

Report On:

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On the Instructions
of:

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Date of Inspection:

2007

Survey by:

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REAL surveys

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SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION

IMPORTANT

It is important that you read the whole of the report and do not rely on the Summary and Recommendations in order to be fully aware of the limitations of the inspection and the details reported.

1.1 SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

The purpose of the report is to give you as much information as possible to assist you in your decision on whether or not to purchase the property. Matters that should be brought to the attention of your legal advisor are also referred to.

As explained in our Conditions of Engagement, there are inevitably some areas of the property that we were unable to inspect. Further inspections of such areas may reveal the need for additional repairs. If such further investigations are necessary, recommendations will be made in the report.

Various assumptions have been made, as set out in the attached Conditions of Engagement.

Subsequent defects

This report refers to the condition of the property at the time of the inspection. Defects may arise between the date of the inspection and your occupation of the property.

1.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

Liability to Third Parties

This Report shall be for the private and confidential use of the Client for whom it has been prepared and may not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by Third Parties for any use without the express written authority of ourselves.

SECTION 2

DESCRIPTION

2.1 THE PROPERTY

Description & Age:

The subject property comprises a mid-terraced house with accommodation over three floors, likely to have originally been constructed circa 1900. The property has the benefit of a loft conversion that was constructed some time previously. We understand that the property has recently been subject to a period of refurbishment.

Construction:

The main roofs are of pitched and slated design. The external walls are of solid masonry construction with external finishes of smooth and dashed render and fair-face brickwork. The floors to the property are of suspended timber construction, i.e. square edged boards or chipboard decking over intermediate timber joists.

Accommodation:

Ground floor: Open porch with front door leading into inner hallway with staircase to first floor, doors to living room, dining room, kitchen/breakfast room and lobby.

First floor: Landing with staircase to second floor, three bedrooms and family bathroom.

Second floor: Bedroom

Externally: Shed

2.2 LOCATION

The property is set within a residential area in reasonable proximity to local amenities and facilities. We assume that you have familiarised yourself with these and have not expanded further within the confines of this report.

2.3 SITE

The site is generally level, we were unable to inspect the front garden due to the vast quantity of rubbish stored in this location. The rear garden is predominantly laid to lawn with basic paths.

2.4 TENURE

Assumed to be freehold with vacant possession upon completion together with no onerous restrictions or encumbrances with regard to title. Your Legal Adviser to confirm prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

2.5
CIRCUMSTANCES
OF INSPECTION

The inspection was carried out in overcast but generally dry weather. Fitted floor coverings restricted the extent of our investigations. The vast quantity of stored goods within the front garden restricted an inspection of the lower parts of the front elevation. No access hatches have been provided to allow access to the front and rear loft voids. As a result, we were unable to undertake an inspection in this area. An inspection of the rear dormer flat roof was precluded due to its height above ground level.

SECTION 3

CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

3.1
CHIMNEYS AND
FLUES

(Chimney stacks have been observed from ground level using binoculars unless otherwise stated.)

The property has the benefit of a single chimney stack, shared in common with the adjoining house. This is of fair-faced brickwork construction above roof level and four flues are present, two consist of boiler terminals and two terracotta pots. The upper parts of the stack have been repointed at some stage in the recent past.

In general, the stack was in fair order only. The chimney breast has been removed within the front bedroom. No support has been provided for the upper parts of the chimney stack. This is contrary to Building Regulations. Immediate support is required to prevent structural damage to the property and to prevent injury to the occupants. We recommend that this is put in hand at your earliest opportunity.

Externally, the stack was not wholly level and even but considered to be satisfactory. Within the rear bedroom and rear reception room, the fireplaces have been removed and the openings blocked. No vents have been provided and as a result condensation and internal dampness could occur. Remedial works should include the provision of vents to prevent this occurring in the future.

In summary, we recommend that satisfactory support is provided to the upper parts of the stack immediately. This will require a Building Regulations application to be made subject to normal maintenance the remainder of the stack was in fair order.

3.2
FLASHINGS AND
WEATHERINGS

(Lead or cement waterproofing around chimneys and where the roof meets the walls. These have been observed from the ground level using binoculars unless otherwise stated.)

Flashings and weatherings have been provided in a number of locations and are described below.

Metal valley gutters have been provided between the front gable roof and the adjoining roof surfaces. These appear to be in a generally clear and unobstructed condition with no obvious or substantial sign of disrepair. You should ensure that these are maintained in a clear and unobstructed condition in future to prevent internal dampness.

Sand and cement flashings have been provided between the porch roof and the adjoining wall surfaces. These were in fair order only and signs of hairline cracking were evident. This is not unusual as differential expansion and contraction of adjoining materials leads to cracking of the mortar. We recommend that you budget for replacement of these fillets with their traditional lead equivalent. Lead work is relatively expensive to undertake and we recommend that you obtain estimates for this work prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

Lead flashings have been provided between the parapets and the adjoining roof surfaces. From our external inspection, which was limited, these appear to be generally satisfactory. Due to a lack of internal access within the loft void, we cannot confirm their adequacy. Further investigations should be made prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

A lead flashing has been provided between the chimney stack and the adjoining roof surface. Whilst these appear to be generally adequate from our ground level inspection, an inspection within the loft void was precluded and we cannot therefore report on their watertightness. We recommend that their adequacy is determined prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property as remedial works would be relatively expensive to put in hand.

A lead flashing has been provided to the perimeter of the rear flat roofed dormer window. The lead has been dressed in too long a length and as a result some creasing and buckling is occurring. In time, this will lead to tearing which could result in internal water penetration. We recommend that the flashings are replaced as part of your upgrading and improvement programme. Traditional lead work is relatively expensive to undertake and you should obtain estimates for this work prior to proceeding further. All new leadwork should be undertaken in accordance with Lead Sheet Association guidelines.

A lead flashing has been provided at the junction of the rear single-storey extension flat roof and the rear wall of the dwelling. This appeared to be generally functional with no sign of significant water penetration internally. The detailing around the soil and vent pipe is poor and we recommend that you budget for having this detail upgraded in accordance with the Lead Sheet Association guidelines in due course.

3.3 ROOF SURFACES

Overall, the flashings and weatherings were in fair order only and in need of general upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in good condition for the future. This will be relatively expensive to put in hand adequately and we recommend that you obtain competitive estimates for this work prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

(Roof slopes which cannot be seen are specifically excluded. The roof slopes have been viewed using binoculars and have been inspected within the limits of a 3 metre ladder unless otherwise stated. Flat roofs which cannot be seen are specifically excluded, although attention is drawn to their presence.)

The main roof to the property is of simple up and over, pitched and slated design. There is a flat roofed dormer to the rear elevation. The pitched roofs are clad with artificial slate materials. Angled ridge tiles have been provided to the apex of the slated roof. Small metal valley gutters have been provided at the intersection of the front roof slope and the projecting front gable. A small valley gutter has been provided between the parapet and the adjoining gable. The roof of the rear dormer is of basic green mineral felt construction. There is a substantial flat roof over the rear single-storey extension, also covered with felt and chippings. There is a small pitched and slated roof over the open porch.

