

David Harting
Surveyors Limited

Building Survey Report

Property:

Client:

Inspected on:
21 November 2009

Inspected by:
David Harting BSc (Est. Man) MRICS Chartered Surveyor

*Please note that this Report is solely for you and your professional advisers and no liability to any one else is accepted.
You must not act upon specific, reasonable advice contained in this Report, no responsibility is accepted for the consequences.
[Standard Terms of Engagement]*

BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

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1.00 GENERAL INFORMATION

1.01 Instructions

We are acting on your written instructions to carry out a Building Survey Report.

In accordance with our Conditions of Engagement, we have not at this stage arranged for any specialist tests or reports on the services installations but comments on the need for specialist tests are included.

You are reminded of the general limitations of the inspection described in the Standard Conditions of Engagement, a copy of which is reproduced at the back of this report.

1.02 Property Address

1.03 Name and address of client

1.04 Inspected by

David Harting BSc (Est. Man) MRICS Chartered Surveyor

1.05 Date of inspection

21 November 2009.

1.06 Weather

During the inspection the weather was changeable, from dry and overcast to moderate intermittent rain showers. The weather in previous weeks has been generally varied.

1.07 Tenure and Occupation

It is understood that the property is freehold and that full vacant possession will be granted upon completion, but your legal adviser must confirm. There was no evidence of any tenancy at the time of our inspection.

1.08 Orientation

For the purposes of this report, unless otherwise stated, the front of the property is considered to be that which faces the public road or path from which access to the property is given, and all references to the left and right hand are given as if viewing a plan of the property, with the front elevation located to the bottom, and the rear elevation located to the top of the plan.

The front of the property faces roughly east.

Similar references to the garage assume that the reader is facing the vehicle doorway.

2.00 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

2.01 Type

This is a two story mid-terraced house.

2.02 Approximate Age

Although precise dating of the property is not possible we understand it to have been built in about 1905 to 1910.

2.03 Location

The property is situated within a terrace fronting directly onto the North Sea, facing a busy main thoroughfare and situated approximately 0.25 miles from the services and amenities of Whitley Bay Town Centre.

The building has the benefit of a direct sea view, but this also indicates that exposure to the elements will be greater than normal.

It would be prudent to familiarise yourself with the locality before purchase.

2.04 Accommodation

The accommodation briefly comprises:

GROUND FLOOR:

Entrance lobby, entrance hall, stairs, living room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room, cloakroom/WC (off).

FIRST FLOOR:

Landing area, four bedrooms, bathroom/WC.

OUTSIDE:

Outbuildings and parking:

There is a detached garage/workshop/store structure situated within the rear area.

The property occupies a generally level site, with front forecourt/garden and rear yard/garden.

3.00 CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

3.01 Chimney stacks, Flashings and Soakers

There are two brick built chimney stacks. The main party line chimney stack to the main ridge has four clay pots and metal flashings. The north party line stack to the rear roof slope has one metal flue vent terminal and metal flashings.

Chimneystacks are particularly exposed to the weather and as consequence regular maintenance must be carried out to ensure their stability.

Repairs are required but these are consistent with the building's age. For example areas of patch pointing are required to both stacks and several areas of spalled brickwork to the rear party stack will require replacement within the short to medium-term. A closer inspection should be carried out to assess their extent.

The dining room gas fire discharges via the adjacent chimney breast and you should ensure that an adequate flue liner and terminal are provided. A metal terminal is evident externally.

The central heating boiler, located in the ground floor cloakroom, has a fan assisted flue, which discharges via the adjacent external wall.

3.02 Roof and Valleys

There are three roofs to this property: main, front bay and single storey rear infill.

The main roof is of pitched design, covered with natural slate whilst the ridge tiles are of clay, the north abutment having metal flashings to the front pitch and cement mortar fillets to the rear pitch, the south abutment having a combination of cement mortar rendering and metal flashings to the abutment.

The front bay roof is assumed to be of flat mineral-based felt type, although inspection was not possible from ground level.

The single storey rear infill roof is of flat mineral felt covering, with mineral felt upstands to adjacent structures.

There is a flat lead covered roof to the front canopy structure.

Where seen from ground level, the main roof is generally even and well formed with no signs of excessive undulation or distortion.

It is apparent the slate roof coverings have been renewed during the lifespan of the building and enquiries in respect of any guarantees available would be prudent.

Weathering and discolouration is consistent with age and degree of exposure.

The roof covering requires an overhaul to deal with a number of damaged or loose slates, to both front and rear roof slopes.

The flat roof above the front bay could not be seen, but is assumed to be covered in mineralised felt materials. An inspection before purchase is recommended, due to water penetration within the front left hand corner of the main front bedroom.

As a rule of thumb, felt roofs have an average life of fifteen years or so, but this is very much dependent upon exposure and the quality of workmanship and materials.

Such flat roofs have an unpredictable life and could fail and need renewal at any time. Consequently, it would be prudent to continuously budget for periodic renewal throughout your ownership.

Internal staining to the suspended ceiling tiles in the kitchen below the infill flat roof suggests a problem in the past, but this was dry at the time of inspection.

The appearance of the covering suggests that failure could occur in the short term and will need early renewal. It would also be prudent to continuously budget for periodic renewal throughout your ownership.

3.03 Parapets

There are no parapets.

3.04 Roof Void

The roof void may be approached via a hatch and retractable metal ladder to the first floor landing.

Inspection revealed a traditional timber frame design typical for this type of building with no evidence of significant distortion.

Some general splitting and staining of the timbers was observed but this is merely consistent with the building's age.

As the roof slopes are underlain with sarking felt, partially lined and over boarded, battens and tile fixings are generally hidden from view. Where visible, the underlay itself appears serviceable. However, the area most likely to perish first is immediately adjacent to the eaves and this could not be inspected.

It is essential for insulated roof voids with an underlay to be ventilated to reduce the risk of condensation and consequent rot to roof timbers.

As is common for a building of this age the existing ventilation arrangements are unsatisfactory and should be improved.

The chimney breast and party wall masonry is fully visible.

Although observed areas are generally satisfactory at present deterioration will inevitably occur.

The floor area of the roof space has been fully boarded for storage purposes. Whilst we are unable to confirm whether any strengthening has been undertaken to the ceiling tie beams in order to accommodate the additional super imposed loads, no obvious evidence of significant structural distortion was noted to ceiling or wall surfaces below at first floor level during our inspection.

3.05 Rainwater Goods

Rainwater goods are formed in a mixture of plastic, timber and cast iron.

Discharge from gutters is via a mixture of downpipes and gutters into gullies at ground level to the rear and direct to surface discharge at the front.

The older rainwater goods must be nearing the end of their life and will demand regular attention until they are renewed.

The plastic rainwater fittings appear to be in serviceable condition, but will require maintenance consistent with their age. Minor overhaul is required now, including attention to leaking joints and poorly taped over connections.

The cast iron pipe discharging from the rear eaves timber guttering into the plastic soil and vent pipe has become detached from the guttering and requires resealing.

The plastic rainwater pipes, providing surface discharge over the front forecourt and rear infill flat roof respectively, are basic but serviceable.

The timber box section guttering is likely to be of extremely limited economic life and its condition should be assessed at the time of repairs to the adjacent rainwater pipe.

Joints between older and replacement sections, particularly if of different profiles, are prone to leakage.

3.06 External Walls and Elevations

Main external walls to the property appear to be of cavity brick construction of varying thickness between 300 mm and 275 mm thick. The rear elevation is covered with textured weather resistant painted coating.

The front two storey bay structure is assumed to be of solid brickwork.

External openings are surrounded by a combination of stone heads, sills, mullions and brickwork, as noted.

