

TIM STUBBS
LIMITED

RESIDENTIAL SURVEYORS AND VALUERS

Building Survey



BUILDING SURVEY

[ADDRESS OF PROPERTY]

1 Introduction

1.1 Scope of instructions

This building survey report has been prepared in accordance with the signed terms and conditions of engagement. It is pointed out that this is a general building survey report on the property and not a schedule of condition which would list every minor defect. It is a report intended to give a general opinion as to the condition of the property and enable you plan for future maintenance. Most clients find it useful to read the Surveyor's overall assessment given in Section 4 to gain a general overview of the most significant matters. It is common however, and essential that the whole report is read and considered in detail. Prior to exchange of contracts, you should conclude all of the further investigations that have been recommended and have these and all the repairs priced so that you are fully aware of the financial commitment you will be entering into when purchasing the property.

A spare copy of the report is provided which should be passed to your Legal Adviser with a request that the points mentioned within the report, particularly those under Section 9 are researched as necessary, together with the normal searches.

This report has been prepared solely for the benefit of the named client. No liability is accepted to any third party.

No formal enquires have been made of the statutory authorities or investigations made to verify information as to the tenure and existence of rights or easements.

Where work has been carried to the property in the past, the Surveyor cannot warrant that this has been done in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations, British and European Standards and Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates and Statutory Regulations.

This report is private and for the confidential use of the named client above and should not be reproduced in whole or part or relied upon by third parties for any use without the express written authority of

1.2 Property address

1.3 Client's name and address

1.4 Date of survey

1.5 Weather

Generally dull and overcast. My inspection follows several days of intermittent, but quite heavy and prolonged rainfall.

1.6 Limitations of inspection

Comment cannot be given on areas that are covered, concealed or not otherwise readily visible. There may be detectible signs of concealed defects in which case recommendations are made in the Report. In the absence of any such evidence, it must be assumed in producing this Report that such areas are free from defect. If assurance is required on these matters, it will be necessary to carry out exposure works. Unless these are carried out prior to exchange of contracts, there is a risk that additional defects and consequent repair costs will be discovered at a later date.

The Property is occupied, fully furnished and has fitted carpets and floor surface coverings throughout.

Each room has been inspected in detail. Damp meter readings have been taken where possible without moving furniture. Fitted carpets have not been raised unless reasonably practical at the edges.

It should be appreciated that some service pipes and cables are covered and access panels cannot be opened without disturbing decorations. Therefore, a full inspection was not possible.

Because the main part of the roof space is used as living accommodation, there is only a relatively small area of residual roof void on which I can comment.

Built-in cupboards containing the owner's personal belongings were not examined in any great detail.

It should be appreciated that parts of the Property are over 200 years old. Accordingly, such parts of the structure and fabric should not be expected to be "as new" and due regard has to be given to natural deterioration due to the elements and usage. Restoration to a condition "as new", particularly of brickwork, stonework, joinery and roofing materials can prove uneconomic. The report has been prepared having due regard to the age and type of the building.

This Report reflects the condition of the various parts of the Property at the time of our inspection. It is possible that defects could arise between the date of the survey and date upon which you take occupation.

1.7 Information relied upon in this report

In addition to the findings and discoveries of my inspection, I have relied upon extensive information provided by the owners at the time of my visit.

2 Description of the property

2.1 Type and age

This is a substantial detached house with accommodation arranged on three separate floors. Whilst the exact date of construction is not known, I would estimate that the oldest part of the building is between 200 and 250 years of age. Various changes have been made during the history of the house, with specific reference to the provision of past extension/modification of the accommodation.

The building was extensively renovated and modernised by the existing owners approximately 23 years ago. In 1992, a detached garage and store was built to the rear of the house.

2.2 Accommodation

CELLAR

GROUND FLOOR: Lounge, separate dining room, sitting room, dining kitchen, walk-in pantry, store, utility room and separate w.c.

FIRST FLOOR: Landing, four bedrooms, two bathrooms – each with a w.c.

SECOND FLOOR: Two intercommunicating bedrooms.

EXTERNALLY: The house fronts onto the road. There is a small area of garden at the side and split-level landscaped hard surfaced garden to the rear. There is a double garage with store included.

2.3 Tenure and occupation

Freehold. My valuation assumes that full vacant possession will be given upon legal completion.

There are no tenancies on which I need to report.

2.4 Further comments

To the best of my knowledge the building is not listed and does not lie within a Conservation Area.

3 Location

3.1 Location

The small settlement of ... lies to the South of It comprises a selection of individual homes in various price ranges.

Whilst local amenities are limited, larger surrounding centres of commerce and employment are within comfortable commuting distance.

3.2 Orientation

The front elevation faces a Northerly direction.

3.3 The site and surrounding areas

The house fronts directly onto the pavement. A shared right of side pedestrian access leads through to a split-level rear courtyard. There is a small enclosed area of garden to the left-hand elevation of the house.

A right of access over the side gives way to the detached double garage and store.

Land to the rear of the building has been developed within recent years. It now contains a nursing home development which is clearly seen from the rear yard and garden.

3.4 Local factors

There are no adverse local issues on which I need to report.

3.5 Trees and hedges

A particular feature of the house and its environment are the two very mature trees located to the left-hand elevation of the building. One is a Wellingtonia and the other a Yew. The largest of the specimens is located upon land beyond the boundary of the Property.

I would ask you to refer to my later comments regarding obligations towards future management and maintenance of the specimens as this is important and will have a direct bearing upon your future ownership.

4 Surveyor's overall assessment

4.1 Surveyor's overall opinion

This is a substantial house with flexible accommodation arranged across three separate floors. Although elements of the building are now starting to look "tired" and are in need of attention, the building has generally been well cared for by its owners during their 23 years of ownership.

The findings contained within the following pages are fairly typical and are mainly related to factors of age, deterioration together with anticipated fatigue over an extended period of time. Because of this, most of the issues can be dealt with on a planned basis during your ownership in the months and years to come. The Property may be occupied and the project of improvement can be planned on a piecemeal basis to fit in with your personal requirements.

Certain works will inevitably require that you go backwards before going forwards. In this respect, I refer to the disruption associated with dampness treatment, re-plastering, replacement of dated fittings and other works which will have an inevitable consequence on the internal and external fabric of the Property.

The drawbacks associated with ... are primarily concerned with its size and the associated costs that will unavoidably be connected with a scheme of planned improvement. Furthermore, the limitations of land ownership and proximity to the road and surrounding buildings would deter certain prospective purchasers in the event of a future re-sale. This being said, it is clear that you would have to pay a considerable amount more for the house if the position was more private and garden more generous.

Whilst this Report will draw your attention to matters that you may not have considered before, it is not my intention to dissuade you from continuing with the purchase. The findings that I have made are characteristic and in-keeping with a building that has been the subject of far reaching improvement in the past, though has now reached the point where it needs the input of time and expense on a further scheme of upgrading. I understand that it is for this reason that the owners have decided to sell at this point, preferring to move to a smaller property rather than face the prospect of the disturbance and work associated with those required changes.