Overall, the main roof was in fair order. Some dishing of the front roof slope was apparent that would tend to indicate that inadequate support is present for the roof. Due to our inability to inspect the loft void, we cannot confirm whether adequate support has been provided. We recommend that further investigations are put in hand prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

A small valley gutter has been provided between the right hand side of the gable and the adjoining parapet. Dampness was noted to the walls within the master bedroom below. We cannot confirm whether this valley gutter is watertight due to its height above ground level. An inspection should be undertaken prior to proceeding further as repair works are likely to be relatively expensive.

Older forms of artificial slate can contain asbestos fibres. This cannot be confirmed from a visual inspection. We therefore recommend that you arrange for an asbestos investigation company to inspect and report on the artificial slates prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property as a precautionary measure.

The lean-to roof over the porch was in fair and reasonable condition with no obvious or substantial sign of disrepair.

The roof over the rear single storey extension is of basic flat construction with an upper surface of green mineral felt and chippings. A lead flashing has been provided between the felt and the gutter. The roof is of some age and in fair condition only. Roofs of this type have a finite lifespan that rarely exceeds ten years. It is our opinion that this roof is at or approaching the end of its useful life. You should obtain competitive estimates for its replacement with its modern equivalent. The roof has inadequate falls and some ponding of water could occur during poor weather conditions. Bubbling of felt was apparent and requires repair. Tears were noted above the gutters which require immediate repair to prevent internal water penetration. Overall, the roof was in fair order only and in need of considerable upgrading and improvement, if not replacement, in the short term.

The roof over the rear loft conversion is also of flat felted construction. A skylight has been provided within. An external inspection was not possible due to its height above ground level. From our ground level inspection, we saw evidence of lifting and ridging of the felt. Again, it is our opinion that the roof covering is of some age and in need of general upgrading and improvement as a minimum. We recommend that you gain access to this area prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property to determine its condition and the extent of repair/remedial works required to put and keep it in watertight condition for the future.

Overall, the roof coverings were in fair order only and in need of general upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future. This could be relatively expensive to put in hand and we recommend that you arrange for further investigations to be undertaken prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

3.4 ROOF SPACES AND STRUCTURE

(Internally, roof spaces have only been inspected where there are access hatches which are reasonably accessible.)

No access has been provided to the main roof void, to the front and rear parts. A limited inspection was possible from within the cupboard. We can confirm that the roof is of traditional cut and pitched softwood construction and that underfelt has been provided. Beyond this, we are unable to provide satisfactory advice as to its structure and condition. We are concerned due to the fact that the front roof slopes are dishing and may be inadequately supported. Further investigations are warranted.

We cannot confirm the adequacy of the structural support for the loft conversion although evidence of a steel beam was noted in one location. We recommend that access hatches are provided to the front and rear of the loft room to enable an inspection of the roof structure to be undertaken, prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

From our limited inspection, we noted the fact that the insulation was missing in one area and elsewhere is of inadequate thickness. The insulation should be upgraded to at least a depth of 250mm/10" to reduce future heating costs.

3.5

RAINWATER GOODS

(Unless it was raining at the time of the inspection, it is not possible to state whether or not the rainwater fittings are water tight or properly aligned. The gutters have been inspected within the limits of a 3 metre ladder and using binoculars from ground level.)

The rainwater goods consist of older style ogee profile metal gutters with circular downpipes together with sections of more modern UPVC gutters. To the front elevation, the downpipe drains within the front garden although we cannot confirm that this enters a gulley or drains over the land due to the presence of debris. To the rear extension, the downpipe drains over the land, adjacent to the outside wall.

Overall, the rainwater goods were in fair order only. No gutters have been provided to the porch that you may wish to install in due course.

Defective connections are present between the gutter and the downpipe. This situation should be rectified immediately. The rear downpipe drains over the land. This should be routed to a soakaway in due course to prevent potential damage to the walls or foundations in future.

The metal gutters have been painted, however given the standard of the rest of the refurbishment, we consider it unlikely they have been repaired. The joints are likely to leak during rainfall. In addition, corrosion is likely to be present. We recommend that you budget for replacement of all older style metal gutters as part of your upgrading and improvement programme. All sections of gutter should be observed during periods of rainfall and realignment undertaken as necessary.

3.6
EAVES, PARAPETS,
ETC.

(The eaves, parapets, etc., have only been inspected from accessible windows, and within the limits of a 3 metre ladder unless otherwise stated and using binoculars from ground level.)

The eaves consist of painted softwood fascia boards and soffits together with decorative bargeboards to the front elevation. To the rear parts, the eaves are of simple flush softwood design with a painted finish. Decorative detailing has been provided to the porch.

Overall, the eaves were in fair order only. Areas of localised rot and decay were apparent that will need to be cut out and new timber spliced in prior to redecoration. This is time consuming work and therefore expensive. All sections will require thorough preparation prior to redecoration. Inadequate eaves vents have been provided and we recommend that this upgraded to prevent rot, decay and infestation to the roof structures.

Overall, the eaves were satisfactory only and in need of wholesale upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future.

Parapets have been provided between this and the adjoining houses. These are of solid 225mm/9" brickwork design and angled ridged tiles have been provided to the upper parts. The finish is of fair-faced brickwork internally. Sections of masonry appear to have been repointed in the past.

Overall, the parapets were in fair order. The ridge tiles were generally uneven and the majority would benefit from re-bedding on fresh sand and cement mortar. Some sections of mortar were missing between the ridge tiles and require reinstatement to prevent internal water penetration. There is a missing ridge tile to the rear right hand side parapet and this should be installed in due course to prevent internal dampness from occurring in future.

Subject to upgrading and improvement, the parapets should be satisfactory for the future. You must appreciate that these are not detailed in accordance with modern Building Regulations and as a result some internal dampness may arise.

3.7

EXTERNAL WALLS

(The walls have been inspected within the limits of a 3 metre ladder. The main external walls have only been inspected from accessible windows, and using binoculars from ground level. Without exposing the foundations we cannot report on their condition.)

The external walls are of solid masonry construction with finishes of fair-faced brickwork, white stucco render and black painted textured render to the front elevation. Decorative stucco detailing has been provided to the heads of the front elevation windows. A decorative brickwork arch has been provided over the entrance door set. A decorative string course has also been installed. The rear facade is of basic, black painted, smooth rendered design. The rear extension is finished with fair face London stock brickwork, laid to a cavity bond.

Overall, the walls were in fair order although in need of general upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future. The decorations are poor generally and stained. Wholesale redecoration is required for aesthetic and practical reasons. Damage was noted to the decorative stucco generally and in particular beneath the right hand side of the gable. Repair works will be expensive due to its decorative nature.

Hairline cracks were noted generally. These will need to be cut out and new render provided to prevent water gaining entry that will result in more costly repairs being required in future. Isolated sections of render were live and defective and will need to be hacked out and renewed.

The brickwork was in fair order although isolated chipped sections were apparent that will need to be cut out and made good. Surface mounted cable and conduit was evident that you may wish to conceal for aesthetic reasons. Where making good has been undertaken, this is to a poor standard overall and consists of foam filler. Upgrading works are warranted.

