



BUILDING SURVEY

Incorporating Russell Francis & Co established 1995



BUILDING SURVEY

PROPERTY ADDRESS	Address withheld xxxxxxx xxxxxxx Northamptonshire NN6 xxx
CLIENTS NAME	Client name withheld
CLIENTS ADDRESS	Client address with xxxxxxx xxxxxxx xxxxxxx
DATE OF INSPECTION	2 October 200
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Scope of Instructions

PLEASE READ THIS PAGE WITH EXTRA CARE

This Building Survey report is being prepared in accordance with the signed terms and conditions of engagement. It is pointed out that this is a general building survey report on the property and not a Schedule of Condition which would list every minor defect. It is intended to give a general opinion of the condition of the property and to enable you to plan for future maintenance.

Most clients find it useful to first read the surveyors overall assessment given in Section 4.0 to gain a general overview of the most significant matters. It is, however, essential that the whole report is read and considered in detail. Prior to exchange of contracts you should conclude all other further investigations we have recommended and have all repairs priced so that you are fully aware of any financial commitment you will be entering into when purchasing this property.

The report reflects the condition of the property on the date of inspection. You should be aware that defects can arise or deterioration can occur between the date of inspection and your taking occupation or possession.

Where reference is made to “right” and “left” within the report, these directions are given on the basis that the property is being viewed facing the front elevation.

A spare copy of the report is provided which should be passed to your legal advisers with a request that the points mentioned within the report, particularly those under Section 9.0 are researched as necessary together with the normal searches.

No informal enquiries have been made of any statutory authorities or investigations made to verify information obtained and I cannot confirm the existence of rights of way.

The report is for the private and confidential use of the client named above and should not be reproduced in whole or part or relied on by any third parties or for any use without the express written authority of Homesurv Ltd. This report is being prepared solely for the benefit of the named client. No liability is accepted to any third party.

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1.02

Date of Survey

2 October 2009

1.03

Limitations of Inspection

The inspection was undertaken during fine conditions which followed a period of dry weather.

At the time of the inspection the property was occupied, fully furnished with fitted floor coverings laid to most rooms.

There is no access to the roof over the single unit extension to the left hand side of the main building and therefore this area was not inspected.

Owing to the configuration of the roof structure and the significant depth of insulation the roof space was not entered but the inspection was carried out from the main hatch with the aid of a torch.

Owing to the configuration of the site with parts of the property being built on the rear boundary line only a restricted view could be obtained of some sections of the rear elevation.

1.04

Information relied upon in this Report

We have not relied upon any specific information.

2.0

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

2.01

Type and Age

It is always difficult to determine just how a property of this considerable age has evolved over the years. We believe that it was built around the mid 18th century as a two unit dwelling. The property was then extended by means of an additional single unit to the left hand side. In the early 20th century it was significantly remodelled with the addition of a front gable and rear two storey projecting bay. The projecting front gable was added to house the more up-to-date staircase. Some of the older windows are believed to date back to this period. The next major change took place approximately 5-10 years ago when the attached outbuildings were converted to a kitchen, wc and utility.

2.02

Accommodation

Ground floor – Entrance porch, study, living room, TV room, kitchen/diner, rear lobby, wc, utility.

First floor – Landing, three bedrooms, en-suite shower and wc, main bathroom and wc.

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2.03
Tenure and Occupation

We understand that the tenure of the property is freehold, (to be confirmed by your Legal Adviser). The vendor, who is in occupation, was present at the time of the inspection.

2.04
**Orientation
and Exposure**

The property faces North.

Typical low density village housing on all sides. It is not an exposed location.

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3.0 LOCATION

3.01 Location

The property is “end on” to the road and is situated in a typical village location comprising residential properties of varying age and style. There are limited facilities available within the village but a wider range of facilities are available in Northampton some three miles distance.

The Health Protection Agency has identified the area of Northamptonshire as one in which, in more than 1% of the dwellings, the levels of Radon gas entering the property is such that remedial action is recommended. It is not possible in the course of an inspection/survey to determine whether Radon gas is present in any given building as the gas is colourless and odourless. Tests can be carried out to assess the level of Radon gas in a building. Test instruments and results are available by post from the Health Protection Agency, 7th Floor, Holborn Gate, 330 High Holborn, London, WC1V 7PP, Tel. 020 7759 2700, Fax. 020 7759 2733, Email webteam@hpa.org.uk and other approved laboratories. The minimum testing period is three months. The Health Protection Agency strongly advises against shorter term testing instruments as they can give misleading results. If tests have not been carried out they are recommended. Where Radon is discovered, it has been the experience of the Health Protection Agency that it is not expensive in proportion to the value of the property to affect the recommended remedial measures.

Although, the Surveyor is unaware of this area having a recent history of flooding you are strongly advised to visit the Environment Agency web site www.environment-agency.gov.uk which will provide detailed information on this aspect. If your enquiries reveal that the area has in fact been affected by flooding you are advised to refer this information to the Surveyor as this may affect the advice given in his/her report. In addition, properties affected by flooding may be subject to higher insurance premiums or experience difficulty in arranging buildings insurance.