I do hope that you find the content of this Report to be of use and benefit to your decision. I appreciate that you will have follow-up questions and I would be delighted to answer any of these. Please feel free to contact me on my mobile telephone number.

Thank you for instructing us to prepare this Report on your behalf.

4.2 Areas of concern

Principle issues that you need to consider before exchanging contracts:

1. Repairs and upgrading of the roof surfaces must be anticipated, together with refurbishment of individual chimneys.
2. High level works are more expensive due to the need for scaffolding erection.
3. Parts of the accommodation are affected by both rising and penetrating dampness and treatment should be anticipated to include re-plastering.

4. The electrical wiring installation needs to be updated.
5. The heating system contains an older boiler and re-appraisal of the heating arrangements can be expected to include the possible short-term installation of a more energy efficient system.
6. Specimen trees to the side of the house will need to be cut back and thinned out under the supervision of an Arboriculturist.
7. Electrical repairs have been completed within recent years. Copies of supporting documentation must be made available.

4.3 Summary of most immediate repairs

1. Complete a general scheme of repair and refurbishment to the chimney stacks and roof coverings to include: re-positioning of any slipped and damaged slates, removal of collected waste matter within valley gutters and reinstatement work as necessary, re-pointing of chimneys, verge fillets etc.
2. Treat dampness to wall and ceiling surfaces. Where required, plasterwork and internal finishes will have to be removed in order to complete necessary corrective works to brickwork within walls and chimneys etc.
3. Renovate individual walls. Brickwork has perished and pointing has failed. This is particularly relevant to the right-hand gable wall.
4. Instruct an NICEIC registered electrician to inspect the wiring and complete the necessary scheme of up-dating to include enhanced earth bonding protection together with the renewal of fixtures and fittings as necessary.
5. Overhaul of external joinery which will unavoidably include the installation of replacement window frames.
6. Review existing heating arrangements with possible consideration of a new high efficiency boiler in the short-term. You should seek advice from a CORGI registered heating engineer.
7. Repairs to plasterwork on walls and ceilings. Skimming, overhauling and plaster replacement will be unavoidable.
8. Replace the existing sanitary fittings which are dated from both a colour and style point of view.

The above list is not exhaustive. It refers only to the main items of repair that will be required in the near future.

4.4 Cost guidelines

Because of the likely variation in estimates and availability of contractors for the various types of work, I am unable to give specific costings for the required works.

Where advised, it is imperative that you obtain written estimates before contracts are signed.

4.5 Further investigations

1. Instruct a competent roofing contractor to provide a report detailing the cost of high level refurbishment work.
2. Instruct a company registered with the British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association to prepare a report and estimate for the cost of dampness treatment.
3. Obtain a costing from an NICEIC registered electrician in respect of the works necessary to ensure that the wiring meets with the current guidelines.
4. Instruct a CORGI registered heating engineer to provide a report in relation to the heating system and its suitability to the house.

5 Construction and condition – structural frame, exterior and interior

5.1 Constructional principles

Solid brick elevations with loadings from the roof, walls and floors transmitted to the foundations. Window frames are made of wood. Floors are constructed of concrete, timber and solid rush and screed material.

5.2 Structural frame

The house comprises a traditional method of construction with roofs covered in concrete tile and slate and supported upon both rafters and purlins. Walls are built of solid brick with decorative brick and stone detailing present above and below the window openings.

The detached garage has walls of cavity brick and block design with factory produced roof trusses supporting the external covering of concrete tile.

5.3 Main roof

- Structure

The roofs are constructed in a conventional way. Frameworks of timber comprise rafters supported by purlins – the main horizontal components running from side-to-side within the main building and front-to-rear within the rear single and two-storey projections. The purlins are, themselves, supported at their ends within the main walls. Incidental support is afforded by basic timber trusses and masonry cross walls. Whilst there is a secondary lining of felt beneath some of the external coverings, this does not extend throughout the roof. In particular, I refer to the section of the roof over the right-hand section of the building (reference – as facing the front). Secondary linings are introduced beneath the slate and tile to afford protection against

surface water penetration from either rainfall or snow. Also, the existence of sarking/monofelt helps reduce the pressures placed on the roof by external wind loadings.

Structural timbers have been in position for many years and show the inevitable consequences of age and the degree of exposure where moisture has found its way in over the years. Furthermore, timbers exhibit hallmarks of infestation with clear indications of wood-boring insect attack in different areas.

From a structural point of view, the timbers are performing in a satisfactory way. There are no indications of damage or distress that give any immediate cause for concern. Whilst there are clear signs of deflection and past movement, this is to be accepted in a building of this age. Timber is a flexible material and can stand a degree of distortion over time. The magnitude of the movement noted across the building is within acceptable and normal limits.

The most visible degree of deflection can be seen where the covering has been replaced with concrete tiles to the main part of the house. You will appreciate that tiles of this type do impose a greater loading and when combined with older timbers, the potential for sagging (and deflection) is quite high. Whilst there are visible indications of this, the movement is within an acceptable age and does not, in my view, warrant any urgent consideration in the form of extra support or structural strengthening work. I would ask you to note my later observation, particularly in respect of those exposed roof timbers to the second floor attic bedroom.

Because some parts of the roof have been leaking over time, then joinery within the vicinity of slate openings will have been more susceptible to rot and decay. With this in mind, the need for external renovation of the slate coverings in particular is emphasised.

Roofs have been set out so as to provide valley gutters at the rear of the building. These are designed to transmit surface water away from the roof slopes into the external rainwater pipes and to the surrounding ground or drainage system. In this case, the gutters have become blocked over a long period of time and I do have concerns over the condition of timbers within close proximity. Joinery close to valley gutters is particularly susceptible to decay and fungal attack. Outbreaks of wet rot are often started in areas near to gutters of this type. Although I did not see internal evidence to suggest any major prolonged leakage, the status of exposed valley timbers in the ground floor shower room do suggest that water has penetrated in the past.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Ensure that external roof coverings are renovated in the short-term.
- ❖ Treat internal roof timbers against infestation attack, rot and decay.
- ❖ Clear out valley gutters and examine adjacent joinery to determine the need or otherwise for short-term repair/replacement work.

- Coverings

Sloping roofs are covered in traditional grey slate and factory produced interlocking concrete tiles. It is apparent that a scheme of renovation work has been carried out in years gone by, although the owners do state that they were not responsible for providing the tile covering to the main part of the structure. Slate has been the subject of renovation, this being demonstrated by its appearance and use of new lead flashings etc.

Dealing with the main roof first, the covering of concrete tiles has been present for approximately 25 years. From an aesthetic point of view, it is out of balance with the main house and, ideally, replacing the surface of slate would certainly look more attractive. This being said, the roof is generally well presented and there are no serious or obvious failings on which I need to make comment. It can be seen, that tiles do undulate and there is visible unevenness to the both the front and rear slopes of the covering. This is the result of deflection of the internal roof timbers, which has taken place over a long period of time. Whilst concrete tiles do certainly impose greater loadings, it is quite likely that the timbers will have already been distorted, to some degree, prior to their selection.