Algae staining was noted to parts of the rear extension. This is indicative of overspilling of gutters that could result in internal dampness. The gutters and downpipes should be overhauled to prevent this in future. We were unable to inspect the flank of the rear extension as it is accessed via the neighbour's land. We cannot therefore report on its structure and condition. Vegetation adjacent to the external walls should be cut back to prevent damage to the walls and foundations in future. As noted previously, no inspection of the front lower elevation was possible due to the vast quantity of debris present in this location. Defects may be present that are currently concealed

Overall, the external walls were in fair order only and in need of general upgrading and maintenance to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future.

3.8
SETTLEMENT /
SUBSIDENCE &
HEAVE

(Deformation of the structure due to ground movement. This is of particular concern if continuing or progressive.)

The property is likely to be founded upon shrinkable clay soil that has the propensity to heave with changing moisture contents and climatic conditions. Whilst we can state there were no obvious or substantial signs of settlement or subsidence on the day of inspection, we are unable to provide categorical assurances as to its future integrity.

3.9
DEFLECTION

(Movement of the structure or parts thereof due to sources other than ground movement, resulting in distortion / deformation of structural elements. Deflection to some elements is inevitable and acceptable provided this is within normal tolerances.)

Properties of this age and style are seldom entirely square and even and this dwelling is no exception. The walls, floors, door and window heads were out of square although we do not consider substantial remedial works to be warranted at the present time.

3.10
WINDOWS

(A sample of the windows have been opened and closed where possible. Secondary double glazing or window locks may prevent the opening of windows.)

The windows to the property consist of double-glazed aluminium units to a sash style. Intermediate glazing bars have been provided. There is a white painted softwood single glazed window serving the kitchen. A Georgian wire glazed skylight has been provided to the upper floor stairwell.

In general, the windows were in fair order only. The windows appear to be a budget installation and are of a reasonable age. Window furniture is missing to the majority and as a result the windows no longer close tightly. Easing and adjusting of the majority is required to ensure their future satisfactory operation. The kitchen window requires replacement as it is in poor condition.

Condensation was noted to the skylight generally and this is likely to be an inherent defect given its age and form of construction. Replacement is the only option. Overall, the windows were in fair order only. You should obtain estimates for all upgrading works to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future.

3.11
EXTERNAL DOORS

The front door to the property consists of a modern timber panel door with central stained glass vision panel. The door is set within an older style white painted softwood surround. The glazing to this is of older style single-glazed type. In general, the door was in fair order although the surround was in need of upgrading and improvement to put and keep it in reasonable condition for the future. The paintwork was stained and defective in areas. Localised rot and decay was noted to the external joinery. Internally, part of the panelling was missing to the lower sidelight fielded panel. Nothing has been provided in order to pull the front door shut. The internal door furniture is a mismatch of different types and upgrading and repair works are warranted for aesthetic and practical reasons.

Overall, the door set is capable of upgrading and improvement, although this is a labour intensive task and therefore relatively expensive.

The rear door consists of a white painted softwood multi-pane glazed type. You should ensure that all glass is in safety materials to prevent any unnecessary accidents from occurring in future. No door furniture has been provided and the door is secured with a bolt. Localised rot and decay was noted to the rear parts. The threshold would benefit from thorough preparation and redecoration. The detailing of the laminate floor adjacent was poor and warrants replacement. We recommend that you budget for replacement of the door and frame for aesthetic and practical reasons.

Overall, the doors are in fair order only and in need of upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future.

3.12
OTHER EXTERNAL
JOINERY

None.

3.13
EXTERNAL
DECORATIONS

(A general comment only has been provided.)

The external decorations do not appear to have been undertaken recently and when they were undertaken, they were undertaken to a poor standard. We recommend that you budget for thorough preparation of all elements together with redecoration to provide a protective coating to the previously painted elements.

3.14
CEILINGS

(These have been inspected from floor level. Suspended ceilings have not been removed.)

The ceilings to the property appear to be mainly of modern construction with a finish of plaster and paint. The ceilings at second floor level are part sloping, following the pitch of the roof. Areas of older style cove cornice are present at ground floor level only.

The older style cove cornice was in poor order generally and in need of upgrading and improvement for aesthetic reasons. The majority of ceilings appear to have been replastered and were in fair order with no obvious or substantial signs of disrepair.

3.15
INTERNAL WALLS
AND PARTITIONS

(These have been inspected generally but furniture, pictures, mirrors, etc., have not been removed.)

The internal walls and partitions are a combination of solid and lightweight materials with finishes of plaster and paint. Fair-faced brickwork and painted brickwork were present at ground floor level. Decorative arches have been provided between the reception rooms. Within the kitchen, fair-faced blockwork was noted beneath the kitchen units.

Overall, the internal walls and partitions were in fair order although have suffered from some settlement over time, as evidenced by the fact that the door heads are out of square. A crude bulkhead has been provided over the stairwell and is visible within the upper bedroom. You may wish to upgrade this detail for aesthetic reasons. Adjacent to the bulkhead is a small cupboard. Internally, the plasterboard is poorly fixed and unplastered. We recommend that the entire cupboard is removed and re-formed in a proper and workmanlike manner as the current arrangements are beyond upgrading.

Areas of live and defective plaster were noted and the worst affected parts will need to be cut out and made good. Damp staining was noted within the master bedroom, to the flank and front wall. We cannot categorically confirm the source of water ingress and further investigations are warranted prior to proceeding further. Damp affected plaster can seldom be rectified and you will need to budget for having the worst affected sections cut out and re-plastered. This is messy and disruptive work.

The heads to the arches are generally low and you should satisfy yourself as to the adequacy of the existing arrangements. Surface mounted cable and conduit was present that you may wish to remove for aesthetic reasons. The left hand side wall of the bathroom was considerably out of square. We are unable to confirm why this is the case and further investigations are warranted prior to a legal

commitment to purchase the property.

Overall, the internal walls and partitions were in fair order although warrant general upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future.

3.16 FLOORS

(Floor surfaces not covered with fixed carpets or other fittings have been inspected where possible. Fixed floorboards have not been lifted. Fixed coverings have not been lifted, but where possible corners have been lifted sufficiently to identify the type of floor beneath.)

The upper floor to the property is of suspended timber design, i.e. square edged boards or chipboard decking over intermediate timber joists. The ground floor is also of suspended timber construction.

Overall, the floors were in fair order only. The bathroom floor was significantly out of level, by approximately 40mm/1.5" over 1 metre/3'6". We are unable to confirm the cause of this defect and further investigations are warranted prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property. Some spring and bounce was noted to the upper floors within the larger rooms although this is considered to be acceptable. This should be monitored in future. Creaking boards are apparent to many areas that you may wish to re-fix in due course.

The tiling to the bathroom floor was very poor and is considered unacceptable. You should satisfy yourself as to its adequacy for your requirements. Replacement is likely to be more cost effective than repair.

The ground floor is not entirely level and even, excessive spring and bounce was noted to the kitchen floor and we recommend that the laminate is taken up to enable an inspection to be undertaken prior to proceeding further. Some replacement of rotten or defective floor joists may be required. The laminate floor in the kitchen/breakfast room is very poorly detailed throughout and again replacement is considered warranted rather than repair. The floor finishes are mainly of carpet. These have not been adequately protected and as a result have suffered from some staining and paint spills. Upgrading and improvement works are required.