3.02 The Site and Surrounding Area

The property occupies an irregular shaped plot which has a gradual rise from the right to the left hand side. Part of the rear wall is sited on the boundary line and for the remainder the rear boundary is approximately 1.0 metres away allowing access for maintenance etc. The gardens are located to the front of the property and also to the left hand side.

The surrounding area comprises predominantly housing which is in keeping with the locality.

3.03 Local Factors

No adverse local factors that we are aware of. The Pitsford reservoir nature reserve is within close proximity.

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4.0 SURVEYOR'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT

4.01 Surveyor's Overall Opinion

Building techniques, materials and the design of properties of this age naturally fall below present day standards. Consequently, defects can arise such as dampness and movements to elements of the building which did not raise concern in previous centuries but now are often viewed with some disquiet. The property has survived the passage of time remarkably well and the items referred to within the report are all 'part and parcel' of old property. Providing occupiers have an appreciation of these limitations then their enjoyment of the property should not be adversely affected.

We have recorded within section 5.6 below widespread movements to the property which take on varying forms but we have concluded that the movements are fairly typical of properties of this age and construction and are not related to any form of current ground related problems but are generally historic movements. We have identified some relatively minor/localised repair and with a structure of this age and construction we can not rule out the possibility of similar localised repairs occurring during your period of ownership. You may also experience seasonal movements cause by variations in the moisture content of the sub-soils, please refer to section 5.21 below.

The property has been modernised and improved over the years and only recently some remedial damp proofing and timber treatment works have been carried out. However, in our view, this has not be sufficiently comprehensive and we have identified further works have been identified.

Again, not untypical of a property of this age, some components are ageing and in this regard we identified some sections of the rainwater fittings and most windows are in need of replacement.

However, the property is considered to be a reasonable proposition for purchase at the agreed price of £370,000, provided you are prepared to accept the cost and inconvenience of dealing with the various repair/improvement works identified below. On the assumption that the necessary works are carried out to a satisfactory standard, there is no reason why there should be any difficulty on resale assuming that normal market condition.

4.02 Summary of Repairs

4.02.01

Repairs of a significant nature requiring prompt attention (short term)

- i) Replace defect rainwater fitting to the rear elevation, please refer to section 5.05 below.

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4.02.02 Maintenance items and medium term repairs

- ii) Localised repair to stonework and possible replacement of lintel to gable wall, please refer to section 5.06 below.
- iii) Remedial damp proofing and timber treatments, please refer to section 5.19 and 5.20 below.
- i) Replacement of mortar fillets and other maintenance items referred to within section 5.02 below.
- ii) Extensive window repairs/replacement, please refer to section 5.09 below.
- iii) Maintenance to upper levels of rear kitchen /utility wall.
- iv) General maintenance to entrance porch roof.
- v) Maintenance/cleaning of front elevation gutters.

4.02.03 Other considerations

- i) Consider bricking up former window openings to rear of kitchen/utility wall, please refer to section 5.06 below.

4.03 Further Investigations

- i) Further investigation of the study floor is required to ascertain its condition, please refer to section 5.14 below.

5.0 CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

5.01 The Constructional Principles

The main roof is of conventional timber framed construction and transfers the roof loads onto the main walls and loadbearing partition walls.

The main external loadbearing walls consist of 500 mm solid stonework. Some internal walls are original external walls and similarly consist of 500 mm solid stonework and loadbearing partition walls are of 110 mm masonry construction.

The study has a suspended timber floor and all other ground floors are of solid construction. The first floors are of timber construction.

The windows are of varying age and style consisting of timber with single glazing.

The rainwater fittings to the front elevation are of modern PVC materials where as those to the rear are of asbestos cement.

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5.02 Main Roofs

5.02.01 Structure

The main roof structure is not original possibly circa late 19th century, early 20th century. It consists of rafters supported mid span by a single purlin to each roof slope which runs the full length of the main roof structure and in turn receives its support from the gable walls and mid span support from extended partition walls. It is possible that triangulation of the roof structure is created by the rafter feet being fixed to the ceiling joists but owing to the significant depth of insulation material we were unable to confirm this.

It is apparent that this roof structure has been strengthened at some time by the addition of a second purlin to the rear roof slope which receives support from a number of timber struts which in turn bear down onto the partition walls and a timber binder. A joint to the front purlin has also been strengthened by a steel plate. We saw no indications of any serious distortion or deformation of the main structural elements and we formed the view that the main roof structure is providing adequate support for the roof covering. Not untypical of a roof of this age, evidence of attack by wood boring beetle was noted to the roof timbers, please refer to section 5.20 below.

5.02.02 Coverings

It is apparent that the main roof has had a major overhaul recently with either the original slates or re-claimed slates being laid on breathable roofing felt. The use of re-claimed slates as apposed to a new covering will of course increase the requirement of on going maintenance, however, this type of covering is appropriate for a building of this age and character. This overhauled roof is in satisfactory condition and the combination of resecured slates and roofing felt should provide an effective barrier against the elements for some years to come.

At the point where the roofs over the projecting front gable and the rear projecting bay meet the main roof the roof valleys are lined with lead. The sides of the rear projecting bay are also clad with lead. This leadwork is well formed and in satisfactory condition.