The magnitude of the movement across the structure is not so significant as to warrant the completion of any urgent strengthening works. Rather, the overall status of the roof should be monitored on in the years to come. Ridge tiles will need to be re-bedded and re-pointed eventually. Cement fillets beneath the leading edge tiles will have to be replaced and flashings around the chimneys will call for occasional attention.

The low level felt lining which should extend from beneath the tiles under the guttering will also certainly have perished and fallen away, therefore, its replacement would be advantageous as this would ensure that rainwater is discharged into the gutters rather than onto the adjacent brickwork or nearby joinery. Unfortunately, the completion of this work would be rather disruptive, requiring the removal of several courses of low level tiles and slates. I do not consider this to be an urgent requirement at this state, although it is something that should be planned in the future.

The second roof over the portion of structure to the right-hand side of the building is clearly showing signs of its age. There are various indications of decay and failure with individual slipped and broken slates being apparent to both the front and rear. Moreover, the absence of a secondary lining beneath this covering means that rainwater has penetrated into the interior with moisture related damage being visible to brickwork, plaster and structural timbers. Repairs have been undertaken in the past. This is demonstrated by the localised presence of “tingles” which have been inserted to secure slates which have fallen away. The cause of the movement is most likely associated with nail fatigue, whereby the nails which secure the slates onto the roof battens have corroded. Although a short-term scheme of minor repair may be undertaken to retain the status of the covering into the shorter-term, I think it inevitable that this surface will have to be removed and re-laid onto new battens with lining of monofelt beneath. Because it will not be possible to re-use some of the slates, the need to purchase reclaimed slate will likely

increase the cost. The roof slopes in this area are very level and I do not envisage the need for any significant strengthening work.

The third roof over the rear two-storey projection is generally neat and tidy and I have no serious concerns on which I need to make comment. Individual slates which have either broken or slipped will need to be re-positioned and replaced as necessary. Ridge tiles will have to be re-bedded and re-pointed. Lead flashings which form the watertight junction between the roof slopes and chimney, together with the valley gutter will have to be checked at this time. Low level felt, which I suspect extends from beneath the slates will most likely have perished and, again, its replacement should be envisaged.

The lowest level slate covered roof is in similar condition to that of the roof above. A corresponding scheme of repair and improvement can be envisaged, although the level of work is not great in this area. It is important at this stage that I mention the moisture penetration around the chimney which is causing damage to the ceiling and chimney breasts within the utility room. Disruptive repairs must be anticipated as a process of investigation will be required to eliminate the various points of possible moisture entry.

What you need to do now

- ❖ You should instruct a roofing contractor to provide you with a quotation for the cost of required maintenance work. Any quotation will inevitably be linked with the observations that I make in the following sections. The cost of scaffolding provision will increase the expense involved and, clearly, it makes sense to plan the works so that they can be completed at the same time.
- Valley gutters

The main valley gutter, which lies between the two projecting rear sections of the Property, is in an untidy state and requires urgent attention. Quite simply, it is completely blocked and constructed by waste and plant growth which has collected over a long period of time. The efficient and uninterrupted discharge of surface water from valley gutters is absolutely vital to their performance and because this has not been happening for some time, adjacent brickwork has been saturated and timbers will have been very vulnerable to moisture exposure and decay.

Problems in this area are magnified as the opening to the valley leads into a hopper which collects the water and discharges into the drainage system. Open sections of the roof in this part, along with plant growth, will have increased considerably the chances of concealed problems.

The second smaller valley gutter is itself obstructed and will also have to be renovated. Close inspection does reveal a number of slipped slates in this area, along with plant growth and residue waste. Disruption of slates must be expected in order that timbers below can be fully examined for signs of moisture exposure and decay.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Because of the potential for there to be concealed and possibly expensive repairs, each of the valley gutters should be examined in more detail before contracts are signed in order that a full appraisal of their condition can be made after the collected waste has been removed. A reputable roofing/building contractor needs to be consulted.
- Rainwater goods

These are made of profile plastic. They have been present for quite some time. In some areas the gutters and downpipes look “tired” and there are numerous defects around the Property, including deformed gutter sections, missing stop ends and fairly significant blockages. The resultant problems are quite clear to see with signs of splashback and overspill being apparent to various parts of the house. The possibility of concealed problems to timbers in constant contact with moisture has to be considered, as lower sections of the roof are particularly vulnerable. The chances of decay are high.

What you need to do now

- ❖ All of the rainwater goods need to be subject of overhaul to include the immediate removal of collected waste matter and re-securing of gutters with correct falls. If necessary, gutter sections which have distorted should be replaced and downpipes fixed. Missing stop ends will need to be reinstated.
- Fascias, soffits and bargeboards

There are no timber fascias, soffits or bargeboards on which I need to make comment.

- Roof windows

There are no windows of this type to the Property.

- Parapets

There are no parapets to the structure.

- Flashings

These are formed in traditional lead. Overall, they appear to be well presented and in satisfactory condition. There are no clear indications of obvious failure, although in saying that, moisture is certainly finding its way around the lead flashings to the rearmost chimney stack serving the utility room. Because a large amount of work is going to be completed at high level, the status and condition of the flashings may be verified and in closer detail at this time. I do not envisage that any far reaching disturbance or replacement work will be necessary.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Instruct the roofing/building contractor to adjust/improve as required the individual stepped flashings, back gutters and soakers between the roofs and brickwork.
- Ceilings

Predominantly, these appear to be of lath-and-plaster construction. Skim coated plasterboard is present elsewhere. Simple, unfinished boarding has been provided to the roof space. Decorative textured coatings have been used for visual effect and finishing. I will be commenting on greater detail on the quality of and issues relating to the ceilings throughout the house. At this point, I can report that some of the ceilings follow the line of the existing roof slopes to the main part of the house. Others are arranged in a conventional way. Whilst isolated damage has been caused by moisture penetration from the roofs/chimneys, the general condition of the ceilings throughout the first and second floors is reasonable with no general indications or suggestions of on-going leakage through the tiles or slates.

- Insulation and ventilation

The existence or otherwise of insulation beneath the slates/tiles cannot be commented upon. However, I think it reasonable to suggest that, if present, any insulation will be quite minimal. Building Regulations applicable between 20 and 25 years ago were certainly nowhere near as stringent as they are today and the introduction of insulation between the slate/tile and the internal ceiling surfaces was not a high priority. With this in mind, it may be possible to carry out upgrading work in the future, although, generally, this is normally done when external re-roofing works are undertaken. The installation of insulating materials can be considered when up-grading is carried out. Materials with a shallow profile may be selected, although this would increase the expense of finishing.