There are signs to suggest the property has been affected by significant structural movement, as evidenced cracking to the rear elevation brickwork around the rear entrance door, above the infill flat roof and around the kitchen bow window. This is confirmed by the apparent lack of visible support for the first floor bathroom projection brickwork at first floor joist level. There has also been further cracking to ceramic tiling above the kitchen window internally above the level of the suspended ceiling tiles. The possibility of further movement occurring cannot be ruled out and it is recommended an investigation is undertaken by a Structural Engineer to identify the extent and cause and recommended remedial work necessary to ensure future stability, together with an estimate of the cost. Recommended works should be carried out in full under professional supervision.

There is evidence a number of cavity wall ties within the building have been replaced and further enquiries are recommended to establish the extent of these repairs and the effectiveness of any guarantee available. Any untreated areas may require expenditure in the future.

The brickwork courses are generally even and adequately pointed. As is typical for a property of this age and location, some stonework to the front elevation has weathered.

The surface of the rear elevation is painted and so its condition is concealed. It was possibly applied to hide previous deterioration due to frost or chemical action - commonly referred to as 'spalling' which can progress and become unsightly. The amount of damage cannot now be accurately assessed but surface repairs are likely to be necessary whenever redecorating. More extensive damage may require the renewal of some areas.

In view of the age of the property it cannot be readily assumed that window and door openings were provided with lintels to support masonry above, Consequently, the need to provide these in the future cannot be ruled out, particularly if you envisage renewing door or window frames.

3.07 Damp Proof Course

It was not possible to identify a damp-proof course within the external walls of the property.

Consequently it is not possible to confirm whether adequate external ground clearance is provided.

Any original damp course is likely to be nearing the end of its life.

Internal moisture meter readings suggest that it is now ineffective and you are referred to item 3.18 of this report.

Whenever a garden wall, such as the rear south boundary, abuts the building dampness may enter the structure, as is the case to the rear left hand corner of the dining room.

When specialist treatments are required it is sometimes possible for a vertical damp-proof course to be installed within the relevant areas of the building's walls as an alternative.

3.08 Sub Floor Ventilation

High moisture meter readings were taken to several areas of floor boarding where fitted coverings could be lifted to the suspended timber ground floors. This suggests sub-floor ventilation to adjacent areas is inadequate and additional airbricks or grilles may be required.

In such situations there is a possibility that rot may have occurred to floor timbers. Consequently, a check of internal timbers (particularly any underfloor areas) is needed.

3.09 External Joinery

Windows are mostly of uPVC with sealed unit double-glazing. There is one period, single-glazed, leaded timber window adjacent the front entrance door.

uPVC frames can vary enormously in quality and an assessment of individual design is beyond the scope of this report. They are less suitable for piecemeal repairs whilst stay mechanisms and fixings can require occasional overhaul.

The double-glazed units appear serviceable but will need routine maintenance.

Double-glazing has a limited life and is prone to deterioration at edge seals. This can sometimes be recognised by moisture between the panes but its presence is dependent upon atmospheric conditions that are, of course, variable, and so failure cannot always be diagnosed during a single inspection. Enquiries in respect of any guarantees available would be prudent as failure can occur at any time.

The double-glazed units are of mixed age and the need for routine maintenance, particularly to the older examples, must be expected.

No key was available for the dining room patio door and this has not been tested.

Front and rear entrance doors are of double-glazed uPVC type. The handle to the front door is generally corroded and worn.

Timber fascia boarding to the eaves level and timber framing to the front entrance door canopy appeared to be serviceable at present.

Joinery at upper levels tends to be less carefully maintained, making the need for repairs in these areas more likely.

Given the significant degree of water penetration noted within the front main bedroom, it is likely rot may have occurred to adjacent timbers at eaves level, or within the bay flat roof structure. Further investigation is required.

3 10 External Decorations

External decorations to timber fascias and front elevation stonework is generally satisfactory at present, although routine maintenance will be required, particularly given the exposed location.

The painted coatings to the rear elevation are serviceable, but becoming poor in places and partial preparation and redecoration is required.

3.11 Ceilings

These are a combination of dated lath and plaster, with more modern plasterboard designs. The kitchen/breakfast area and cloakroom/WC ceilings are covered with suspended ceiling structure.

A combination of textured coatings and papered finishes have been applied in several rooms.

Period features have also been retained in several areas.

The lath and plaster ceilings are a type no longer installed today. Their life expectancy is unpredictable and can be reduced by alterations or poor maintenance. In view of their assumed aged, they are likely to have only a limited life and occasional repair will be required until they are eventually renewed.

Areas of cracking have appeared in several ceilings, typical of the age and type of property. Making good will be required when these areas are next redecorated.

The area of ceiling adjacent the damp penetration within the front main bedroom will also require repair and redecoration, once the source of the penetration has been identified and rectified.

It is possible defects may be concealed by the textured and papered coverings.

The polystyrene ceiling tiles in the bathroom are now considered a fire risk and should be removed.

The suspended ceiling structure is serviceable at present but, again, ceiling tiles of this type can constitute a fire risk. In our opinion, most prospective buyers would wish to remove the suspended ceiling structure, which will necessitate some remedial repairs to the plasterwork above.

3.12 Internal Walls and Partitions

The internal faces of the outside walls are mainly faced with plaster, with the exception of the kitchen/breakfast area and cloakroom/WC, where the walls are part timber clad and part ceramic tiled.

Internal walls and partitions are a combination of solid and lightweight construction, mainly with a plaster finish. The bathroom walls are fully ceramic tiled.

There is a risk that these linings may conceal dampness or defects that would otherwise be identified. The presence of these linings meant that the wall surfaces could not be inspected and there is a risk that it may conceal dampness or defects that would otherwise be identified.

In view of the building's age plaster repairs are likely to be necessary, particularly when decorating.

Structural movement was noted, for example in the form of hairline cracking in several internal partition walls, but this is consistent with the age and type of building and within the acceptable limits for domestic construction, with no evidence of recent significant movement. The presence of furnishings and fittings restricted the areas available for inspection.

Surface cracks will require making good before you next redecorate.

In keeping with the building's age loose plaster is commonplace and some renewal will be required when redecorating.

Internal alterations include the removal of the main rear load bearing wall at ground floor level, between the kitchen projection and the breakfast area and, also, the ground floor element of the north side wall of the bathroom projection. Boxing visible within the suspended ceiling structure indicates the presence of load bearing structures beneath the main load bearing wall. However, there is no visible evidence within the suspended ceiling of any form of structural support to the first floor bathroom projection brickwork. We are unable to confirm whether any adequate support or restraint is present above the line of the ceiling plaster without undertaking destructive exposure works of the structure.

This matter should be investigated by a Structural Engineer, to determine the existence, or otherwise, of adequate support for the bathroom projection brickwork. Any necessary remedial works are to be undertaken under professional supervision.

Your legal adviser should be asked to verify that Local Authority approvals have been obtained.

3.13 Fireplaces, Flues and Chimney Breasts

There are fireplaces in the living room, dining room and front and rear main bedrooms.

The fireplaces to the living room and both bedrooms are sealed and apparently unvented. There is an older-style gas fire to the dining room fireplace.

It is assumed the fireplace to the rear north side bedroom has been converted to provide a built-in cupboard, with an element of the flue remaining, in order to serve the extractor hood within the kitchen.

You should ensure that an adequate flue liner and terminal has been provided to the gas fire in the dining room.

Disused flues should normally be capped and ventilated internally and externally to reduce the risk of damp penetration and condensation.

It would be a wise precaution to have swept any flue you intend to use as a working fireplace.

3.14 Floors

The ground floors are of both suspended timber and solid construction, whilst other floors are of suspended timber design throughout.