The mortar pointing to the roof verges and ridge is also in good condition.

5.02.03 Flashings

The weather detailing around the base of the chimney stacks is formed by lead flashings. These flashings have been reasonably well formed and are free from significant defect.

5.03 Other Roofs

The front entrance porch has a shallow pitched roof with slate covering. It is possible that the pitched of this roof is too shallow for its covering. However, we saw no indications of any problems as a consequence of

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5.03.01 Structure

this. There are a small number of broken and chipped slates to this roof which require replacing and the mortar verges are in need of repointing. There is no access to the roof of the single unit extension to the left hand side of the main building. We would anticipate that this roof is of similar structure to the main roof. Externally, we saw nothing to suspect significant defect and the roof slopes are reasonably true which would suggest that the structure is providing adequate support.

There is no accessible roof space to the converted outbuildings. The underside of the roof structure forms the ceiling to the kitchen. The roof structure is likely to consist of timber rafters supported by a single purlin and the outline of a purlin which is encased in plasterwork can be seen. Again, we saw no indications to suspect significant defect and we form the view that this roof structure is providing adequate support for the covering.

5.03.02 Coverings

The roof to the single unit extension is also of pitched construction with slate covering. This section of the roof was not overhauled at the same time as the main roof. As mentioned above, internal access of the roof space was not available and therefore we are unable to confirm if this roof is lined. Clearly, when the main roof was overhauled a decision was taken by the present owners not to overhaul this section of the roof presumably it was assessed as not being essential. The roof slopes to this part of the building are reasonably true and the slate covering is generally in satisfactory condition.

The kitchen (former outbuilding) has a mono-pitched roof with slate covering. The roof slopes undulate to a degree which is indicative of slight bending of the supporting timbers but not unusual in a property of this age. The slate covering is considered to be in satisfactory condition.

The front entrance porch has a shallow pitched roof with slate covering. It is possible that the pitched of this roof is too shallow for its covering. However, we saw no indications of any problems as a consequence of this. There are a small number of broken and chipped slates to this roof which require replacing and the mortar verges are in need of repointing.

5.03.03 Flashings

The left hand end of the roof is terminated with a parapet wall which has recently been provided with a new coping. This parapet has received recent reconstructive works and is in satisfactory condition. At the point where the roof abuts the gable of the main building and the parapet wall the weather detailing is formed by mortar/slate fillets. These have a tendency to crack and deteriorate over a relatively short time scale, thereby, allowing water to penetrate the building at this junction. However, the use of mortar fillets is quite common with stone built properties. The mortar/slate fillets to the right hand side is cracked and deteriorated and due for replacement.

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5.04 Chimneys

There are three stone built chimney stacks. The right hand side chimney stack contains a single flue which serves the fireplace within the study. The central stack also contains a single flue which serves the fireplace within the living room. The left hand side chimney stack contains a single flue which has been sealed off and is now obsolete.

We believe the chimney stacks have been reconstructed in recent years and the stonework and mortar pointing is in satisfactory condition. No instability of the chimney stacks was observed.

The original outbuilding is believed to have contained a corner chimney stack which served an old boiler. The upper levels of this chimney stack have been removed and the area slated over. The chimney breast remains within the corner of the kitchen.

5.05 Rainwater Fittings

Stormwater from the roof tops is collected into gutters at eaves level which in turn disperse water into downpipes located to each elevation. These in turn disperse stormwater into the underground drainage system.

It is apparent that the system to the front of the house has been replaced in recent years and consists of modern PVC materials. We saw no defects of a significant nature to this part of the system but some sections of the gutters are blocked with leaves and maintenance in the form of cleaning out all gutters to ensure that the system is fully watertight and free flowing is required.

The system to the rear elevation is much older and consists of both asbestos cement and cast iron components. This system lacks maintenance and is defective. The entire system to the rear elevation is in need of replacement.

Not untypical of a property of this age, a rear downpipe disperses stormwater onto the ground. It would be advisable to ensure that there is an appropriate channel to direct the water away from the base of the building and into a stormwater system soakaway or into the roadway.

For comments in respect of asbestos containing materials please see 8.04 below.

5.06 External Walls

The main walls are of 500mm and 400mm solid stone. Solid stone walls of this type usually consist of an outer and inner leaf of stonework. As the inner and outer leaves of the building are built up the cavity between them is filled with smaller stones or rubble. The inner and

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outer leaves are usually tied by laying cross bonding stones at frequent intervals.

Structural movement is often encountered in properties of this age and construction and can be in varying forms.

Movement in buildings will naturally occur and is acceptable, to a certain degree. The building structure is usually rigid although it is built over ground which is inherently flexible. As soon as the weight of the building is imposed upon the ground, there is likely to be some slight movement, which is usually referred to as *initial settlement*. Such movement can often continue for many years and is not usually of any particular concern.

Other forms of movement occur due to seasonal changes and even daily temperatures changes. The latter is usually referred to as *thermal movement* and, again is not of particular concern, although some allowance for such is required in the design of the structure.