Ventilation to roof timbers is critical as it helps to reduce the collection of still air and condensation which, in the right combination, can cause serious problems of timber decay. Certain sections of the roof are very well ventilated and there are no issues of concern on which I need to report here. Small voids which exist between the external coverings of slate and the internal ceiling surfaces have not been provided with any form of visual ventilation and therefore, for reasons of long-term security, the introduction of factory produced venting tiles at low level around the roof slopes can be considered. These allow a flow of air into spaces which are enclosed and more susceptible to the impact of moisture.

What you need to do now

- ❖ The provision of low level venting tiles may be viewed as desirable. These can be introduced at the time of the previously mentioned roofing works. The additional cost should not be high when considering that contractors will already be working in the areas to where access would be required.

5.4 Other roofs

Other than the pitched roof to the garage, there are no other roof surfaces on which I need to make comment.

5.5 Chimneys

There are five chimneys in total. Each is substantial and of brick construction. Whilst there are signs of partial reconstruction, the stacks are original.

There are indications of exposure and associated weathering, with signs of pointing deterioration and other moisture related problems. Because of this, you will need to anticipate general repair and maintenance works in the near future, particularly where pointing is starting to fail and fall away.

The cement flashings which surround the flue outlets are quite shallow and can be renovated so as to ensure that surface water is discharged away from the masonry.

Flashings around the base of the chimneys appears to be performing in a satisfactory way, although clear evidence of damage to the utility room does identify a problem to the stack on the lower section of the rear projection. This will need to be investigated by way of internal and external disruption to include the removal of the existing ceiling and tiles/leadwork as necessary.

Because of their height and exposure, chimneys will always be susceptible to problems related to weathering and, for this reason, it is very important that the condition of each stack be periodically checked.

The chimney to the left-hand side of the building (reference: as facing the front) has a pretty substantial degree of distortion which has been present since the owner's purchase approximately 23 years ago. Structural movement is quite common to chimneys, being a consequence of exposure and changes in moisture content over time. There are no suggestions to indicate that the stack is more vulnerable at this time to any progressive movement, although situations can change and I would like to see its status checked in more detail during the completion of roofing repairs. In some cases, it is more economically viable to actually reconstruct a stack rather than try to complete a scheme of repair or stabilisation.

Chimneys which remain active will need to be swept and tested before their future use. Older chimney flues are vulnerable to deterioration and, as with all fossil fuels, problems associated with carbon monoxide poisoning are as relevant to that of gas appliances. If necessary, re-lining of older flues is an expensive process requiring expert advice and Building Regulation approval. The need to re-line or upgrade the flues in the future cannot be completely discounted and because individual flue pipes may not have been swept for in excess of 12 months, this should be arranged before appliances are used.

The owner does confirm that the flue serving the gas fired boiler has been provided with a Copex style liner, which is a critical component.

5.6 External walls

The house is built in a traditional way. Walls are constructed of solid brick. Although there are no special constructional characteristics on which I have to comment, the formation of the brick courses across the front of the building are definitive and interesting with reference to the arrangement of the bonding. Furthermore, stone lintel supports have been incorporated above window and doorway openings to the same elevation.

First of all, I can tell you that there are no areas of serious concern on which I need to report. The issues that I have identified are characteristic of the building's age and its method of construction, together with fatigue and anticipated wear and tear over a prolonged period of time. The points noted during the inspection are, therefore, quite typical and not out of the ordinary for a property of this type.

Whilst certain areas of brickwork have clearly been affected by quite significant deterioration, this is a large house and the substantial area of brickwork is generally well presented and does not present a theme of far reaching deterioration. Where it has occurred, brickwork failure has been quite impressive with specific reference to the area concentrated around the right-hand gable wall which fronts onto the shared pathway. Serious decay has affected a large panel of masonry here and this will need to be repaired as a priority measure.

Elsewhere, signs of weathering can be seen to the faces of individual bricks along with a degree of deterioration to mortar joints. Because of this, localised repair and stabilisation work will be necessary. In respect of the works necessary to correct the existing deficiencies, the removal of those bricks badly affected by weathering will have to be budgeted for, along with replacement with reclaimed masonry. This work is labour intensive and the cost will be increased as a direct result.

Repairs have been carried out around the building in the past, together with isolated modifications. The quality of some improvement work is poor and improvements could be made to enhance appearance and long-term durability. In particular, I am referring to those works carried out on the rear elevation.

Modifications have been made on the front where a former doorway has been replaced with a window and a new opening created. The quality of finish is acceptable here.

Heavy Ivy growth to the rear elevation is far from ideal and needs to be significantly cut back. Plants growing around buildings can have consequences on the condition of masonry and other difficulties can arise whereby rainwater goods can be blocked and a direct passage of entry may be given into the roof space for rodents and insects. Because of this, the existing growth must be cut back and manicured as a priority measure.

As expected, the structure has been affected by movement over the years. In general, the amount of distress is fairly minimal and, although unevenness can be seen to mortar courses and distortion to runs of brickwork, the level of past movement is quite minimal. This being said, a noticeable degree of "buckling" can be seen at mid-point to the right-hand gable wall. According to the owners, this was present when they purchased the Property approximately 23 years ago. Distortion

of this type is not surprising in an older house and can sometimes be attributed to damage which took place shortly after the property was built. Whilst it is not possible for me to say categorically when the distress formed itself, I can report that the damage has been present for quite some time and although strengthening may be undertaken for considerations of long-term security, I do not believe this to be an urgent requirement. Concentrating on this wall, it is very important to mention a scheme of structural stabilisation works complete approximately 5 years ago. A section of wall had started to pull away and, based on the investigations and findings of the owner's loss adjusters and insurance company, it was decided to install a series of Helifix ties in a vertical formation through brickwork on the front right-hand corner. Also, re-pointing was carried out where mortar joints had opened. The owners are in possession of all the documentation in relation to the completion of this work and you should request that this be provided in order that you can refer to it in the future. Importantly, any company who is being asked to provide buildings insurance will wish to see this in order that they can confirm that cover will be available under normal terms and conditions.

Structures are affected by external factors including trees. In this case, the two large specimens close to the left-hand wall are within influencing distance. However, there are no visible indications to suggest that these have had any negative effect on the building. It is important, however, that both be the subject of periodic management under the supervision of a qualified Arboriculturist. Thinning and cutting back to moderate growth will be vital in the future. Given that the largest tree is in the control of another party, you must identify who is responsible for the completion of any future works and insurance.

A low-level render threshold to the base of the building has cracked and this will be vulnerable to moisture penetration. Rendering is susceptible to moisture related difficulties and you may need to replace and repair this in the short/medium-term.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Ideally, you should obtain an estimate for the cost of brickwork repairs from a local builder who is used to working on older structures of this type. A guide of costs should include reference to other minor maintenance works around the building in order to ensure the continuing performance of brickwork and rendering to the long-term.

You should instruct your Solicitor to make enquiries regarding the specimen tree which lies on neighbouring land in order that you have information regarding its ownership etc.

