issues outlined below should not be considered an exhaustive list of matters to be considered.

Flooding risk

We have not undertaken detailed investigations into the potential for flooding of the land on which the property lies. However, a search on the website www.environment-agency.gov.uk, of the Environment Agency will provide information regarding the potential for flooding on any site.

Tree proximity

The proximity of trees to buildings can give rise to concern because structural damage can be caused by root systems growing around, under and sometimes through foundations and subterranean walls. The risk of damage caused by tree roots depends on:

- the proximity of the tree to the building concerned
- the height, age and species of tree
- the design and depth of a building's foundations
- the type of sub-soil

If there are trees near the building. The growth of these trees should be monitored and, if necessary, controlled in due course.

Radon risk

Radon is a radioactive gas that occurs naturally in the ground. It occurs when uranium decays. Uranium is found in small quantities in all soil and rocks. Decaying uranium turns into radium and when radium, in turn, decays, it becomes radon. Uranium can also be found in building materials derived from the rocks.

Radon rises through cracks and fissures in the ground into the air. Outdoors, radon is diluted and the risk it poses is negligible. Problems occur when it enters enclosed spaces, such as a building, where concentration levels can build up. When this happens, it can cause a significant health hazard to the occupants of a building by increasing the risk of lung cancer.

Radon is everywhere, but usually in insignificant quantities. General technical information on Radon can be obtained from Public Health England. Their website address is <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england>

Following the legal searches, if Radon, as an environmental hazard, is something that you are particularly sensitive to, further investigations and, if necessary, testing should be considered for an assessment of the site's exposure.

Electromagnetic fields and microwave exposure

There has been concern that electromagnetic fields from both natural and artificial sources can cause a wide range of illnesses such as blackouts, insomnia and headaches to depression, allergies and cancer. Artificial sources commonly comprise overhead or subterranean high voltage electrical power cables.

It is suggested that the electrical discharges from these high voltage cables upset the balance of minute electrical impulses employed by the human body to regulate itself in much the same way as television and radio signals can be disrupted.

Controversy and uncertainty prevail with regard to this matter; no strong evidence that is generally accepted to be conclusive has been developed to prove or disprove this alleged hazard. More information is available from the National Radiological Protection Board's website. You should be aware that the presence of power cabling in the vicinity of a building can affect its value and liquidity in addition to the health of those occupying the property.

We have not undertaken any separate inquiries with the relevant statutory authority as part of this inspection.

Invasive vegetation

The existence of any Knotweed or Hogweed around the property many have been highlighted with this report. However, we have not carried out a thorough inspection of the whole garden.

Japanese Knotweed was introduced into the UK in the 19th century. It grows vigorously and can cover large areas to the exclusion of most other plant species. It has been known to grow through bitumen macadam, house floors and sometimes through foundations.

Wood Boring Insects (Woodworm)

We have not undertaken a detailed investigation into the potential for Woodworm as this would cause for intrusive works to be carried out, however we will highlight if presenting at the time of the inspection any evidence of an active infestation.

Woodworm may manifest itself in a number of varieties ranging from 3mm in size to 25mm. Eggs are laid on or in the timber and the larvae that hatch feed and bore into the timber which consequently results in weakening of timbers and a risk to the structural integrity of the property. Treatment of active woodworm involves applying insecticides to the timbers. In extreme cases where the timbers structural integrity has been compromised by the attack, replacement may be the only solution.

Fungal Decay (Dry Rot & Wet Rot)

Moist and damp conditions provide an ideal environment for fungal attack. In cases where the moisture content is over 20% this is classified as 'dry rot'. Fine grey strands of fungus spread through wood and other materials developing into sporophores which give off spores which in turn spread the fungus further. Timber suffering from dry rot becomes very dry and brittle and begins to fracture to such an extent that it can be broken and crumble by hand. When the moisture content is higher than 40% to 50% this is classified as 'wet rot'. The presence of wet rot in timber is recognised by a dark brown staining colour and splitting or longitudinal cracking.

Treatment of fungal decay is initially to remove the source of the dampness which is enabling the fungus to 'feed' and develop. Exposure works will then be

necessary to determine the full extent of the damage caused. Following any repairs or replacement works it will be necessary to treat the timbers with an approved fungicide to safeguard against recurrence.

SAMPLE

Appendix C

What To Do Now

Getting quotations

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

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

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

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

Further investigations

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

Who you should use for these further investigations

You should ask an appropriately qualified person, though it is not possible to tell you which one. Specialists belonging to different types of organisations will be able to do this. For example, qualified electricians can belong to five different government approved schemes. If you want further advice, please contact the surveyor.