Differential movement can also occur between two parts of a structure. For instance, at the junction between a lightweight stud wall and solid brick wall; or at the junction between the original building and a later extension. Such differential movement can occur due to differing rates of thermal expansion or contraction, or differing degrees of initial settlement.

Movement in a building only becomes a concern when it becomes progressive. Hairline cracks are usually indications of acceptable movement, but they can also be first signs of more damaging problems. *Progressive movements* in a structure will eventually result in wider cracks and possible loss of support to beams and other elements. This can eventually result in collapse.

Progressive movement can occur for many differing reasons; the most common being due to excessive ground movements or failure of part of the structure.

We noted varying forms of structural movement to most of the elevations. For instance, to the front elevation we noted fracturing to some of the window sills which are also out of true, we also noted cracking and outward movement of the stonework over the study window and deflection of the timber lintel over the TV room window. To the right hand side gable we noted that one of the lintels is out of true and there is a localised area of cracking/displacement of stonework over the window which may be related to decay of the lintel causing compression resulting in the displacement of the stonework.

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To the rear elevation we noted bulging of stonework to the right hand side with an associated 2mm crack along with some cracking to the window sills.

Localised areas of bulging stonework are usually caused by compaction of the internal core of the stone wall. The internal core usually comprises rubble, soil etc and as it compacts over the years (compaction can be caused by road vibration etc) the outer leaf of stonework can be forced outwards. In some instances this process can result in the actual failure of the outer leaf of stonework necessitating localised rebuilding/repair. It is not an uncommon problem with rubble filled walls but we saw no signs that such failure is imminent.

To the right hand side gable we have identified the possible decay of a lintel which has resulted in a small area of displaced stonework. This area requires repair. It would be advisable to check the condition of the lintel and replace it if necessary and reinstate the stonework. From our experience timber lintels in buildings of this age usually comprise two or three timber sections and it is likely that only the front section may have decayed. However, this will not be positively established until the area is investigated further. Decay/deterioration was also noted to the timber lintels over the obsolete windows to the rear kitchen wall. These either require treatment or the obsolete openings require bricking up as referred to below.

All other movements described above are considered to be typical of properties of this age and construction and appear to be longstanding and non-progressive and the likelihood of further significant movement seems remote.

There are two former window openings to the rear wall of the kitchen. These have been covered over internally and are not visible but externally the window/frames remain in position. Neglect to maintenance is evident and decay/deterioration is evident to the joinery. Consideration should be given to bricking up these former openings as they are no longer required. There is also some maintenance required in the form of repointing of the brickwork to the upper levels of this part of the rear elevation.

As already referred to above, some of the window openings are formed by timber lintels. These have a tendency to deflect causing distortion to the openings. In addition, they can be prone to decay/deterioration from the elements. We have already identified the possibility of decay to at least one of the lintels. Other window

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openings are formed by concrete lintels which were added around the early part of the 20th century. No defects of a significant nature were observed to these later lintels.

The stone elevations consist of Northampton ironstone. This is a soft sand stone which is susceptible to weathering/erosion. However, on the whole, the stonework is in satisfactory condition for a property of its age and only relatively small localised areas were identified as requiring some general maintenance in the form of repointing of mortar joints. One such area was noted to be to the lower levels of the front elevation.

The lower levels of the right hand side gable have been provided with a cement render. Some general deterioration is evident to the rendering but on the whole it is considered to be in acceptable condition. Rendering is also evident to the front elevation of the single story section of the building. Again, this rendering is in acceptable condition with no signs of disrepair.

5.07 Damp Proof Courses

A property of this age would not have been constructed with a damp proof course. However, there are indications that remedial damp proofing works to the lower levels of the main walls have been undertaken, please see below.

Typically with a property of this age the ground/path levels are high in relation to internal floor level. Unless adequate “tanking” (vertical damp proofing) has been incorporated, internal dampness is likely to occur.

5.08 Floor Ventilation

There is a timber floor to the study (right hand side room). It is of paramount importance that the area beneath a timber floor is well ventilated. The reasons for this is that the structural timbers are constructed into the main walls which we have identified are without a damp proof course and consequently will be damp. Inevitably timber decay will occur and the presence of ventilation will reduce the risk of decay occurring. It is apparent that ventilation has been provided to this floor in relatively recent years with modern air bricks being inserted around the base of the main walls. However, we have identified timber decay to the floor, please refer to section 5.1 below.

5.09 External Joinery

The front door to the entrance porch consists of a modern softwood stable type door with hardwood threshold. No defects of a significant nature were observed but it is need of some redecoration/retreatment. Similarly the external door to the side of the property (back door) is also of modern joinery and of the stable door type formation. This again requires redecoration/retreatment to the lower levels of the door and door frame. The inner front door consists of a half glazed stable type door which is of

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advanced age. However, no defects of a significant nature were observed.

The windows are of varying age and style. Some are circa early 20th century consisting of the timber casement type and single glazed and some are circa late 20th century and again consist of the casement type window and single glazed. Almost without exception, the windows are affected by wet rot decay/deterioration around sill level along with some patch repairs being evident. We have formed the view that most of the windows are beyond economic repair and you should consider embarking on programme of window replacement over a period of say the next five years. It will be necessary to choose a window which is appropriate to the character of the building and will also need to comply with the FENSA requirements. Consequently this will be an expensive process and you may wish to obtain estimates for such work prior to your commitment to purchase.

