

JOB REF:

RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY
OF
The Hayloft



FOR
Mr N
PREPARED BY

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INTRODUCTION

Firstly, may we thank you for your verbal/written instructions of 28 August; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property. This Survey was carried out on 3 September.

The Building Survey takes the following format, there is an introductory section (which you are currently reading) and includes a synopsis of the building and a summary of our findings and our Summary Upon Reflection, written after we have reviewed our findings. We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and also attach some information on the property market.

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a house is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

We recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas which you wish to discuss for whatever reason and call our office to discuss the matters further on 0800 298 5424.

We obviously expect you to read the entire report but we would suggest that you initially look at the summary, which refers to various sections in the report which we recommend you read first so that you get a general feel for the way the report is written.

As part of our service we are more than happy to talk through the survey as many times as you wish until you are completely happy to make a decision. Ultimately, the decision to purchase the house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

REPORT FORMAT

To help you understand our Report we utilise various techniques and different styles and types of text, these are as follows:

GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION

This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.

TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED

Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" type face for clarity.

PHOTOGRAPHS



We utilise photographs to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area (with this property we have taken approximately one hundred photographs in total and we have enclosed a sample of these within the report).

ORIENTATION

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

SYNOPSIS

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

A fairly modern barn conversion we assume once forming the hayloft for The Manor (although this could be a developer using his imagination). It is 'L' shaped in plan with the main part of the property being two storey and the kitchen/dining area etc being in the single storey part of the dwelling.

There is car parking to the front for several cars and to the rear there is a garage, which also forms part of the annex which was built in 1998. It is a self contained two storey property built in a barn conversion style with a double garage to one end. It is completely separate of the main property.

Both properties share a reasonable size garden, which has several semi-mature trees and a water feature, which was half empty at the time of our inspection, all on a gentle slope. We are advised that the sewerage system that serves the surrounding properties is at the base of the garden.

The property sits in the village. Winslow is a short distance away, which has a limited range of shopping facilities and the larger towns and cities of Buckingham and Milton Keynes are also close by.

EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



Rear side Elevation



Annex

ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES

Main Building

Ground Floor

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Study
- Double bedroom or additional Reception Room
- W.C.
- Services Room
- Lounge
- Kitchen
- Breakfast Room
- Dining Room

First Floor

The first floor accommodation consists of:

- Double Bedroom with en suite shower facilities
- Four piece bathroom
- Smaller Bedroom
- Master Bedroom with en suite shower room

Annex

Ground Floor

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- Kitchenette
- Lounge (presently used as a gym)

First Floor

- Galleried Bedroom

Attached Double Garage

INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Please note that some of the photos may have been taken with a concave lens, to enable us to show you as much of the room as possible, which does make the photos slightly blurred.



Lounge



Kitchen



The Fireplace

Dining Room

This room has some nice features, such as the fireplace.



The Fireplace



The Landing with a view



Bedroom



Bathroom



Bedroom



Annex First Floor Bedroom



Gym come Dining Room

SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

MAIN BUILDING

External

Flues:	There are three metal flues to the property
Main Roof:	A pitched slate roof
Rainwater Goods:	Plastic
Walls:	Stained weatherboarding and brickwork in both Flemish and cavity wall bond
External Joinery:	Double glazed timber windows and purpose made doors

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard
Walls:	Predominantly solid with a plaster finish (assumed).
Floors:	<u>Ground Floor:</u> We believe it to be solid (assumed), although we would refer you to our comments within the Floors Section of this Report. <u>First Floor:</u> Joist and floorboards (assumed).

ANNEX

External

Main Roof:	A pitched slate roof
Rainwater Goods:	Plastic
Walls:	Weatherboarding and brickwork
External Joinery:	Double glazed timber windows and timber doors

Internal

Ceilings:	Plasterboard
Walls:	Studwork with a plasterboard finish (assumed).
Floors:	Ground Floor: Solid underfoot, concrete (assumed). First Floor: Joist and floorboards (assumed).

OUTSIDE

A reasonable size garden shared by both the annex and the main dwelling all sitting on a sloping plot (with surrounding lands sloping towards it). There is a double garage to the end with automatic gate entry and there is a small pond in the garden. Recently decking has been added around the single storey portion of the property.

The above is explained in full in the main body of the Report along with the technical terms used. We have used the term 'assumed' as we have not opened up the structure.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full. Having said all of that, here are our comments:

Generally we found the house in good order, without any structural issues or major maintenance issues. We would however draw your attention to the following:

1) Ridged Tiles

We noted that some of the ridge tiles need re-bedding. This is possibly where we found a small amount of dampness coming into the dining room area roof. For safeties sake we would suggest that all the ridge tiles are checked and re-bedded.

ESTIMATED COST: This depends of course upon the extent of the work, but we would expect £250 - £1,500 (Two hundred and fifty pounds to one thousand five hundred pounds). This is made slightly higher due to the access problems to the higher roofs.

Please see the Roof Coverings Section of this Report.

2) Smell of Dampness - Annex

As a surveyor we have to work on our hunches and experience and as such we are concerned that the annex may have dampness, although we have no definitive proof over this. We were unable to take meter readings due to the way the property has been constructed at the lower portion (a dry lining technique; i.e. likely to be a timber studwork over the face of the wall with a plasterboard finish). We can therefore only use our senses. Being in this occupation you get very used to the odour of dampness and we felt we could smell this slightly (or to be exact taste it at the back of our throat!) when we first entered the property. This then led us to check to see what precautions had been taken to stop the dampness from getting into the wall. This would normally take the form of an external lining/tanking or an internal lining/tanking. We dug around the outside

edge of the building and could not find any form of external tanking; we dug down approximately three quarters of a foot. Alternatively there may well be an internal tanking, but without opening up the structure we cannot confirm this.

ACTION REQUIRED: We recommend that the structure be opened up within the annex. We are happy to organise the opening up of the structure and to carry out the examination for an agreed fee and/or the present owner provides evidence of the damp proofing technique used, although the opening up of the structure is much preferred in our mind as even if guarantees are provided or drawings are presented this does not mean that the work has actually taken place!

ESTIMATED COST: £100 - £250.

3) Treatment of the Weatherboarding

The weatherboarding was redecorated approximately two months ago. This, of course, can hide many defects. You should not underestimate the amount of time and/or money it will take to redecorate this property.

Please see the Walls Section of this Report.