What the further investigations will involve

This will depend on the type of problem, but to do this properly, parts of the home may have to be disturbed and so you should discuss this matter with the current owner. In some cases, the cost of investigation may be high.

Appendix D

Glossary of Building Terms

A

Air Brick A perforated brick usually to be found in external walls to provide - ventilation to ground floor joists.

Alcove A room access often found to both sides of a chimney breast.

Angle Irons Wrought iron right angle shaped bars.

Apron or Apron Flashing Traditionally of lead and correctly used to describe a strip of lead built into a wall and dressed up the wall, eg where a flat roof abuts a vertical wall.

Arch A curved structure built to distribute weight over an opening in a wall.

Architrave Traditionally a moulded wood strip around the edge of a door, covering the joint of door frame and plaster or other wall finish.

Arris The sharp external edge where two surfaces meet at a point.

Ashlar Stone walls built with cut blocks of stone.

B

Baluster A vertical pillar supporting the hand rail of a staircase; may be carved or plain.

Balustrade A row of balusters joined to a horizontal rail at, for example, the edge of a landing.

Barge Board The board placed along the verge of a roof at the gable end.

Bat A cut brick, either half bat or three-quarter bat.

Batten Timber fillets to which slates and tiles are nailed or fixed.

Benchings Originally called bolstering - this refers to the cement finish to the space between open pipes where they join in a manhole.

Birdsmouth (joint) The notch cut in the end of a rafter where it joins the wall plate.

Bond The placing of bricks in mortar to form a wall - English bond, Flemish bond, garden wall bond.

Bottom Rail The lowest horizontal part of a door.

Box Girder A hollow girder.

Boxing A term for the recess into which internal window shutters are folded.

Braced Door A type of door with diagonal supported braces.

Breeze (as in breeze block) Ashes, coke or cinders formed into a building block used for partition walls or inner skins of cavity walls.

Brick Noggin Brickwork built into a timber framework.

Buttress A brick or stone support to a wall designed to resist thrust movement and give added stability.

C

Cames The lead bars in leaded lights

Cased Frame Adjoining sash windows with a cased frame in the middle for the weights.

Casement A window hinged at one end and designed to open inwards or outwards.

Ceiling Joist Joist which supports a ceiling.

Cement Fillet A cement joint, generally used to describe cement joints between roof slopes and walls.

Cesspool A construction to hold sewage and foul waste.

Chair Rail The top of the dado fixed about 3ft above ground level.

Chamfer Where the edge or arris of adjoining walls has been cut to form a flat surface.

Chase A cut in plaster, brickwork, etc, to receive cables, pipes, etc.

Chimney Breast That part of the chimney flue that projects into a room.

Chimney Stack That part of the chimney built above roof level.

Close End (or Stopped End) The end of a gutter.

Closer As in Queen closer, is a brick cut along its horizontal length; or as in King closer, with a cut corner.

Cogging A notch in a wall plate for joist.

Collar A horizontal timber joining rafters, the cross piece in a single frame.

Coping Brick or stonework on top of a wall.

Corbelling Bricks projecting in step from a wall, often found at the top of a wall immediately below the roof.

Cornice Ornamental plaster around the joint of wall and ceiling.

Couple Roof A roof without a collar.

Coursed Rubble Squared stone laid in course, but with courses of different sizes.

Cowl A movable cap to the chimney or vent pipe which moves in the wind to keep the opening away from the direction of the wind.

Creasing Projecting courses of tiles at the top of a wall or chimney stack to stop rain from running down the face of the wall.

Crown The top of an archway.

Cupola A glazed structure in the shape of a lantern found at the top of a dome.

D

Dado The lower 3ft or so of wall where finished in timber, providing protection to the wall and covering the brickwork most likely to be effected by rising damp.

Damp-proof Course (dpc) An impervious membrane laid about two brick courses above ground level to prevent damp from rising.

Dormer Window A window formed in a roof slope which projects from the slope.

Double-hung Sash Window A window where the upper and lower sashes are hung on cords or slides and can move up and down.

Dowel Usually used to describe a timber pin holding jointed section of timber together.

Dress, Dressing Terms used by plumbers when working with lead. Dressed lead has been beaten into shape.

E

Ear part of cast-iron or lead rainwater goods used for fixing pipes to walls.

Eaves The lower edge of a roof near the gutter.

English Bond A brick wall with alternate courses of headers and stretchers.

