# Marshalls

## Chartered Surveyors

### Building Survey Report

on

SAMPLE

for

SAMPLE

RICS®

ISVA
Independent Surveyors & Valuers Association
PUTTING THE CLIENT FIRST

# Marshalls Chartered Surveyors

Building Survey Report

SAMPLE

## INDEX OF CONTENTS

## A GENERAL INFORMATION

**Foreword**

You should appreciate that surveys, by their nature, tend to concentrate on the defects and negative aspects of a property. We believe our job is not to deter you from the purchase, but to assist in your buying decision. When reading this report, you should always keep in mind the initial reasons for your interest in the property.

Whilst we endeavour to avoid jargon in our reports, the use of some technical terms is unavoidable. However, if any part of your report is unclear, please contact your surveyor who will be delighted to assist further.

**Instructions**

We are acting on your confirmation of instruction form dated ??. Our inspection has been carried out in accordance with our Standard Terms of Engagement, reproduced at the end of this report.

**Address**

PICTURE

SAMPLE

**Client(s)**

SAMPLE

**Surveyor**

Richard Foulkes MRICS.

**Related Party Disclosure**

We confirm that there is no material conflict of interest or any current or previous material involvement with any related third parties.

**Inspection Date(s)**

??.

**Circumstances of the Inspection**

It was dry at the time of our inspection and because of this it is possible that some areas of damp penetration may not be visible. A period of generally dry weather preceded our visit.

The property was occupied and furnished with floor coverings and finishes in the rooms. The vendor, Mr SAMPLE, was present at the time of our inspection.

**Directions**

All directions given in the report assume that the reader is outside looking towards the front elevation of the property, which faces approximately southwest.

PICTURE

## B THE PROPERTY

### Type and Age

The property comprises a terraced town house, formally two properties and apparently converted in the late 1980's to a single dwelling. There is a date stone on the front elevation indicating 1813 or 1834. This is most likely when extensive re-modelling of the much older houses occupying the site was undertaken. The utility room/playroom is a later addition.

The property has undergone general modernisation and improvement, apparently mainly during the 1980's. Little recent maintenance and repair has been undertaken and the property is now in need of renovation.

The property is Grade II Listed and also situated in a Conservation Area.

PICTURE

PICTURE

### Accommodation

Ground Floor

Main entrance hall, …….

First Floor

Landing, ……

Second Floor

Landing, ……..

The ground floor plan – not to scale.

The first and second floor plans – not to scale.

- Outside

The house is pavement fronted with small walled gardens to the rear only.

There is no garage, but there is on-street parking at the front with a residents' scheme in operation. You should note that space is very limited and parking may be a problem at times. The road is very narrow and damage to vehicles could occur.

There are no permanent outbuildings.

- Services

All mains services are connected.

The property has a gas fired central heating system with radiators in most areas of the house.

## C OVERALL OPINION

- Summary of Findings

The property was found to be structurally satisfactory, although now in need of some repair and modernisation. The various works outlined in the report are very typical and are not serious, although you must be prepared to accept the cost and inconvenience of dealing with the various repair and improvements required. These items are common in properties of this age and type, and provided that the necessary works are carried out to a satisfactory standard, no more than normal maintenance should be needed. However, it should be appreciated that a period property of this type will need a relatively high level of ongoing repair.

## D SUMMARY OF REPAIRS & RISKS

### Warning

The following is a brief summary of the significant repairs and further investigations required. Significant risk items are also highlighted.

You should take time to read the WHOLE report so that these items can be taken in context.

You are most strongly advised to obtain competitive quotations from reputable contractors for the major items of repair, prior to exchange of contracts. As soon as you receive the quotations and reports for the works, and also the responses from your Legal Advisers, we will be pleased to advise whether or not they would cause us to change the advice given in this Report. However, should you decide to exchange contracts without obtaining this information, you would have to accept the risk that adverse factors might come to light in the future.

### Urgent Repairs

The following items, all discussed later in the report, are considered to be urgent repairs to be remedied as soon as possible, preferably BEFORE exchange of contracts:

- None.

### Further Investigations

The following further investigations, all discussed later in the Report, are considered to be urgent and should be undertaken BEFORE exchange of contracts:

- Inspection and testing of the electrical installation by a registered electrical contractor who is a member of The Electrical Safety Register.
- In the absence of adequate certification, inspection and testing of the heating system by a member of a ‘competent person scheme’, such as a Gas Safe Registered engineer.

### General Repair and Maintenance Items

The following items of repair and improvement should not be neglected, but they are NOT considered to be urgent and can be undertaken as part of routine maintenance:

- Repairing the chimney stacks.
- Cowling the unused chimney flues.
- Roof repairs.
- Repairing defective roof linings at the eaves.
- Overhauling the rainwater fittings.
- Patch re-pointing, patching defective render and occasional replacement of frost damaged masonry.
- Repairing external joinery.
- External redecoration.
- Patching and repairing defective plasterwork.
- Sweeping and checking the active flues, if these are to be used.
- Undertaking an inspection of the ground floor sub-floor voids, as and when possible.
- Upgrading internal fittings and joinery, as required.
- Internal redecoration, as required.
- Ongoing management of dampness.

- Lowering external ground levels at the rear of the house.
- Upgrading insulation, where possible.
- Improving fire precautions, as required.
- Improving security precautions, as required.
- Upgrading the landscaping to the plot, as required.

Other than the normal maintenance work that is required for a property of this type and age, there are no other significant items to bring to your attention.

## Significant Risks

The following significant potential risks to both the property and people were noted:

- Significant damp penetration (See Section F – Chimney Stacks).
- The risk of falling masonry (See Section F – Chimney Stacks).
- Significant damp penetration (See Section F – Roofs).
- The presence of materials that may contain asbestos (See Section F – Roofs).
- Defective fittings (See Section F – Rainwater Fittings).
- The high front door steps (See Section F – External Joinery).
- The possible presence of paint that may contain lead (See Section F – Decorations).
- The use of fibreboard ceiling finishes (See Section G – Ceilings).
- The presence of plaster that may contain Anthrax (See Section G – Ceilings).
- The presence of plaster that may contain Anthrax (See Section G – Internal Walls and Partitions).
- The working fireplaces (See Section G – Fireplaces).
- Limited sub-floor ventilation (See Section G – Floors).
- The staircases (See Section G – Internal Joinery and Fittings).
- The possible presence of paint that may contain lead (See Section G – Decorations).
- High external ground levels (See Section H – Dampness).
- Inadequate detectors and limited fire protection (See Section H – Fire Precautions).
- The location of the property in an area possibly affected by radon gas (See Section I – Radon Gas).
- The location of the property in an area possibly affected by flooding (See Section I – Flooding).
- The gas installation (See Section J – Gas).
- The electrical installation (See Section J – Electricity).
- Possible water contamination (See Section J – Water).
- Inadequate insulation (See Section J – Water).
- The heating installation (See Section J – Heating).
- Pipes run in the floor screed (See Section J – Heating).

## E MATTERS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISER

### Planning

The property is Grade II Listed and is also situated in a Conservation Area. Because of this, stringent planning restrictions will apply and if you are contemplating any extension or alteration works, you should liaise with the Local Authority, prior to exchange of contracts, to ensure they are likely to be permitted. As the property is Listed, you will need to get Listed building consent from the Local Authority if you want to alter it in any way that affects its character, inside or out (although repairs which match exactly may not need consent). Even relatively minor works, such as putting up aerials and burglar alarms and also many internal works, such as moving or removing internal walls and making new doorways, are likely to need consent. With Listed buildings, the Local Authority has the power to insist that any alterations that have been unlawfully undertaken to the property after the date of the listing on 10th December 1971 are removed and reinstatement carried out. This applies even if the unlawful works have been undertaken by previous owners. It is usually possible for your Legal Adviser to arrange an insurance indemnity policy against the risk of Local Authority action.

The listing states:

SAMPLE

… has now closed and is likely to be redeveloped, probably into flats. There will inevitably be some disturbance during the works and the open views over the car parking areas may be blocked.

There are no other planning or highway matters that are likely to adversely affect the property, although you Legal Adviser should carry out further formal enquiries with the Local Authority.

Recommendations

No further action is required, although as the property is subject to additional planning restrictions, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to undertaking any significant repairs or renewals as permission may be needed.

You should ensure that the redevelopment of SAMPLE will not adversely affect your enjoyment of the property.

### Guarantees

Your Legal Advisers should check for the existence, validity and transferability of any guarantees, certificates, warranties and service records. These should be made available to you before completion. Likely items include:

- Damp-proofing works (See Section H – Dampness).
- Timber treatment works (See Section H – Timber Decay & Infestation).
- The central heating installation (See Section J – Heating).

Legal Checklist

Your Legal Advisers should undertake formal enquiries to advise further on the following items:

- That the property is freehold.
- That the road is adopted (maintained at public expense) by The Local Authority.
- That Local Authority notifications and approvals for the extension and alteration works were obtained and all necessary statutory inspections have been made.
- That the property is designated as a Listed Building and situated in a Conservation Area.
- Whether a residents' parking permit will be available from The Local Authority.
- That the main sewer is adopted (maintained at public expense) by The Local Authority.
- Your rights and responsibilities to maintain the shared private drains (the parts of the system between the property and the main sewer).
- The ownership of the boundaries.
- That the property is free of possible chancel charges.
- Whether testing for the presence of Radon gas has been previously undertaken. If not, a Radon bond should be negotiated with the vendor.
- Whether the property has been flooded in the past. If flooding has occurred, it should be confirmed to what extent and whether repairs were undertaken under insurance. It is also important to confirm that continuing insurance cover will be available.

## Recommendations

You should immediately pass a copy of this Report to your Legal Advisers.