5.10 External Decoration

External decorations have been maintained to a reasonable standard although redecoration is about to fall due. Any redecoration should be undertaken in conjunction with the window replacement/repair programme.

5.11 Roof Spaces

5.11.01 Main Roof Space

The only accessible roof space area is that over the main building. Owing to the configuration of roof structure and the significant depth of insulation the roof space was not entered but was inspected from the top of a ladder with the aid of a torch.

The overhauled slate roof covering has been underdrawn with a breathable and untearable roofing felt. This work has been undertaken recently and the underfelt is in good condition.

The insulation to this section of the building has been recently increased to a depth of approximately 200mm.

5.11.02 Other Roof Spaces

There is no accessible roof space to the single unit extension to the left hand side of the main building nor is there any to the roof space area over the converted outbuildings. In the case of the converted outbuildings we understand that this work was undertaken in the region of five to ten years ago and therefore it is likely that the roof covering is underdrawn with felting and the roof is insulated to the regulations which existed at the time.

5.12 Ceilings

All ceilings have been replaced in recent years and consist of modern plasterboard materials. Some of the ceilings were noted to be a little out of true but this is only to be expected with a property of this age and construction. We noted damp staining to the study ceiling in the vicinity of the first floor en-suite and also damp staining to the ceiling in the TV room in the vicinity of the bathroom. Both areas were found to be dry and the damp staining is likely to be attributable to past overspillage from the

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sanitary fittings directly above.

We also noted slight cracking to some ceilings which occurs along the plasterboard joints. This is attributable to normal thermal movement and not to any form of significant defect. Making good is required during the normal redecoration process.

5.13 Internal Walls and Partitions

The original two unit layout still remains to the cottage and each of the original units is divided by a masonry partition wall. The original gable wall to the two unit cottage now acts as a dividing wall between the central living room and the left hand side TV room. The gable wall to the single unit extension now divides the TV room from the single storey section of the building. These masonry walls continue upwards and divide the first floor accommodation in a similar way. They also provide support to the roof structure. We are the view that much of the plasterwork has been renewed over the years although we did identify some areas of hollow plaster which is indicative of the plasterwork having become detached, in places, from the supporting structure. No immediate action is considered to be warranted. We also noted imperfections to some plasterwork surfaces some of which are attributable to workmanship. However, imperfect surfaces to a property of this age are all part and parcel of its character.

All surfaces, where visible and accessible, were inspected for indications of cracking, distortion and bulging. In addition, wall surfaces were tapped at appropriate intervals to detect any significant loss of adhesion of materials to the wall structures.

We saw no evidence of any significant distortion/deformation or serious ongoing structural movement.

5.14 Floors

Most floors are covered with carpeting and this restricted our inspection to a degree. However, where possible the carpeting was eased back to some rooms to establish the construction and also gauge an overall view of the condition.

The entrance porch is of a relatively recent construction and therefore the floor is likely to consist of solid concrete. It has a modern ceramic tile finish. No defects of a significant nature were observed.

The study floor is of timber construction. We have concerns regarding timber floors in old buildings as the structural timbers are in variable built into damp walls and invariably the sub-floor area lacks ventilation. Such conditions are conducive to timber decay. Although, it is apparent that ventilation has been provided in recent years to the sub-floor area, evidence by air bricks to each elevation, we found that the floor timbers have decayed to the front right hand side corner. Further investigation which will necessitate the lifting of some floorboards will be necessary to determine the extent of this decay. Evidence of attack by wood boring beetle was also noted to the floor boards. Some renewal of the timbers is likely to be necessary and this should be done with timbers treated with

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preservative to prevent further decay.

As far as we could tell the living room and TV room floors are of solid construction with quarry type tile to the surface where seen. We are unable to ascertain the condition of these tiles but the floors were found to be generally level. We do not believe these are the original floors and are likely to date back to the early 20th century alterations. Floors of this age and type are unlikely to incorporate a damp proof membrane and therefore are usually damp. Although a degree of dampness was recorded this is not considered to be excessive and provided these floors are not covered with an impervious floor covering the dampness will be allowed to evaporate and renewal is unlikely to be warranted.

The floors to the larder, kitchen, utility and WC are also of solid construction and are likely to have been renewed at the time this area was converted/renovated. These floors have a modern stone tile to the surface and were found to be in good condition.

The first floors are of timber construction and on the whole they were found to be reasonably level. Again, the construction of these floors is likely to date back to the early 20th century. The supporting structural beams to these floors, which are visible within the ground floor rooms, are encased in timber/plasterwork. However, we saw no signs of any distortion or deformation to these structural members. We did detect a degree of spring to the floors but that is fairly typical of a property of this age and construction. No action is considered to be warranted.