English Garden Wall Bond Brickwork constructed with three courses of stretchers and one of headers.

Entablature The finish at the top of a column.

Escutcheon The metal plate covering the key hole.

Espagnolette Bolt Typically found on continental windows were, when turned the casement is bolted at top and bottom.

F

Fanlight A light (window) over a door or casement.

Fascia The board to which the gutters are fixed.

Fillet A small strip of wood, slate, cement.

Finial An ornament, often of terracotta, fixed at the gable end of the ridge.

Fire Bricks Special bricks for fireplaces designed to withstand intense heat.

Firring Tapered pieces of timber laid on joists of flat roofs to provide an adequate fall to gutters.

Fish Plates Iron plates for joining large beams.

Flag A large paving stone - as in flagstone.

Flank Wall A side wall.

Flashings Usually made of lead and fixed to provide a waterproof protection at the joint of flat roofs and adjoining walls between pitched roofs and walls or around chimneys.

Flat A flat roof.

Flaunching The cement work around chimney pots.

Flemish Bond Brickwork with alternate headers and stretchers in each course.

Footings A term sometimes used for foundations, effectively where the brick wall widens out at its base on top of the foundations.

Framed and Braced Door A door made up of rails, styles, battens and braces.

French Casement (or Door) A pair of sashes the height of a door and hinged to serve as a door and window. Used to describe any casement door from living room into garden.

Fresco Painting done on plaster.

Frog The depression in the top of a brick.

Furniture In building terms - the handles, knobs, locks etc, fitted to doors, windows and fitted or built-in cupboards.

G

Gable As in gable end, is the triangular part of a wall under a roof end.

Gauged Arch Where the bricks forming the arch are cut to the radial form.

Gauged Brickwork Bricks rubbed to an exact size and laid with very fine joints.

Girder A large beam made from iron or steel.

Granolithic A floor finish of crushed stone or aggregate.

Grout Used for filling the joints in wall tiles.

H

Half Timbered Timber framed walls filled with brick or stone and frequently plastered.

Header The end of a brick.

Herring-bone Bond Bricks bonded in diagonal lines.

Herring-bone Strutting Pieces of wood nailed between joists to reduce movement.

Hip The angle where two roof plans meet at a ridge.

Hopperhead A funnel of hopper-shaped head to the top of the rainwater pipes to

collect rainwater and waste from one or more pipes.

I

Interlocking Tiles Tiles which lock together to form a water tight roof without the need for lapping.

Invert of Invert Levels The lowest part of a drain.

J

Jamb The side of a door or window.

Joists Timbers built into or hung from walls to provide support for floors or fixing for ceiling or both.

K

Key A surface can be roughened to form as a key, eg for rendering purposes. It also refers in lath and plaster work to the early coats which are forced through the gaps in the laths to form a key.

Keystone The centre stone or an arch.

Kingpost The central post of a timber roof truss.

Knotting A liquid applied to knots in woodwork prior to painting. Knots not treated will always show through.

L

Lantern Light A roof light (window) constructed like a lantern with opening or fixed glazing.

Lap To overlap a course of slates.

Lean-to A structure, the sloping roof which abuts a higher wall.

Ledged and Braced Door A door which is strengthened with diagonal braces.

Ledged Door A door where vertical boards are fixed to ledges only.

Linings The wood finish to door and window jambs.

Lintel The horizontal beam over a window or door opening.

M

Mansard Roof A roof made with two slopes - effectively provides a top floor of usable space within a roof structure.

Mastic A generic term for any sealant used in the building process, eg for sealing the joint around window openings.

Mezzanine A floor between the ground floor and first floor.

Mullion An upright division of a window.

N

Newel The post at the bottom and top of a stair to which the handrail is fixed.

North Light Generally refers to factory roof construction which includes a glazed slope facing north.

Nosing The rounded projecting edge of a step in a staircase.

O

Oriel Window A window projecting from an upper floor.

Oversailing Course A projecting course of brickwork.

P

Padstone A stone laid under the end of and RSJ to distribute weight.

Panelled Door A door which is inset with panels - these may be glazed.

Pantile A curved roofing tile which hooks over adjoining tiles.

Parapet As in parapet wall - the external wall is built up above the eaves with a gutter formed behind it, or mansard constructed behind it.

Pargetting Plaster finish to the inside of a new flue.

Parquet Floor Small strips of wood usually laid on a solid floor to form a pattern.

Parting Bead The timber fillet that separates sliding sashes in the window frame.