## F EXTERIOR – MAIN BUILDING

- Chimney Stacks

### Construction

There are two brick built chimney stacks, which are sealed to the adjoining tiled roofs with mortar fillets. Both chimneys have two flues, which are fitted with clay pots, bedded in mortar. The stacks currently serve open fires in the ground and first floor sitting rooms and the dining room below. There would also have been an open fire in the bedroom above the ground floor sitting room, but this is now unused.

There would have been a further stack at the rear of the house, but this has been removed and roofed over.

### Condition

Both chimneys are reasonably straight and true with no signs of serious cracking. The rights side stack has bulged over the years, but this is very typical and not serious. The left side chimney has a simpler style and appears to have been partially rebuilt at some stage in more modern brickwork. The top course to this chimney is lifting slightly, most likely due to damp penetration. Whilst not urgent, eventual re-bedding of the top course of bricks will be needed.

As expected, the brickwork and pointing have weathered over the years with some basic patching to frost damaged bricks having been previously undertaken. The right side stack now requires some further patch re-pointing and replacement of defective bricks. The work is not urgent, but the stack will continue to deteriorate and it should not be delayed for too long.

The stacks are both situated at an adequate height above the roof coverings.

The clay chimney pots appear satisfactory, although the tall pots to the right side stack are leaning slightly and there is cracking evident to the bedding mortar. The pots are likely to require re-bedding in order to minimise the risks of falling masonry.

Ideally, the unused bedroom flue should be cowled and ventilated to minimise the risks of rain penetration and possible condensation. The fitting of a cowl will also help to deter nesting birds.

The mortar fillets sealing the stacks to the roof coverings have cracked and are allowing water penetration, as visible to the chimney breasts in the attic rooms. Some re-sealing has been undertaken, but this is to a very basic standard and the dampness persists. Early repairs will be needed to minimise the risks of further dampness and timber deterioration. Mortar fillets are prone to thermal cracking and ongoing repairs will be required. Whilst replacement with lead, which is more durable, would be better, the property is Listed and this type of repair is unlikely to be acceptable to the Local Authority.

The stacks are unlikely to incorporate a damp-proof course and even with the fillets in good order, some internal dampness may still occur from driving rain and some dampness to the chimney breasts in the attic bedrooms is likely to persist. In view of the height of the ceilings, this is unlikely to be a significant problem. However, if serious dampness persists the breasts can be boxed-in. Whilst this does not cure any damp, it will provide a good surface for decoration. Regular usage of the chimneys will help to dry any damp.

Recommendations

The chimney stacks are in now in need of a general overhaul, most urgently repairing the leaking mortar fillets and securing the leaning pots. Whilst access at height is obtained it would also be advisable to cowl the unused flues and patch re-point and repair areas of defective brickwork as necessary.

Chimney stacks are exposed to severe weathering and it is essential that they are kept in good order to minimise the risks of water penetration, timber deterioration and falling masonry. The material cost of repairs to chimneys is usually minimal, but scaffolding will be required for safe access and this can be expensive. Repair works are best carried out by a competent roofing contractor or general builder and are best combined with other works at height to the roofs and rainwater fittings.

As the property is subject to additional planning restrictions, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to undertaking any significant repairs or renewals to the chimneys as permission may be needed.

Television aerials have been fitted to both stacks. Ideally, Local Authority consents should have been obtained for this, although this is unlikely.

The left side stack, which serves the ground floor sitting room and would have served a fireplace in the bedroom above.

Close view of the upper courses. Note the bricks are lifting.

Close view of the mortar fillets – note the cracking and short-term patching with mastic sealer.

The left side view. It would be best to cowl the unused bedroom flue. Ideally permission should have been obtained for the fitting of the television aerial.

The rear right side view.

Close views of the basic patching undertaken to the fillets.

The chimney breast and damp penetration in the attic bedroom below.

The right side stack, which serves the fireplaces in the first floor sitting room and dining room. The chimney has a more ‘fancy’ design and is possibly original.

Close views. Note the basic patching to the frost damaged brickwork.

The front left side view – note the pots are out of true and there is cracking visible to the bedding mortar. There is a risk of falling masonry and they should be checked and re-bedded, as necessary. The mortar fillets are in better condition.

The rear view – note the bulging to the upper courses.

Ditto. Note the weathered pointing to the lower courses of the brickwork.

The fillet is slightly cracked.

Internal view of the chimney breast.

There is less dampness, but the area should be monitored.

## Construction

The main roofs are all of conventional pitched construction with a shallow mansard to the main body of the roof. There is a ‘catslide’ to the rear with a split pitch. This slope incorporates three rendered timber framed and tiled dormers, which have tiled valleys. The front roof slope also incorporates three timber framed dormers, which are finished with lead roofs and cheeks (sides). The later rear utility/family room extension has a hipped roof built to lead lined horizontal valley gutters on three sides.

The roof slopes are all covered with plain clay tiles, finished at the ridges and hips with half round and angled tiles bedded in mortar.

The exposed roof edges (verges) are finished with mortar pointing set on slate or fibre reinforced cement boarded undercloaks. The inner edges of the roofs are sealed to the adjoining walls with both mortar fillets and lead flashings/soakers. There is a short parapet wall to the rear left side slope.

All of the visible roof slopes incorporate felt linings, which provide a secondary means of defence against internal water penetration.

There are two lead covered hoods over the front doors.

## Condition

As is expected with a property of this type and age, the roof slopes have sagged and distorted considerably over the years. This is not considered to be serious and will not affect the ongoing performance of the tiling.

All of the roof slopes have an adequate pitch.

The tiling is in fair condition, although there are a number of slipped, missing and broken tiles. Numerous tiles have also suffered from frost damage. Replacement tiles will need to be fitted, but as the roofs are lined this is not urgent. However, the tiles are mainly old and because of this, a high level of ongoing maintenance must be expected.

There is some moss and lichen growth to the roof slopes. Whilst not yet serious, old clay tiles are very vulnerable to frost damage and where possible, they should be kept reasonably free of moss and other debris that will hold moisture and shorten their life.

There are also some creepers growing into the roofs, notably to the extension. This is unsatisfactory and the plants should be carefully removed. This may result in some further damage requiring repair.

The tiles finishing the ridges and hips appear to be generally satisfactory, but the mortar below a number of the tiles has weathered and cracked over the years. Whilst not yet serious, it should be noted that these tiles are often dislodged by high winds and for safety they should be periodically checked and re-fixed, as found necessary.

The bedding mortar to the verges (the exposed roof edges) is satisfactory, apart from minor cracking and weathering. Whilst not serious, occasional patch re-pointing will be needed to minimise the risks of damp penetration, timber decay and vermin ingress.

The undercloak boards supporting the bedding mortar to some of the verges are formed with cement sheeting, which may contain a small proportion of asbestos. Providing they remain in good order, the sheets are perfectly safe in use and should not be a cause for concern. However, care should be taken during maintenance (See Section I – Asbestos).

The mortar fillets have cracked and deteriorated over the years, but there are no signs of any recent water penetration. However, as already mentioned under ‘Chimney Stacks’ above, these fillets are prone to thermal cracking and ongoing repairs will be required to minimise the risks of dampness and timber deterioration. It would be best to undertake repairs when access at height is possible.

The parapet wall at the rear only has a very basic finish and there have been past problems with water penetration. There are no signs of recent problems, but the top of the wall has been patched with bitumen, which is only a temporary repair. This will always be a vulnerable part of the roof and ongoing repairs must be expected.

The horizontal lead lined gutters to the rear roof appear watertight, although they are currently choked with creepers and will need clearing. The tiled valleys are also satisfactory. However, valley gutters are often a source of leakage due to blockages and periodic inspection and cleaning should be undertaken to minimise the risks of future problems with water penetration and timber deterioration.

The various dormer windows remain serviceable, although the lead roofs to the front have been patched. Whilst apparently watertight, older leadwork tends to become brittle and ongoing patching must be expected.

Some of the render beads used to finish the corners of the rendering have rusted and it would appear that galvanised, rather than stainless steel or plastic beads, have been used. This is not ideal and ongoing corrosion will occur. This is not structurally significant, but the rusting will affect the appearance of the render.

Internally, the felt roof linings are generally serviceable, where visible, with no significant defects. The lining felt projecting externally along the eaves (the bottom of the roof) has perished and is also not properly dressed into the guttering. As this could lead to water penetration and decay repairs should be undertaken. This can be best achieved with strips of new felt, or damp course, dressed under the eaves and lapped into the gutters where the linings are defective. Repairs are not urgent and can be undertaken as part of routine maintenance.

The small lead covered hood over the left side front door is in satisfactory condition.

The pitched lead covered hood over the main front door is covered with shrubbery and could not be inspected.

Recommendations

The various roofs are fair, but now in need of a general overhaul, principally replacing defective tiles and removing the creepers. In view of the age and size of the roofs, regular maintenance must be expected.

It is essential that the roof coverings are kept in good order to minimise the risks of water penetration and timber deterioration.

Roofs are often damaged during maintenance and aerial installation. Care should be taken. For safe access, scaffolding is required for most roof repairs and this can be expensive. Repair works involving over 25% of the area of a roof will need Building Regulation permission unless undertaken by a member of the ‘Competent Person Scheme’, such as a Competent Roofer.

As the property is Listed and subject to additional planning restrictions, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to undertaking any significant repairs or renewals to the roofs as permission may be needed.

PICTURES

The main roof – front slope.

Close view of the right side area.

The central and left side areas. There are a few slipped and frosted tiles, but this slope is in better condition than the rear.

The dormers are serviceable.