5.15 Fireplaces and Chimney Breasts

As identified earlier within the report there are three chimney stacks each containing a single flue which serves the three principal rooms. There is a recessed fireplace within the study which contains a free standing iron grate. The timber lintel which supports the masonry above the fireplace would be very close to a naked flame should the fire be used. We would question the suitability of this fireplace for present day usage and if it is your intention to use it then we would recommend you obtain the advice of heating engineer.

The recessed fireplace to the living room is fitted with a modern wood burning stove. We saw no issues in relation to this arrangement. The fireplace to the TV room has been sealed up and the flue is now obsolete.

There was a chimney and boiler to the corner of the kitchen (originally an outbuilding) but the chimney stack and the boiler have been removed although the chimney breast remains.

There would have originally been fireplaces to the first floor rooms but these have been removed.

5.16 Internal Joinery

Internally joinery such as skirting and architraves are of varying age but all are relatively modern. On the whole, the internal joinery is in satisfactory condition.

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The internal doors have been replaced in recent years and consist of a braced cottage style door. These replacement doors are in good condition.

The staircase which we believe to be circa early 20th century was found to be reasonably sound. However, it does not conform to current Building Regulations as the risers are of differing heights and therefore care needs to be taken when ascending and descending. The handrail and balustrade were found to be sound.

Kitchen fittings are minimalistic with only three base units each having granite worktops. The arrangement is appropriate for a property of this age and style and the units are in satisfactory condition.

5.17 Internal Decorations

Paint finishes to walls and ceilings consist of emulsion paint. Finishes to internal joinery such as skirting and architraves, doors etc are finished with an oil based paint. Overall, the decorations are considered to be in satisfactory condition.

5.18 Basements and Cellars

There are none.

5.19 Dampness

Dampness in buildings can occur in a number of ways. The most common form of dampness is known as *rising dampness*. This occurs when moisture from the earth is taken up through the bricks and other materials by capillary action into the wall above ground level. This dampness will continue to pass through any porous material until it reaches a barrier (damp proof course) preventing its further progression or it reaches a point where an equal amount of moisture evaporates to the atmosphere.

Impervious barriers or damp proof courses as they are known became commonly used in late 19th century properties. Such damp proof courses were often of either slate or lead, originally but were followed by materials such as asbestos, asphalt, bitumen and nowadays plastic. It has been identified in section 3.5.07 above that this property would not have been built with a damp proof course.

Dampness can also occur in buildings due to penetration through external coverings. This is referred to as *penetrating dampness*. An example of this is the leaking roof covering or direct penetration through the walling material or flashings around chimney stacks etc. It is quite common, in solid wall structures used in pre 1900 construction.

The modern day use of a building also tends to introduce dampness/moisture in the form of *condensation*. For instance steam arising from bathing, showering and boiling water collects within the building and condenses on cold surfaces such as pains of glass and in some cases wall surfaces. Houses used to be well ventilated with several open fireplaces, well ventilated floors and draughty ill-fitting windows. Houses today are very much sealed up with closed/sealed heating

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appliances, draught proofed windows and doors etc. Consequently moisture laden air can not escape and condenses on cold surfaces. *Condensation* is a modern day problem which can be reduced by improvements to insulation, maintaining constant even temperatures with an efficient heating system and controlling ventilation. The best means of controlling ventilation is to fit extractor fans which are automatically activated within areas such as kitchens, bathrooms and cloakrooms etc. Frequent air changes, achieved by regularly opening windows is also recommended.

5.19.01 Rising Damp

It is extremely difficult to totally eradicate dampness in a building of this age and construction. Invariably, damp proofing is carried out on a piecemeal basis over the years and owing to the complexities of a building of this age and construction, such as rubble filled walls high external ground/path levels and differing floor levels/construction, it is extremely difficult to achieve a complete and continuous impervious barrier against dampness retrospectively.

Moisture readings were taken with a Protimeter electronic moisture meter where possible and where considered appropriate.

We understand from the present owner that relatively recent extensive damp proofing works have been carried out and this involved replastering of some walls to a height on 1.0 metre. However, having carried out extensive metering with a moisture meter we have concluded that in some areas the remedial damp proofing works have not been entirely effective and there are also areas which were not treated. It may be possible to recall the damp proofing firm to remedy the situation under the terms of the guarantee although, in our experience this is rarely successful. At the same time, it may be possible to ascertain from them why certain areas were not attended to. I think you should obtain the appropriate documentation along with a plan defining the areas which have been treated and the guarantees relating to these areas.

It is recommended that a report is obtained from a PCA (Property Care Association) damp-proofing specialist firm in respect of the whole property to identify the full extent of the problems, recommend any remedial measures necessary and advise on the likely cost involved.

5.19.02 Penetrating Damp

We noted dampness and deterioration of the plaster above the back door (left hand side elevation) which is a result of penetrating dampness above the lintel. At this point, there is a parapet wall which has a concrete coping. These formations are prone to dampness and it is apparent that the parapet wall has been reconstructed recently and provided with a new coping. The dampness that we saw may be residual and it is possible that the new arrangement is working effectively but we were unable to positively establish this. Saturated areas of masonry do take quite some

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time to dry out. Repairs will be necessary to the internal plasterwork once you are satisfied that the repair is effective.