Where walked upon suspended timber upper floor surfaces revealed minor spring and unevenness but this is within the acceptable limits for domestic construction and not considered to be of structural significance.

Indeed, it is quite common in older properties, particularly above ground floor level.

Excessive spring was detected to several areas of floorboarding adjacent to areas of rising dampness within the ground floor walls of the property, suggesting that the supportive timbers beneath have suffered from rot.

As a precaution a competent specialist timber treatment company, as recommended in item 3.19, should carry out an underfloor inspection.

As mentioned earlier in this report sub-floor ventilation to the timber ground floor may be inadequate and additional airbricks may be needed. At the same time a precautionary check for floor timbers (including under floor areas) should be made as inadequate ventilation may have allowed rot to occur.

Exposed timber surfaces are subject to wear consistent with age. Some boards have split or require repair/replacement. Several boards are damaged and require repair or renewal.

Solid floors can consolidate after construction leading to hollows beneath the surface or, in extreme cases, substantial deflection. Damage can also be caused by expansion or impurities contained within the sub-floor filling.

Subject to the limitations of the inspection there was no evidence of such defects to the kitchen/breakfast area, cloakroom/WC floors, although normal deflections within acceptable building tolerances do exist.

It is not possible to confirm whether floor incorporates a damp-proof membrane.

3.15 Internal Joinery including Kitchen Fitments

A random selection of accessible doors and windows were checked to establish the ease with which they may be opened and shut. The windows that were checked were serviceable but occasional maintenance will no doubt be required.

Some internal doors were difficult to operate and need easing or adjustment. Some door furniture is defective and requires attention.

The stairs are of traditional timber construction. The treads are generally even and firm underfoot, with no immediate repairs apparent. The size of the balustrade openings would not meet modern safety standards and improvements would be prudent. The balustrading is slightly loose and will require some resecuring in the interests of safety.

Other items of internal joinery, including door frames and skirtings are in generally serviceable condition for the age and type of property.

Cracked glazing panes to the entrance lobby/hall door require replacement. It is not possible to confirm whether the glazing present within the internal doors is of adequate thickness or specification to meet modern safety requirements.

The Kitchen units are a limited range of extremely dated wall and floor units with timber carcasses. The work surfaces are of Formica-type and there is a stainless steel double drainer sink with separate hot and cold taps. There is an electric extractor hood installed.

Fitments in the kitchen are very dated and worn. Their replacement is recommended.

3.16 Internal decorations

Internal decorations are of mixed papered and paint finishes. They are generally dated and in places have become marked and stained. In our opinion most potential buyers would wish to undertake comprehensive preparation and redecoration. In any event, redecoration will be required to those areas where other works of repair are required.

3.17 Cellar/Basement

None were observed.

3.18 Dampness

Random checks for damp were made wherever possible using an electronic damp meter however, as described earlier in this report, access was limited by furniture and fittings.

The presence of timber wall boarding and ceramic tiling prevented an assessment of areas concealed beneath.

Evidence of excessive dampness was found to several areas throughout the ground floor of the building, including the entrance lobby, living room south party wall and dining room rear wall.

Timbers adjoining damp walls may be affected by rot. In particular, there is excessive moisture present within the entrance lobby floorboarding. The dampness to the rear corner of the dining room is likely to be a combination of rising dampness and bridging through the rear party/boundary wall structure.

You are therefore recommended to instruct a specialist British Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing Association registered contractor to investigate the cause and full extent of these faults and to carry out appropriate remedial work and allied repairs.

Penetrating dampness was detected in the front main bedroom at ceiling level, adjacent to the front eaves and bay structure. Possible causes include defects within the slate roof coverings, flat roof coverings, rainwater fittings or fascia boarding at eaves level. Further investigation and remediation is required.

3.19 Timber Decay and Infestation

A representative sample of exposed timber was examined and whilst all reasonable care was taken the possibility of concealed defects cannot be entirely ruled out. Indeed, the extent of timber surfaces available for inspection was limited.

Any timbers within dry lined areas are particularly at risk. Their inspection is impractical within the limitations of this report.

No evidence of wood beetle infestation was observed within exposed timbers.

As mentioned earlier in this report, sub-floor ventilation to the timber ground floor is considered inadequate and additional airbricks may be required. At the same time a precautionary check of floor timbers (including under floor areas) should be made as inadequate ventilation may have allowed rot to occur.

The excessive floor spring described in item 3.14 may have been caused by rot in the sub-floor timbers.

The presence of dampness was mentioned in item 3.18 and adjacent timbers may be affected by rot.

Special attention should be paid to under floor areas. You are therefore recommended to obtain a full report on the cause and extent of damage throughout the property along with an estimate for all necessary repairs from a specialist British Wood Preserving and Damp-proofing Association registered contractor.

3.20 Thermal insulation

Thermal insulation in this property includes double-glazing to all windows (with the exception of the single-glazed window adjacent the front entrance door), and both the front and rear entrance doors.

The underside of the main roof slopes have been partially lined and insulated, but this may cause ventilation issues, as referred to earlier in the report. We are unable to confirm whether insulating materials are present beneath the floorboarding within the roof space.

As is to be expected in a property of this age and type, it is unlikely to meet current standards in respect of thermal efficiency.

4.00 SERVICES

PLEASE NOTE THAT ONLY A GENERAL INSPECTION OF SERVICES HAS BEEN MADE. SUPPLIES AND SERVICE INSTALLATIONS HAVE NOT BEEN TESTED.

4.01 Gas

Mains gas appears to be connected. The meter is located within the kitchen understairs cupboard.

In view of the complexity of regulations and safety implications an inspection of the installation and equipment by a GAS SAFE registered gas installer is strongly recommended prior to commitment to purchase.

The gas fire within the dining room appears dated and may not comply with current safety requirements. Consequently an inspection of the appliance by a GAS SAFE registered gas installer is recommended prior to a commitment to purchase.

Flue and ventilation requirements for gas burning appliances require special consideration.

4.02 Electricity

Mains electricity appears to be connected.

The meter and consumer unit are located within the kitchen understairs cupboard.

In particular, the earthing arrangements for many older properties would not meet current standards and require upgrading.

The observed wiring and fittings appear to be a mixture of modern and older style suggesting partial rewiring in the past. Consequently some elements may require upgrading and you are recommended to instruct a specialist inspection by a competent electrician (preferably NICEIC registered) and any recommendations given should be implemented.

The observed wiring and fittings in the rear outbuildings give cause for concern over the safety of the installation. You are therefore recommended to instruct a specialist inspection by a competent electrician (preferably NICEIC registered) and any recommendations given should be implemented.

It was noticed that the number of power points provided, and the positioning of several light fittings, would not meet modern expectations.

Current IEE guidelines advise that electrical installations should be tested every five years.

4.03 Coldwater

It is assumed mains water supply is connected. The internal rising main stopcock is located adjacent the kitchen sink unit.

The condition of the unseen incoming supply is not known but in view of the building's age the need for renewal within the term of your ownership cannot be ruled out. If the incoming supply is of lead it should be replaced for health and safety purposes.

Observed internal supply pipework is run in copper where visible and appears serviceable although the inspection was limited and much is concealed.

The water pressure from randomly selected taps seems variable but this is to be expected in this type of installation, particularly when more than one is opened at the same time.

There is no evidence of significant leakage.

Where observed, pipework is subject to minor staining but this is not uncommon and when randomly checked areas were dry to the touch.

4.04 Hot Water

The central heating system gas fired combination boiler located in the ground floor cloakroom/WC provides hot water

4.05 Space Heating

A gas-fired combination boiler located in the ground floor cloakroom/WC provides hot water and central heating and the rooms are in turn heated by panel radiators in each room except the bathroom, which features an additional electric heated towel rail. Such systems require more regular maintenance and are incapable of providing hot water should any of the mains supplies be terminated temporarily.