Parting Slip The timber fillet inside the frame of a sash window to keep the weights of the two sashes apart.

Partition A wall dividing internal space can be stud partition, ie non-loadbearing.

Party Wall The wall which separates, but is shared by adjoining properties.

Pitch The slope of the roof, technically the ratio of span to height.

Plinth The projecting base of a wall.

Pointing To point is to fill the joints of brickwork with mortar. A process carried out while laying the bricks or at a later stage.

Purlins The horizontal roof member on which the rafters rest.

Q

Quoin Bricks or stones used at corners of walls.

R

Rafters The roof timbers to which felt and battens are fixed.

Rail A horizontal part of a door frame or window.

Raking Bond Diagonal or herring-bone brick bond.

Random Rubble Stone walls built without courses.

Rebate A set-back in timber, stone, etc.

Relieving Arch An arch over a lintel.

Retaining Wall A wall built to hold back or retain a bank of soil.

Ridge The top of the roof where the two slopes meet.

Ridge Course The course of tiles or slates fixed next to the ridge which may be of a different size to the rest.

Ridge Piece A horizontal timber running the length of the ridge to which rafters may be fixed.

Ridge Tile A shaped tile placed along the ridge.

Rising Butt A door hinge which raises a door as it opens.

Roof Boarding Where rafters are covered in boards before battens are laid.

Rough Cast A rough render finish to external walls usually made with gravel.

RSJ Rolled steel joists used for supporting upper load-bearing walls above wide opening.

S

Sarking A felt used for covering roofs before laying battens.

Sash The frame of a window that holds the glass.

Settlement Sinking of foundations.

Sill The piece of timber at the bottom of a window - window sill.

Skirting A board fixed to the bottom of a wall at joint of the wall and floor.

Skylight A window in the slope of a roof.

Sleeper Wall A low wall built to support ground - floor joists.

Soakers Lead strips to provide water-proof joint between a roof slope and adjoining wall.

Stack Pipe The correct name for vertical rainwater pipe.

Stretcher A brick laid length ways in a wall.

String The sloping board to which the steps of the staircase are attached.

String Course A course of brickwork that projects beyond the face of an external wall.

Struck Joint Pointing depressed with a trowel handles or shaped wood.

Stucco A type of external plaster finish.

Style A vertical part of a door.

T

Tilting Fillet A timber fillet fixed at eaves to raise the edge of the first row of slates.

Tingles Strips of lead or other metal used to secure the edge of flashings or to hold slipped slates in position.

Tongue and Groove Boarding Close-fitted boards where the edge of one board fits into a groove of an adjoining board.

Trimmer Joists Used where openings are made in roofs and floors, eg for roof hatches, stairwells.

Truss As in roof truss, ie timber framed together off site.

Tusk Pointing Projecting pointing.

U

Underpin To strengthen existing walls and foundations.

V

Valley The junction between two sloping-roof planes.

Vent As in vent pipe, to allow ventilation of foul air from sewers.

W

Wainscot Panel boarding to walls.

Wallplate Timber placed on a wall to receive floor joists or roof rafters.

Weatherboard A board fixed to the bottom of a door on the outside to prevent rain driving in.

Weepholes Holes at the base of walls to allow moisture to drain out.

Appendix E

Maintenance Tips

Your home needs maintaining in the normal way, and this general advice may be useful when read together with your report. It is not specific to this property and does not include comprehensive details. Problems in construction may develop slowly over time. If you are concerned contact a RICS qualified surveyor for further advice.

Outside the Property

You should check the condition of your property at least once a year and after unusual storms. Your routine redecoration of the outside of the property will also give you an opportunity to closely examine the building.

- **Chimney stacks:** Check these occasionally for signs of cracked cement, split or broken pots, or loose and gaping joints in the brickwork or render. Storms may loosen aerials or other fixings, including the materials used to form the joints with the roof coverings.
- **Roof coverings:** Check these occasionally for slipped, broken and missing tiles or slates, particularly after storms.

Flat roofing has a limited life, and is at risk of cracking and blistering. You should not walk on a flat roof except for maintenance work. Where possible keep it free from debris. If it is covered with spar chippings, make sure the coverage is even, and replace chippings where necessary.

- **Rainwater pipes and gutters:** Clear any debris at least once a year, and check for leaks when it is raining. You should also check for any loose downpipe connectors and broken fixings.
- **Main walls:** Check main walls for cracks and any uneven bulging. Maintain the joints in brickwork and repair loose or broken rendering. Re-paint decorated walls regularly. Cut back or remove any plants that are harmful to mortar and render. Keep the soil level well below the level of any damp proof course (150mm minimum recommended) and make sure any ventilation bricks are kept clear. Check over cladding for broken, rotted or damaged areas that need repairing.