When arranging your own insurance, the issues relating to the most recent scheme of structural stabilisation works will need to be discussed and drawn to the attention of any prospective insurers.

5.7 Damp-proof course

A chemical treatment, based on silicon injection, was completed by the owners during their original scheme of refurbishment. There are clear signs of this externally with drill holes apparent to low level sections of brickwork and render. Because of the passage of time there will no longer be any guaranteed protection

and, in view of my findings, it will be necessary to carry out additional treatment in the very short-term. The effects of moisture rising through brickwork can be seen across at the front of the building where a “tide mark” can be noted along with indications of efflorescence – a white powdery deposit caused by soluble salts rising to the surface of the brickwork.

Generally, ground levels in relation to the damp-proof course are satisfactory and there are no high paths or borders which may be considered a direct threat or obvious cause of the moisture levels. Notwithstanding this, the boundary wall attached to the gable end section of the building will allow moisture to penetrate above the damp-proof course and into the fabric of the building in this area. It is no surprise that corresponding internal surfaces are affected by high levels of moisture.

What you need to do now

- ❖ You should instruct a company registered with the British Wood Preserving and Damp Proofing Association to prepare a report and quotation for the cost of dampness treatment. A full specification needs to be produced along with accurate indication as to the expense involved. Such a report must be provided before contracts are signed.

5.8 Floor ventilation

Ground floors are of solid construction and there is no requirement for ventilation to any enclosed timbers.

The cellar area does, however, require constant ventilation and, although steps have been taken to provide an uninterrupted flow of air, this is minimal and, in my view, inadequate. I would like to see a greater volume of air exchange so that the moisture levels within this part of the Property can be reduced. I appreciate that the introduction of an additional source of ventilation may be complicated and rather disruptive. Rather than dealing with this matter immediately, you should look first of all at the possibility of eliminating surface water collection so that airbound moisture can be removed in the first instance. In itself, this may help to reduce condensation and possibly eliminate the requirement for additional external ventilation.

5.9 Internal walls and partitions

- **Party walls**

There are no party walls on which I need to make comment.

- **Load-bearing walls and partitions**

Walls which accept the loadings from the roof and floors do not display any signs of significant structural movement. Whilst there are clear indications of associated distress in the past, the amount of distortion and unevenness to wall surfaces is quite minimal overall. Doorway openings have distorted slightly and are uneven as a result. This is to be anticipated.

Structural support over window and door openings is likely to be formed in timber and the possibility of there being concealed infestation or decay is

reasonably high. I would hope that any sections of joinery exposed during house refurbishment were treated accordingly.

Partitions are, themselves, affected by older movement and a degree of increased flexibility is inevitable.

Plasterwork throughout the Property ranges in quality and, without doubt, there will be the need to complete some re-plastering on a room-by-room basis, particularly where the existing standard of surface finishes is inferior. Furthermore, the undertaking of low level plaster replacement will be an inevitable aspect of dampness treatment. Unfortunately, this is a disruptive and rather dirty process which is possibly better handled on a piecemeal room-by-room basis.

Certainly, the standard of plasterwork presented to the attic area is the most inferior within the house and, for this reason, this section of the building is going to need a fairly significant level of surface improvement.

5.10 Fireplaces and chimney breasts

Those flues which are to remain in use will have to be swept on a very regular basis. First of all and most importantly, this is critical for personal safety as the dangers presented by carbon monoxide poisoning is common to the burning of all fossil fuels. Secondly, the efficient removal of waste products from the heating appliances is critical to their performance and efficiency of operation.

Older chimney flues are susceptible to deterioration and failure and, for this reason, they can be problematic in terms of good collection and leakage. Modification/improvement work has been carried out to the flues in the past and you should request of the owners any information that they may hold in respect of new linings.

The vertical flue leading from the boiler must contain an appropriate Copex style liner. I could not check this.

Unfortunately, I am not in a position to provide any detailed comment on the condition of the individual flues. If they have not been either swept or smoke tested within the last 12 months then arrangements should be made for a qualified chimney sweep to undertake this work prior to the use of the solid fuel heating appliances. In relation to the gas installations then documentation from the CORGI registered heating engineer should be produced to confirm that inspections have been carried out.

Disused chimney flues can be vulnerable to the collection of condensation and still air. Because of this, staining can sometimes form on finishes due to the transfer of chemical products from the flue and across the masonry courses. This is one of the reasons why re-lining is most likely required in an older building. The provision of ventilation to those flues which are no longer used is also important, subject of course to verification that none of the first or second floor flues are directly connected to any of those which remain in use by any of the heating appliances.

Building Regulation approvals cover chimney flues and heating appliances and you must check that any future works comply with the stated requirements.

5.11 Basements/cellars

There is a vaulted cellar area to the Property. It is not very large and has a reduced head height. Access is given via a doorway from the rear entrance lobby.

The floor to the cellar has been provided with a new concrete surface incorporating a damp-proof membrane. This was installed some time ago. A window has been sealed and a venting pipe introduced to the outside. As mentioned before, the level of cross-flow ventilation is not ideal and I would like to see it improved.

As with many cellars or basements, water finds its way in and, in this case, ponding can be seen to the surface of the concrete. Although some form of gulley has been introduced to remove this, it is obstructed by bricks and is clearly not working. In any event, gullies in basements are known to be varied in their performance and whilst I would certainly advise investigation into its serviceability, I am doubtful as to whether or not it will enable water to be removed.

Whilst the collection of water is not, in itself, detrimental it does increase the amount of airborne condensation and this does have consequences in terms of brickwork and any sections of exposed timber. My comments concerning the provision of increased ventilation are directly related to this.

The removal of surface water is often considered preferable and, on this basis, you may wish to consider the incorporation of a sump pump. This would have to be professionally installed. Simply, a recess is created within the floor and an electrically operated pump is placed within this. This will have a float device and when levels of water rise to a pre-set limit, the pump will activate and discharge it to an external source via a hose or pipe connected. This arrangement helps to balance water levels within basements and is often favoured in circumstances where persistent problems are known to exist. Clearly, it is extremely important that any electrical works be undertaken by a fully qualified contractor and that the discharge of any water be carefully thought out.

What you need to do now

- ❖ First of all, view the possibility of installing a sump pump and obtaining some guidance as to the likely cost of installation. Review external ventilation as part of this thought process.

5.12 Floors

The ground floors are solid construction. According to the owners, they were completely replaced with concrete at the time of renovation. Surfaces are level and free from detectable signs of settlement and surface uplifting. Although gaps can be seen locally between the floors and skirting boards, this is the result of minor movement which is inevitable in any large area of flooring.

First floors are of conventional suspended timber design. Now, these are a little more uneven and a number of loose and dropped boards were noted on a room-by-

room basis. This does not come as a particular surprise, although I highlight the need for floor repair and stabilisation on a room-by-room basis as you plan to undertake a scheme of cosmetic change. Clearly, carpets will have to be removed in order to provide access.