Overall, the floors were in fair order only and in need of general upgrading and improvement to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future.

3.17 CELLAR

(The general condition only has been noted.)

There is no cellar to the property.

3.18
DAMPNESS

(Damp meter readings have been made where appropriate and possible without moving furniture, wall hangings, fixings, fittings, dry linings, or causing damage to finished wall surfaces.)

Damp proof course:

We were unable to note the presence of a damp-proof course to the property.

Rising Damp:

During our tests with a protimeter damp meter, positive readings for dampness were recorded within the kitchen and front reception room. We strongly recommend that you arrange for a specialist timber and damp company to inspect and report prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property. Remedial re-plastering works may be required. This tends to be expensive and relatively disruptive.

Penetrating Damp:

Signs of penetrating dampness were noted within the first floor master bedroom. This consists of damp stains to the front and flank walls. We cannot confirm their cause and further investigations are warranted prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

3.19
TIMBER INFESTATION
AND ROT

(Inspection has been made where appropriate and possible without moving furniture, fitted floor coverings, wall hangings, fixings, fittings, dry linings or causing damage to surfaces.)

No obvious or substantial signs of infestation were noted to the timbers on the day of inspection, however, you must appreciate that few exposed timbers were apparent to enable an inspection to be undertaken.

Some rot and decay may have occurred to the ground floor structure that has caused the deflection to the kitchen floor. We recommend that an access hatch is provided to enable an inspection of the sub-floor void and timbers prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property. An inspection of the loft void should also be put in hand as a precautionary measure.

3.20
SUBFLOOR
VENTILATION

(Timber floors depend upon a good through flow of air to keep them in good condition. It is important that all air bricks are kept clear of vegetation or debris.)

The sub-floor ventilation to the property should be upgraded. Additional air bricks should be provided to prevent a build-up of condensation, leading to rot, decay and infestation. You should budget for this to be undertaken in the short to medium term.

3.21
CHIMNEY BREASTS
AND FIREPLACES

(Open fireplaces should not be used until the chimneys have been swept, or confirmation of recent sweeping has been provided by the vendor. Smoke tests to each of the flues is recommended prior to use.)

One fireplace remains in the property, however it is unusable. This consists of a fair-faced brickwork fireplace within the front reception room. A gas fire is present within, however as the flue has been removed from within the bedroom above, it is no longer usable. You should confirm that the gas appliance has been turned off for safety reasons.

The fireplace within the rear reception room has been blocked and not vented. A chimney breast is also present within the rear bedroom. Again, this has been blocked and no vent provided. Vents should be provided to these flues to prevent a build-up of condensation within the flue that could result in condensation and internal dampness occurring in future.

As noted previously, we strongly recommend that satisfactory support is provided to the unsupported section of chimney adjacent to the loft conversion, for safety and structural reasons.

3.22
STAIRCASE

(Where the upper surface is carpeted and the underside boarded, general comments only have been made.)

There are two staircases to the property. That rising from ground to first floor level is of timber construction with upper winders. Timber spindles have been provided together with a handrail. The staircase would not comply with the building regulations due to the fact that the gaps between the spindles are in excess of 99mm. The Building Regulations enforce this rule to stop babies or young children falling between the gaps. We recommend that additional spindles are provided as part of your upgrading programme.

The spindles that have been provided are not set upon the "string" of the stair but adjacent to it. This is a wholly unconventional detail that you may wish to upgrade in due course. In addition, basic strengthening works have been undertaken to the handrail, for example, a metal angle strap between the lower newel post and the handrail, to connect the two together. Upgrading works are warranted for aesthetic reasons. The treads creak under foot that you may wish to re-fix in due course.

The staircase rising from first to second floor level is also of timber construction with central winders. A handrail has been provided to one side. The staircase was in fair order although suffers from the inherent defect that it has inadequate head height. The Building Regulations requirement is that a minimum 2M of head height is provided over the pitch line of the staircase. To the lower parts, the head height is below this. Upgrading works are warranted. Any upgrading works will form a substantial expense due to the need to alter the structural design of the second floor to accommodate the necessary head height. You should obtain a design and costed estimates for this work, prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

Overall, the staircases were in fair order only and require upgrading and improvement. The upper staircase will require remedial works that will form a substantial expense to put in hand.

3.23

INTERNAL JOINERY

(The general condition only has been noted.)

Doors

The doors to the property are a combination of types including six panelled stained softwood and double folding doors within arches. Multi-pane glazed doors are also present.

In general, the doors were in poor order throughout. Due to the fact that a loft conversion has been created, fire doors should be provided along the escape route. No fire doors have been provided and therefore replacement of all the doors is warranted for fire safety reasons.

The doors that have been provided are of low standard. The handles are very low that you may wish to adjust in due course. The heads of the doors are also out of square which is indicative of the settlement that the partitions have been subject to over the years. They have also suffered from general knocks and scuffs together with some impact damage that you may wish to upgrade as part of your improvement programme.

A number of the doors have warped although this is an inherent defect and costly to rectify. You should satisfy yourself as to the adequacy of the existing arrangements. Where part glazed doors have been provided, you should confirm that these are in safety materials to prevent any unnecessary accidents from occurring in future. The doors have also been hung very badly and in our opinion replacement of the doors rather than repair is warranted.

Skirting Boards and Architraves

Skirting boards and architraves have been provided within the majority of areas, although not all. The majority are of some age and have suffered from general knocks and scuffs. The finishing works have been undertaken to a very low standard overall. Where making good has been undertaken, this is poor. Pieced in sections have also been undertaken to a very low standard. Some sections of skirting board are missing that you may wish to re-instate.

The architraves are in a range of materials and in fair condition only. Again, it is likely that the majority of purchasers would wish to upgrade or replace these with their traditional equivalent.

3.24 KITCHEN AND UTILITY AREAS

(The general condition and layout only has been noted. No appliances were tested.)

There is a basic contract quality kitchen to the property with a range of wall and base units together with fitted appliances. The kitchen has been installed to a basic standard only although appears to be generally functional. Due to the low quality of the kitchen in the first instance, it may not stand the test of time well. We therefore recommend that you confirm the adequacy of the current arrangements for your requirements.

No utility area has been provided.

3.25 BATHROOMS/ CLOAKROOMS

(The general condition only has been noted and tested only by passage of water.)

Within the first floor bathroom, there is a basic white suite comprising close-coupled WC, plastic bath and pedestal wash hand basin. No extract fan has been provided and one should be installed in due course. The plug and chain to the bath is broken. The water pressure is high and when the basin taps are turned on, water tends to spray out of the basin. The bath panel has been crudely jointed together with mastic. The pipework behind the basin and the WC is generally poor and too exposed. Wholesale upgrading and improvement works would be beneficial.

3.26
INTERNAL
DECORATIONS

(A general comment only has been provided. If the property was built before the 1960's and still has original coats of paint these may contain lead on windows, doors and other woodwork. If the property has Artex finishes to the walls or ceilings, and these were applied before the mid 1980's, then these may contain asbestos as part of their composition; see further comments under section 5.3 Hazardous Materials. Where pictures, etc., have subsequently been removed there may be shadings to painted and papered surfaces and pin fixing holes to walls which dictate redecoration of the internal surfaces.)