4) Decking

We are slightly concerned that the decking to the rear will cause some dampness due to the way it has been carried out, which will allow water to sit upon the brick plinth. A simple alteration to this should suffice with the removal of the nearest decking board to the building or alternatively making it slightly higher and therefore allowing the water to drain off the brickwork.

ESTIMATED COST: One weekend of DIY. Alternatively £100 - £250.

Please see the External Areas Section of this Report.

5) Lie of the Land – Sloping Site and the Huge Drain in the Road

We have come across problems previously where properties on sloping sites such as this one get the water discharged on to them from the hill above. We note there is a large drain in the road to take up such water (this is directly behind your annex, which is not ideal).

We also noted the drain in the road was full of water, which is interesting particularly when you consider how dry it has been this summer.

The road drain, from what we could see, has a two-fold benefit, firstly it reduces water getting into your property and secondly it reduces the likelihood of water travelling down the road and on to the main highway which, if you are not aware, is an offence to discharge water onto a highway due to possible accidents from ice etc. We were concerned about this so we spoke with one of your potential neighbours-to-be who advised us that in the past there had been flooding although they could not recall it being that severe.

We noted that one of your neighbours was having a new garage built. This is directly opposite the drain and may have a further impact on the ground water in the area. You must remember that since the property was originally built the annex has been added, stopping the water from getting down the hill on this side, and now the garage has been added, effectively channelling the water down the road. The effect of this is unknown and will be experienced for the first time this autumn/winter/spring.

Please also see the Damp Proof Section of this Report.

The above issues are explained in full within the main body of the report.

There are numerous other items that we would class as DIY or handyman type work such as clearing the gutters and replacing the mastic around the doors. These problems are fairly typical for this age, style and type of property. We have detailed these and other issues within the main body of the report.

Purchase Price

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have however referred you to sources of general information on the housing market within the Information on the Property Market Section, which can be found in the Appendices at the end of the Report.

Every Business Transaction has a Risk

Every business transaction has a risk, only you can assess whether that risk is acceptable to you and your circumstances. You should now read the main body of the Report paying particular attention to any “**ACTION REQUIRED**” points.

Final thoughts

Please also see our comments in the Summary Upon Reflection Section, which is at the end of this section of the report. These comments were added after we had reviewed this report whilst still in draft format.

MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT

Just a few more comments about the Report format before you read the actual main body of the Report.

TENURE

We have assumed that the property is to be sold Freehold and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?

Finally, it is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and therefore are eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS

This report is being carried out under our standard terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys.

SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out with our thoughts a few days after the initial survey. We would add the following:

The more we reconsider this property the more we consider there may be problems with dampness and ground water in the annex in particular and the part of the main property that is cut into the ground.

We think for the sake of simply having the annex opened up in part and/or drawings provided and/or guarantees provided it is well worth the time and effort to try and anticipate any future problems.

We have dealt with a similar barn construction fairly recently where we ended up digging down the side of the barn, putting tanking in place and then refilling, forming a trench drain. This perhaps is making us more wary than we might normally be, but on the other hand we also saw the problems that could arise from it.

Another thing that keeps coming to mind is the drains and the quality of drainage that a developer would have put in, but there is no way really of checking this without putting close circuit TV cameras down the drains, which we do not feel is necessary, bearing in mind we ran the taps for a fair while.

The only other thing that is more of a personal taste comment is that we are aware from personal experience of having tried to buy a barn that they are an acquired taste and they do not appeal to all the market.

For any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion. If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

We would ask that you read the Report and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

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FLUES AND ROOF LIGHTS

We noted three flues to the property, all metal and at varying heights, each having a rain-protecting cap. We find the most important thing with flues, assuming they are the right height to function correctly, which we can only assume, is the way that they bond with the roof as this has to be watertight.

We found the following:

Main Roof Flue

This is a metal flue with an integral flashing detail, which is bedded into the slates with no further lead work or, from what we could see, amendment to the slates. From what we could see in the roof this was in reasonable condition and reasonably watertight.



The detail at the base of the main flue.

Kitchen Roof Flue

This has been formed in a similar manner to the main roof flue. We were unable to view the underside of this to confirm if it was dry or not. However there was no dampness visible in the main part of the property.



Kitchen Roof – with integral flashings

Dining Room Flue

This again has been formed with an integral flashing and the slates built around it. We were unable to access the part of the roof around it, but we did

note hairline cracking and paint flaking within the dining room. This we attribute mainly to the loose ridge tiles, which we comment on within the roof section of this report.



Close up of flue over the dining area.

Flashings Defined

Flashings prevent dampness from entering the property, usually at junctions where materials change. Such a junction is the one between the chimney and the roof.

Roof Lights

As the roof lights used in the annex also form part of the main windows we have covered these in the Annex Roofs part of the Main Roofs Section and the External Joinery Section of this Report.

Finally, we have made our best assumptions on the overall condition of the flues and Roof lights from the parts we could see. The inspection was made from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated) using a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera. A closer inspection may reveal latent defects.

Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERFELTS

The roof coverings and underfelts section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.

The underfelts function is to prevent wind and minimise water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:

We will consider the roofs in two areas, the main building and the annex.

Main Building Roofs

The roofs to the main building are clad with slate. This looks to be natural slate (as opposed to manmade slate). This is what gives it its undulating look and mixture of colours.

We note that some repairs have been carried out to the slate and that a slate was missing. This is not particularly good for such a new roof, however there did not look to be anything that would cause leaks at present.



Sample area of the main roof

General Information on slate roofs

Slate has been commonly used as a roofing material in many areas, particularly where it was available as a natural resource. With the coming of the railway age slate was used predominantly during the Victorian times. Slate continued to be used up until the end of the 19th Century and in recent years planners have insisted upon its use where they feel it is appropriate; this probably happened in this case.

Joins

Where one roof joins another, or there is a change in level, there is a weakness in the roof structure. There are three such joins in this roof.

Join between the lower single storey roof and the main property

Here the slate abuts the weatherboarding. We were unable to see whether a lead flashing had been put in to the full length of the join, however we did note to the rear corner, near the double doors from the kitchen, that we could see lead work indicating that it probably has. We also noted on the far side that there was a lead detail just above the rainwater goods. We show a picture of this within the Rainwater Goods Section as it is a fairly awkward detail and could do with amending.



Junction of lower roof, which should have a lead flashing. It is difficult to tell if one has been incorporated or not, with the exception of possibly right at the top of the roof.