Note the patching to the roofs – ongoing repairs must be expected, but lead can be readily patched. The dormers are likely to contain little or no insulation and renewal could be considered if extensive renovation works are planned (particularly as the windows are rotten).

The main rear slope.

The right side area.

Close views – note the cracking to the fillets. Whilst there are no signs of recent water penetration, repairs should be undertaken whilst access is available for other works.

The central and right side areas. There are numerous frost damaged tiles, which will need replacement.

The short parapet is a relative weak point in the roof and must be kept in good order in order to minimise damp penetration.

The left side dormer window. Note the rusty render beading.

The newer right side attic bedroom dormer.

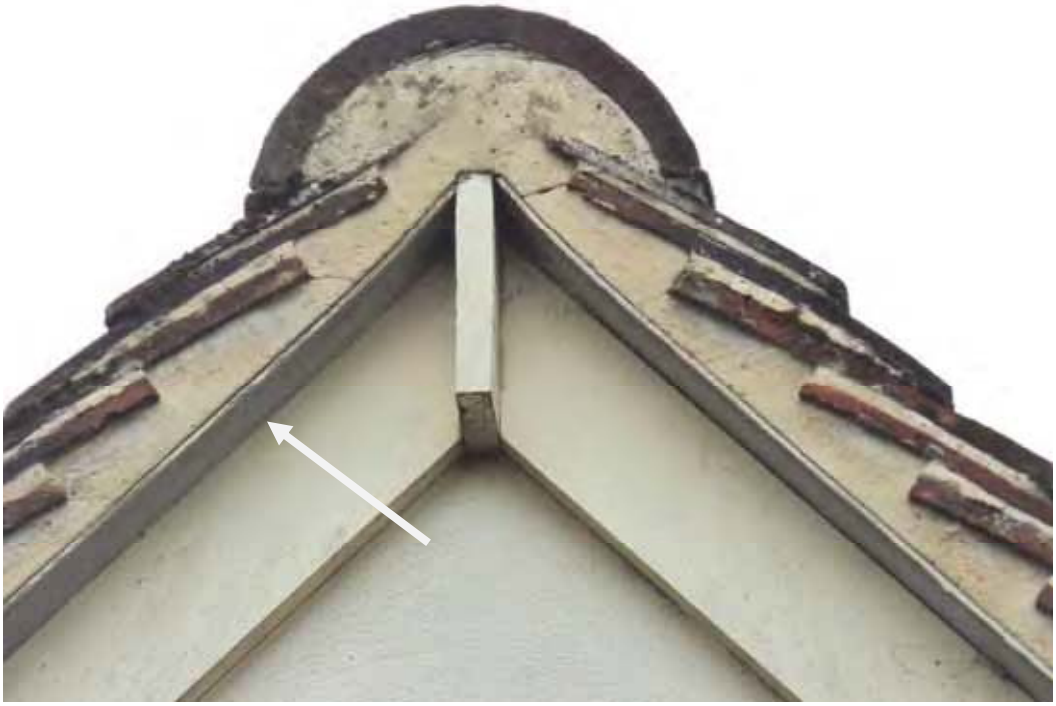
The central rear first floor bedroom dormer.

The left side roof slope.

The right side slope.

The split pitch.

The mortar to the verges has cracked and weathered. Occasional patch pointing will be needed.



The cement undercloak boards may contain a small proportion of asbestos and appropriate care should be taken.

The ridge tiles are satisfactory, although the mortar bedding the tiles has cracked and weathered in areas. Occasional re-bedding may be needed.

The extension roof.

The front slope and lead lined valley gutter.

The left side slope – the creepers will need to be carefully removed and regularly cut back.

The rear slope.

Raised view showing the right side slope and valley gutter. Note the frost damaged tiles.

The roof slopes are lined with felt.

The roofing felt should project along the eaves and dress into the gutters.  Strips of new felt, or damp course should be dressed under the eaves (bottom) tiles and lapped into the gutters.

PICTURE

The main front door hood is covered with shrubbery.

The secondary hood is satisfactory.

## Construction

Stormwater from the roofs discharges into plastic gutters and downpipes with black plastic used on the front elevation and white plastic ‘squareline’ type fittings used at the rear.

## Condition

The fittings are serviceable, but now in need of a complete overhaul, principally cleaning, realignment and some re-sealing of joints.

## Recommendations

The rainwater fittings are modern and in reasonable condition, although now in need of an overhaul. Leaking rainwater fittings are one of the principal causes of dampness and timber deterioration and it is essential that the installation is kept in good order at all times. Periodic inspections should be undertaken following heavy rainfall for signs of blockages, spillages or overloading.

For safety, scaffolding or access equipment will be needed for most repairs and maintenance works to the rainwater fittings, which can be expensive. Repair works are best carried out by a competent roofing contractor or general builder (preferably a member of The Federation of Master Builders).

The use of plastic fittings with a Listed Building is not ideal, but often overlooked by the Local Authority. However, you might wish to consider the use of more appropriate ‘heritage’ style fittings during any repairs.

The front right side stop end is out of alignment.

PICTURES

The gutters are reasonably clear.

The rear gutters are choked.

Regular cleaning will be needed due to moss, creepers and the frost damage to the tiles.

The gutters are also misaligned in areas.

External Walls & Elevations

## Construction

The original properties were likely to be of native timber framed construction, most likely with wattle and daub infill. These walls have been substantially replaced in stone and brickwork with brick infill used to the remaining areas of timber framing visible internal in areas and externally at the rear. The walls are generally of limestone rubble, mostly rendered and measuring around 500mm - 550mm in thickness. There is a short buttress to the front left side corner. Openings in the walls are likely to be supported on built in timbers with the front window openings having stone sills.

The rear utility/playroom extension is a fairly modern construction with a brick cavity wall to the left side measuring around 300mm. The other walls most likely utilise the old stone boundary walls with brick or block linings. The window openings are likely to be supported on concrete or steel lintels, although these are not visible for inspection.

## Condition

As expected with an older property of this type, the walls have suffered from considerable movement over the years and consequently, are not precisely straight and true. Internally, the older floors are also off level and there is distortion evident at the openings (which are effectively holes in the walls and a relative weak point). This appears to have been caused by a combination of general ageing and building settlement. This type and pattern of movement is very typical and appears to be long standing with no major repairs or further investigations required. However, it should be appreciated that period properties of this age were usually built from relatively shallow footings, rather than the deeper foundations used with later construction. Because of this, a degree of seasonal movement is to be expected due to changes in sub-soil moisture levels. This will not affect the ongoing stability of the property, but you may notice slight cracking, particularly internally, at openings, joints and corners.

Some differential cracking has also occurred between the various elements of the property, but this is to be expected and not considered serious or progressive. There is a vertical crack to the left side flank wall, most likely at the junction between the front stone façade and the older timber framing in this area. The cracking is fairly slight and the flank wall is also buttressed by the chimney stack. The short buttress at the front left corner will help to restrain movement at least to the ground floor of the front wall. Whilst some differential movement will always persist, there are no signs to suggest any outward bulging of the front façade, which would necessitate the fitting of corner straps, or similar.

The external rendering is generally in satisfactory condition with most areas having been painted. There is the usual weathering and cracking, but no urgent repairs are needed, although ongoing patching will be required, prior to redecoration.

The dressed stonework towards ground level at the front is in good condition with no signs of any serious frost damage.

The brickwork to the rear timber framing areas has suffered from extensive frost damage. This is to be expected and not unduly serious in this relatively sheltered location. However, it would be prudent to cut out and replace the worst affected bricks, although this will result in some nuisance. As this wall is only of single skin construction (half brick thick) and it will be particularly prone to damp penetration and condensation. Consideration could be given to internal linings, not least to improve insulation.

The timbers visible externally have deteriorated over the years with some patching having been undertaken with hard cement based mortar. This is not recommended as the mortar will tend to harbour water leading to increased decay. The timbers are best stripped of any paint and mortar and left open to weather. If any large splits require filling then a soft haired lime mortar should be used, which will allow for movement in the timber and also the easy evaporation of any moisture.

Some patch re-pointing will also be needed to these walls, not least around the timbers, as these are often a vulnerable point for water penetration. The gaps between the masonry and timbers will always move and will need ongoing patching. The gaps are best filled with tarred string or similar, prior to re-pointing. When any re-pointing is undertaken to these older walls, the use of lime mortar is advised, as this allows a degree of movement of the structure. This mortar also has a ‘wick’ effect, which will help the walls to ‘breathe’ and dry more quickly, helping to minimise the risks of possible damp penetration and decay.

The more modern walls to the rear extension appear satisfactory, although largely obscured by creepers. These plants should be cut back or preferably removed and any damaged areas made good.

The external masonry sills are weathered and are cracked in places, but they remain in satisfactory condition. However, occasional patching will be needed to minimise the risks of damp penetration and timber deterioration. As the sills have been previously painted, any repairs can be easily masked during redecoration.

Although not fully visible, there is no evidence of failure of the lintels (beams) that support the masonry above the openings. The masonry above the openings to the older stone walls are likely to be supported is supported by built-in timber beams. As they are set in relatively damp masonry these timbers are at an increased risk of decay and wood-boring insect infestation, but there are no signs of failure.

Recommendations

No urgent repairs are needed, although some patch re-pointing and replacement of frost damaged masonry will be needed, along with some patching of the render, prior to redecoration. The creepers growing against the walls should be removed.

In order to minimise the risks of damp penetration and timber deterioration, it is essential to maintain the exterior walls in good repair at all times.

For safe access, scaffolding or access equipment will be needed for most repairs at height to the walls and this can be expensive. Repairs are best carried out by a competent building contractor.

As the property is Listed and also situated in a conservation area, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to undertaking any significant repairs or renewals to the walls as permission may be needed.