The property has been decorated to a neutral standard internally. The decorations have been undertaken to a piecemeal standard. The walls and ceilings appear to have been emulsioned, however the joinery does not appear to have been satisfactorily repaired and redecorated. You should ensure that these costs are fully taken into account within the purchase price.

Should you purchase the property and wish to undertake the works, you should budget for thorough preparation of all elements to provide a sound base for new finishes.

SECTION 4

SERVICES

The property is connected to electricity, gas and mains water. In accordance with our Conditions of Engagement, specialist tests have not been carried out. General observations only have been made as follows:-

4.1 ELECTRICAL

(Electrical installations have been checked visually in order to advise upon their apparent age and condition. Tests have not been carried out. It is recommended that prior to exchange of contracts, you have the electrical installation tested for compliance with the latest safety standards by an NICEIC registered electrical contractor.)

The property is connected to mains electricity there being a key meter within the understairs cupboard. Two fuse boards are present, one in the understairs cupboard area and one within the kitchen. Both fuse boxes are of older style. There appear to be a wholly inadequate number of power points for modern day requirements. Within the rear larger bedroom, one double power point is present. The consumer units do not appear to comply with modern requirements. If the vendors are unable to provide you with a test certificate ensuring its safety, we recommend that you arrange for a specialist test and report prior to proceeding further. In our opinion, upgrading works are warranted to comply with current safety standards.

4.2 GAS / OIL

(No tests have been carried out on gas or oil supplies. It is recommended that, prior to exchange of contracts, you have the gas installation plus any connected appliances and systems inspected by the Gas Supply company or a specialist gas engineer who is a Member of the Council for the Registration of Gas Installers.)

The property is connected to the mains gas. A key meter is located within the understairs cupboard. Gas systems should be tested on an annual basis for safety reasons and we do not recommend their re-use until this has been put in hand.

4.3 COLD WATER

(We cannot comment on the condition or material of the mains water supply to the property, nor on the condition or material of the water board's supply pipework. We cannot therefore rule out the possibility that some traces of lead may be possible in the water.)

The property is connected to mains water although we were unable to locate the incoming main. No tanks are present and the system is mains fed. Water arrived at the fittings under reasonable pressure and free from significant discolouration.

4.4
HOT WATER &
HEATING

(Hot water and space heating installations, boilers, controls, etc., have been visually inspected only and activated where possible to test the physical operation. General comments only have been made. It is recommended that prior to exchange of contracts you arrange for the central heating system and gas appliances to be tested by a CORGI registered heating engineer.)

Heating and hot water is provided by a wall mounted combination boiler in the kitchen. Older style radiators have been provided within the majority of rooms. No hot water cylinder is present. Combination boilers are not renowned for the pressure of hot water created. We recommend that you confirm that the existing arrangements are satisfactory for your requirements, prior to proceeding further. The radiators are of older style and somewhat dated and worn. Again, the majority of purchasers would wish to upgrade these with their modern equivalent.

Hot water and heating systems can be expensive to replace if defective. We therefore recommend that a specialist test and report is undertaken prior to proceeding further as a precautionary measure.

4.5
DRAINAGE

(Accessible inspection chambers have been examined and drains tested only by passage of water.)

Where visible, the appliances are connected to modern plastic wastepipes and traps. There is a plastic soil and vent pipe to the rear elevation that is encased in masonry within the kitchen/breakfast room. The extension appears to be built over the drain run. We were unable to inspect the below ground drainage and we therefore cannot provide you with any information as to its adequacy or condition. Further enquiries would be prudent prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property. If the drain run is defective remedial works would form a significant expense.

SECTION 5

OTHER

5.1
CONDENSATION,
VENTILATION AND
THERMAL
INSULATION

(The effectiveness of ventilation and insulation in relation to condensation and heat loss is reported.)

No obvious or substantial signs of condensation were noted within the dwelling on the day of inspection. We recommend that extract fans are provided within the kitchen and bathroom to remove moist air in the future.

The ventilation of the property should be upgraded. We recommend that air bricks are provided to the sub-floor area and we also recommend that the ventilation of the flat and pitched roofs is provided in accordance with current Building Regulations to reduce the likelihood of rot, decay or infestation occurring.

The thermal insulation of the property is poor. There is an inadequate level of roof insulation. The majority of windows are double-glazed whilst the doors are single-glazed. The external walls are of solid construction and do not appear to incorporate insulation. Every opportunity should be taken to increase the thermal insulation of the property to reduce future heating costs.

5.2 SOUND INSULATION

(Significant noise from aircraft, rail, traffic or other reasonably anticipated sources has been noted.)

During the course of our inspection, the general area was relatively peaceful, however the next door neighbour, to the right hand side, played their music at concert hall level for the majority of the duration of the survey. You should satisfy yourself as to the adequacy of the sound insulation to the property for your requirements. The party walls appear to be generally too thin and would not comply with current standards. Background noise from both adjoining properties was audible from within the subject property.

5.3 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

(It has been assumed that no high alumina cement, concrete or calcium chloride additive or other deleterious materials or techniques were used in the construction of the property. We are not qualified under the United Kingdom Accreditation Service scheme to carry out asbestos surveys. Therefore no tests have been carried out on any materials to establish whether these contain asbestos. Asbestos may be present in many materials in buildings built before 2000, for example in cement, fillers and binders, insulating boards, ceiling panels/tiles, roofing felt, bitumen roofing materials, vinyl or thermoplastic floor tiles, tanks, lagging, artex and other textured coatings. Asbestos cannot be identified by visual examination and requires an analysis of the material by a laboratory technician. It must be assumed that asbestos is present in a suspect material unless proven otherwise. Current advice of the Health and Safety Executive is that if the asbestos is in good condition, is not likely to be damaged and is not likely to be worked on or disturbed, it is usually safer to leave it in place and manage it. If the asbestos is in poor condition or is likely to be damaged, worked on or disturbed, then specialist advice is needed from an asbestos surveyor, a laboratory or a licensed contractor. Asbestos is dangerous if inhaled and should not be broken, crumbled, scraped, drilled or sanded.)

We saw no evidence of hazardous materials during our inspection. This does not mean that they are not present. If this is of particular concern,

we recommend that you arrange for an asbestos investigation to be undertaken prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

5.4
MEANS OF ESCAPE
IN THE EVENT OF
FIRE

(Specific comments are made in relation to the means of escape from a house of more than two storeys or house with through room access only. Fire is always a danger in any property. You should ensure that smoke detectors are provided and correctly positioned where appropriate, including to the landings, hallways and any other rooms passed through between the top floor and the external doorways. You should regularly check that these smoke alarms are in proper working order so as to provide early warning in the event of a fire.)

The means of escape from the property is considered to be wholly unsatisfactory and dangerous. This is in principle due to the presence of the loft conversion. There is no means of escape window to the front elevation, this is usually a low level Velux window. No fireman would be able to gain safe access to the rear parts to provide a ladder adjacent to the rear dormer to enable escape from the loft room.