We also noted that dampness to the right hand side of the kitchen window where blown/flaking paintwork is evident. Our initial thoughts centred around leaking guttering at this point but on inspection of the guttering that did not appear to be the case unless it has been repaired recently. This area needs to be monitored. It may be necessary to replaster the area with a moisture resistant plaster.

5.19.03 Condensation

We noted evidence of condensation occurring with the very restricted area of the en-suite shower. Condensation can be reduced by maintaining constant even temperatures and good levels of ventilation.

5.20 Timber Defects

Timber is prone to attack by both fungal decay (wet and dry rot) and wood boring beetle. For fungal decay to occur the presence of moisture is necessary. Infestations by wood boring beetle is also common in old buildings, the most common of which is the “common furniture beetle” referred to more commonly as woodworm but there are other types for example, the “death watch beetle”.

5.20.01 Fungal Decay

We have identified the presence of timber decay to the corner of the floor within the study. The extent of this decay needs to be determined and remedial measures carried out.

5.20.02 Wood Boring Beetle

We also identified evidence of attack by wood boring beetle within this floor and also to the roof timbers. The owner advised us that the timbers to the main roof have been treated recently against such outbreaks. Again, we are unsure as to why this area was treated in isolation. It would be advisable to request documentary confirmation along with an appropriate guarantee.

It is recommended that a report is obtained from a PCA (Property Care Association) timber specialist firm in respect of the whole property to identify the full extent of the problems, recommend any remedial measures necessary and advise on the likely cost involved.

5.21 Structural Movement

Properties of this age are built on shallow foundations which are more responsive to volumetric changes in the subsoil which can be caused by changes in the moisture content. It follows therefore that variations in moisture content can cause minor movements in old property which are acceptable and no long-term damage is caused. More serious conditions such as prolonged drought can cause more serious problems such as subsidence. Similarly leaking drains are a

Use on Pre
1910
properties
when
considered
appropriate.

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cause of structural movement in properties.

It follows therefore that with old properties there is a greater risk of such problems occurring and therefore it is important to reduce these risks by ensuring that the drains are well maintained and free flowing and that there are no trees growing within close proximity of the building or drains.

There is a mature horse chestnut tree growing within relatively close proximity to the property, please see below.

We have identified various form of structural movement to the property referred to within section 5.06 above. Such movements are not untypical of properties of this considerable age and construction and most appear to be longstanding and non progressive and the likelihood of further significant movement seems remote. The movements described relate mostly to design deficiencies and early forms of settlement rather than to any current ground problems. However, we have identified some localised repair of stonework to the gables.

5.21.01 Trees

There is a mature horse chestnut on the opposite side of the road which is some 20-25 metres in height positioned 10 metres away from the gable wall of the property. Whilst no associated damage was noted, you should be aware that trees can cause problems to structures and services located on shrinkable sub-soils. We would anticipate that the road between the house and the tree has acted as a root barrier and provided a degree of protection. The tree and house have existed in equilibrium for many years.

PLEASE READ THESE NOTES

Movement, timber defects and dampness are, in their various forms, are the three greatest potential threats to the structure of a building. Where evidence is found of any of these conditions, advice is given on what action should be taken. (Where a problem is judged to be serious, it might prove necessary for a separate, detailed examination to be undertaken – perhaps by specialists. For example, the foundations might have to be laid open to analyse the cause of some structural movement, or the full extent of timber rot might require further investigation, including the lifting of floorboards etc.)

6.0 SERVICES

The efficiency, compliance with regulations and adequacy of design of services can only be assessed by tests conducted by suitably qualified specialists. Although, surveyors are not specialists in these particular areas, an informed opinion can be given on the basis of the accessible evidence. Where possible, drainage inspection chambers are examined but drains are not tested during the inspection. However, in all cases advice is given if there is any cause to suspect a problem.

The property is connected to mains services for water, electricity, drainage and gas. No tests were undertaken, a visual inspection only was carried

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out.

6.01 Electrics

The meter and consumer units are located in the understairs cupboard.

The electrical installation has been upgraded over the years and the last major change was carried out when the outbuildings were converted to a kitchen.

We should point out at this stage that surveyors are not specialists in this particular field, however, our visual inspection revealed nothing that we would regard as being a significant defect or serious deficiency. But, we would stress that you can only be certain that there are no problems by having the system tested by a qualified electrician using the appropriate testing equipment. The Regulating authority recommends that electrical installations are tested at least every five years and on change of ownership. It follows therefore that consideration should be given to arranging for a test and visual examination to be undertaken by an "authorised competent person" for example a member of the NIC/EIC.

The en-suite is fitted with ceiling down lights. These units can give off a significant amount of heat and require air space around them. Some units can now be purchased with built in protection but older units will not incorporate such provision. A risk of overheating can occur particularly in a roof space where the lighting unit has become covered with insulation material. There are such light units in the en-suite. Consideration should be given to consulting an "authorised competent person" for example a member of the NIC/EIC.

6.02 Gas

The meter is located in the TV room. The visual inspection revealed no significant defects or deficiencies.