The left side rendered gable – note the vertical cracking where the façade has moved slightly from the main body of the house. This type of movement can require strapping, but there are no signs of any recent movement and no repairs are needed.

The buttress at ground floor level should help restrain movement.

The right side gable has been painted and there are no signs of movement.

The render will need some general patching, prior to decoration.

The remnants of the timber framed rear wall are visible. The lower timbers have rotted away over the years and been replaced. There are a few timbers remaining at first floor level – these have been extensively cut and weakened over the years, but this is not unduly serious

The filling of the timbers will mortar should be avoided, if possible. They are also best left unpainted.

The extensive frost damage to the bricks is not ideal, but they are relatively sheltered and piecemeal replacement is not ideal. You could consider internal linings when renovation works are being undertaken.

## Windows

The majority of the windows are older sash and casement frames, which are single glazed. Most of the frames are serviceable, but will need a complete overhaul, principally patching and filling of the joinery and easing of the sashes and opening lights. Attention is also required to the cords and furniture. There is more extensive rot to the dormer windows at the front, most likely due to increased difficulty in maintenance. Hopefully, the frames should be capable of renovation, but some replacements may be needed.

The three dormer windows at the front elevation have been fitted with metal railings. These have suffered from some corrosion, but remain serviceable. The rails will help prevent falls, although they will could easy emergency escape.

The newer dormer to the rear of the right side attic bedroom has been fitted with a timber double glazed casement window, which is modern and in good order.

There are also modern casements fitted to the rear extension. These appear fair, although presently covered with shrubbery.

You should consider fitting additional good quality window locks.

## Doors

There are two front entrances, each fitted with older panelled and part glazed doors. The doors are both serviceable, although in need of some minor patching and filling, prior to redecoration. They would also benefit from easing and the fitting of draught-proofing. The steps up to the doors may be inconvenient for some visitors and care will need to be taken.

The three rear doors are relatively modern timber and glazed units. The doors remain serviceable, but will need some patching and filling, along with easing notably to the French door, which is stiff.

The various door locks are only basic and will benefit from upgrading. To ensure security, it is advisable to change the locks when taking up occupation.

## Other Joinery

The other external timbers appear to be in fair order, but will require some patching and filling, prior to redecoration.

## Recommendations

The external joinery timbers have not been maintained in recent years and are now in need of a general overhaul, prior to redecoration. Although the older frames will need a high level of ongoing maintenance, if possible, they should be retained in order to maintain the ‘character’ of the property. However, the front dormer windows are particularly poor and it may be more cost effective to undertake replacement.

Damp can easily penetrate around the edges of window and door frames. To minimise problems, it is essential that the frames are kept in repair and carefully sealed to the walls. Condensation and mould growth can also be a problem, particularly during cold weather. This can be difficult to manage, but is often minimised by good heating and ventilation. Any mould growth is best cleaned with dilute bleach.

As the property is Listed, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to undertaking any significant repairs or renewals to the joinery timbers as permission may be needed. Consent should have been obtained for the installation of the newer window frames and door frames.

The front frames to the dormers are difficult to access and they have not been maintained.

There is considerable decay.

Ditto.

Repairs will be needed to minimise further problems and limit damp penetration.

The house retains many older sashes.

Note the rot to the lower sash – these windows are made with good quality timber, but lack of maintenance has allowed some decay, which will need repair.

Some frames retain shutters.

The relatively modern sash to the kitchen.

The old casements to the shower room.

An old painted-up casement to the kitchen.

The newer rear window to the right side attic bedroom.

The extension also has newer frames.

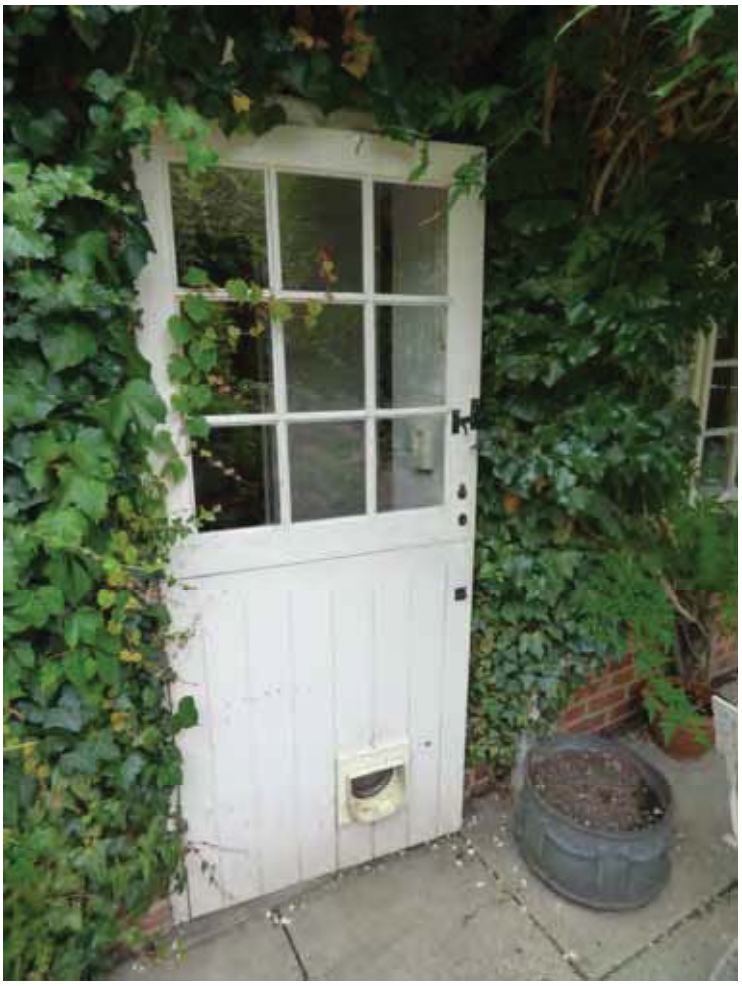
PICTURES

The main front door and steps.

The secondary front door.

The modern kitchen door – note the high external ground levels.

The basic modern French doors into the garden room.



The utility room door. Note the high ground levels.

The other joinery timbers require patching and filling, prior to redecoration.

## Decorations

The external decorations have not been maintained and are in poor order. Early redecoration is required, to prevent timber deterioration. If possible, this work should be undertaken prior to winter.

Regular renewal of the decorations will be required to prevent deterioration and help to maintain the visual appearance of the property. When redecoration is undertaken, the edges of the window and door frames should be carefully inspected and re-sealed as necessary in order to minimise the risks of possible damp penetration and decay. For safety, proper access equipment should always be used.

Bearing in mind the age of the property, lead paint may have been used previously. When this is sanded or it peels and flakes, the dust could be harmful, particularly to pregnant women and children. Testing kits are readily available and if found, the paint should be removed carefully with appropriate precautionary measures taken.

Recommendations

External redecoration should be undertaken if possible prior to winter. This will help minimise deterioration and also improve the external appearance of the property. As the property is Listed the Local Authority are likely to require the use of fairly neutral colours.

## Other

As already mentioned, access equipment will be required for most repair works at height. This can be relatively costly and it would be best to combine repairs, where possible. Access will be needed onto adjoining land to allow for maintenance. Reciprocal access will also be needed by neighbouring owners.

There is no separate access into the rear garden. This means that workmen and materials will need to pass through the living accommodation, which will be inconvenient.

There are no other external matters affecting the main property that require further comment.

## G INTERIOR – MAIN BUILDING

- Roof Spaces

There is access into the main roof void, gained via a good sized hatch in the central attic bedroom. There is no loft light or ladder. There is also a small eaves area leading from the second floor landing and many of the main roof timbers are also exposed in the front and left side attic bedrooms.

The roofs are of traditional 'cut' timber construction with sawn common rafters, generally 75mm square and generally laid at 350mm centres. There are purlins (horizontal timbers) front and rear, both in the loft space and also within the living accommodation. The tops of the rafters are laid to a ridge board and the rafter feet are likely to rest on timber wall plates (although these are not visible). Limited lateral restraint is provided by the ceiling joists and there are also a number of cross collars and struts etc. Many of the joints have also been strengthened with metal angle straps and ties.

There is also access into the roof void areas over the bathroom and shower room via hatches in the ceilings. There are no ladders or loft lights fitted.

These roofs are also of similar traditional timber framed construction.

As already mentioned under 'Roofs', the timbers have sagged and distorted considerably over the years due to a combination of wood boring insect infestation, general ageing and some decay. The odd timber has also broken and been replaced with newer timbers. Loads on the roof structures have also been increased over the years by the installation of relatively heavy lining felt. There also appears to have been a fire at some stage affecting a few of the rear timbers. Despite this, the various roof structures appear satisfactory with no strengthening or repair works required at this stage. However, as with any older roof, there may be a need to insert the odd strap, doubling rafter or tie from time to time.

There is also access to the roof void area above the rear extension. There is a good sized hatch with a light and pull down ladder (although this is broken).

This roof is also of traditional 'cut' timber construction with larger 100mm x 50mm common rafters, generally laid at 275mm centres. The rafters are cut to ridge and hip boards. There are no purlins, but this is not unusual for a smaller roof of this type.

The structure is in satisfactory condition with no significant distortion or other serious defects.

This roof is lined in fibre-boarding, most likely bitumen coated with felt above.

There is adequate fire and security separation between the various roof void areas and the adjoining properties.

There are mouse droppings in the lofts. This is not unusual, but poison should be carefully laid in covered bait boxes in order to minimise possible damage to electrical cabling and insulation. Mice often enter buildings during autumn, as the cold weather approaches and periodic treatments are likely to be needed.