Mains linked smoke detectors should be provided on all levels to provide early warning in case of fire. In addition, 30 minute fire doors with self-closers should be provided to all the doors on the escape route, aside from the bathroom. Clearly these works have not been undertaken and we recommend that they are put in hand at your earliest opportunity to preserve the health and safety of the occupants of the dwelling.

5.5
SECURITY OF THE
PROPERTY

(A general comment only has been noted in relation to its location, door and window locks. Burglary and theft are unfortunately a part of modern life. You should contact your local Crime Prevention Officer for specific advice concerning increasing the security of the property. It is recommended that you check your insurance policies in order to establish the insurers' conditions for security of the property.)

The security to this property is poor. Modern locks have been provided to the front door. No lock is present to the rear door aside from a high level bolt. The windows do not appear to incorporate any locking mechanisms. We recommend that all locks are changed as and when you gain possession of the property and you should also consider the provision of an intruder alarm.

SECTION 6

EXTERNAL AREAS

6.1 GARDENS AND GROUNDS

(This relates to the immediate and private garden areas surrounding the property.)

We were unable to inspect the front garden due to the presence of a mound of debris. The rear garden is given over to lawn, an area of decking and a pergola to the rear. A basic hardstanding is present adjacent to the rear extension and there is a basic path from the extension to the decking. All hard and soft landscaping would benefit from upgrading and improvement to put and keep it in reasonable order for the future.

6.2 ADJOINING PROPERTIES

(The perceived use of the adjoining properties and their condition is noted from the subject property.)

The adjoining properties are residential. Aside from the impact of sound, they do not appear to have a significant affect upon the use and enjoyment of the subject property.

6.3 GARAGES

There are no garages, nor any off-road parking.

6.4 CONSERVATORIES AND PERMANENT OUTBUILDINGS

(A general comment only has been provided unless agreed otherwise.)

There is a lightweight timber shed within the rear garden, however this is in need of replacement rather than repair and we have not therefore dwelt upon this item.

6.5 BOUNDARIES

(Your Legal Adviser should advise on the ownership and repairing liability of the various boundaries.)

The boundaries are made up of lightweight timber materials that are in a range of conditions from fair to poor. The front garden boundaries would benefit from replacement.

Your Legal Adviser to confirm the precise extent of the land to be conveyed together with your maintenance responsibilities for the boundaries, prior to a legal commitment to purchase the property.

6.6
HARD SURFACES/
RETAINING WALLS

(A general comment only has been made.)

Where visible, the hard surfaces were in basic materials and to a poor standard. Wholesale upgrading and improvement is required to put and keep them in reasonable order for the future. The decking within the rear garden requires replacement rather than repair.

6.7
SHARED AREAS

(A general comment only has been made)

No shared areas were apparent. Your Legal Adviser should confirm whether any rights of way are present, particularly to the rear of the site, although no gates were present in this location.

SECTION 7

FURTHER ADVICE

(You should await the result of any further investigations recommended in this section, and seek builders' estimates before proceeding with the purchase. Initial budget estimates are often exceeded once work is put in hand, and often estimates do not include the peripheral work necessary to carry this out properly and effectively.)

7.1 FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS RECOMMENDED IN THIS REPORT

(You are strongly recommended not to proceed to purchase until the additional inspections, specialist reports and estimates recommended have been received, and their financial implications included in your proposed purchase. A summary of further investigations recommended is listed as follows):-

- Provide access hatches to enable an inspection of the loft void.
- Obtain estimate for various repair and upgrading works.
- Asbestos investigation – roof slates.
- Drains test.
- Electrical test and report.
- Heating and hot water test.
- Gas safety test.
- Timber and damp report.
- Investigate excessive spring to kitchen floor.

7.2 SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISER

(The following points should be checked with your Legal Adviser, along with the usual Enquiries, to ensure retention of any rights or guarantees which will be reserved to you, and to clarify any liabilities you may have to others. In respect of leasehold properties, please also see the attached Leasehold Appendix):-

- Confirm freehold status with vacant possession upon completion together with no onerous restrictions or encumbrances with regard to title.
- Confirm maintenance responsibilities for boundaries and precise extent of the land to be conveyed, prior to proceeding further.
- Confirm that *** Road is a made-up and adopted highway.

SECTION 8

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

(These paragraphs are provided as a general and balanced summary of the report and each individual point has not been brought forward. You should therefore read the whole text of the report to ensure you are aware of all items that have been raised. You should also be wary of taking individual sections out of context in relation to the property as a whole, and should you have any doubts or concerns on any parts of the report or their relevance, please come back to us and we will be happy to explain in more detail the implications of the various points raised before your legal commitment to purchase.

Please bear in mind that if you plan to alter or extend the property, additional investigations may be required over and above the normal survey, in order to establish whether such works are feasible. Such works may also require Planning Permission and/or Building Regulation Consent.)

8.1 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In summary, the property is not considered to be a reasonable proposition for purchase due to the poor standard of its refurbishment. There are a number of inherent problems, particularly with regard to the loft conversion, that require immediate resolution for the health and safety of the future occupants.

The works that have been undertaken are generally superficial and to a crude standard. Should you wish to proceed further with the purchase of the property, we recommend that you negotiate a substantial discount to fully take into account the wants of repair and the upgrading and improvement works required to bring it in line with current safety standards.

In summary, if you are contemplating proceeding further with the purchase of the property, we recommend that you undertake all further investigations listed above and read the full text of the report together with reflecting on its contents and the results of the further investigations prior to reflecting on whether to proceed further with the purchase of the property.

Daniel Cooper BSc (Hons) MRICS DipSurv
For and on behalf of
REAL surveys

SECTION 9

ENCLOSURES

1. Conditions of Engagement. (These form an integral part of the report and their implications should be fully understood before any decision is made to proceed to a legal commitment to purchase).
2. Maintenance Notes.

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The Surveyor shall advise you by means of a written report as to his/her opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the subject property based on the inspection as set out below. The individual undertaking the inspection and providing advice will be a chartered surveyor.

The Surveyor will use all the care and skill to be reasonably expected of an appropriately experienced chartered surveyor.

The Report, with particular reference to large buildings, should be construed as a comment on the overall condition of the premises rather than an inventory of every single defect which might be detected if time and cost permitted, many of which will have no effect on value.

The Report is intended to assist the Client to make a reasoned and informed judgement on whether or not to proceed with the purchase. However, it is not a guarantee that all defects that are present or may occur in the future will be discovered due to the inherent limitations of inspection.

In accordance with the requirements of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, South East Surveys operates a complaints handling procedure. Details are available upon request.

CONTENT OF THE REPORT

The Surveyor will report upon:

- the main aspects of the Property including assessing the site/location, the design, structural framework, fabric and services;
- The grounds, boundaries and environmental aspects considered to affect the Property;
- Any requirements for further investigation arising from the inspection.

ASSUMPTIONS

Unless otherwise expressly agreed the Surveyor while preparing the Report will assume that:

- The Property (if for sale) is offered with vacant possession;
- The Property is connected to mains services with appropriate rights on a basis that is known and acceptable to the Client; and
- Access to the Property is as of right upon terms known and acceptable to the Client.