General view of low level roof

Roof step down

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There are two steps in the roofs. The single storey roof, where there is a change in level due to the lie of the land. In both cases the step looks to have a lead flashing which, in our opinion, is a good detail providing it has been carried out correctly.



Step in lower roof. This is a weak area although it does look to have had a flashing. The fascia board will nevertheless need redecoration in the foreseeable future as you can see it was missed when the recent redecoration was carried out. Which is fairly difficult where people paint only the items that can be seen.

Ridge Tiles

We noted that light could be seen through the joints of some of the ridge tiles, which means they either were not originally bedded in cement or it has been worn away, which is somewhat disturbing given the newness of the roof. We therefore feel that the ridge tiles were probably put on in a cement mortar mix, which had far too little cement in it. We therefore recommend that you have all the ridge tiles inspected.

ACTION REQUIRED: Ask a competent roofer to inspect all the ridge tiles and advise upon which need re-bedding. We could visibly see that approximately half a dozen needed re-bedding; based upon this we would anticipate costs to be a few hundred to a few thousand pounds (though more likely to be the few hundred scenario).

We also suggest that at the same time the roofer has a close check of the roof slates as we are concerned that we could see that some had slipped and that some had been replaced already, which is quite unusual for a roof this young.



If you look closely at this photo you will see that the ridge tiles do not have any mortar between them, which has led to some dampness getting in. These all need re-bedding and, as we say in the report, you need to check all of the ridge tiles.

Vents

Whilst manufacturers are getting better at hiding vents that are required under Building Regulations (to stop condensation from forming in the new well insulated roofs) we were surprised that we could not see any vents in this instance. Equally, we would add, we could not see any significant condensation staining internally within the roof.

Sarking Felt

We were able to access the main roof and a small part of the lower roofs. In both cases we found, as we would expect, that a sarking felt had been added. The notes at the start of this section explain what a sarking felt does. We did note in several areas externally that the edge of the felt is deteriorating, which means that water could drip off the slates and behind the rainwater goods. It is worth having a closer examination of this from a set of long ladders after the winter of 2003.



Close up of the roof. If you note the sarking felt underneath the slates should sit into the guttering. This is beginning to wear in some areas and could lead to dampness and deterioration.

Annex Roofs

Again this is a slate roof in reasonable condition. It has a valley gutter, which can be a weakness in these types of roofs. We inspected this as best we could, it was formed in metal, which did not look to be rusting, which is a good sign and it was clear at the time of our inspection, which is also a good sign.

There are three roof lights to the property, which make a nice feature of the bedroom in the roof. They are also a weakness in the roof structure and whilst we note the gutter system around them we would anticipate that in the long term there will be some leaks in these as it seems inevitable with roof lights. We comment more upon these within the External Joinery Section of this Report.

Rooms formed within Roofs

Where a room is formed within a roof the gap between the ceiling and the roof should be insulated, the reason for this is to stop both heat gain and heat loss as you are particularly close to the elements. On the day of our

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inspection it was fairly hot within the room. We put this down to solar gain, rather than lack of insulation through the roof.



General view of the annex



Close up of the valley gutter and also showing a missing slate. We also noted that there were no clips to the slates, which is a fairly common practice, particularly where the roof is exposed on slightly high areas such as this.

Vents

Please see our comments within the Main Roof Section of this Report.

Finally, all the roofs were inspected from ground level with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

ROOF STRUCTURE AND ROOF VOIDS **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.

We were able to gain access to the main roof and to a small part of the low level roof in the main building and in the annex we were able to get access to the roof that joins the original garages and annex together.

Main Building

Main Roof and Low Level Roofs

The loft hatch to the main roof is in the small first floor bedroom and to the low roofs it is within the kitchen. Neither have a loft ladder. The main roof is partly boarded out but the smaller roof is not at all. Neither loft has a light; if they do we could not find them! We recommend that ladders and lights be added, as it will make the roof space safer and easier to use. We viewed both roofs by torchlight. We were pleased to see there were only a limited amount of stored items within the main roof and none at all in the low level roof. However, boarding and insulation still restricted to some extent what we could see. We therefore give comments based upon our best assumptions and from what we have inspected.

Roof Timbers

The roof structure is a cut timber roof with purlin supports, the cut referring to the fact that it was cut on site and fitted, the purlin support referring to the supporting timbers running the length of the roof, that give support to the common rafters. We saw nothing unusual in its configuration or the size of timber used. In fact the purlin timbers were particularly chunky. We did note some splits in the timbers, but this is fairly common and these did not appear excessive given the age and type of roof structure.

The only thing we did notice that was slightly unusual was the vertical metal brace to the centre joist (the one next to the roof access). This type of construction is normally seen on Victorian properties and we have found that it is generally used to stop roofs spreading, which brings us on to our next point, we did note that to the front left hand side of the main roof that the roof is slightly out of line. At first we thought this was the guttering being

out of line but upon further inspection we believe there to be a twist in the main roof.

Purlins Defined

The purlin is the horizontal timber member usually running from gable end to gable end and parallel with the walls which supports the jack or common rafters (the angled rafters forming the slope to the roof).



General view into the roof.

The roof had various stored items in it.



View of the end gable. The purlin is running horizontally on the left hand side. We were pleased to see this was chunkier than we would normally find. There are some splits within the common rafters; this is not unusual, although perhaps slightly excessive for a property of this age. Note also the plasterboard to the end gable, indicating the type of construction, which is fairly 'lightweight', this has the weatherboarding on the other side of it. Also notice the rat bait! Which was all



General view of the purpose made low level roof. Note the wasp nest to the right hand side; we are not sure if it is active. We were pleased to see the modern wiring.

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Annex Roof

The access to this roof is from the galleried bedroom through what initially looks like a cupboard.

We did not actually get within the roof due to the number of rolled carpets at the entrance and the general lack of time to do the two buildings, which meant our efforts were concentrated on the main dwelling.

The roof has a light but no light bulb! What we could see by torchlight from the entrance is a cut timber roof, which joins on to the old sloping pitch of the garage. This is a fairly common practice and one that we have seen many times before.

Sarking Felt

We were pleased to see that there is a sarking felt present.



General roof view. You can see here the old hipped roof that formed the garage prior to the extension (the black battened area). You are in need of a light bulb in this area.

Finally, it should be noted that a general inspection of the roof timbers has been made but we have not examined all surfaces of every length of timber because of the style of construction and restricted access.

RAINWATER GOODS

Rainwater goods is the term given to the rainwater gutters and the rainwater downpipes. Their function is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.

Defective rainwater goods are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.