You are recommended to establish its service history prior to commitment to purchase as only regular servicing by a competent person can ensure efficiency and safety. If these enquiries suggest that previous maintenance has been inadequate you should instruct a competent person to check the whole system prior to purchase.

It was noted the central heating system is of generally mixed age, with some older large bore pipework noted to several parts of the system.

The bottom panel of the boiler cover was noted to be missing, and the boiler is poorly located relative to the wc.

4.06 Sanitary Fittings

There are two rooms containing sanitary fittings, the main bathroom and the cloakroom/WC situated off the kitchen.

The first floor bathroom contains a suite comprising of a vitreous low-level WC with wood seat, vitreous pedestal basin with separate hot and cold taps, cast-iron enamelled bath with separate hot and cold taps and over-bath electric shower unit.

The ground floor cloakroom/WC comprises a vitreous low-level WC with wood seat.

The sanitary fittings are clean, but generally dated and worn, although apparently serviceable. They were not inspected in any detail. As part of a general upgrading of the premises, you may wish to consider replacing all sanitary fittings.

4.07 Drainage

Your legal adviser should ensure that mains drainage is connected.

A plastic soil/vent pipe is affixed to the rear wall of the building.

With a property this age the original pipework will require occasional attention until it is eventually renewed.

One inspection chamber cover was noted within the rear garden/yard area. However, the chamber cover could not be lifted, due to the presence of heavy planters situated upon it. No obvious evidence of significant defects was noted from a surface level inspection.

Plastic waste water pipes observed externally appear serviceable. Nevertheless, improved support would be beneficial where brackets are missing.

Arrangements for surface water drainage appear satisfactory, being via glazed/grated gullies to the rear yard/garden area and to the adjacent public footpath via a section of downpipe to the front of the property. The system has not been tested and the existence of adequate underground drainage cannot be confirmed.

The serviceability of the underground drainage system for a building of this age cannot be predicted and the need for future repairs or even renewal must therefore be accepted. It is therefore

recommended that a specialist drainage contractor be asked to inspect and test the drainage system before you are legally committed to purchase the property.

4.08 Other Facilities

Additional facilities apparent at the time of inspection include: a security alarm and smoke detectors, but please note that these have not been tested or inspected in any detail.

5.00 THE SITE

5.01 Garage

There is a detached single garage/workshop to the rear of the property, of brick construction under part pitched and part shallow pitched felted timber roofs. There is an electrically operated metal roller shutter access door to the rear lane (not tested) and part glazed timber double doors affording access to the rear yard/garden area. Windows are of single-glazed timber type, whilst rainwater fittings are of plastic. Floors throughout the structure are of solid, assumed concrete, construction.

The condition appears adequate for current use but general maintenance and repair will be required. Some evidence of previous staining was noted to roof timbers, although there is no evidence of significant continuing, ongoing water penetration.

5.02 OTHER SUBSTANTIAL BUILDINGS

There is an attached infill structure, forming part of the garage/workshop, formed of perspex sheet roofing on timber frame, with part brick walling and part timber infill. There are timber doors affording access to the rear lane and rear garden/yard respectively. Rainwater fittings are of plastic. Flooring is of suspended board type, assume to be laid over the original concrete yard surface.

Whilst no obvious evidence of significant defect was noted, the boarded flooring must be considered susceptible to rot attack and ongoing maintenance/repair should be anticipated.

The electrical installation to all outbuildings if of mixed age/type and is considered potentially suspect – see section 4.0 Services for further comment.

5.03 The Site and Local Factors

The property is situated upon an average sized, generally level, site. The front forecourt is laid to low maintenance gravel/boarders, with concrete pathways. The rear yard/garden is part laid to lawn, with boarders and concrete pathways. All external grounds are serviceable at present, although routine maintenance/repair will be required.

The exposed position of the property close to the coastline may make maintenance costs higher than average and it would be prudent to familiarise yourself with the sea defence policy for the locality prior to purchase.

The property is not thought to pose any special risk of flooding under normal conditions.

The property is situated in a former coal mining area and a written report on mine workings in the vicinity should be obtained from the relevant authorities prior to purchase.

The property is in an area where coastal erosion has taken place in the past. The rate of erosion is under constant scientific review but not all expert opinions agree. You are recommended to establish the latest predictions for the area from the Environment Agency and Local Authority prior to purchase.

Whilst the prospect of erosion is not considered to pose an immediate threat past experience shows that it limits demand for property in the locality and this has been reflected in the valuation report.

5.04 Trees

There are no trees within or outside the curtilage of the property thought to present any risk to the structure.

5.05 Boundaries

The front boundaries comprise brick walls with part stone capping and a wrought iron access gate. The brickwork is satisfactory at present, although ongoing maintenance/repair will be required, particularly given the exposed location. The access gate requires preparation and repainting.

The boundaries comprise a combination of brick walls and timber fences, with a timber rear access gate and frame forming part of the infill structure. Again, all are adequate for purpose at present, although routine maintenance will be required.

Your responsibilities for the maintenance of boundaries should be established via your conveyancer and routine expenditure will be required.

5.06 Wayleaves, Easements and Rights of Way

There do not appear to be any adverse easements, servitudes or wayleaves that affect the property but your conveyancer should be asked to verify the situation.

5.07 Planning, and Environment Matters

The road is believed to be made up and adopted by the Highways Authority but confirmation from your conveyancer is recommended.

Connection to mains drainage should be established via enquiries before purchase and your conveyancer should verify the maintenance and repairing responsibilities in respect of any shared drains/sewers.

We do not believe the property to be adversely affected by highway or development proposals but your conveyancer should check in the normal pre-contract enquiries.

There are no other known local factors believed to adversely affect the property although your conveyancer should verify this.

6.00 MATTERS TO BE REFERRED TO YOUR SOLICITOR

We advise that you raise the following matters with your conveyancer and seek sufficient clarification prior to entering into any legally binding contract: -

They should also ensure that the original development complied with all necessary consents and permissions.

Confirmation is required that all previous alterations to the building, in particular comply with the necessary Local Authority approvals.

In the event that their existence cannot be verified you are advised that the latest Building Regulations now provide for retrospective consent, which incorporates a scale of charges and powers to enforce the upgrading of substandard work.

The information contained in Items 1.07 requires confirmation.

That the highway is adopted by the Local Authority.

That there is adequate provision for all reciprocal rights in respect of shared drainage and other services and for the maintenance thereof where these are shared with neighbours property or are not independent connections to mains serving this property.

Confirm where possible the position of the boundaries and responsibility for maintenance thereof where these are shared with neighbours property.

Confirm whether the property is in a building conservation area.

Ensure that there are no outstanding statutory, public health, legal or other notices affecting the property.

Ensure that there are no outstanding debts in respect of credit agreements relating to the property, fittings or contents remaining.

Ensure that there are no road improvement or development proposals which would be detrimental to the property.

Obtain a mining search report as recommended at section 5.03.

Any adverse discovery may have serious effect on the resale potential of the property and a possible detrimental effect upon its value. It may therefore be important for you to refer any such matter back to us before you proceed to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

You should immediately forward a copy of this report to your conveyancer with the request that they check all legal matters.

Some of the legal enquiries necessary may be highlighted in other sections of the report.

7.00 LIMITATIONS

You are reminded that access was limited during the inspection and it is not possible to confirm that unseen areas are free from defect.

Some maintenance and repair will require the co-operation of adjoining owners.

The property was unoccupied and partly furnished.