THE INSPECTION

General

The inspection is a general surface examination of those parts of the property which are accessible; in other words, *visible and readily available for examination from ground and floor levels and within the limits of a 3 metre (10 foot) ladder, without risk of causing damage to the property or injury to the Surveyor.* Inspection will be limited to those parts of the building which can be examined from within the site or adjacent public areas.

Due care is exercised throughout the inspection regarding safety, practicality and the constraints of being a visitor to the property (which may be occupied). So furniture, floor coverings and other contents or obstructions are not normally moved or lifted and no part is forced or laid open to make it accessible. The Surveyor will not inspect those areas which are covered, unexposed or not reasonably accessible. The Surveyor will therefore be unable to report that such parts of the structure are free from defects.

The Surveyor will consider his or her advice carefully but is not required to advise on any matter the significance of which in relation to the Property is not apparent at the time of inspection from the inspection itself.

The Surveyor will not undertake any structural or other calculations.

Damp readings will be taken where appropriate and possible using a moisture meter, without moving heavy furniture, wall hangings, fixtures, fittings or dry linings.

Roofs

The Surveyor will inspect the roof spaces if there are available hatches. The Surveyor will have a ladder of sufficient height to gain access to a roof hatch or to a single storey roof, not more than 3 metres (10 feet) above the floor or adjacent ground. It might therefore not be possible to inspect roofs above this level. Outer surfaces of the roofs and adjacent areas will be inspected by using binoculars.

Floors

The Surveyor will lift accessible sample loose boards and trap doors, if any, which are not covered by heavy furniture, ply or hardboard, fitted carpets or other fixed floor coverings.

Walls

The exposed elements of all walls and brickwork will be inspected externally and internally as far as practicable but it is not possible to carry out any inspection of the foundations. No inspection will be made of wall ties or cladding fixings.

Boundaries, Grounds &

The inspection will include a brief examination of boundaries, grounds and permanent outbuildings. Specialist leisure facilities, including

Outbuildings	swimming pools and tennis courts, are noted but not examined.
SERVICES	<p>The services are inspected (except, in the case of flats, for drainage, lifts and security systems), but the Surveyor will not test or assess the efficiency of electrical, gas, plumbing, heating or drainage installations, will not confirm compliance with current regulations, and will not check the internal condition of any chimney, boiler or other flue. (Lightweight drainage inspection covers will be lifted where they are accessible and it is practical to do so, unless the property is a flat.) However, if a problem is suspected in any of these areas, advice is given on what action should be taken.</p> <p>Where specialist tests or reports on building services are required, this work is an independent exercise to our Survey and responsibility for the tests and examinations must be with the specialists.</p>
FLATS AND MAISONNETTES	Unless otherwise agreed, the Surveyor will inspect only the subject flat and garage (if any), the related internal and external common parts and the structure of the building or particular block in which the subject flat is located. Other flats will not be inspected. Roof spaces are inspected only if there is a hatch within the flat. The Surveyor will state in the Report the limits of access and/or visibility in relation to the common parts and structure. The Surveyor will state whether he or she has seen a copy of the lease and, if not, the assumptions as to repairing obligations on which he or she is working.
ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER ISSUES	<p>Particular noise and disturbance affecting the property will only be noted if it is significant at the time of inspection or if specific investigation has been agreed between the Surveyor and the Client and confirmed in writing.</p> <p>The Surveyor will report on any obvious health and safety hazards to the extent that they are apparent from elements of the Property as part of the inspection.</p>
DELETERIOUS & HAZARDOUS MATERIALS	<p>Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no high alumina cement, concrete or calcium chloride additive or other deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property.</p> <p>Lead water supply pipes will be noted if visible and advice given but it must be appreciated that such materials are often only visible after opening up, which cannot be carried out without the risk of causing damage.</p> <p>The Surveyor will not carry out an asbestos inspection, and will not be acting as an asbestos inspector in completing an inspection of properties that may fall within the <i>Control of Asbestos in the Workplace Regulations 2002</i>. In the case of flats it will be assumed that there is a</p>

dutyholder, as defined in the Regulations, and that a Register of Asbestos and effective Management Plan is in place, which does not require any immediate expenditure, or pose a significant risk to health. No enquiry of the dutyholder will be made.

The Surveyor will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines which might give rise to an electro-magnetic field, either on or over the subject property or visible immediately adjacent to the property, but the Surveyor cannot assess any possible effects on health. For obvious reasons the Surveyor cannot report on any underground cables.

CONTAMINATION	The Surveyor will not comment upon the existence of contamination as this can only be established by an appropriate specialist. No enquiries or investigations will be made to establish whether there is any contamination to the land and it will be assumed that there is no contamination. The Surveyor will not be required to comment upon the possible existence of noxious substances, landfill or mineral extraction, or other forms of contamination. If, however, contamination is readily apparent or known from the Surveyor's local knowledge, then this will be reported.
CONSENTS, APPROVALS & SEARCHES	<p>The Surveyor will assume that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions, obligations, covenants, encumbrances or outgoings and that good Title can be shown. • That the property and its value are unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and Replies to the usual Enquiries or by Statutory Notice and that neither the property nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful. • That all Planning, Bylaws, Building Regulations and other Consents and Approvals required have been obtained for the current use. In cases of new buildings, alterations and extensions which require Statutory Consents or Approvals, the Surveyor will not verify whether such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or the Client's legal advisers. Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor unless otherwise previously agreed.
FEES & EXPENSES	The client will pay the Surveyor the agreed fee for the Report and any expressly agreed disbursements. VAT will be payable in addition.
CONFIDENTIALITY	The Report will be for the stated purpose and for the sole use of the named Client. It will be confidential to the Client and the Client's professional advisers. The Surveyor accepts responsibility to the Client alone that the Report will be prepared with the skill, care and diligence reasonably to be expected of a competent Chartered Surveyor but accepts no responsibility whatsoever to any parties other than the Client. Any such parties rely upon the report at their own risk. Neither the whole nor any part of the Report nor any reference to it may be included in any published document, circular or statement nor published in any way without the Surveyor's written approval of the form and context in which it may appear.

MAINTENANCE NOTES

The following notes are intended to help you inspect and maintain your property on a regular basis. The list is not intended to be fully comprehensive nor to include every building type. If in doubt please seek our further advice.

Roofs – Pitched

Roof slopes should be overhauled and any slates or tiles that are cracked or slipped replaced. Ridge and hip tiles should be firmly bedded in mortar.

Cement pointing at the roof edges must be repaired or loose and metal flashings regularly checked.

Within the roof space check for wood-boring beetle infestation, rot and decay, rodent activity and leaks. Provide insulation to the loft if this has not been done, to a depth of around 250mm. Do not insulate tight up to eaves or below the water tanks and make sure that the electrical cables are not covered.

Roofs – Flat

These have a limited lifespan. Make sure that any chippings on the roof surface remain evenly laid. If cracked or bubbled areas are noticed, these should be repaired and roof edges must be properly sealed.

Regularly monitor ceilings under flat roofs for moisture stains.

Parapet/Valley Guttering

Clean out valleys and flashings regularly removing weeds, leaves and other debris.