To both the main building and the annex the rainwater goods are plastic. As it was not raining at the time of the inspection it is not possible to confirm 100 per cent that the rainwater installation is free from blockage, leakage etc. or that it is capable of coping with long periods of heavy rainfall. However, we must comment upon the poor detailing which is present to both the main building and the annex. There are some very awkward 'S' bends, which we feel will lead to blockages sooner or later. From what we could see unfortunately there is very little that you can do about these now.



There are several awkward rainwater goods details. Such as this! Also note the brickwork has been cut slightly lower than the roof level and would benefit from a cement mortar fillet to stop any water getting in



This photo shows where the downpipes drain away and is not ideal as the drainage should be much further underground. Care should be taken not to damage them.

Another awkward rainwater goods detail.



A very awkward detail on the rainwater goods, which could lead to some dampness running down the side of the weatherboarding, and probably already has. A hopper head would probably be better here.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would always recommend that the rainwater goods are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

We did note that the downpipes feed directly into the ground. This is a practice we are not keen on as any blockages cannot be easily cleared. We would much prefer to see a gully system, which ironically are almost as easy to fit.

Rainwater Goods around the Roof Light Windows

It is the first time we have come across this sort of rainwater goods design where the guttering passes the window in a pipe. However, we cannot see why it will not work unless it gets blocked by leaves, as it looks to be at the moment and you need to an eye on this area and regularly clean it.



There is a fairly awkward detail where the window/roof lights are.

Close up of the detail around the roof light, which shows it is blocked if you look closely in the gutter. This needs to be cleared, which is easier said than done as we tried to reach this during the course of our survey and could not

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. We were not able to make a close inspection of the roof level rainwater goods (our ladders are not long enough) and therefore cannot identify the type of material 100 per cent or the condition. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

WALLS

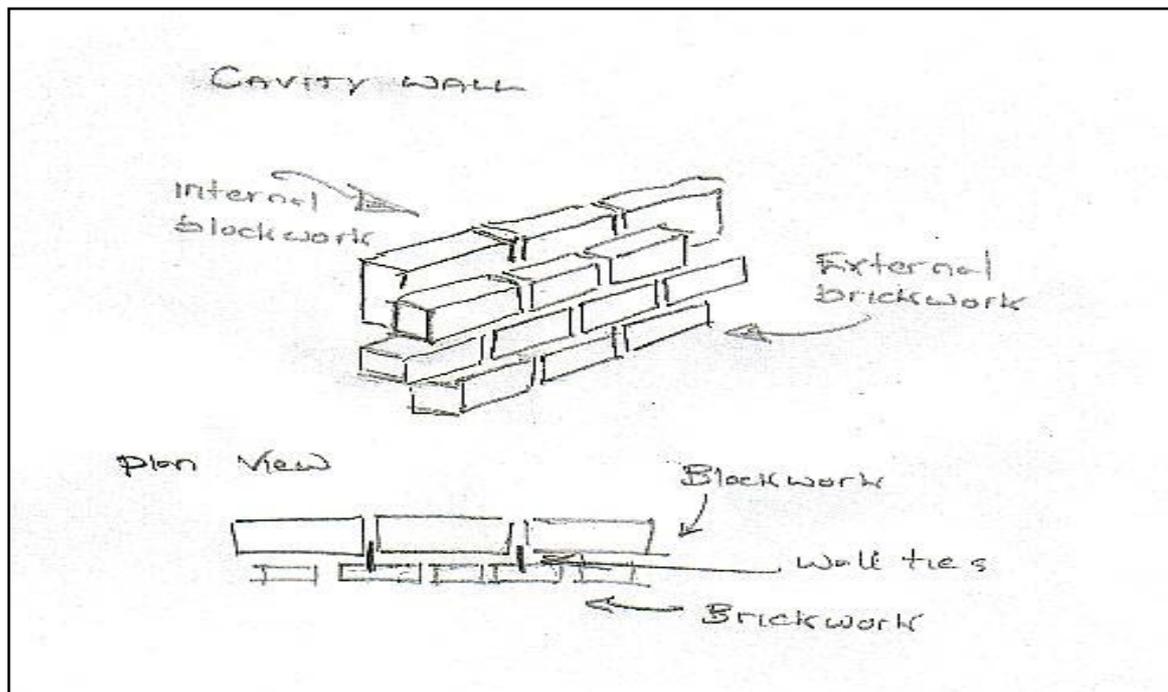
External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.

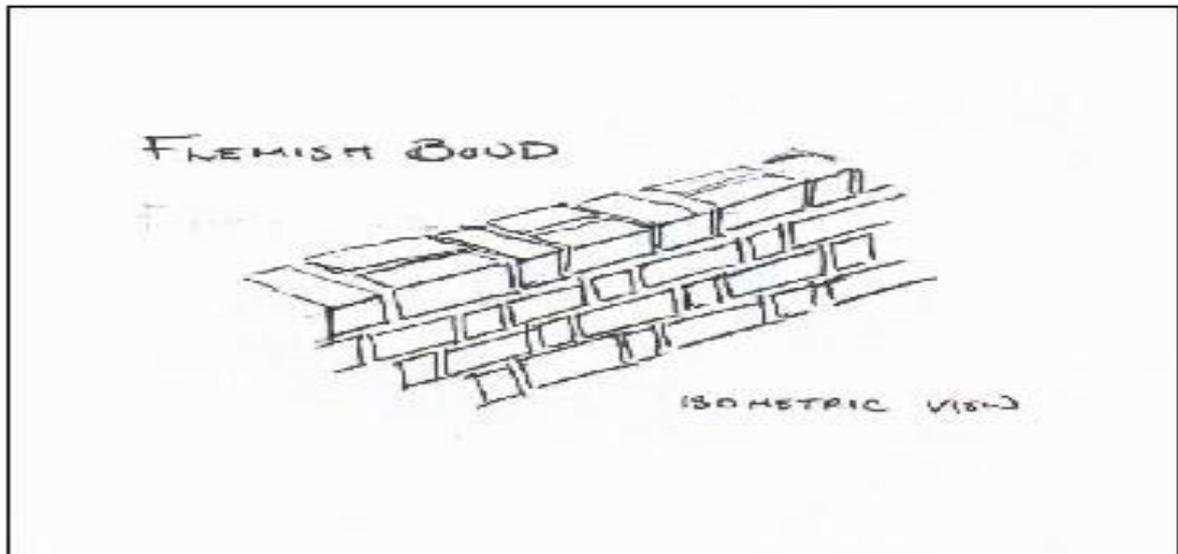
Weatherboarding

The majority of both the main building and the annex walls are clad in weatherboarding. We were advised in our question and answer session with the vendors that this was redecorated approximately two months ago. This unfortunately means that defects can be hidden. Having said that, the timbers look relatively new. We did note that some of them have split but this was mostly where they were nail fixed too close to their edge.