There is no evidence that the roofs have been used as bat roosts.

The roofs are partly boarded, but should not be overloaded with stored items, in order to prevent possible sagging of the joists and damage to the ceiling finishes. The lofts are dirty and any stored items should be well protected. You should formally confirm with the vendor that the items currently remaining in the roofs will be removed, prior to sale.

Recommendations

No major repairs are required, although poison should be carefully laid in covered bait boxes to minimise mouse infestation. The interior elements of the property are not mentioned in the Listing, but consent should be obtained prior to any works on the roof structures, particularly as many areas are exposed.

The access hatch into the main roof void.

The wall to the right side attic room – this offers limited fire resistance and insulation (although not untypical in an old house).

The better plasterboard faced wall to the left side room.

View to the front right side slope.

View to the front left side slope.

View to the rear right side slope.

View to the rear left side slope.

The timbers are built to a ridge board indicating they are likely to be nineteenth century, rather than earlier.

There are various cross collars and struts.

The left side area as visible in the attic room – view left.

View right.

The front right side slope.

The front left side slope.

There are various straps and braces.

The right side and left walls.

The front and rear slopes.

There is limited access to the rear eaves.

The area provides limited storage.

There is access to the eaves void over the shower room.

View left.

View right – some of the rafters are charred and there may have been a small fire, possibly from the old rear stack.

The purlin is visible within the room.

There is also a good hatch into the eaves area over the bathroom.

View right.

View left to the old stack.

The hatch into the extension roof – there is a light and loft ladder (although this is broken).

View to the front – the loft provides good storage, but should not be overloaded.

The hip end.

The left and right side slopes.

View rear.

- Ceilings

## Construction

The remaining older ceilings are constructed of lath and plaster (the traditional method of ceiling construction with plaster applied to narrow strips of timber) with plastered finishes. These have been under boarded and or replaced in some areas with plasterboard. Plasterboard has also been used in the newer rear extension.

The ceiling in the rear central first floor bedroom has been underlined with timber boarding.

## Condition

The older plaster ceilings are in reasonable condition for their age, but as expected, the plaster has sagged and cracked over the years. This is very typical and not serious, although lath and plaster ceilings are susceptible to sudden failure, caused by vibration and shrinkage of the timber laths over time, principally due to heating. This results in loss of adhesion of the plaster, which works loose. Because of this, ongoing repair and re-plastering must be anticipated. Great care should be taken during redecoration, particularly if steam strippers are used. Despite needing increased repair, where possible, the older plaster ceilings should be retained, in order to maintain the ‘character’ of the property.

There is a very small risk that Anthrax spores may exist in the old ceiling plaster from unsterilized animal hair used as a binder (hair used after 1907 should have been sterilized). There is no risk in day to day usage, but sensible precautions should be taken during repair works. Protective clothing and a mask should be worn and waste promptly cleared away to minimise exposure to dust.

The more modern plasterboard ceilings are in satisfactory condition, with no significant defects. There are some shrinkage and differential movement cracks, mainly at corners and joints. These cracks are not of a structural nature and only minor filling and decoration will be required.

The timber boarded finishes are also satisfactory.

A small area of old fibreboard ceiling was noted in the airing cupboard. This material offers little fire resistance, but this is not serious in this location. Fibreboard was often used to improve insulation in older houses and further areas of lining may be found during renovation works. Any vulnerable areas are best replaced. The paper backing to some old fibreboards contained asbestos to provide limited fireproofing. At present, the ceilings remain in acceptable order and this material should not constitute a health hazard in normal use. However, if removal is required, sensible precautions should be taken (See Section I – Asbestos).

There is reasonable head height throughout most areas of the property, although this is restricted under the sloping ceilings.

Recommendations

No major repairs are required, although the finishes are basic in areas and would benefit from some upgrading, including general patching and filling, prior to redecoration. The ceilings are not mentioned in the listing and there are no distinctive features. Despite this, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to any significant works.

Typical shrinkage cracking to the plasterboard ceilings.

The finishes are basic in areas and would benefit from upgrading.

The boarded ceiling in the central rear bedroom.

## Construction

The internal walls and partitions are constructed of masonry and studwork with mainly plastered and boarded finishes.

There are some areas of exposed stone and brickwork.

## Condition

The walls and partitions are satisfactory with no signs of significant structural movement. However, the general consolidation of the property over the years has resulted in slight distortion, most noticeable at openings. This movement, which is longstanding, is very typical and is not considered to be serious. No repairs or further investigations are required.

The wall finishes are in fair condition, but some localised patch plastering will be required, prior to re-decoration.

Extensive re-plastering appears to have been undertaken using gypsum plaster. This type of plaster is not ideal with older construction, but the finishes remain in satisfactory condition in many areas and there is no reason to carry out extensive upgrading at this stage. However, the plaster will work loose in areas over time and you may also see areas of white hygroscopic salts, which draw in moisture from the air. Small affected areas of plaster can be sealed, prior to redecoration. However, this will only be a short-term repair and periodic resealing and patching of decorations will be required. If any larger areas of re-plastering are carried out in the future, lime based plaster should be used as this will allow the masonry to ‘breathe’ and help to minimise dampness.

As mentioned in ‘Ceilings’ above, there is a very small risk that Anthrax spores may exist in the old wall plaster from unsterilized animal hair. Sensible precautions should be taken during repair works.

Some of the walls have been dry lined internally. These linings give a good dry surface for decoration, but may be hiding defects, such as damp and poor plasterwork. If the finishes are replaced or disturbed during decoration, additional repairs may be necessary.

## Recommendations

The wall finishes are fair, but will need some general patching and filling, prior to redecoration. It is important that any future substantial re-plastering works are undertaken to the older walls are carried out in a lime based plaster. The walls are not mentioned in the listing and there are no distinctive features. Despite this, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to any significant works.

There are some exposed brick and stone walls – this is good detailing as the masonry can ‘breathe’ helping to minimise dampness.

There are working fireplaces in the sitting and dining rooms. The ground floor fires appear to have been regularly used and although not tested, there are no signs of soot staining, or other problems indicating defects with the flues. However, it is important that all working flues are swept and checked, prior to use, in order to minimise the risks of fire. Older flue linings inevitably deteriorate over the years and re-lining may be needed (this is always a requirement for high performance appliances).

The fire surrounds remain in satisfactory condition.

The open fire in the left side first floor bedroom has been blocked-in and the surround removed. As previously mentioned, the tops of the unused flue should be fitted with a cowl.

For safety, carbon monoxide detectors should be fitted close to the working fires and carefully maintained.

Recommendations

No major repairs are required, although for safety, the working fires should be swept and checked, prior to use. The fireplaces are not mentioned in the listing and the surrounds are mainly modern. Despite this, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to any significant works.

Carbon monoxide detectors should also be fitted close to the fires and carefully maintained.

PICTURE

The ground sitting room fireplace with a modern mantle.

The brick arch supporting the opening is satisfactory.

Internal view of the smoke hood.

PICTURE

The dining room fireplace has an older surround.

View to the hearth.

Internal view of the flue.

PICTURE

The first floor sitting room fireplace. If this room is used as a bedroom, it is essential that the fire remains unused.

Internal view of the flue. The cobwebs indicate that the flue appears to have been little used recently.

PICTURE

The blocked bedroom fireplace.

## Construction

The majority of the floors are of conventional suspended timber construction with various boarded finishes.

There are solid floors in the side hall, kitchen and rear extension areas, these mainly have tiled finishes, but with concrete screed in the playroom.

## Condition

The older timber floors are considerably off level in areas, but this is due to past movement of the property, rather than any significant recent defects. No repairs or improvements are considered necessary, although some wedging of furniture may be needed. The more modern timber floors are reasonably level with some renewal having been undertaken.

The concrete ground floors are reasonably level with no signs of any significant structural movement.

The suspended timber ground floors will require a constant through flow of air in order to minimise dampness and the rate of decay to the floor timbers (which will have inevitably deteriorated over the years). The floors appear relatively firm, but during renovation works it would be prudent to lift the odd floorboard to inspect the joists and sub-floor voids.

Ventilation of the floors is limited with grilles only fitted along the front of the house and no opportunity to install grilles to the rear due to the solid floors. Because of this, achieving ideal through ventilation will never be possible and the current arrangement is the best compromise available. However, it will mean that the floors will inevitably deteriorate at an increased rate.

The various floor surface finishes, where visible, are in reasonable condition with no major defects. However, the floorboards have been cut and damaged over the years for the installation of services. Whilst not serious, some re-fixing and repairs will be needed, prior to re-covering. Many areas have been covered with ply and hardboard, which gives a good surface for carpeting, although there may be some attractive old boards, which could be potentially exposed.

There are a number of step and level changes between the rooms, which may be inconvenient for the less able.

## Recommendations

There are no major repairs outstanding, but you might wish to consider some upgrading of the floor finishes during renovation works. The floors are not specifically mentioned in the listing and none of are any great architectural merit. Despite this, The Local Authority should be consulted, prior to any significant works.

It would be prudent to carry out a further inspection of the suspended timber ground floors, as and when access is possible.

The older floors are considerably off-level, but some new joists have been installed – these support the shower room floor.

Most areas have been covered with boarding, which provides a good even surface for carpeting.


There are many modern boards.


There are some older boards – you could consider stripping the boards as this is cheap and gives a good finish popular with most purchasers.

There are tiled finishes.

The exposed screed in the playroom.

PICTURE

The ventilation grilles at the front are satisfactory, but as it will not be possible to install vents at the rear and ideal ventilation will never be possible.

The majority of the rooms are fitted with older panelled doors. These are serviceable, although generally ill-fitting with the usual split panels and loose furniture etc. Despite this, the doors are a good 'feature' and where possible, should be retained.