The presence of floor coverings throughout the property prevented a full inspection.

Ladders were raised for close inspection of the upper parts of the building. Our inspection was made entirely from ground level or from upper windows where available.

This report is for the private and confidential use of the Client for whom the report is undertaken and for the use of their professional advisers and should not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by third parties for any purpose without the expressed written authority of the surveyor.

Our inspection of this property covered all those parts of the building that could be seen either from ground level externally or from the interior including accessible roof spaces.

We also inspected single storey flat roofs etc where these were accessible from the short ladders we are able to carry.

Binoculars were used to inspect roof slopes, chimneystacks, etc externally and a dampness test meter was used internally.

Many parts of a building such as foundations and sub-floor areas are concealed during construction and we do not disturb these. It follows, for practical reasons, that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are, therefore, unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

Similarly, we cannot always establish whether a property has had wall cavity insulation provided, and we may not be able to comment on the type or suitability of the insulation material unless the vendor can provide specific information about it.

As far as the service installations (gas, electricity hot and cold water, space heating and drainage) are concerned, our inspection was a limited superficial one and in the absence of specific tests we cannot give warranty as to their condition, design or efficiency.

The suitability of the main supplies and acceptability of the installations connected to them is something on which the gas, water and electricity companies have the final word.

Underground pipes from rainwater downpipes or gullies were not traced or tested.

In drafting this report we have limited comment to the more material matters and, in particular, we have not listed individually such minor items as slightly loose door or window fittings or minor decorative blemishes which have no structural significance.

8.00 CONCLUSIONS

The designs and methods used in building are continually improved and this property would probably not comply with current standards in many respects, but this is true of the vast majority of the country's housing.

The house has been maintained reasonably well but naturally is beginning to suffer a little with age, and as one would expect to find within such a property, a number of repairs were identified. The most important items requiring immediate remedial attention or further investigation can be summarised as follows:

MAIN BUILDING

1. Report from Structural Engineer concerning existence of and suitability of structural support to rear projection first floor bathroom brickwork, above kitchen, where walls removed and lack of visible support at ground floor level, including evidence of movement observed to external wall surfaces adjacent.
2. Investigation/remedy of rising and penetrating dampness at ground floor level, including inspection of associated structural timbers where necessary.
3. Overhaul of slate roof coverings by competent roofing contractor, to include assessment of condition/anticipated lifespan of flat felt and lead roof coverings.
4. Investigation/remedy of penetrating dampness to front main bedroom wall at eaves level, adjacent bay window.
5. Repairs to chimney stacks.
6. Overhaul/repair of rainwater fittings, including attention to disconnected rear downpipe and poorly jointed connections.
7. Testing of electrical installation to main house and outbuildings by suitably qualified, competent electrician.
8. Removal of polystyrene ceiling tiles from bathroom for fire protection purposes.
9. Adjustment of internal doors and attention to defective door furniture and broken glazing.
10. Precautionary testing of central heating system, including assessment of condition of dining room gas fire by a competent Gas Safe registered engineer.

SITE

1. Preparation and painting of front entrance gate.

In addition to the above there are a number of other aspects that require attention in due course, which can safely be dealt with as part of an ongoing programme of routine maintenance and upgrading.

We would strongly recommend that you arrange for any builders or other specialist reports, estimates or tests before you legally commit to purchasing the property so that you are fully aware of the costs.

Most of the defects revealed by our survey are of a type that one would expect to find in a property of this age and character but it must be appreciated that with period properties, attention to preservation must be continuous.

Repairs or alterations to party structures should only be undertaken after consultation and agreement with adjoining owners in full compliance with the 1996 Party Wall Act.

The interior would benefit from some modernisation.

Particular attention is necessary to the improvement of services.

Any refurbishment of a building will inevitably expose parts of the structure currently hidden from view and so unseen defects requiring expenditure may come to light. It would therefore be prudent to include within your budget an additional sum of money for unexpected items.

You are also recommended to seek professional advice in respect of both planning and supervising any intended structural alterations.

The costs of repairs can vary enormously and depend on your choice of builder, the standards you finally wish to achieve in updating and additional costs found when opening up the structure to deal with the problems identified. Additional costs can also add to this as in redecorating large areas of plasterwork may need repair/renewal.

Care must be exercised when choosing specialists or contractors to ensure they are sufficiently competent, and membership of relevant trade associations should offer some general reassurance.

The enclosed maintenance checklist contains additional advice about routine repairs you can expect to be required from time to time.

You are recommended to only proceed with the purchase after the receipt of satisfactory responses to all legal enquiries.

With reference to timescales in respect of future expenditure the following is offered as a general guide:

Short-term – within 2 years

Medium-term – 3 to 10 years

Long-term – more than 10 years

We trust that we have correctly interpreted your instructions and have accurately reported on this property, but should any of the points in our report be unclear or should you wish to discuss our report in greater detail, please do not hesitate to contact us.

9.00 ADDITIONAL ADVICE

We have identified that some elements of construction contain asbestos products. Asbestos is considered a health hazard in certain circumstances and although commonly used in building in the past, its use now is severely curtailed and is only permitted in specialised and controlled conditions. Its use in asbestos cement products is not considered hazardous if the products are left undisturbed however workmen, including decorators, who carry out repairs and renovations should be advised of its presence so that they may take appropriate safety precautions. Similarly, safety precautions should also be taken when carrying out any DIY work. Further advice on this safety topic may be obtained from the environmental health office of your local council.

Normally the removal of asbestos products from buildings has to be carried out by especially licensed firms operating to stringent safety standards that can prove an expensive exercise. However, small quantities of asbestos cement products may be removed without utilising the specialists expensive facilities although obviously reasonable safety precautions should be taken to prevent the creation of dust, the spread and inhalation of dust by all persons within the building either during the operations or afterwards and the removed material disposed of to the appropriately licensed tip, the location of which can be ascertained from your local council. Asbestos cement products used for roof coverings are fragile and should not be walked upon without appropriate safety precautions and the provision of adequately sized crawler boards properly supported. Its presence may deter some purchasers and future value could be affected by changes in legislation.

INSURANCE COVER

The estimated rebuilding cost of the property for insurance purposes is £ 151,000 (one hundred and fifty one thousand pounds).

The gross external floor area of the living accommodation is approximately 130 square metres.

This is the minimum sum recommended and the policy should be index linked. No investigation or allowance has been made for any remediation works that might be required by the Local Authority

under legislation relating to contaminated land as it is beyond the extent of the report and this should be drawn to your Insurer's attention.

VALUATION

We are of the opinion that the open market value of the unencumbered freehold interest on the basis of a sale with full vacant possession is fairly represented in the sum of £230,000 (two hundred and thirty thousand pounds) as at the date of this report.

Market Value is described in Chapter 3 of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' Appraisal and Valuation standards manual (5th edition) as follows:

The estimated amount for which a property should exchange on the date of valuation between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arm's-length transaction after proper marketing wherein the parties had each acted knowledgeably, prudently and without compulsion.

In arriving at the opinion of the Market Value, the Surveyor also makes various standard assumptions covering, for example: vacant possession; tenure and other legal considerations; contamination and hazardous materials; the condition of un-inspected parts; the right to use mains services; and the exclusion of curtains, carpets, etc from the valuation. (If required, details are available from the Surveyor.) Any additional assumption, or any found not to apply, is reported.