Brickwork

The single storey section of the main building is in brickwork bedded in a cement mortar, as is the base under the weatherboarding on both the main building and the annex. The brickwork is predominantly a modern cavity wall construction, although there are some areas of Flemish bond construction.





This shows a fairly typical detail where the nails are too close to the edge of the weatherboarding and have caused splitting.



General view of the new brickwork, which is in a cavity bond. The older brickwork being in a Flemish bond.

Brickwork Detailing

To the main property there is a brickwork detail at the base of the shiplap boarding. It is very important to the well being of the property that this detailing is done correctly and we were pleased to see that in the main it has. This means that the bricks should be sloping, as they are in most cases, with a lead flashing detail. There is obviously a difference of opinion between how this detail should be carried out between ourselves and whoever specified the work, as we would have carried it out beneath the windows as well.

Another area we need to draw your attention to is the brickwork detailing to the rear of the property around the lounge and kitchen area, which is adjacent

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to the new decking. Here, unfortunately, due to the way the decking has been put next to the structure it does give the outside chance that dampness could occur. What we envisage happening is in the autumn months the leaves from the trees build up around this area and sit on the brickwork. This will eventually allow dampness into the property.

ACTION REQUIRED: We would not recommend adding the lead detailing unless dampness started to occur internally as it is a very difficult job. We would however recommend that you remove the decking around the brickwork detail, just the one board should do, this can either be removed or lowered or adjusted to allow water to run off the brickwork.



We were pleased to see the lead drip detail on the brickwork, although we cannot understand why it was not carried out underneath the windows as a precautionary measure to minimise future dampness.



Whilst the bricks are angled a lead flashing underneath the windows would have been a much better detail.



The decking may possibly add to dampness in the property as you can see it effectively stops the run off of water on the brickwork. We are talking a long-term process here, but nevertheless with the removal or adjustment of that plinth, by making it slightly higher it would allow the water to run away rather than to sit on the wall.

Retaining Wall

We note the retaining wall to the annex does not have any weep holes to it. This is to drain off any build up of water that occurs behind the wall.

ACTION REQUIRED: Core drill holes into the retaining wall to provide weep holes. To some extent it could be argued that the retaining wall has survived for a few years without weep holes, but we feel it would be better in the long term to add the weep holes. It is not an urgent job, but something to be on your list of things to do – particularly if the wall starts to lean over at an angle!



This is the retaining wall around the patio area to the annex, where ideally weep holes should be added.

Finally, where the window and door lintels are concealed by brickwork and/or plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In older buildings concrete lintels or metal lintels are common which can be susceptible to deterioration which is unseen particularly if in contact with dampness.

The external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and randomly via a ladder within the boundaries of the property.

FOUNDATIONS

The foundations function, if suitably designed and constructed, is to transfer the dead or superimposed load through the soil so it can suitably carry the loads. Many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or no foundations, as we now think of them, with a minimum depth of around 1 meter filled with concrete.

Unfortunately it is impossible to say how deep the foundations are. We can only make assumptions and guesses. We assume that Building Regulations would have required them to renew/completely replace most of the original foundations to modern standards and requirements. These would mean a foundation of approximately a meter deep in concrete. This is certainly likely to be the case in the annex as, from what we were told, this is a complete new build.

We have inspected the base of the property for movement and have noted nothing unusual on the property. We would tempter our comment with the fact that any property that is predominantly weatherboarded effectively adjusts to some extent to any movement that occurs.

Whilst we are on the subject of foundations we would comment that in building these properties, particularly the annex, a considerable amount of earth would of had to be removed when you look at the lie of the land. Without exposing the foundations we can only assume that it has been built to Building Regulations approval. The only way to be 100% sure is to open up the foundations, which we are happy to do, but it would be very unusual and also expensive to carry out.

Finally, the foundations cannot be inspected without considerable excavation and possible damage to the property. We cannot, therefore, comment on their construction or condition. You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave, etc.

TREES

Whilst there are trees within the curtilage of the land none of these are within influencing distance.

Influencing Distance Defined

This is the distance in which a tree may be able to cause damage to the subject property when fully grown.

Please also refer to the External Areas section.

DAMP PROOF COURSE AND TANKING

The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required a minimum foundation depth of 225mm and an oversight of 150mm. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout the country.

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6") should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels.

Main Building

We did not specifically see a damp proof course during our investigations. However, given that the refurbishment was carried out only ten years ago the damp proof course should be present.

No Tanking Found

We are more concerned about the property where, due to the fact it is sitting on a sloping site, part of it goes below ground level. We dug around this area and was surprised that we could not find any tanking, although this could have been carried out on the inside of the walls and to be fair we did not find any dampness within.



This is one of our investigations to see how deep the damp proof course goes. Unfortunately it was only a few inches below the surface level and did not continue down any further. There is no sign of tanking on the side of the building.

Annex – No Tanking Found

Our comments for the main building would equally apply to the annex. Although in addition we are concerned about the annex because we thought we smelt dampness. There is a considerable amount of water sitting behind the annex in the drain from the road and the base of the property is dry lined, therefore not allowing us to use our electronic damp meters to check these areas.

ACTION REQUIRED: Open up the lower section of the annex. We would have to carry this work out for an agreed fee. Please telephone our office to discuss further.



As mentioned in the report our electronic meter could not take any readings on the lower portion of the property due to it being dry lined. Above this we found everything to be satisfactory. (The yellow item is the electronic damp meter.)



You can see the fall in the road which combines with the fall from the surrounding hills, which when it rains all the water will travel along the road. Note the new garage to the left hand side, which we feel will further direct water towards your annex.



This is the land drain, which holds a tremendous amount of water, which is in the road adjacent to your annex, where we believe there could be problems.



This is my further investigation to try to establish if there is any damp proof course or tanking to the annex, or indeed the main building that is built below ground level. There does not appear to be. This is a major area of concern and that is why we are suggesting opening up the annex walls.

EXTERNAL JOINERY

The external joinery part of this section covers windows, doors, fascias and soffits and any detailing such as brick corbelling etc.

Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property. Another element of external joinery is the fascias and soffits. These offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of guttering.

Fascias and Soffits

The property has newly decorated timber fascias and soffits. These all looked in reasonable condition, as they should. We noted that some of the fascia boards have been missed when redecorating in the steps in the roof, which is not unusual as people usually only paint what can be seen, and in this case we could be very cynical and say that the painting has been carried out purely to help sell the property and/or hide any defects!

Windows

The properties have double glazed windows set within timber frames. These looked in reasonable condition; but they should do having been redecorated only recently.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long-term solution. Enquiries should be made as to the existence of any transferable guarantees.



Sorry to come back to this but we think it would be a far better detail if lead was put underneath the windows as the run off water will equally sink into the brickwork below the windows as it would below the weatherboarding, which will lead to dampness. Ideally a lead flashing should be fitted underneath the windows. This however will be a very difficult task

Roof Lights/Windows

Within the annex a fairly unusual window type has been used, which is both a window and roof light. We have seen these within the catalogue and indeed have tried to use them in the past in extensions that we have been involved with designing. However, to date, no planners have actually approved them. It was therefore interesting for us to see them first hand. From what we could see they were fairly well designed with drainage channels surrounding them (please note we were viewing these from ground level and could not see them all the way round the windows, but we know they should be there from the details we have seen in various manufacturers catalogues).

A problem we did note was the pipe that spans between the windows getting blocked. This is approximately a 2.5cm pipe (or one inch for those that are still imperial), which has been partially blocked by leaves and moss etc., but other than this they looked in reasonable condition.

Doors

The properties have an array of doors, from the oversized timber entrance door to the French doors to the rear.

We were disappointed with some of these doors, due to the poor quality of workmanship, which left quite substantial gaps between the French doors for example.

We would recommend that alterations and improvements be carried out as we feel they are an open invitation to a burglar.



The mastic has now dried out from around the edge of the doors and we suggest it is replaced. We assume it was brown because the property was at one time painted brown.

If you can ignore the reflection and instead note the gap between the doors where the pencil sits. This is an open invitation, we feel, to any burglar wanting to gain entry and also generally poor craftsmanship.



There are however some nice details to the external joinery, such as the flashing at the base of the door entrance, marked here by the pencil.

Finally, a general and random selection and inspection of the exposed timbers, doors, windows, fascias and soffits has been made visually and this gives an

over-view of the general condition. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS

The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern, as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.

You really should not underestimate the amount of time and/or money that it will take to re-stain the weatherboarding. Unfortunately if you do not carry it out this property could look very tatty very quickly. And as we have already mentioned cynically, this property has had to be painted as part of the marketing of it in our opinion (we are advised that the property had been on the market previously).

It does not help that the black absorbs the heat and making it deteriorate quicker.

Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials' properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

INTERNAL

CEILINGS, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES

In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.

Ceilings

From within the roof space we could identify the ceilings as being formed in Gypsum plasterboard, which is building board with a core of aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, and used as a dry lining. In this case these have been painted or papered internally and the majority look in reasonable condition. However:

Hairline Cracking and Flaking Paint

We noted in the dining room that there is hairline cracking and also flaking paint. Upon closer inspection we believe this relates to the ridge tiles that are not bedded correctly.

ACTION REQUIRED: As already mentioned, re-bed the ridge tiles and check all of the ridge tiles.



If you look closely at this picture you can see the flaking paint that alerted us to the possibility of a problem on the roof, which we later found to be the ridge tiles not having any mortar.

Internal Walls and Partitions

Generally internal partition walls are plastered or rendered and decorated. Without the removal of the plaster or decorative finish we cannot be 100 per cent certain of the construction but we believe it to be studwork. This will mean that there is potential for noise transfer between rooms. There is little that can be done about this.

In the annex there are not any internal walls as such.

Studwork Defined

Usually a timber frame, clad in either lath and plaster or plasterboard and used to divide areas. Studwork can be structural, i.e. load bearing, or alternatively non-structural depending upon its construction. Within more modern properties, a proprietary metal system or a honeycomb cardboard may also be found. Modern Building Regulation requirements also require minimal sound transfer and this is usually adhered to by the incorporation of insulation.



If you look closely at this beam you can see there has been slight movement. This is common and normal within a timber frame property as the property changes, adjusts and moves minutely with the seasons, what is termed as ‘breathing’, this will lead to hairline cracking and movement such as can be seen in this photo. If you note the gap between the beam and the tiles

We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken. The type of materials employed cannot be ascertained fully without damage being caused.

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES

There is a chimneybreast in the lounge and also one in the kitchen used by the Aga and also one in the dining room. In our opinion the chimneys are one of the features that help give character to this property. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be ventilated to prevent dampness.

At the time of the survey, no chimneys were in use. We did however, in our answer and question session ask when they were last used and we were advised that the lounge chimney had been used in April of this year.

Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Flues Section of this Report.

FLOORS

Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.

No exposure was carried out due to the restrictions of fitted carpets, floor coverings etc. The comments are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction.

Ground Floor

We believe that this floor is a mixture of a suspended timber floor, in areas such as the study, bedroom, dining room and lounge (although it is only likely to be on batons), and quarry tiles, which we assume have been laid onto a concrete flooring.

First Floor

We assume that the first floor construction was joist and floorboard. This floor does deflect more than we would normally expect. You should ensure you are happy to live with this deflection.

Suspended Timber Floor Construction Defined

A suspended timber floor usually consists of timbers spanning the ground floor, supported on piers (usually brickwork), vented via airbricks within the walls.

Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

These are usually at first floor level consisting of a joist supported from the external walls, either built in or, in more modern times, sitting upon joist hangers, sometimes taking additional support from internal walls, with floorboards fixed down upon it.

No floorboards were lifted. The floor was not accessed.

DAMPNESS

In this section we look at any problems that are being caused either by rising damp or lateral damp.

Rising Damp

Rising damp depends upon three components, the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation from the wall surface. The water rising from the ground will tend to rise in the raw materials and will continue to do so due to capillary action to varying degrees of intensity and height. deterioration that we discuss below.

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. No evidence of any significant rising dampness was detected. However, as already mentioned we felt we could small dampness within the annex and would recommend that part of the walls are removed.

Effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with backboards, wall tiles and wall panelling etc.

Lateral or Penetrating Dampness

This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall material, inadequate rainwater goods or corroded downpipes.

It is therefore essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause, as there are also other sources of dampness such as condensation, which may inadvertently by the inexperienced eye be considered to be lateral dampness or rising damp.