- **Windows and doors:** Once a year check all frames for signs of rot in wood frames, for any splits in plastic or metal frames and for rusting to latches and hinges in metal frames. Maintain all decorated frames by repairing or redecorating at the first sign of any deterioration. In autumn check double glazing for condensation between the glazing, as this is a sign of a faulty unit. Have broken or cracked glass replaced by a qualified specialist. Check for broken sash cords on sliding sash windows, and sills and window boards for any damage.
- **Conservatories and porches:** Keep all glass surfaces clean, and clear all rainwater gutters and downpipes. Look for broken glazing and for any leaks when its raining. Arrange for repairs by a qualified specialist.
- **Other joinery and finishes:** Regularly redecorate all joinery, and check for rot and decay which you should repair at the same time.

Inside the Property

You can check the inside of your property regularly when cleaning, decorating and replacing carpets or floor coverings. You should also check the roof area occasionally.

- **Roof structure:** When you access the roof area, check for signs of any leaks and the presence of vermin, rot or decay to timbers. Also look for tears to the under-felting of the roof, and check pipes, lagging and insulated areas.
- **Ceilings:** If you have a leak in the roof the first sign is often damp on the ceiling beneath the roof. Be aware if your ceiling begins to look uneven as this may indicate a serious problem particularly for older ceilings.
- **Walls and partitions:** Check these when you are cleaning or redecorating. Look for cracking and impact damage, or damp areas which may be caused by plumbing faults or defects on the outside of the property.
- **Floors:** Be alert for signs of unevenness when you are cleaning or moving furniture, particularly with timber floors.

- **Fireplaces, chimney breast and flues:** You should arrange for a qualified specialist to regularly sweep all used open chimneys. Also, make sure that bricked-up flues are ventilated. Flues to gas appliances should be checked annually by a qualified gas technician.
- **Built-in fittings, woodwork and joinery:** Check for broken fittings.

Services

- Ensure all meters and control valves are easy to access and not hidden or covered over.
- Arrange for an appropriately qualified technician to check and test all gas and oil services, boilers, heating systems and connected devices once a year.
- Electrical installations should only be replaced or modified by a suitably qualified electrician and tested as specified by the Electrical Safety Council (recommended minimum of a ten year period if no alterations or additions are made, or on change of occupancy).

- Monitor plumbing regularly during use and when you are cleaning. Look out for leakage and breakages, and check insulation to tanks and pipes are adequate particularly as winter approaches.
- Lift drain covers annually to check for blockages and clean these as necessary. Check any private drainage systems annually, and arrange for a qualified contractor to clear these as necessary. Keep gullies free from debris.

Grounds

- **Garages and outbuildings:** Follow the maintenance advice given for the main building.
- **Other:** Regularly prune trees, shrubs and hedges as necessary. Look out for any overhanging and unsafe branches, loose walls, fences and ornaments, particularly after storms. Clear leaves and other debris, moss and algae growth. Making sure all hard surfaces are stable and level and not slippery or a trip hazard.

Important Information for Purchasers of Older, Listed and Historic Properties

Modern properties, those built after 1900 or so, are essentially constructed as sealed boxes which are designed to keep all moisture out. This is achieved by the use of impermeable membranes at ground level (such as a damp-proof course) to prevent moisture rising up from the ground below and cavity walls which are designed to prevent moisture penetrating through the walls. Windows and doors are made to seal tightly and most houses built today are constructed without any chimneys at all.

In this type of property, where dampness is found inside, then it is generally due to some specific defect which will require repair.

Older properties, generally those built before 1850 or so, were constructed in a very different way and one in which moisture will naturally enter the property. They do not have damp-proof courses or cavity walls and are not intended to be a sealed unit.

However, these properties are designed to manage the movement of moisture in such a way as to prevent it becoming a hazard to health or to the structure of the building and it is important to understand the mechanisms by which it does this in order to protect the structural elements of the building from becoming defective.

At the time that these properties were constructed, it was normal for them to have many openings where draughts could enter the building, such as multiple open fireplaces, ill-fitting doors and windows and gaps in floorboards. As a result, ventilation levels were very high, allowing moisture to evaporate readily in the moving air and to be carried away to the outside. So, for example, where moisture penetrated the walls, although the inside surfaces of those walls would be damp, the levels of moisture would achieve equilibrium as the rate of evaporation compensated for the rate of penetration.