Signature of Surveyor for and on behalf of David Harting Surveyors Limited



David Harting BSc (Est. Man) MRICS Chartered Surveyor

Details of inspecting firm:

David Harting Surveyors Limited
20 Fir Tree Lane
Hetton-le-Hole
HOUGHTON LE SPRING
Tyne and Wear
DH5 0GA

Telephone: 079 5117 7154

Date of Report: 27 November 2009

APPENDIX A

Building Survey Standard Terms of Engagement

- 1** We will inspect all reasonably accessible parts of the structure from ground level and other visible areas up to 3 metres in height from ladders, or with the aid of binoculars, where appropriate. No furniture, no floor coverings or floorboards will be lifted or removed.
- 2** The Survey report will not include a valuation of the property unless specifically agreed between the Surveyor and Client at extra cost.
- 3** Save as hereinafter provided the Surveyor will use all reasonable skill, care and diligence expected of a reasonably competent Surveyor in carrying out the survey and preparing the report.
- 4** The inspection will be limited to the main structure of the property and main outbuildings, any principal garage if applicable but will not include outbuildings of a prefabricated or temporary nature. If there are extensive outbuildings these will not be inspected unless agreed beforehand.
- 5** Parts of the structure, such as foundations, wall ties and woodwork which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible will not be inspected except where agreed to the contrary. No site investigations or environmental survey will be carried out and we can give no assurance that the property is unaffected by mineral extraction, landfill or noxious substances.
- 6** We shall not be responsible for arranging the testing of service installations unless specifically instructed to do so. Specialist tests can be arranged at an additional fee.
- 7** It is not always possible in the time available to obtain authoritative information from Local and Statutory Authorities concerning such matters as Planning, road widening proposals or charges, sewers or services and although we will comment to the extent of our current knowledge, a written enquiry should be made by the Client's legal adviser to the relevant Authority to confirm the latest position on such matters.
- 8** Unless otherwise expressly agreed or stated we will, in carrying out our report of the property, assume: -
 - 8.1** that vacant possession is provided;
 - 8.2** that all required, valid planning permissions and statutory approvals for the buildings and for their use, including any extensions or alterations, have been obtained and complied with;
 - 8.3** that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used, that there is no contamination in or from the ground, and it is not land-filled ground;
 - 8.4** that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions, encumbrances or outgoing and that good title can be shown.
 - 8.5** that the property and its value are unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search (or their equivalent in Scotland) and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a Statutory Notice and that neither the property, nor its condition, its use, or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.
 - 8.6** that an inspection of those parts that have not been inspected would not reveal material defects;
 - 8.7** that the property is connected to and there is the right to use the reported main services on normal terms;
 - 8.8** that sewers, main services and the roads giving access to the property have been adopted, and that any lease provides rights of access and egress over all communal estate roadways, pathways, corridors, stairways and to use communal grounds, parking areas and other facilities; and
 - 8.9** that in the case of a newly constructed property, the builder is a registered member of the NHBC, the Zurich Municipal Mutual, or equivalent and will construct the property to obtain its cover;

- 9** Our report will be provided in writing as soon as reasonably possible after completing our inspection and investigations. Any verbal comments given to the Client prior to the receipt of the full written report are given in good faith but, in order to avoid any possible misinterpretation or misunderstanding, the Client should not act upon these verbal comments until the full written report has been received and studied.
- 10** This report will be confidential to the Client. It may be disclosed to other professional advisers assisting the Client in respect of that purpose, but the Client shall not disclose the report to any other person. The report should not be reproduced in whole or in part without written permission.
- 11** The Client will pay to 'Northeast Surveyors' the agreed fee in respect of the said professional advice. In addition the Client will pay the amount of any Value Added Tax on the fee at the appropriate prevailing rate. The fee is payable in advance and normally our report will not be released until payment, in full, has been received

APPENDIX B

BUILDING TERMS EXPLAINED

Aggregate

Broken stone, gravel or sand used with cement to form concrete. Aggregates may be coarse or fine and are often used in the construction of 'soakaways'.

Airbrick

A perforated brick built into a wall for the purpose of providing air for ventilation purposes. Used for instance, to ventilate the underside of a wooden floor or a roof space.

Architrave

A moulding around a doorway or window opening that usually covers the joints between the frame and the wall finish thus hiding any shrinkage gaps that may occur.

Asbestos

Material used in the past for insulation. Can sometimes be a health hazard - specialist advice should be sought if asbestos (especially blue asbestos) is found.

Asbestos Cement

Cement mixed with 15% asbestos fibre as reinforcement. Fragile - will not usually bear heavy weights. Hazardous fibres may be released if cut or drilled.

Asphalt

Black, tar-like substance, designed to be impervious to moisture. Used on flat roofs and floors.

Barge Board

See 'Verge Board'.

Balanced Flue

Common metal device normally serving gas appliances that allows air to be drawn to the appliance whilst also allowing fumes to escape.

Baluster

A post or vertical pillar supporting a handrail or parapet rail.

Balustrade

A collective name for a row of balusters or other infilling below a handrail on a stair or parapet.

Beetle Infestation

(Wood boring insects eg woodworm.) Larvae of various species of beetle can tunnel into timber causing damage. Specialist treatment normally required. Can also affect furniture.

Benching

Shaped concrete slope beside drainage channel within an inspection chamber. Also known as 'haunching'.

Bitumen

A black sticky substance similar to asphalt used in sealants, mineral felts and damp-proof courses.

Bond

The regular arrangements of bricks or stones in a wall so that the units may be joined together. The principal types of 'bond' used in domestic construction being English, Flemish, header, stretcher, diagonal or garden wall bond.

Breeze Block

Originally made from clinker cinders or ('breeze') - the term now commonly but incorrectly used to refer to various types of concrete and cement building blocks.

Carbonation

A natural process affecting the outer layer of concrete whereby the metal reinforcement within that layer is liable to early corrosion, with consequent fracturing of the concrete in some cases.

Casement Window

A window composed of hinged, pivoted or fixed sashes.

Cavity Wall

Traditional modern method of building external walls of houses comprising two leaves of brick or blockwork usually separated by a gap ('cavity') of about 50mm (2 inches).

Cavity Wall

Insulation filling of wall cavities by one of various forms of insulation material:

Beads:

Polystyrene beads pumped into the cavities. Will easily fall out if the wall is broken open for any reason.

Foam:

Urea formaldehyde foam, mixed on site, and then pumped into the cavities where it sets. Can lead to problems of dampness and make replacement of wall-ties more difficult.

Fibreglass:

Inert mineral fibre pumped into the cavity.

Cavity Wall-Tie

A twisted piece of metal or similar material bedded into the inner and outer leaves of cavity walls intended to strengthen the wall. Failure by corrosion can result in the wall becoming unstable - specialist replacement ties are then required.

Cesspool

A simple method of drainage comprising a holding tank that needs frequent emptying. Not to be confused with 'septic tank'.

Chipboard

Often referred to as 'particle board'. Chips of wood compressed and glued into sheet form. A cheap method of decking to flat roofs, floors and (with Formica or Melamine surface) furniture especially kitchen units.

Cleaning Eye

Sometimes known as an 'access eye' or 'rodding eye' which is an opening in a drain or ventilation pipe, covered by a plate, the removal of which allows the drain to be rodded to clear blockages.

Cob

Walling of damp earth or clay, usually mixed with small stones and straw and compressed without reinforcement into blocks. Sometimes it is rammed into formwork. This cheap method of walling has in the past been practised mainly in East Anglia and the West of England.

Collar Beam A horizontal tie beam of a roof, which is joined to opposing rafters at a level above that of the wall plates.

Collar

Horizontal timber member designed to restrain opposing roof slopes. Absence, removal or weakening can lead to roof spread.

Combination Boiler

Modern form of gas boiler that activates on demand usually within a pressurised system. With this form of boiler there is no need for water storage tanks, hot water cylinders etc.

Coping/Coping Stone

Usually stone or concrete, laid on top of a wall as a decorative finish and designed to stop rainwater soaking into the wall.