Notwithstanding this movement, the floors are generally firm to foot and secure. I did not detect any excessive flexibility that would lead me to conclude that strengthening is a requirement. Obviously, the size of the timbers in a house of this type would not meet the guidelines of the existing Building Regulations and, although some form of strengthening may be beneficial, I do not consider this to be critical.

Inevitably, older floors are going to be more susceptible to infestation and almost certainly exposure of the floorboards will reveal the consequences of past activity from wood-boring beetles. The owners do report that timber treatment was carried out previously. Whilst I would hope that this would have been effective in reducing the possibility of further outbreaks, this cannot be guaranteed. Therefore, the need to undertake further treatment cannot be discounted in the future along with possible replacement of any timbers which may have been damaged by infestation attack. You must plan for this during improvement work.

Clearly, it is impractical to think about removing all of the floor coverings at this stage in order to determine what the situation currently is. Rather, a sensible piecemeal approach should be adopted, whereby works should be completed only when considered appropriate.

Second floors in the attic area are of conventional rush-and-screed construction. This method of construction is commonly found in areas such as this. Generally, floors of this type are affected by movement and there is a degree of distortion and unevenness to this part of the building, although not of a significant nature. The floor surfaces feel generally secure and are free of “bounce” or similar distress. Inevitably, removal of the existing floor finishes would reveal surfaces that are affected by surface fracturing and signs of other distress. Also, past repairs may have been completed sometimes with the use of fillers or similar. Flooring of this type is integral to the structure of the house. Whilst they are strong, they are not designed to withstand significant loadings and the concentration of both live and dead loads must be carefully considered in the future. The provision of overboarding or timber finishes must be avoided.

5.13 Ceilings

These are made of both lath-and-plaster and plasterboard. Decorative finishes including wallpaper are present throughout. Whilst the ceiling surfaces to a majority of the rooms are in acceptable condition, others are poorly finished and will need to be improved, particularly to the attic area where basic boarding has been introduced.

Individual ceilings will require attention during the process of improvement. In some cases, this will simply be surface preparation prior to decoration, whereas other ceilings will need to be either removed and replaced or, as an alternative, overboarded and skim coated. Again, this is a matter which does need to be dealt with on a planned basis.

Occasionally, ceilings in older houses were created using composite boards, some of which can contain asbestos deposits. Whilst I did not identify any signs of this material, care should always be exercised when removing or disturbing any boarded ceiling. Suspect sections of boarding should be treated with caution and if you have any concerns or suspicions as to the composition of materials discovered, specialist advice should be sought.

Special mention is made of the ceiling within the ground floor utility room adjoining the chimney breast. This has been exposed to moisture over a long period of time and its removal will, inevitably, be necessary in order to discover the exact source of the problem.

5.14 Windows, doors and joinery

- Windows

Window frames have been in provision for quite some time. A number are in poor condition and beyond economic repair. Opening lights were found to be stiff and difficult to operate. Fixtures and fittings are dated. Because of this, you will need to anticipate individual window frame replacement in the short and medium-term. Considering the likely cost involved, this is another project which will most likely need to be dealt with on a piecemeal basis. In older houses, it is not only the window frames that require consideration. Often, removal of a frame can cause disturbance to brickwork or support directly above. In some cases, you can discover that there is, in fact, either limited or absent support. For this reason, the introduction of strengthening over window frames cannot be discounted in the future. My remarks concerning timber lintels are re-inforced. Exposing of timber components can sometimes reveal signs of past or active infestation or, indeed, decay. The need for repair cannot be discounted.

- External doors

These are serviceable, although have been in position for some time. Certainly, the main rear entrance door does need to be the subject of adjustment, with particular reference to the existing locking arrangements. Doors are a little ill-fitting and will be draughty as a result.

- Internal doors

These are quite simple in their design. They comprise both latch and flush finish. They do require individual attention to include easing and adjustment. Given that there is living space in the attic area, the provision of a fire door to the base of the staircase would certainly be a worthwhile short-term consideration.

- Stairs

Both sets of stairs are affected by wear and tear. Treads and risers are loose and you will need to complete a scheme of strengthening and repair in the

near future. This work will have to extend to the balustrades and newel posts which are, themselves, flexible and little loose.

- Skirtings and architraves

These are of standard appearance. They display general signs of wear and tear consistent with inculcation and minor impact of damage except to improve.

- Kitchen cupboards

Whilst a little dated from a colour and style point of view, kitchen units remain serviceable. The effects of wear and tear are inevitable. Individual doors will need to be adjusted/re-secured in the future. This is inevitable.

- Other fitted cupboards

These are satisfactory. There are no significant defects on which I need to make comment. Again, wear and tear is inevitable.

What you need to do now

- ❖ You will have to instruct a carpenter/joiner to carry out necessary repairs, particularly in relation to the staircases, balustrades and newel posts. You will no doubt have your own thoughts as to the future of individual internal doors. You can replace these according to your own taste.

Again, a kitchen is every personal and whilst the existing units are dated, I do not foresee any reason to anticipate their immediate replacement.

For considerations of safety, any glazed panels which lie below 800mm should be protected with safety film or replaced with toughened glazing.

5.15 Finishes and decorations

In general, the accommodation is presented to a neat and tidy standard throughout. This being said, the consequences of age and more limited attention within recent years is beginning to show itself along with the effects of dampness to sections of decoration at both low and high level. Redecoration of the interior can be planned in the months and years to come. Prior to the undertaking of any work, repair, improvement and upgrading work must be anticipated, particularly in relation to walls and ceilings.

5.16 Dampness

I found evidence of rising dampness in various places. This is characterised by visible indications of plaster and decorative failure. Furthermore, a meter used to test the walls revealed high concentrations of dampness in various parts of the ground floor, particularly the dining kitchen, study and dining room.

Before you exchange contracts, you will need a report from a competent BWPDA registered damp-proofing specialist which provides the specification and the cost of likely repairs. It is very important that a suitable bonded guarantee be provided upon completion of the work.

My observations concerning penetrating dampness around the chimney breast in the utility are re-enforced. Further investigations will be necessary to determine the exact cause and type of work necessary to eliminate the problem.

5.17 Timber defects

I have not found evidence of active wood-boring infestation attack. Certainly, there are indications of previous infestations in many places, particularly to exposed timbers and floorboards etc. Bearing in mind such factors as age and the nature of the internal timber components, it is my opinion that there is a high probability that active wood-boring insect infestation will be present to currently concealed or inaccessible areas. For this reason, the need to undertake treatment can be anticipated. I advise that you make contingencies for any such treatment that may be necessary in the future.

I advise that you make financial contingencies for any such treatment that may be necessary in the future. Any required works will have to be completed by a specialist BWPDA registered damp-proofing contractor.