The more modern internal doors remain in satisfactory condition.

The stairs are satisfactory with no significant defects. A few of the treads creak, but this is not serious. The gaps in the balustrade to the upper fight are wider than the 100mm recommended, which may be dangerous, particularly for small children. For safety, you should consider improvements. Head height to this staircase is also restricted.

The fitted units in the kitchen and utility room are only basic and show considerable wear. Although serviceable, at least in the short term, you may wish to consider some upgrading in due course. Your Legal Adviser should confirm what appliances (if any) are to be included in the sale.

There are some useful fitted cupboards and wardrobes. The other areas of internal joinery are in satisfactory condition with some attractive old exposed timbers, notably in the attic bedrooms.

Recommendations

There are no essential repairs needed, although most purchasers would consider upgrading the dated kitchen fittings.

None of the internal joinery items are mentioned in the listing, but The Local Authority Conservation Officer is likely to be keen to retain the older elements of the construction and should be consulted, prior to any significant works.

There are some good older panelled doors.

As is very typical, these are generally ill-fitting with some split panels and glazing. Despite this, the doors are a good feature of the house and likely to be attractive to potential purchasers.

Some doors have been stripped – a finish popular with purchasers.

Some doors require easing and there are many split panels.


Ideally, the glazed doors should be fitted with safety glass, but fitting film is a good compromise if younger children are to use the house.

The unusual folding doors to the utility room.

The main lower flight of stairs.

There is a good safe balustrade.

The upper flight, which has limited headroom.

The wide gaps between the balusters may be dangerous, particularly for small children. For safety, you should consider improvements.

PICTURES

The kitchen.

The sink is stained.

The basic utility room units.

There are some useful fitted cupboards and wardrobes.

- Decorations

The internal decorations are generally worn, but no doubt redecoration to your own taste is contemplated.

As noted earlier, lead paint may have been used previously and sensible precautions should be taken during redecoration.

Recommendations

Redecorate, as required.

- Cellar

There are no cellars or vaults to our knowledge.

## H OTHER MATTERS

- Dampness

### Damp-proofing

The original walls would not have been built with a damp-proof course, but efforts have been made at the front to install an electrolytic damp course, most likely in combination with internal re-plastering works. Some chemical treatments may have also been added, but there are no obvious signs. There may be some form of treatment guarantee available, although these are often of little benefit. In any event, damp-proofing of old stone walls is rarely effective or long lasting and should be avoided in the future.

There are no signs of any damp-proofing works to the rear.

The newer walls to the rear extension may incorporate a bitumen felt damp course, although this is not visible, most likely due to high external ground levels.

One of the principal causes of dampness in properties is high external ground levels and where possible, these should be maintained at or around 150mm below internal floor or damp-proof course level. Areas of hardstanding laid around the property should be set at an appropriate level and also fall away from the walls, to ensure the efficient removal of surface water. The use of free draining materials, such as shingle, around the perimeter of the walls is strongly recommended as this will help minimise damp from splashing. Particular care should be taken around vulnerable door thresholds and sub-floor vents.

At present, there is adequate ground clearance to the front.

The external ground levels at the rear of both the main house and the extension are too high being at least level, or slightly above, in some areas of the internal floor level. Where possible, these high levels should be lowered to reduce internal dampness and the risk of decay. This work will inevitably need some disturbance. A less satisfactory alternative is to form French drains around the perimeter of the walls. These are narrow channels dug immediately adjacent to the walls, which are back filled with pea shingle. This will allow moisture to evaporate and also promote good surface water drainage.

The solid floors in the extension are likely to incorporate some form of damp-proof membrane.

The older solid floors may not be damp-proofed, but this is not serious with the current tiled finishes. If required, damp-proofing can usually be undertaken at minimal cost by the brush application of a liquid damp-proof membrane, prior to re-finishing.

### Rising & Penetrating Damp

The ground floor walls are suffering from a degree of dampness, principally due to relatively high external ground levels at the rear, which should be lowered. The rear gardens also slope towards the house and this will encourage surface water to wet the walls. Good management of surface water is essential. It is also essential to maintain the exterior of the property in good order, particularly the rainwater fittings. Internally, the sensible use of heating and ventilation is important.

The property is also situated in a flood area and there are old stains, possibly indicating past flooding. In this riverside position, the house will always be vulnerable, but there is good ground clearance at the front, which will limit problems with most minor floods.

As already noted, extensive re-plastering appears to have been undertaken using gypsum plaster, which is exacerbating problems with dampness. The plasterwork is in fair condition, but this type of finish is not ideal with older construction as it will inhibit the masonry from ‘breathing’ and can exacerbate problems with dampness. Whilst the finishes remain in satisfactory condition, there is no reason to carry out extensive upgrading at this stage. However, the plaster is beginning to work loose in areas and over time and you may also see areas of white hygroscopic salts, which draw in moisture from the air. Small affected areas of plaster can be sealed, prior to redecoration. However, this will only be a short-term repair and periodic resealing and patching of

decorations will be required. If any larger areas of re-plastering are carried out in the future, lime based plaster should be used as this will allow the masonry to 'breathe' and help to minimise dampness.

Some of the walls have been dry-lined. This will not cure any dampness, but it provides a good surface for decoration. It is often better leave walls exposed as this will allow dampness to evaporate easily.

As already mentioned, there are problems with damp penetrating around the chimney stacks with staining evident to the chimney breasts internally at high level. Repairs to the mortar fillets sealing the chimneys will be needed, but even when this is undertaken some dampness will persist as the stacks will not contain a damp proof course. Ongoing repairs will also be needed to the parapet, which has allowed water penetration in the past.

There is a damp stain visible to the ceiling in the second floor central bedroom. This appears to have been caused by past leakages from the water storage tank above. The stain appeared old and was dry with no signs of any recent problems. The tank ballcock appears to have been recently renewed.

Damp is penetrating around the soil and vent pipe to the rear extension cloakroom. Repairs are likely to be needed to the flashings, although these are not clearly visible.

The single skin (half-brick thick) walls to the older timber framed part of the house will be prone to high heat losses, condensation and are at an increased risk from damp penetration. Internal upgrading could be considered.

There is also a small damp stain evident to the ceiling in the airing cupboard. The staining appears to be old and was dry at the time of our inspection. Nevertheless, it should be periodically monitored, as repairs may be needed in the future. There are no signs of significant associated damage caused by the dampness.

There are no signs of any other significant damp penetration. However, in order to minimise the risk of future damp problems, it is essential to maintain the exterior of the property in good order at all times.

## Condensation

There is no evidence of excessive condensation or mould growth within the living accommodation. However, the attic rooms are likely to suffer from a degree of condensation with warm, relatively moist, air reaching the relatively poorly insulated and cold ceilings and then condensing. Better insulation will help, but this will be difficult. The single skin walls will also suffer from increased condensation.

The cupboards in the playroom were 'musty' and better ventilation may be needed, particularly as they will be relatively cold areas.

It should be appreciated that all properties suffer from a degree of condensation due to relatively warm, moist air from day to day activities, such as cooking and bathing coming into contact with cold surfaces, such as walls and glazing. The warmer air then cools and it is unable to hold as much moisture, resulting in the formation of water on the surfaces and subsequent dampness. Condensation can be a very difficult problem to manage, but good insulation and sensible use of heating and ventilation will help. Care should be taken when storing perishable articles, such as books as these may deteriorate.

It is advisable to consider the fitting (and use) of extractor fans in the bath and shower rooms (the fan in the shower room appears to be broken). This will help to reduce condensation and smells. An extracting cooker hood should also be installed in the kitchen.

As already mentioned, ventilation to the timber ground floors is limited by the solid ground floors at the rear. The vents at the front are adequate and the current arrangement is the best possible compromise in the circumstances.

Ventilation to the roof void areas is limited, but condensation levels to the accessible timbers were low at the time of our inspection and upgrading is not essential.

Recommendations

The relatively high levels of dampness within the property will need careful management by the sensible use of heating and ventilation internally. It is also essential to ensure that the exterior of the property is kept in good order at all times to minimise problems, particularly the rainwater fittings. The relatively high external ground levels at the rear of the house should be lowered as soon as possible and good surface water drainage maintained. Even with suitable repairs undertaken and good heating, it will take many months for moisture levels to reduce.

Repairs will also be needed to the chimney stacks, parapet and around the extension soil pipe.

Extractor fans should also be fitted in the bath and shower rooms and an extracting cooker hood installed in the kitchen.

The electrolytic damp course under the lead cover flashing at the front of the house. This type of damp coursing has fallen out of favour - dampness in thick stone walls cannot be effectively treated and must be carefully managed.

The kitchen door threshold – the external ground levels are above the internal floor level.

PICTURES

The levels to the other door thresholds at the rear are also too high.

The soil is banked up against the rear wall, most likely to maintain the apple tree. The external levels should be lowered where possible, ideally to 150mm below internal floor level (although this ideal may not be possible due to drains).

Lowering the levels should help minimise dampness.

The patterns of dampness also indicate that some flooding may have occurred, most likely affecting the floor voids at the front with dampness rising up the internal walls.

The modern gypsum plasters used in the house are not ideal and will inhibit the evaporation of moisture from the walls. The plaster will continue to break down over time. Any re-plastering should be undertaken with lime.

PICTURES

There has been past leakage from the parapet wall and the attic rooms are likely to suffer from a degree of condensation with warm relatively wet air reaching the relatively poorly insulated and cold ceilings.

The old damp stain in the central attic bedroom, apparently from a leaking ballcock, which has been replaced.

The old stain in the airing cupboard.

Leakages around the soil pipe in the utility room cupboard. Repairs will be needed.