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal walls, floors and other surfaces. No evidence of any significant penetrating dampness was detected.

Condensation

Whilst no condensation was noted we did see that both the bathrooms have relatively small extraction systems. These all needed a clean and ideally we would suggest that they are increased in size, particularly in the shower rooms.

ACTION REQUIRED: Clean fans and/or replace them with larger units.



Clean the extraction fans.

INTERNAL JOINERY

This section looks at the windows, the doors, the stairway and the skirting boards.

Doors

These are timber doors and in keeping with the property.

Staircase

The underside of the staircase is lined. It is now considered good practice to add a lining to slow down the burning of the staircase in a worse case scenario where a fire breaks out. This will then allow you more time to escape from the upper floors.

Kitchen

In our opinion the kitchen units are of a reasonable standard.

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have taken a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

TIMBER DEFECTS

This section considers dry rot, wet rot and woodworm.

What is Wet Rot or Dry Rot?

Wet and Dry rot are species of fungi that initially need moisture to allow their airborne spores to germinate. Dry Rot can grow rapidly when conditions are good and if water continues to enter a building unchecked, wetting internal wood, Wet Rot can also spread throughout the timber in a property over a short period of time.

Dry Rot and Wet Rot

No significant evidence was found of wet rot that we believe will cause structural problems; although there is the possibility of it occurring behind the dry lining within the annex and the main property if it is damp there, but this is a worse case scenario.

Woodworm

Signs of old woodworm infestation were found throughout the property on the 'feature' timbers that have been used and left exposed to give a barn feel to the property. We were assured these have been treated and we did not note any significant evidence within the roof structure, which does indicate that the woodworm flight holes are old. However, we would comment that in a property of this age there is a slight possibility that woodworm is active. We have therefore examined furniture etc. to see if it has encroached into this, but did not find any signs of it. Whilst we did not see anything if you wish to be 100 per cent certain we suggest that we return once the property has had all the furniture and stored items removed, which we are happy to do for an agreed fee.

INTERNAL DECORATIONS

All in reasonable condition and decorated in a contemporary style, which is possibly not to everyone's liking. You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends on the use and abuse that the decoration gets, for example within hallways this tends to be greater than for example within a spare bedroom.

We would draw your attention to the fact that removal of existing decorative finishes may cause damage to the underlying plasterwork necessitating repairs and making good prior to redecoration.

THERMAL EFFICIENCY

It is very difficult to comment upon thermal efficiencies in a building of this age and type. For example, many requirements of present Building Regulations, which cover thermal efficiency, would not be appropriate to this type of structure as they are designed for modern buildings, which are constructed to different standards.

We would, however, comment as follows:

Roofs

Roof insulation was present (approximately 150mm) although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 200mm.

The tanks to the loft were insulated, as were some of the pipes leading to it, where visible.

Walls

Hopefully there is a considerable amount of insulation behind the shiplap boarding to meet the Building Regulations of the day. Whilst we have generally increased our thermal efficiency values over the years for the past 20 or so years the standards have been reasonably good, however without opening up the structure we cannot confirm what is there.

Windows

These are double-glazed and therefore have good thermal properties.

Services

Service records should be obtained for the boiler for example. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently.

Summary

We believe this property is average for what we find (assuming there is a good amount of insulation in the walls).

We would advise that an energy rating is likely to be required for future house sales.

Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:

HTTP//www.est.org.UK which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.

or alternatively www.cat.org.UK

or www.ecocentre.org.UK for an alternative technological view.

OTHER MATTERS

Security

A security system was noted. It was not tested. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. As a matter of policy we do not comment upon layout and design. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services) Telephone No 01628-637512, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke detectors were noted. The current Building Regulations require that they are wired into the main power supply. Obviously in this type of property, where there is a lot of combustible material, it is beneficial to have as many smoke alarms as possible.

We would recommend, for your own safety, that battery operated smoke detectors are installed in each room and, should the opportunity present itself during redecoration, they are wired in to the electricity supply. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local fire authority is usually happy to give advice.

Insurance

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

SERVICES

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating or drainage, as they were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey.

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied. Conclusive tests can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors. The vendor should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

ELECTRICITY

The consumer units and fuse boards are located in the breakfast room for the main building and in the kitchen for the annex.

Generally, visible wiring and fittings are of a modern type. If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.

OIL

The oil boiler is located in the cupboard under the stairs. It is a Trianco Eurostar oil boiler. The oil tank itself is up near the garages. It should have a bundwall around it which can take all the oil should it leak.

PLUMBING AND HEATING

Water Supply

We believe the controlling stopcock is located underneath the kitchen units. It is important that its presence is established in case of bursts or leaks. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

It should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner.

We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.



You have a slight leak from one of your tanks as is noted by a small amount of water coming from the overflow pipe.

Plumbing

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper pipework. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors.

Heating

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

We did note that the central heating had microbore pipes. A practice that we do not like as it tends to block up far easier than the traditional 12mm pipe.

SANITARY FITTINGS

In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bath, the wash hand basin and the WC. We also include comments relating to the kitchen sink and utility room/shower room as applicable.

The sanitary fittings are as new throughout.

In the family bathroom in the main property we had difficulty switching off the shower and getting it to run on just the taps, although we did not spend too much time trying at this task.

In the shower room off the left hand bedroom we found the taps to be rather noisy. We thought that the water might be being pumped.

We would make a general comment that where tiling has been used on wood, as is the case in most of this property, when the property 'breathes' during the various seasons, and moves slightly, hairline cracking may appear around the tiling.

It is important to ensure that the tiling and seals are properly made and maintained at the junction between wall surfaces and baths, showers, etc. as damp penetration can lead to the development of fungal decay in concealed areas. This may not become apparent until a major attack has developed necessitating extensive and costly repairs.

MAIN DRAINS

The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the Victorian era and works so successfully today, it is often taken for granted. It is only in recent years that re-investment has taken place to upgrade the original drainage systems.

The cold taps have been run for approximately half an hour in the bathroom and kitchen and no build up or back up occurred during this time.

We are advised that the property has a septic tank that is shared with other residents (four we believe). This is located to the far side of this property. The seller advised that he saw the GRP septic tank being put in place. Septic tanks should be operated on the principle of solids being broken down by bacteria, the partly treated foul water then being disposed of by discharging into adjacent ground by a system of soakaways, land drains, perforated pipes or as we are advised in this case by going into a stream, for which you need permission to do, usually from the National Rivers Authority.