5.18 Structural movement

Signs of structural movement were noted, both inside and out. Indeed, localised repairs have been carried out within the last five years. Characteristics including buckling of masonry and distortion of walls/doorways are quite typical for a building of this age and type. Moreover, distortion of those timbers supporting the roof structure does not come as a surprise.

Having looked at the Property in detail, I can report that I did not identify any signs of active structural movement to any of those areas which were visible during my inspection of the house. On this basis, I do not believe that there is a need to carry out any structural repairs at this time. Minor repairs to plaster can be expected in various areas where fractures have formed through shrinkage or thermal movement.

6 Services

6.1 Electrics

The wiring system was introduced over 20 years ago. The consumer units and modified fuse boards with mini trip switches are located in a ground floor walk-in cupboard. Where visible, distribution cables were seen to PVC covered and switch plates and socket outlets are typical of age.

As the system will not be up to modern-day standards, you should have it tested by an NICEIC registered electrician before exchange of contracts. Up-grading will be required and this will involve you in some cost. In particular, I refer to the need for enhanced earth bonding, possible improvements to circuit breaker protection and

replacement of those fixtures and fittings which have been damaged by wear or, indeed, paint.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Obtain a written report on the current status of the wiring and estimate for the cost of required up-dating so as to comply with the 16th Additional Regulations produced by the Institution of Electrical Engineers.

6.2 Gas

Mains gas is connected to the house. The meter is located to the side of the building. A modification to the installation has been undertaken with a chamber inspection cover marked "gas" to the surface of the side walkway.

British Gas/Transco have a planned programme of meter change and next date of upgrading should be confirmed.

The meter and associated pipework also has to be checked on an annual basis for signs of leaks or discrepancies. This should be undertaken by a CORGI registered heating engineer at the time of his/her inspection. The correct positioning of earth bonding to the meter pipework is also something which will have to be looked at by your electrician.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Obtain copies of all correspondence relating to the existing heating systems before exchange of contracts.

6.3 Water supply and plumbing

The water meter is located within a cupboard to the walk-in pantry/utility space. The cost of supply is charged according to use.

Where visible, distribution pipework was seen to be of copper construction. I did not identify any residual lead piping.

Plastic cold water storage tanks are positioned within a built-in cupboard to the attic space. They are not fully protected and need to be covered so as to prevent possible contamination.

The ground floor shower room facility is in the same room as an open flued gas appliance. This contravenes safety regulations and, because of this, the shower must not be used.

6.4 Private water supplies

There is no private water supply to the house.

6.5 Hot water installations, boilers, control equipment, space heating etc.

Central heating and hot water supplies are provided by a floor mounted gas fired boiler in the utility room. This discharges its products of combustion via a vertical open flue.

The owners confirm that the appliance was serviced by a CORGI registered heating engineer in July/August 2007. Whilst I have no doubt about the validity of this, copies of the supporting documentation and CORGI credentials of the company that completed the work can be checked before contracts are signed.

Because the boiler is now over 20 years old, the appliance has to be considered to be in the twilight of its life. It could have many more years of service left in it. Alternatively, it could fail quickly and without notice. Because of this, the need to introduce a new boiler should be accepted as part of your ownership and you are advised to make appropriate contingencies for this. In any event, reconsideration of the existing heating arrangements would be beneficial, particularly in respect of the delivery of hot water and distribution of heating throughout the Property.

The hot water storage facility to the first floor landing cupboard has been modified within recent years to include the introduction of a pressure vessel. Again, any documentation relating to the completion of this work should be provided.

Background heating provided by multi-fuel/open fires has been commented on previously.

The Rayburn in the kitchen will also have to be serviced annually.

Older heating appliances can contain asbestos products and care should be taken when planning for their removal.

What you need to do now

- ❖ Obtain copies of all correspondence relating to the existing heating systems.
 - Plan for reconsideration of the current arrangements with specific reference to the longstanding boiler and method of hot and cold water storage.

6.6 Drains

I am informed by the owners that the Property is connected to the mains drainage system. There are two inspection covers, one to the rear of the house and the other within the side walkway.

Clay and plastic pipes to each were seen to be clear of obstruction and free-flowing. It is good practice to regularly flush through drains with hot soapy water.

You should ask your Legal Advisers to verify the arrangements with regard to the drainage system, with specific reference to the liability for the completion of any future maintenance or repair works. It is a shared facility and the extent of your responsibility should be clarified at this point.

6.7 Foul and surface water

As far as can be determined, surface water is discharged into the drainage runs. In addition, it is likely that some will go to the surrounding ground. It is important that all surface be taken a suitable distance away from the building so that the structure is not adversely affected by prolonged exposure.

6.8 Private drainage systems

There is no private drainage system.

6.9 Other services

I have no knowledge of any other services.

7 Environmental and other issues

7.1 Orientation and exposure

According to a compass bearing taken at the time of my inspection, the front elevation faces in a generally Southerly direction.

Clearly the low level brickwork of the right-hand elevation is vulnerable to exposure and failure in this part of the building as a direct consequence of weathering. Other than this, there are no signs of adverse exposure to the external elements of the building.

7.2 Thermal insulation and energy efficiency

Thermal insulation and energy efficiency issues should receive consideration during the course of your ownership and programme of planned improvements. There are ways in which the house may be upgraded to perform better in both respects. The introduction of fibre quilting insulation across ceiling surfaces would be advantageous, as would draught-proofing and the provision of long-life lightbulbs. The more costs measure that should be thought about include the incorporation of a high efficiency heating and hot water delivery system with zoning controls and the provision of replacement windows including sealed unit double glazing.

7.3 Ventilation

My observations concerning cross-flow ventilation are re-inforced.

Maintaining a careful balance of heating and ventilation is vital with any property. The problems associated with condensation are well known. Fortunately, older buildings do “breathe” more easily and draughts can circulate around a large house. Being honest, this may be a slight annoyance and a careful balance does have to be achieved between ensuring air flow and maintained a comfortable level of heating.

It is likely that the attic rooms will be cold in the Winter and warm in the Summer.

I advise that you incorporate new extraction fans to the kitchen and bathrooms.

7.4 Noise and disturbance

Besides noise generated by the normal functions of everyday life, including the roof frontage, I have no knowledge of any adverse issues relating to either noise or disturbance.

7.5 Means of escape

This is a critical area which always requires important consideration when considering accommodation arranged on three separate floors. It is critical that you are able to leave a building without delay in the event of a fire and, on this basis, you should plan a route of escape in the unfortunate event where such circumstances should arise.

When contemplating the second floor, protection against the spread of fire has to be looked at with specific reference to the provision of self-closing fire doors, an integrated smoke alarm system etc. Moreover, being able to leave the second floor via an external ladder has to be viewed in the context of the existing window openings. Modification can therefore be anticipated.

7.6 Other health and safety concerns

Living in an older building is not the same as a modern construction which has been designed according to up-to-date Building Regulations which are prepared very much with health and safety in mind. Navigating narrow and steeper staircases clearly being one of those areas, together with the height of ceilings and beams etc.