## Timber Decay & Infestation

There is extensive wood-boring insect attack (often called woodworm) in the older exposed timbers. This infestation appears to be old and inactive with no treatment necessary at this stage. However, wood-boring insects can live in timber for many years before emerging, even after treatment. If any active infestation becomes apparent in the future, localised treatment should be sufficient.

There is no evidence of significant fungal decay (rot) to visible structural timbers. However, with a property of this age, it is likely that the ground floor timber joists will be in close proximity to relatively damp masonry and the timbers will have inevitably deteriorated to some extent over the years. Although there is no evidence of any disrepair at present, it would be prudent to lift several ground floor boards to inspect the joists and sub-floor voids, prior to re-covering.

As already mentioned, there is wet rot affecting the external joinery and repairs will be required, prior to redecoration.

As already noted, the walls incorporate numerous built-in timbers. Whilst there are no signs of failure, these hidden timbers are at an increased risk from penetrating damp and infestation by wood-boring insects. If required in the future, replacement of any defective timbers can be disruptive.

### Recommendations

No essential treatments or repair works are required at this stage, although it would be prudent to carry out a further inspection of the timber ground floors. You may need to carry out localised treatments in the future for wood-boring insect attack, as and when any older timbers are exposed. Keeping timbers relatively dry is the best way of minimising decay and infestation.

## Insulation

The roof void areas have been insulated with a patchy layer of mineral quilt, but with some areas completely uninsulated. It is advisable to consider upgrading to minimise heat losses with insulation increased to provide the equivalent of a 270mm layer of mineral quilt laid both between and over the ceiling joists to minimise gaps. Where possible, electrical wiring and fittings, particularly spotlights, should be left uncovered as they can overheat. The access hatch covers should also be insulated and draught proofed.

The accessible stud walls in the eaves areas and the attic bedrooms are only provided with minimal insulation and upgrading should be considered.

It should be noted that mineral quilt insulation is an irritant and sensible precautions, such as wearing a mask and gloves, should be taken during maintenance.

The water tanks and pipework in the roof void areas are currently uninsulated and improvements should be undertaken to minimise the risk of frost damage and water leakage (particularly if general insulation levels are upgraded and the lofts become colder).

The sloping ceilings in the attic bedrooms appear to have been insulated with a thin layer of polystyrene foam. This is well below modern standards, but improving insulation will mean re-lining the ceilings, which will be disruptive and may also substantially cover the attractive old timbers.

The dormers are likely to contain little or no insulation, but upgrading will be difficult.

Compared to modern cavity construction, the solid walls will suffer from relatively high heat losses. However, effective upgrading will not be possible without considerable disturbance, which is not warranted in this case. The single skin walls will suffer from very high heat losses and you could consider some internal lining. The newer cavity walls to the extension may incorporate some insulation, although there are no signs.

The majority of the windows are only single glazed and consideration should be given to the installation of additional double glazing. The fitting of secondary glazing is usually considered preferable in a Listed building, as it is removable and the existing frames will be preserved.

The extent and adequacy of insulation to the suspended timber floors and any concealed plumbing within the floor voids cannot be ascertained. If the floors are exposed in the future, the opportunity should be taken to lift a few boards and upgrade insulation, where possible.

The concrete ground floors are unlikely to incorporate any insulation.

The foam insulation around the hot water cylinder is satisfactory, but where possible, areas of exposed hot water pipework should be lagged.

It should be ensured that the outside tap is lagged, or isolated, during cold weather to prevent freezing and leakage.

The property is terraced and may suffer from some noise transmission from adjoining occupiers. No problems were noted during our inspection, but if this proves to be a serious problem, you may need to consider further sound insulation.

Recommendations

Where possible, insulation levels should be upgraded in order to minimise heat losses and the risk of water leakage from frost damage.

The thin polystyrene insulation to the sloping ceilings in the attic rooms. Upgrading will be difficult and disruptive.

Better insulation is needed to the stud walls, tanks and pipes in the roof void areas.

The spotlights are best protected with terracotta flower pots. These should have a drainage hole in the base to allow for ventilation and minimise the risk of overheating.

## Fire Precautions

The property has living accommodation over three storeys and to comply with modern best practice, there should be an adequately protected means of escape from the upper storeys. This is usually via a stairwell constructed with fire resisting materials, including fire resisting doors to the habitable rooms. As expected, the property does not comply fully with modern requirements and whilst you could consider upgrading, this will not be possible without very extensive and disruptive alteration works, which will adversely affect the 'character' of the property. However, to improve safety, better smoke detectors should be fitted, along with a heat detector in the kitchen. Whilst not ideal, this will be a good compromise. It should be noted that upgrading is not generally enforceable by the Local Authority unless extension or extensive alteration works are being undertaken (even then, this is unlikely to be a requirement for a Listed Building).

There is reasonable fire and security separation between the property and the adjoining houses.

To ensure easy emergency escape, all keys should be kept readily available. As already mentioned, the window bars fitted to the second floor frames will inhibit emergency escape.

As and when found, any combustible inner linings should be upgraded with fire resistant materials.

Electrical faults are a major cause of fires and it is essential that periodic safety inspections are undertaken by a registered electrical contractor who is a member of The Electrical Safety Register (www.electricalsafetyregister.com).

Recommendations

Upgrade fire precautions, as required.

There is no burglar alarm and you may wish to consider having one installed.

You should consider fitting additional and better quality window locks. The various door locks should be upgraded. To ensure security, it is advisable to change the locks when taking up occupation.

You should consider additional external lighting, as this is a good deterrent.

The rear gardens are fully enclosed and also slightly overlooked by neighbours, which improves security. CCTV could now be considered as this is very cost effective.

Recommendations

Upgrade security precautions, as required.

## I THE SITE & ENVIRONMENT

| | |
|---|---|
| Conservatory | There is no conservatory. |
| Garage | There is no garage. |
| Substantial Outbuildings | There are no permanent outbuildings. |
| Grounds and Boundaries | No serious hazards were noted within the boundaries of the site. However, the property is situated ??? carries a regular flow of traffic. In view of this, care should be taken particularly with younger children.<br><br>The hardstanding at the rear of the house is mainly formed in concrete pavings. These are slightly cracked and uneven in places, but remain serviceable.<br><br>As already mentioned under 'Dampness', it is important to maintain the external ground levels at the correct height in order to minimise the risks of dampness and decay. Where possible, the high external levels should be lowered and if any new areas of hardstanding are laid around the property, they should be set at an appropriate level and fall away from the walls, to ensure the efficient removal of surface water. The use of free draining materials is also advised.<br><br>The rear gardens are bounded with tall stone walls. These are mainly shrouded in shrubbery, but there are no obvious defects. However, future repairs are potentially costly and where possible your Legal Advisers should confirm the ownership of the walls.<br><br>There are no trees or larger shrubs that are considered to be a significant threat to the property. However, the foliage growing near the house will need to be regularly cut back to minimise possible damage.<br><br>Recommendations<br><br>There are no essential repairs required, although the relatively high ground levels around the main walls should be lowered. |

PICTURES

The front views. The Upper Reaches is likely to be redeveloped at some stage, which may mean some disturbance and loss of view.

The rear views.

The small garden area.

The walls are mainly hidden by shrubbery, but there are no obvious defects.

The basic pavings. The external ground levels are too high and these will need to be lowered, at least those abutting the walls.

## Radon Gas

Public Health England has identified the local area as one in which the levels of radon gas entering the property may be such that remedial action is recommended. It is not possible in the course of our inspection to determine whether radon gas is present in any given building, as the gas is colourless and odourless. However, tests can be carried out to assess the level of radon in a building with test instruments available from Public Health England and other approved laboratories at a small cost. The minimum testing period is 3 months (Public Health England strongly advises against using shorter-term instruments as they can give misleading results). If tests have not been previously carried out, they are recommended. It has been the experience of Public Health England that it is not usually expensive, in proportion to the value of the property, to undertake any recommended remedial measures required and these are unlikely to be needed in this location.

Recommendations

Your Legal Advisers should formally confirm with the vendor whether testing for the presence of radon gas has been previously undertaken. If not, a radon bond should be negotiated with the vendor.

PICTURE

The Public Health England Radon map for the area showing the property is situated in an area that statistically could be affected by increased levels of radon gas.

## Flooding

The property is situated in an area that The Environment Agency (http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk) has indicated could be at an increased risk from flooding. To our knowledge, the immediate area around the property has flooded in recent times, but the house is reasonably elevated at the front riverside elevation. The rear garden levels are too high and above internal floor level in places. This greatly increases the risk of surface water ingress. The water stains visible in the hallway may be indicative of past floor damage.

Your Legal Advisers should carry out further formal enquiries of the vendors.

PICTURES

The Environment Agency river and surface water flood maps – the property is situated in a flood risk area.

Recent surface flooding in the road.

Recommendations

Your Legal Advisers should formally confirm with the vendor whether the property has been flooded in the past. If flooding has occurred, it should be confirmed to what extent, whether repairs were undertaken under insurance and that continuing insurance cover will be available at reasonable cost.

## Asbestos

As already mentioned, the property has been constructed using some materials, which may contain asbestos. However, any possible asbestos content can only be definitely ascertained with laboratory testing. Bearing in mind the type and age of the property, it is possible that there may be other asbestos containing materials that are currently hidden. According to the Institute for Environment and Health, the presence of asbestos would not normally constitute a health hazard unless the material, which contains the asbestos, is disturbed, drilled or substantially damaged. Any asbestos containing materials are usually best left undisturbed. However, when maintenance work, building improvements or other alterations are undertaken, you should be mindful of the possibility of asbestos. Sensible precautions should be taken following guidance issued by The Health and Safety Executive. At present, there is no requirement for removal of many asbestos containing materials found in domestic properties to be undertaken by a licensed asbestos removal contractor. However, if found, certain high risk asbestos containing materials may need to be removed by a specialist, which could be costly and disruptive. For further information and guidance go to www.hse.gov.uk.