Today, we try to minimise draughts by blocking fireplaces, adding secondary or double glazing, laying laminate floors and sealing the gaps around doors and windows. As a result, moisture levels rise due to the decreased air movement that is a consequence of the reduced ventilation. This then leads to dampness becoming evident, particularly in areas of minimal air movement, such as behind large objects of furniture and within cupboards and wardrobes.

Many older homes were built at a time when lime mortar was the primary method of setting bricks and stones. Lime mortar is both flexible and porous, unlike the very hard, inflexible and non-porous cement mortars used in more modern construction. Lime mortar, therefore, allows the moisture evaporation process to continue by acting as a wick for moisture to leave the main walls between the bricks and/or stones that make up the bulk of the wall. This is a further step in the process of managing moisture within the property.

Today, we see many repairs carried out to older homes using cement mortar. This seals the gaps between the bricks and/or stones, trapping the moisture in the wall and forcing it into the surface of the bricks and stones, causing them to fail when that moisture freezes in the surface of those materials and by reducing the amount of moisture that can evaporate through the wall to the outside, it increases dampness levels inside.

As a result of the actions described above, it is common, today, to find higher than average moisture levels in older properties. The consequences of this can cause significant defects within the property. In particular, high moisture levels, especially in roof spaces and cellars, can promote the development of wood boring insects such as Common Furniture Beetle and Death Watch Beetle in structural timbers such as roof and floor joists. High levels of dampness in walls causes plaster to fail, decorations to become damaged and, in some properties, significant damage to the timber frame of the building.

To avoid these defects developing and becoming a serious threat to the building, it is important to be aware of the consequences of any actions which may have an impact on moisture management within the building.

The following is a list of suggestions and recommendations that will help maintain the building in a good and sound condition. It is by no means an exhaustive list and it is recommended that all owners of listed, historic and older buildings inform themselves of the best way to protect such a property.

1. Consider ways to improve ventilation within the property. This may include the installation of mechanical extractors in kitchens and bathrooms, removing secondary glazing units, ensuring that windows can be opened easily and that they are used regularly, removing insulation from the eaves area of the roof where it may block ventilation and not leaving the property closed up and unoccupied for extended periods.
2. Where repairs are necessary, ensure they are carried out by tradespeople who are knowledgeable and competent in traditional building methods and that materials are sympathetic to those used originally. In particular, where walls are to be re-pointed, then lime mortar (which is very different from cement mortar with some lime added) should be used and any earlier cement mortar repairs removed and re-finished.
3. Ensure that the guttering and rainwater handling systems are in a well maintained and fully operative condition. Very significant damage can be caused in a very short period of time due to simple leaking gutters, downpipes, hoppers and other elements of the rainwater handling system. It is therefore essential that these are inspected regularly, at least three or four times a year and any damages or defects repaired as quickly as possible. In particular, they should be cleared after autumn leaf fall to ensure they are as effective as possible during the winter.
4. Maintain a regular and vigilant inspection process. Unidentified or unrepaired defects can rapidly become more significant and therefore more costly to repair. A regular process of inspection is more likely to ensure that defects are identified at an early stage and can be rectified before further damage is caused. Such a process should include inspection of all the outside elements such as chimneys, roofs, walls, guttering and downpipes, windows and doors and roof edge timbers etc. Internal inspections should include a detailed examination of the roof timbers, moving of large objects of furniture to assess the wall condition behind, examination of floors, doors and timber fittings to identify signs of movement and the condition of the heating and plumbing systems to ensure no leaks are present. This is in addition to a general and normal maintenance programme.

5. Avoid the introduction of unnecessary interventions. Many companies will recommend the use of chemical processes such as spraying of timbers or injection of damp-proof courses as a means of rectifying the effects of dampness. In most cases, in respect of older properties, these processes are completely unnecessary, usually ineffective and in many instances counter-productive. Attempting to prevent the passage of moisture through a wall which was always intended to be damp is unlikely to affect a cure. In fact, it is likely to push the problem elsewhere and may cause even more significant damage.

Remember that, if a property is listed, any works you wish to carry out may require listed building consent and it is always best to check with the local authority Conservation Officer before undertaking any activities.

There are many useful resources of information available from, for instance English Heritage and the Society of Protection of Ancient Buildings, which can help you in understanding how to manage an older property in a sympathetic and considered way. It is strongly recommended that you gain an understanding of the means and methods that they advocate in order to protect your investment.