You should incorporate alarms for the detection of smoke and carbon monoxide fumes on each floor. Ideally, appliances should be mains wired.

The ground floor shower must not be used. The location of this facility in the same room as an open flued gas appliance means that it contravenes safety guidelines. The shower is therefore redundant and cannot be replaced whilst the boiler remains in its current location.

7.7 Hazardous materials

I have not identified any hazardous materials during my inspection. Clearly, there are limitations on what can be seen. I would draw your attention to my comments concerning products which can have an asbestos content. This relates not only to boarded substances, but also can include decorative artex finishes, thermoplastic tiles etc. A degree of caution must always be applied when undertaking any disturbance work which will involve the creation of dust or deposits.

Lead-based paint can be found in most properties built before 1970. In homes built before 1950 lead-based paint will certainly have been used. If disturbed, lead-based paint can be damaging to health and extreme caution needs to be observed when preparing and re-painting such surfaces. Often, old lead paint is hidden under layers

of more modern paintwork. The use of lead paint is now banned and this warning applies to both internal and external paintwork.

7.8 Security

The existing security arrangements should be compared to the requirements of your insurance company since they will specify a minimum criteria for the provision of complete cover against all perils. This is very important.

An ADT alarm is present. I understand that this is covered by an annual service/maintenance contract. The owners will be in a position to provide you with additional details in this regard.

8 Outbuildings, grounds and boundaries

8.1 Gardens and grounds

The definition of ownership of the individual boundaries should be confirmed by reference to the Title Deeds. This is important, particularly when accounting for the large sections of brick built walling around the building and undoubted obligations that there will be in the future towards the completion of maintenance and repairs.

Rights in respect of the side access and driveway are also critical and your Solicitor will be in a position to advise you in this respect.

Whilst there is a small area of allocated garden, most of the site is dedicated to hard surfacing. Without wishing to point out the obvious, surfaces such as this can become very slippery and caution will need to be exercised in the future. Occasional cleaning down with a jet wash or similar may be beneficial.

I have referred previously to the large specimen trees within close proximity of the left-hand elevation. These will need to be managed by an Arboriculturist and the cost of any necessary care and management work will be high and, for this reason, it is important that you verify your obligations in this regard. It is important that only a qualified Arboriculturist be used for the undertaking of any works of cutting back, trimming etc. Always seek advice from the Council before carrying out such works.

8.2 Garages

The detached brick and block garage was built approximately 15 years ago. You should check for the availability of planning consents and Building Regulation approvals. Access is given via the driveway which is in the ownership of the Care Home at the rear.

The structure has been well built and there are no material defects on which I need to comment. As with all external buildings, occasional care and repair works will be necessary to include re-positioning of any slipped or broken roof tiles, re-bedding and re-pointing of ridge tiles to the roof covering, clearance of rainwater goods, painting of woodwork etc. Moreover, the internal electrical supply system will have to be tested periodically. The wiring should be subject to routine testing.

8.3 Conservatories

There is no conservatory to the house.

8.4 Other outbuildings

There are none.

8.5 Boundaries

These should be determined by reference to the Deed Plan. A section of brick built walling to the left-hand side of the Property, within close proximity of the tree, has been affected by structural damage in the past. This movement could be progressive and, ideally, should be monitored. Although it could be connected with the close proximity of the trees, it also could be as a result of minor settlement or subsidence to the foundation. In the short-term, I would recommend that a repair be executed and a period of observation carried out thereafter.

8.6 Retaining walls

There are no significant retaining walls to the house.

8.7 Shared areas

Other than the shared pathway to the side of the house, there are no other shared areas on which I need to report.

9 Matters for Legal Adviser's attention

9.1 Statutory

I am not aware of any recent works which will have required statutory control by way of Planning Permission or Building Regulation approvals. To my knowledge, the building is not listed, nor does it lie within a known Conservation Area.

Please be aware that Building Regulation approvals are now required for works which were not previously covered. For example, the provision of heating appliances, electrical wiring and glazing. If in doubt, always seek advice and guidance from the local Planning/Building Control Departments.

9.2 Rights of way, easements and shared services

There is a shared pedestrian pathway to the right-hand side of the building. I understand that the driveway is in the ownership of the ..., although ... does have an interrupted right of vehicular and pedestrian use. Both matters can be confirmed by your Legal Advisers.

9.3 Boundaries

As mentioned previously.

9.4 Environmental

I am not aware of any adverse planning proposals or other such matters which could have a detrimental affect on either the current or future market value/re-sale potential of the Property. This information should be verified by reference to a written Local Authority search.

9.5 Guarantees/warranties

I have no knowledge of any guarantees or warranties which will be passed on to you as the new owners. As mentioned previously, it is very important that you obtain guarantees for any works of a specialist nature which are to be completed on your behalf, particularly damp-proofing, any timber treatment, new boiler installation, electrical wiring updating etc.

10 Additional services

10.1 Security issues

As mentioned, the house benefits from an existing alarm. I would ask that you discuss the existing arrangements with the owners, together with the cost of any annual maintenance/service contracts and emergency callout facility etc.

10.2 Insurance rebuilding cost assessment

The value of the Property for insurance re-instatement purposes is fairly represented in the sum of **£375,000 (three hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds)**. This figure has been calculated in accordance with the tables prepared by the Building Cost Information Service of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and is based upon the gross external floor area of approximately 261 square metres.

10.3 Valuation

The agreed purchase price falls within an acceptable range for a property of this size in this location. Indeed, the amount is quite competitive when specific account is taken of the size of the building, its location and general standard of presentation. I think it fair to say that there is scope for the value of the Property to increase as works of improvement and updating are carried out in the months and years to come. It is reasonable to conclude that any future prospective buyer will account for the location of the Property, with specific reference to its road frontage and limited amount of surrounding ground. Ultimately, this will create a ceiling to market value as other similar homes with a superior position and more ground will command higher prices.

You may wish to give consideration to slight re-negotiation of the agreed price in circumstances where the estimates for required works are greater than anticipated, specifically in respect of masonry repairs and damp-proofing treatment.

10.4 Scale plans

I have not been asked to produce any scale plans.

10.5 Testing of services

No specialist testing of services has been requested.

10.6 SAP rating report

This is the means of assessing the energy efficiency of a house and providing guidance as to improvements which will assist in future cost savings and energy efficiency. A SAP certificate has not been produced in this case.

10.7 Maintenance notes

Even when improved, older houses do require a far greater commitment of time and expense on maintenance and repair. For this reason, care should be taken to monitor the condition of those areas which are the most vulnerable, particularly high level – i.e. the chimney stacks, roof surfaces, valley gutters, rainwater pipes etc.

Annual servicing of heating appliances is critical, as is periodic testing of the wiring systems.

10.8 Feasibility studies

Not applicable.

10.9 Further investigations

Other than those recommendations contained within this Report, no further investigations are required.

Signed by: _____

Qualifications: BSc, MRICS, MBEEng