Rainwater Gutters and Downpipes

Gutters should run to the downpipe heads at even slopes and be free from splits and cracks. Clean out gutters regularly removing weeds, leaves and other debris and ensure that joints are watertight.

Chimneys

Chimneys should be kept in good order ensuring that pots and cowlings are securely cemented to the top of the stack. Mortar joints and rendering should be maintained in good condition and any cracking repaired at once.

External Joinery

Periodically inspect window frames, doors, fascia boards, etc. and repair any areas affected by wet rot. Regular painting and maintenance of glazing putty helps prevent rot occurring.

Cracked panes of glass are dangerous and should be replaced. Replace any broken sash cords and window catches. Regularly lubricate hinges and make sure all opening sections move freely but can be adequately secured.

Walls & Damp-Proof

Keep the brickwork and mortar joints in good order particularly to solid

Course	<p>walls where poor maintenance can lead to damp penetration. Any loose, hollow or cracked render should be hacked off and replaced.</p> <p>If you are concerned about any cracks or any bulging, distortion or other signs of movement, please seek our further advice.</p> <p>Ground levels should be maintained at least 150mm (6 inches) below the level of the damp-proof course and internal floor levels.</p> <p>Cut back wall creepers regularly as certain types destroy the mortar joints between the bricks and encourage dampness.</p>
Floors	<p>Take care not to overload timber floors. If any unevenness, distortion, cracking or dampness should become apparent, please seek our further advice.</p>
Internal Finishes	<p>Try to keep the ceilings, walls and woodwork in good condition. If any staining becomes apparent the cause should be investigated.</p> <p>Stained and cracked ceilings may indicate a need for replacement.</p>
Plumbing & Sanitary Ware	<p>Never restrict access to stopcocks.</p> <p>Repair any damaged or leaking plumbing pipework immediately and periodically clean out the traps to baths, sinks and wash basins. Attend to leaking taps. Regularly monitor condition and effectiveness of seals around bath and shower fittings.</p> <p>Clean out water tanks, maintain ball valves and overflow pipes and keep tanks and pipes properly insulated and covered.</p>
Electricity	<p>Do not make any alterations to the electrical wiring without qualified advice. Amateur repairs, adaptation and additions can be dangerous.</p> <p>If no recent electrical test has been obtained then commission a qualified electrician's report to ensure the safety of the installation.</p> <p>As a precaution, all wiring and fittings should be checked if:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The installation is over 10 years old and has not been inspected for more than 5 years. • Fuses or circuit breakers operate without apparent reason. • A shock is received from a socket or light fitting. • Any DIY wiring has been undertaken. • Any of the sockets or light fittings get hot in use or show signs of discoloration. • Any of the cabling is unsecured or if sockets or light fittings are unsecured.

Heating & Hot Water

Modern gas appliances are generally safe and reliable as long as they are correctly installed and regularly checked and maintained by experts. Ensure that your appliances are installed and regularly serviced by British Gas Services or a gas engineer registered with the Council for Registered Gas Installers (CORGI).

Gas appliances require an adequate supply of fresh air and an unobstructed chimney or flue to operate safely. Too little air can lead to dangerous quantities of carbon monoxide being emitted. This can also happen if the chimney or flue is obstructed. Air vents should never be blocked or obstructed.

Carbon monoxide is a gas which can be produced by appliances that have not been properly installed or maintained. You cannot see it, taste it or smell it but it is highly poisonous and can be deadly. An appliance burning fossil fuel such as gas, coal or oil can potentially produce carbon monoxide if it is not correctly installed, serviced or checked. A carbon monoxide detector, kite-marked and tested to BS7860, can provide a clear warning in the event of carbon monoxide build-up.

A faulty or dangerous appliance might not give any obvious indication that anything is wrong but there are several tell tale signs that can indicate an appliance is faulty and possibly at risk of emitting carbon monoxide. Signs of a possibly faulty appliance include:-

- Stains, soot or discolouring around gas fire, water heater or boiler.
- A yellow or orange rather than a blue flame.
- A strange smell when the appliance is on.

If any of these symptoms become apparent, particularly when in the home and using a heating and hot water appliance, stop using the appliance immediately and contact the BG Transco Gas Emergency Service who will attend free of charge and advise if follow up work is required.

Any open fireplaces in use should be swept on an annual basis.

Drainage

Periodically lift the inspection chamber covers and have the drains cleaned out if necessary. Keep inspection chamber covers airtight and in good condition. Monitor effectiveness of gullies and keep clear of leaves and other debris.

Keep trees and shrubs away from drainage runs as roots can break drainage pipes resulting in damage to foundations.

Drainage systems of properties not connected to the mains sewer need regular emptying and maintenance.

The Site

The growth of all trees and shrubs should be kept in check particularly where shrinkable clay sub-soils are known to be prevalent. Prevent climbing shrub growth particularly around eaves.

Boundary and retaining walls should be checked for stability, and spalled and weathered areas cut out and replaced.

APPENDIX FOR LEASEHOLD PROPERTIES

PLEASE NOTE: *This Appendix is an integral part of the Building Survey Report for all Leasehold Properties.*

Everybody planning to buy a leasehold property (other than in Scotland, most flats and maisonettes and a few other properties are leasehold) is advised to pay particular attention to the terms of the lease. The Surveyor is not responsible for advising on the true legal effect of the lease and you should obtain independent legal advice on the interpretation of the lease.

Your Legal Advisers, who are responsible for checking the lease for you, do not normally see the property. The surveyor may note any specific features which may have legal implications. Any such matters are reported in Section 7.2: Specific items for your Legal Advisers. You are advised to pass a copy of the Report immediately to your Legal Advisers.

The possible rights and implications of lease renewal and enfranchisement have not been considered.

You are advised to ask your Legal Advisers to supply the answers to the following questions:

- Are the other flats occupied by owners, long leaseholders or short leaseholders?
- Is there a management company correctly set up and/or a managing agent appointed to deal with the running and maintenance of the block containing the property?
- Identify the duty holder in respect of the *Control of Asbestos in the Workplace Regulations 2002*, confirm that there is a Register of Asbestos in place and an effective management plan in relation to it.
- Does an appropriate annual maintenance and replacement fund exist, with suitable reserves, to deal with general cleaning, maintenance and repair of the common parts, and repairs to the main structure, centralised heating installation, lifts, etc?
- What is the ground rent; what sum was last paid as a maintenance/service charge, and what period did it cover; and are the maintenance/service charge accounts satisfactory and up-to-date?
- Is there evidence of regular maintenance of services; and are there satisfactory current certificates for the testing/servicing/maintenance of the following common services (1) the lifts; (2) the fire escapes and fire alarms; (3) the security system(s); (4) any common water/heating system; and (5) other communal facilities?
- Are there any existing or foreseeable management problems or disputes, or any known outstanding repairs or programmed works, which would affect the level of the service/maintenance charge payable?
- Is the liability clearly set out – as between the leaseholders, the freeholder and any management company – for repairs to the property, to the

common parts and the main structure; is the liability shared equally between leaseholders; and is there suitable machinery for settling any disputes which may arise in this area?

- Is it the management company or each individual leaseholder who is responsible for the building insurance, and is there a block insurance policy?
- Are there any unusual restrictions on the occupation or the sale of the property?