Corbel

Projection of stone, brick, timber or metal jutting out from a wall to support a weight above it.

Cornice

A large moulding at the junction between an inside wall and a ceiling which can also include a moulding at the top of an outside wall designed to project and throw raindrops clear of the wall.

Coving

A curved junction between wall and ceiling.

Dado Rail

A wooden moulding fixed to the wall or capping panelling and forming the topmost part of a dado. Originally designed to avoid damage to the wall where people or furniture brushed against it.

Damp-Proof Course

Layer of impervious material (mineral felt, PVC etc) incorporated into a (or DPC) wall and designed to prevent dampness rising up the wall or lateral dampness around windows, doors etc. Various proprietary methods are available for damp-proofing existing walls including 'electro-osmosis' and chemical injection.

Deathwatch Beetle

(Xestobium Rufovillosum). An extremely serious insect that attacks structural timbers, usually old hardwoods where fungal decay is already present.

Double-glazing

A method of thermal insulation usually either: Sealed unit: Two panes of glass fixed and hermetically sealed together; or Secondary: In effect a second 'window' positioned inside the original window.

Double Hung

A window in which the opening lights slide vertically within a cased Sash Window frame, counter balanced by weights supported on sash cords which pass over pulleys in the frame.

Dry Rot

(Serpula Lacrymans). A very serious form of fungus that attacks structural and joinery timbers, often with devastating results. Can flourish in moist, unventilated areas.

Eaves

The overhanging edge of a roof.

Efflorescence

Powdery white salts crystallized on the surface of a wall as a result of moisture evaporation.

Engineering Brick

Particularly strong and dense type of brick, often used as a damp proof course in older buildings.

Fibreboard

Cheap, lightweight board material of little strength, used in ceilings or as insulation to attics.

Flashing

Building technique designed to prevent leakage at a roof joint. Normally metal (lead, zinc, copper) but can be cement, felt or proprietary material.

Flaunching

The cement mortar weathering on the top of a chimneystack, surrounding the base of the chimney pots, which is to throw off the rain and thus prevent it from saturating the stack.

Flue

A duct in a chimney, or a proprietary pipe, serving a heat-producing appliance such as central heating boiler.

Flue Lining

Metal (usually stainless steel) tube within a flue - essential for high output gas appliances such as boilers. May also be manufactured from clay and built into the flue. Other proprietary flue liners are also available.

Foundations

Normally concrete, laid underground as a structural base to a wall; in older buildings these may be brick or stone.

Frog

An indentation, usually U shaped in the bedding face of the brick to reduce its weight. 'Frog down' or 'Frog up' are the generally accepted ways of describing how the brick are laid.

Gable

Upper section of a wall, usually triangular in shape, at either end of a ridged roof.

Ground Heave

Swelling of clay sub-soil due to the presence of moisture: can cause an upward movement of foundations in extreme cases.

Gulley

An opening into which rain and wastewater are collected before entering the drain.

Gutter

A channel along the eaves of a roof or the edge of a path for the removal of rainwater.

Hardcore

Broken bricks or stone which

Haunching

See 'Benching'. Also term used to describe the support to a drain underground.

Hip

The external junction between two intersecting roof slopes.

Hip Tile

A saddle shaped or angular tile fitting over the intersection of those roofing tiles that meet at a hip.

In Situ

'In position' applied to work done in the position where it is finally required, eg concrete may be precast in sections which are later taken to the position where they are required or it may be cast 'in situ'.

Inspection chamber

Commonly called the 'man-hole': access point to a drain comprising a chamber (of brick, concrete or plastic) with the drainage channel at its base and a removable cover at ground level.

Jamb

The vertical side face of a doorway or window.

Joist

A timber or steel beam directly supporting a floor or a ceiling. Steel beams are usually referred to as RSJs (rolled steel joists).

Key

The roughness of a surface which provides a bond for any application of paint, plaster, rendering, tiles etc or spaces between laths or wire meshes which provide a grip for plaster.

Landslip

Downhill movement of unstable earth, clay, rock etc often following prolonged heavy rain or coastal erosion, but sometimes due to sub-soil having poor cohesion.

Lath

Thin strip of wood used in the fixing of roof tiles or slates, or as backing to plaster.

Lintel

A horizontal beam over a door or window opening usually carrying the load of the wall above. Often lintels can be partially or completely hidden from view.

Longhorn Beetle

(*Hylotrupe Bajulus*). A serious insect pest mainly confined to the extreme south-east of England, which can totally destroy the structural strength of wood.

LPG

Liquid Petroleum Gas or Propane. This requires a storage tank and is used to serve gas appliances in areas without mains gas.

Mortar

Mixture of sand, cement, water and sometimes lime used to join stones or bricks.

Mullion

A vertical bar dividing individual lights in a window.

Newel

A stout post supporting a staircase handrail at top and bottom. Also, the central pillar of a winding spiral staircase.

Oversite

The rough concrete below timber ground floors.

Parapet

A low wall along the edge of a roof, balcony etc.

Parapet Gutter

A timber gutter of rectangular cross-section usually provided with a flexible metal or other impervious lining. Used behind a parapet or sometimes at a valley.

Pier

A vertical column of brickwork or other material, used to strengthen the wall or to support a weight.

Plasterboard

A 'sandwich' of plaster between layers of paper. Now in widespread use for ceilings and walls.

Pointing

Outer edge of mortar joint between bricks, stones etc.

Powder Post Beetle

(*Bostrychidae* or *Lyctidae* family of beetles). A relatively uncommon pest which can, if untreated, cause widespread damage to structural timbers.

Purlin

Horizontal beam in a roof upon which rafters rest.

Quoin

The external angle of a building; or specifically, bricks or stone blocks forming that angle.

Rafter

A sloping roof beam, usually timber, forming the carcass of a roof.

Random Rubble

Basic an early method of stonewall construction with no attempt at bonding or coursing.

Rendering

Vertical covering of a wall either plaster (internally) or cement (externally), sometimes with pebbledash, stucco or Tyrolean textured finish.

Reveals

The side faces of a window or door opening.

Ridge

The highest part or apex of a roof, usually horizontal.

Ridge Tile

A specially shaped tile covering and making weather tight the ridge of a roof. These tiles may have a rounded or angular cross-section.

Riser

The vertical part of a step or stair.

Rising Damp

Moisture soaking up a wall from below ground, by capillary action which can cause rot in timbers, plaster decay, decoration failure etc.

Roof Spread

Outward bowing of a wall caused by the thrust of a badly restrained roof framework (see 'collar').

RSJ

Frequently used abbreviation for a rolled steel joist.

Screed

Final, smooth finish of a solid floor; usually cement, concrete or asphalt.

Septic Tank

Drain installation whereby sewage decomposes through the action of bacteria, which can be slowed down or stopped altogether by the use of chemicals such as bleach, biological washing powders etc.

Settlement

All properties settle to some extent, and this can show as cracking and/or distortion in walls. Very often minor settlement is not of great significance to the building as a whole.

Sewer

A large, underground pipe or drain used for conveying wastewater and sewage. The Local Authority is usually responsible for the sewers, which collect the effluent from various drains, the drains being the responsibility of the landowners.

Shakes

Naturally occurring cracks in timber; in building timbers, shakes can appear quite dramatic, but strength is not always impaired.

Shingles

Small rectangular slabs of wood used on roofs instead of tiles, slates etc.

Soakaway

A pit, filled with broken stones etc below ground to take drainage from rainwater pipes or land drains and allow it to disperse.

Soaker

Piece of flexible metal fitted to interlock with slates or tiles and make a water tight joint between a wall and a roof or at a hip or valley. Stepped flashings are used over the soakers at a joint against a wall.