We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting covers (two found) and running water from the sanitary fittings within the house.

It must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the building's foundations. Drainage repairs are inevitably costly and may result in damage being caused to those areas of the property beneath, or adjacent to, which the drains have been run.

Inspection Chambers/Manholes

We found no manholes, but we did find two inspection chambers. One directly in front of the front door and one to the left hand side of the property. Both were opened.

Inspection Chamber One (in front of the front door)

This revealed a plastic chamber, which looked free of any debris at the time of our inspection.



This is directly outside the main property.

Inspection Chamber Two (located to the far left hand corner of the property)

Again when we unscrewed this one it was plastic and there was no debris found.



Between the main property and the annex.

For your information, manholes/inspection chambers are required to be provided in the current Building Regulations at each change of direction or where drainage runs join the main run.

Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of surface water disposal discharging via the rainwater goods from the property's roof areas.

Surface water drains have not been tested and their condition or effectiveness is not known. Similarly, the adequacy of soak-aways has not been established although you are advised that they tend to silt up and become less effective with time.

Please also see our comments within the Rainwater Goods section.

EXTERNALLY

OUTBUILDINGS

We have not inspected any outbuildings.

EXTERNAL AREAS

Whilst we note the boundaries, these may not be the legal boundaries. Your legal advisor should make further enquiries on this point and advise you of your potential liability with regard to any shared structures, boundary walls and fences.

Front Garden

This is level and mainly brick paved and shingled, suitable for parking several cars.

Rear Garden

The garden is laid mainly to lawn and there is a wood decking platform that levels out the area around the main building. There are several trees and also a pond feature within the garden.

The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property, however in a development such as this it is usually set out specifically on the deeds.



General view of the garden.

Neighbours

We have spoken to the neighbours across the road on the left hand side of the property and they were pleasant during our discussion. We also met one of the neighbours to the front of the property, who again was pleasant.

POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR

The following points should be checked by your Legal Advisor:

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:
 - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
 - ii) Rising damp treatments.
 - iii) Central heating installation.
 - iv) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
 - v) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith e.g. access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g. Access, Easements and Wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General Development Proposals in the locality.
- j) Tree Preservation Orders.
- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation / contamination etc. exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.

- l) Our report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or of the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or similar product is used by your legal advisor to establish whether this area falls into a flood plain, old landfill site etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your legal advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them about it.

LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA

From our investigations the property has been identified as being Listed (although we do not know what grading). It is listed as part of the Manor Farm listing. The property is not in a Conservation Area.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm the above and carry out any searches he/she feels are necessary.

Planning and Building Regulations

Due to holidays etc at the Local Authority there was no one available to answer our enquiries.

We spoke to Anne Davis at the Aylesbury Vale District Council on 28 August 2003 at 11.05 am.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm this and carry out any checks he/she feels necessary.

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

“When you receive your full structural survey (now known as a Building Survey) or House Buyers Report, do remember that you have requested a list of the property’s faults so it is unlikely to make cheerful reading. Every property has its faults but what you are looking for are the serious ones. If your Report does reveal a serious problem that you had not anticipated when making your offer, the first thing to do is to decide whether you want to take on the repairs if an adjustment is made to the price. If you do, then get quotes for the work as quickly as possible and present your case in a fair manner. Most people are reasonable under such circumstances and will compromise but inevitably there are those who are sufficiently confident of their position to say take it or leave it. In a very active market, prices may have moved up sufficiently to cover the extra expenditure in theory and the vendor will not hasten to point this out but remember that he has probably got a vendor pressing him to proceed quickly and starting with a new purchaser will cause him delay”

It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed! Please do not hesitate to contact us on 0800 298 5424.

For and on Behalf of

REFERENCES

The repair and maintenance of houses
Published by Estates Gazette Limited

Life expectancies of building components
Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and

www.1stassociated.co.uk

0800 298 5424

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Building Research Establishment

Surveying buildings

By Malcolm Hollis 4th edition published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Books.

House Builders Bible

By mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press

APPENDICES

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LIMITATIONS

Our limitations are as per our original Terms and Conditions of Engagement.

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement dated 28 August 2003 and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

ENGLISH LAW

We would remind you that this report should not be published or reproduced in any way without the surveyor's expressed permission and is governed by English Law and any dispute arising there from shall be adjudicated upon only by the English Courts.

SOLE USE

This report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his professional advisors. Any other persons rely on the Report at their own risk.

ONLY HUMAN!

Although we are pointing out the obvious, our Surveyors obviously can't see through walls, floors, heavy furniture, fixed kitchen units etc. they have therefore made their best assumptions in these areas.

As this is a one off inspection, we cannot guarantee that there are no other defects than those mentioned in the report and also that defects can subsequently develop.

OCCUPIED PROPERTY

The property was occupied at the time of our survey, although we had been told that it was going to be unoccupied, and therefore we did not send our question and answer sheet, as we would normally do. If you wish us to do this please contact us immediately and we will arrange this.

WEATHER

It was a sunny at the time of the inspection. The weather did not hamper the survey.

Finally, we would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you are probably aware the year 2000 was the wettest year on record and this may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

We used to include within our reports articles on the property market that we thought would be of interest and informative to you, however we were concerned that in some cases these did not offer the latest information. We have therefore decided to recommend various websites to you, however it is important to realise the vested interest the parties may have and the limits to the information.

www.landreg.org.uk

This records the ownership of interests in registered land in England and Wales and issues a residential property price report quarterly, which is free of charge. The Land Registry is a Government body and records all transactions as far as we are aware, although critics of it would argue that the information is often many months out of date.

www.rics.org.uk

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors offer quarterly reports via their members. Although this has been criticised as being subjective and also limited, historically their predictions have been found to be reasonably accurate.

www.halifax.co.uk and www.nationwide.co.uk

Surveys have been carried out by these two companies, one now a bank and the other a building society for many years. Information from these surveys is often carried in the national press. It should be remembered that the surveys only relate to mortgaged properties, of which it is generally considered represents only 75% of the market. It should also be remembered that the national coverage of the two companies differs and that they may be offering various incentives on different mortgages, which may taint the quality of information offered. That said they do try to adjust for this, the success or otherwise of this is hard to establish.

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www.hometrack.co.uk

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

Motleyfool.co.uk

We also like the Motley Fool website which is a general financial site and although it is selling financial services and other services they do tend to give a very readable view of the housing market.

www.1stassociated.co.uk

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