Recommendations

No further action is required, although when maintenance work, building improvements or other alterations are undertaken, you should be mindful of the possibility of asbestos containing materials. If found, certain materials may need to be removed by a licensed contractor, which could be costly.

- Other Environmental Matters

There are no significant adverse factors regarding the location of the property, to our knowledge. However, the town centre position will inevitably mean some nuisance from time to time. The re-development of The Upper Reaches will also cause some nuisance. You should ensure that this is not likely to adversely affect your future enjoyment of the property.

Recommendations

There are no significant adverse factors regarding the location of the property, to our knowledge. However, it is advisable to obtain an environmental search.

## J THE SERVICES

- Gas

Mains gas is connected to the property with the meter located in a lower level cupboard in the dining room. Visible pipework and fittings appeared to be satisfactory, although annual safety inspections of the installation are essential. This is usually best combined with servicing of the central heating system.

Recommendations

For safety, it is essential that the gas installation and all appliances should be inspected annually by a member of a 'competent person scheme' such as Gas Safe Registered engineer (https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/). This is best undertaken when the central heating system is serviced.

The gas meter.

Mains electricity is connected to the property via an underground supply with the meter and consumer units located at low level in the dining room cupboard. Short circuit protection is provided by older fuses.

The installation is dated and upgrading will be needed to bring it up to latest regulations. There are only a limited number of power outlets and lighting provision is basic. In view of this, extensive improvements, or possibly re-wiring may be needed, which will be disruptive. An Electrical Installation Condition Report and estimates should be obtained from a registered electrical contractor who is a member of The Electrical Safety Register (www.electricalsafetyregister.com). The contractor should also provide appropriate certification upon the completion of any necessary works.

The Electrical Safety Council recommends that you should get a registered electrical contractor to carry out an Electrical Installation Condition Report on the property and its electrical fittings at least every ten years, or on change of occupancy. All electrical installation work that has been undertaken after 1st January 2005 should also have appropriate certification.

You should also carefully consider your own needs with regard to the installation, as improvement or alteration works can be disruptive and are best undertaken prior to redecoration. A registered electrical contractor should carry out any larger repair and alteration works, or they now require building regulation approval.

Some energy efficient light bulbs (compact fluorescent lamps) have been fitted. It should be noted that these bulbs contain mercury and although the accidental breakage of a lamp is most unlikely to cause any health problems, it's good practice to minimise any unnecessary exposure to mercury, as well as risk of cuts from glass fragments. Sensible precautions should be taken in the event of breakages. These bulbs are classed as hazardous waste and should not be disposed of with general rubbish. Further advice is available at: http://www.defra.gov.uk. LED bulbs are a better alternative.

### Recommendations

You are advised to arrange for a registered electrical contractor, who is a member of The Electrical Safety Register (www.electricalsafetyregister.com), to test the installation, provide an Electrical Installation Condition Report, quote for any necessary remedial works and also undertake any improvement or alteration works that you require. Appropriate certification should be issued upon completion of any works. Electrical faults are a major cause of fires and it is essential that periodic safety inspections are undertaken by a registered contractor.

The meter and consumer units.  The installation is dated and will need updating.

## Water

The property is connected to the mains supply with the external stopcock located in the pavement. There is no meter fitted.

There is an internal stoptap in the understairs cupboard and the vendor believes that there is possibly another one is location under the dining room floor. The incoming service pipe to the understairs pipe is run in copper. Whilst the pipe is not fully visible, there are no signs of leakages. In view of the age of the property, this visible part of the pipe may be an extension to an older lead main. Whilst you may wish to consider renewal in plastic, this will be disruptive and is not essential, as lead is not considered to be a significant health hazard in this relatively hard water area.

Water is stored in a fibreglass tank situated in the loft. The tank is in satisfactory order with no signs of recent leakages, although there have been past problems with a large stain evident to the bedroom ceiling below. The ballcock has been renewed and the stain was dry.

A proper cover should be provided to the tank in order to minimise the risk of contamination. Some of the outlets in the house are also direct fed, which gives better pressure. However, it does mean that no water will be available if the main supply fails. The tank is relatively small for a larger house of this type, but if the central heating system is upgraded during modernisation works, then it would be best to install a direct fed system without any storage tanks.

Hot water for the main part of the house is provided by the understairs central heating boiler and is stored in a copper foam lagged cylinder located in the bathroom. There is also an electric immersion heater for alternative provision. The cylinder is in satisfactory condition with no signs of leakage. However, it should be noted that sudden failure can occur in this hard water area. The tank may be small for a large house of this type, but again if the heating system is upgraded it is likely that a large pressurised cylinder would be installed.

The second boiler in the landing storage cupboard is a combination unit, which provides hot water on demand and there is no stored supply.

Service pipework is run in copper tubing. Visible areas are satisfactory, with no sign of significant leakage. There is some water hammer and a pressure reduction valve may be needed.

The sanitary fittings are fair, although they are dated and most purchasers would renew. There has been leakage from the shower and whilst some patching has been undertaken, but replacement is advised. If the other fittings are retained, attention will be required to the brassware and the cloakroom WC seat is loose. The waste traps from the vanity unit and shower room are also noisy, possibly from lack of use.

Recommendations

The plumbing system is serviceable, although fairly dated and most purchasers would consider renewing the older sanitary fittings.

The installation could be improved into a direct fed system with a single large pressurised hot water tank if consolidation of the central heating is undertaken.

The external stoptap housing.

Internal view - there is no meter fitted.

The visible internal stoptap in the understairs cupboard.

The cold water storage tank – note the poor cover.

Internal view – the ballcock has been renewed.

The foam lagged hot water cylinder.

PICTURES

The shower room fittings.

The shower leaks.

There has been some pipework leakage from the bidet – this was dry, although the unit is little used.

PICTURES

The bathroom fittings.

The vanitory unit in the left side attic bedroom. The taps are stiff and the waste is noisy, possibly from limited usage and airlocks. There is also some water hammer.

The cloakroom.

Hot water and central heating are provided from two Potterton boilers, one situated in the storage cupboard on the first floor landing and one in the understairs cupboard. These boilers heat conventional radiators in most parts of the house. The system was not operating at the time of our inspection, but there is no reason why it should not be reasonably effective in heating the property. However, the property is not highly insulated, it also has draughty windows and relatively high ceilings. In view of this, the system may be found wanting in particularly cold weather.

The system is of some age, particularly the older boiler in the understairs cupboard. In view of this, you should allow for replacement in due course. It would be advisable to consider reconfiguring the installation with one boiler.

If the system is drained in the future, you should consider the fitting of additional thermostatic valves.

Some of the service pipes are buried in the floor screed (top concrete surface of the solid floor). Chemicals in concrete can attack the copper in the pipes causing leakages into the floor, which are very disruptive. Without exposure works, it cannot be confirmed that the pipes have been well protected, but there are no signs of any leakages at present. Care should be taken when undertaking maintenance and repair as the pipes will be vulnerable to damage from nails and screws etc.

There is a fibreglass expansion tank situated in the loft. The tank is in satisfactory condition with no signs of leakages, although ideally, a proper cover should be provided.

For safety, it is essential that annual servicing of the system is undertaken by a member of a ‘competent person scheme’ such as Gas Safe Registered engineer (https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/). You must also obtain a Landlord’s Gas Safety Certificate if the property is to be let.

For safety, carbon monoxide detectors should be fitted close to the boilers and carefully maintained.

Recommendations

You are advised to arrange for a full service and appraisal of the central heating system by a member of a ‘competent person scheme’, such as a Gas Safe Registered engineer (https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk/), who should quote for any necessary remedial work.

Carbon monoxide detectors should also be fitted close to the boilers and carefully maintained.

The newer combi boiler and flue.

The older boiler situated in the understairs cupboard.

The expansion tank.

Some of the radiator service pipes are run within the floor screed and there is increased risk of pipe corrosion and associated disturbance from leakages.

- Drainage

## Foul Drainage

It is assumed that the property is connected to the main sewer, which has been adopted and is maintained at the public expense. However, your Legal Advisers should formally confirm this. The drains are likely to be shared with neighbouring properties.

There are no inspection chambers visible within the plot, but the vendor informed us that there is a chamber in the playroom under the floor. This could not be inspected and whilst there are no signs of any blockages or obvious defects, it would be prudent to ensure that the chamber cover is readily accessible to allow for emergency access, particularly in view of the likely age of the installation.

As the drains run under the buildings, this could cause problems if serious blockages or collapse occurs.

The kitchen gully is modern and satisfactory.

The soil and vent pipes (main vertical drainage pipes) are in satisfactory condition with no significant defects.

## Surface Water Drainage

Surface water from the front downpipes discharges over the pavement. This is not ideal, but very common with older properties of this type. There are no kerb drains and accordingly, there is an increased risk of slippages during freezing weather.

Stormwater from the rear downpipes is likely to drain to the foul system. Without excavation, the layout of the underground system cannot be confirmed, but there are no signs of flooding or blockages. Combined drainage into the foul system is not ideal, but very common and acceptable, bearing in mind the age of the property.

Recommendations

No major repairs or improvements are required, although it would be prudent to ensure there is easy access into the drainage system to allow for the clearance of any blockages.

The kitchen gulley is satisfactory.

The downpipes at the front spill over the pavement.

## K SIGNATURE

| | |
|---|---|
| Signature | |
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| Reference Number | ??? |