Soffit

The underside of an arch, beam, staircase, eaves or other feature of a building.

Soil Pipe/Soil Stack

A vertical pipe that conveys sewage to the drains. Its upper end is usually vented above the eaves.

Solid Fuel

Heating fuel, normally wood, coal or one of a variety of proprietary fuels.

Spandrel

Space above and to the sides of an arch; also the space below a staircase.

Stopcock

A valve on a gas or water supply pipe that is used to cut off the supply.

Stud Partition

Lightweight, sometimes non-load bearing wall construction comprising a framework of timber faced with plaster, plasterboard or other finish.

Subsidence

Ground movement, generally downward, possibly a result of mining activities or failure of the subsoil.

Sub-Soil

Soil lying immediately below the topsoil.

Sulphate Attack

Chemical reaction, activated by water, between tricalcium aluminate and soluble sulphates that can cause deterioration in brick walls and concrete floors.

Tie Bar

Metal bar passing through a wall, or walls in an attempt to brace a structure suffering from structural instability.

Tingles

Metal strips, often of lead or copper, used to hold slipped slates in place

Torching

Mortar applied on the underside of roof tiles or slates to help prevent moisture penetration. Not necessary when a roof is under-laid with felt.

Transom

Horizontal bar of wood or stone across a window or top of door.

Tread

The horizontal part of a step or stair.

Trussed Rafters

Method of roof construction utilising prefabricated triangular framework of timbers. Now widely used in domestic construction.

Underpinning

Method of strengthening weak foundations whereby a new, stronger foundation is placed beneath the original.

Valley Gutter

Horizontal or sloping gutter, usually lead- or tile-lined, at the internal intersection between two roof slopes.

Ventilation

Necessary in all buildings to disperse moisture resulting from bathing, cooking, breathing etc, and to assist in prevention of condensation.

Floors:

Necessary to avoid rot, especially dry rot; achieved by airbricks near to the ground level.

Roofs:

Necessary to disperse condensation within roof spaces; achieved either by airbricks in gables or ducts at the eaves.

Verge

The edge of the roof, especially over a gable or around a dormer window or skylight.

Verge Board

Timber, sometimes decorative, placed at the verge of a roof; also known as 'barge board'.

Wall Plate

Timber placed at the eaves of a roof, designed to take the weight of the roof timbers and coverings.

Wall Tie

See 'cavity wall tie'.

Waste Pipe

A pipe from a wash hand basin, sink or bath to carry away the waste water into the drains.

Weather Boarding

Horizontal overlapping boards nailed on the outside of a building to provide the finished wall surface.

Wet Rot

(Coniophora Puteana). The decay of timber due to damp conditions. Not to be confused with the more serious dry rot.

Woodworm

Colloquial term for beetle infestation: usually intended to mean Common Furniture Beetle (*Anobium Punctatum*): by far the most frequently encountered insect attack in structural and joinery timbers.

APPENDIX C

PROPERTY MAINTENANCE CHECK LIST

Your home represents a very considerable financial investment and it makes good sense to keep it in good order. Regular checks of various parts of the building and prompt maintenance can pay dividends in preventing potentially more serious and costly repairs. The following checklist is not intended to be defective or fully comprehensive but is intended to be a simple easy to follow maintenance guide.

CHECK POINTS:

ROOF

Roof slopes and coverings, for example tiles, slates - particularly after severe weather conditions check for slipped, cracked or badly damaged tiles/slates.

Cement pointing at the roof edges. Make sure that this is kept in good condition.

Remove lichen and other moss growth from tiles/slates if this becomes heavy.

Flat roofs, normally covered in felt or metal are prone to defects. Felt in particular has a limited life. Whenever possible try to avoid walking or standing ladders on flat roofs as the coverings can be very easily damaged.

Check flashings and valley gutters or hidden gutters for blockages and leaks. Valleygutters are particularly prone to defects and should be cleaned out at regular intervals.

Make sure that the chippings to your flat roof remain evenly laid and clear away any heavy moss or lichen growth as this can retain moisture.

Keep chimney pots and cowls in good order and ensure that the brickwork cement joints are in good condition.

Gutters often become blocked with leaves, weeds or debris and should be cleaned out on a regular basis. Replace or repair any missing or defective sections immediately in order to protect the property.

LOFT

Check for bird ingress or wasps' nests. In very rare cases where you find bats, remember that they are a protected species so you will need specialist advice.

Check condition of water storage tanks and pipework and ensure they are properly covered and lagged.

WALL

Dampness can penetrate through defective mortar joints or hairline cracks in the rendering. Although very fine surface cracks may appear insignificant, it is always sensible to fill them to be on the safe side.

Ensure that the cement mortar around the waste pipes is in good condition. Use a pliable waterproof mastic sealant to close any gaps around the window or doorframes.

Never bridge a damp course by building up external paving levels or garden borders. A sensible guide is to keep external levels at two brick courses below damp course level, or inside floor level.

Never render walls down to external ground-level as this is likely to bridge any damp proof course. Always finish the rendering in a properly formed bell cast.

Water may get behind poor rendering that could lead to dampness. Any cracked or loose areas of rendering should be repaired or replaced.

Remove ivy or other climbing plants in particular from walls and gutters. Such plants can damage stone/brickwork and retain moisture in the wall.

Do not allow any sub ground floor airbricks to become blocked. Failure to do so will prevent adequate airflow and could lead to decay

Check water downpipes for splits or leaky joints.

EXTERNAL WOODWORK

Paint/re-stain window frames and other joinery at regular intervals.

Periodically check window and door frames and repair any timbers affected by wet rot. Regular painting will help avoid the timber becoming rot affected.

Replace broken or damaged sash cords or window latches.

Renew cracked or broken panes of glass and replace missing or loose putties before redecoration.

ELECTRICS, HEATING AND PLUMBING

We strongly advise that you have the electrical installation checked by the electricity board at least every three years as the system can deteriorate with age and Regulations are being constantly updated.

Ensure that you obtain qualified advice before making any alteration to the electrical wiring system.

ELECTRICS, HEATING AND PLUMBING (Cont'd)

Ensure that you know how to get to external and internal stopcocks in the event of an emergency.

Check your plumbing pipework and waste pipes for joint leaks and from time to time clean out bath, sink and wash basin traps. Reseal joints around shower bases and other appliances.

Clean through overflow pipes from water tanks or cisterns.

Arrange for central heating boilers, water heaters and heating appliances to be regularly serviced to maximise efficiency.

Blocked soakaways or gullies in a drainage system may be cleared byrodding or pressure hosing.

IN THE GARDEN

Shrubs and trees can be damaging to the fabric of the property and so their growth needs to be restricted. Keep soil, trees and shrubs away from outside walls wherever possible.

Cut back any wall climbing plants as they can damage walls and can encourage damp penetration.

EXTENSIONS/ALTERATIONS

Before you start any structural alterations or extensions check with your local council as to whether Building Regulation or Planning Approval is necessary. (Building warrants in Scotland.)

If you live in a Listed Building remember that Listing Building Consent may be necessary even in the case of minor alterations to the appearance of the building.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

The thermal efficiency of your property can often be improved or relatively modest cost.

These measures can often result in an improved internal environment, reduced carbon dioxide emissions and lower fuel bills. Such measures include:

Fit draught exclusion to windows and external doors.

Insulate hot water cylinders and lag water pipes.

Check that your loft insulation is thick enough but make sure that gaps are left at the eaves to allow sufficient ventilation of the roof space, and remove from below water storage tanks.

Ensure that your heating controls are effective, eg consider the use of automatic time clock controls, thermostatic radiator valves, thermostatic cylinder controls etc.

Install double or secondary glazing to windows.