6.03 Water Supply and Plumbing

The stop tap is located within the TV room. From the limited view of the supply pipe we believe that it may be of cast iron which would suggest it is of advanced age. If this is the case then it is likely to require replacement within the not to distant future. Beyond the stop tap the plumbing installation is relatively modern with visible pipework being in copper. The visual inspection revealed no significant defects or deficiencies.

Sanitary fittings are of an appropriate standard showing signs of normal wear and tear. Black discolouration to the tiled shower surround is attributable to mould growth caused by condensation. This would suggest there is inadequate air circulation/ventilation within the en-suite. This is resulting in high humidity and condensation. An improvement in the ventilation is recommended.

We have identified earlier within the report water staining to the ceiling directly below sanitary fittings. This is likely to be attributable to inadequate shower curtain/screening etc and also defective/ inadequate

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6.04 Space Heating and Hot Water

seals around sanitary fittings. Such problems can lead to more serious defects and it would be advisable to ensure that shower screen/curtains are effective and seals watertight at all times.

A gas combination boiler in the third bedroom provides domestic hot water on demand and heats a system of panel radiators located in most main rooms.

The visual inspection revealed no significant defects or deficiencies with the installation. Because of the specialist nature of gas appliances and heating installations if you want to be sure that there are no problems then you should arrange a test by a Registered Gas Safe engineer.

Regular maintenance of gas appliances/heating installations is important as well as being of some assurance to you that the system complies with current Regulations. Failure to maintain gas appliances/heating installations can put your health and safety at risk. A fully documented servicing history undertaken by a Registered Gas Safe engineer should be requested and will confirm that the system was working at the time of the last service. If you fail to obtain such confirmation then you are taking a risk that the system may not be working effectively and there may be some areas of non-compliance. Surveyors do not have the specialist knowledge to make this assessment and in the absence of confirmation that annual servicing has been carried out it would be advisable to have the system checked/tested by a Registered Gas Safe engineer prior to commitment to purchase.

6.05 Drains

6.05.01 Above Ground Drainage

Soil waste and waste water from the bathroom are dispersed into a plastic soil vent pipe located to the front of the property. Similarly, soil waste and waste water from the en-suite also disperse into a plastic soil vent pipe located to the right hand side of the front elevation. These soil vent pipes discharge into the underground drainage system which runs to the front of the house and is presumably shared with the new detached house located to the left hand side.

Stormwater from the roof tops is collected in gutters at eaves level which is turn disperse stormwater into downpipes located to the front and rear elevations. It is quite usual for a property of this age to have a combined stormwater and foul system. It is also common in properties of this age for stormwater to be discharged directly onto the ground.

6.05.02 Below Ground Drainage

The two soil vent pipes discharge into the underground drainage system located to the front of the building. The only access point identified is a chamber located within the block paved driveway. This is built into the block paving and specialised lifting equipment is required to remove the

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7.0 OUTBUILDINGS, GROUNDS AND BOUNDARIES

7.01 Boundary Walls and Fences

cover. The cover was therefore not lifted during our inspection and therefore we are unable to comment any further on the drainage system except to say that it is likely to be shared with the neighbouring property and from this chamber it is likely to make connection with the mains sewer within Manor Road.

The front boundary is formed by a 2.0 metre high dry stone wall which is considered to be free from significant defect. The right hand side boundary is formed by a 1.0 metre high stone wall some sections of which are quite old and some are of quite recent construction. Again, this boundary walling was found to be in generally satisfactory condition. The rear boundary is formed partly by a 2.5 metre high stone wall with concrete coping. Again, no defects of a significant nature were observed to this wall. The remainder of the rear boundary is formed by a 1.0 metre high stone ground retaining wall. This ground retaining wall is in need of general maintenance. The left hand side boundary is formed partly by a new stone wall and partly by the wall of the garage to the neighbouring property.

7.02 Gardens and Grounds

The shared drive is formed partly in block paving and partly in gravel and there is a gravel surfaced parking area. Paths and patios are formed with paving and all surfaces are in generally satisfactory condition.

The gardens are located to the front and left hand side of the property. These have been reasonably well maintained. There is a well located to the front of the property which is covered/protected.

7.03 Garages

There is no garage but there is an off road parking area to the front of the property.

7.04 Conservatories

There are none.

7.05 Other Outbuildings

There are none.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER ISSUES

8.01 Noise and Disturbance

The property is located in typical rural/village setting and during our inspection we were not aware of any noise or disturbance issues.

8.02 Means of Escape

The 2004 Building Regulations require new and materially altered dwellings to be fitted with smoke alarm/heat detection systems. Although, this property is likely to fall outside this requirement, it is in the interests of

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the health and safety of the occupants to have such a system in place if there is not one already one present. This report will not indicate if such a system is present nor will it comment on the condition or functionality of such a system if one is present.

8.03 Other Health and Safety Concerns

We did not identify any other specific issues in this respect.

8.04 Hazardous Materials

Although, Surveyors are not trained asbestos specialists but we did identify some components externally that may contain asbestos. However, it should be borne in mind that risk to health arises from breathing in asbestos fibres. It follows therefore that you will not be at risk during the normal useage of your home. Risk to health will only arise by working on asbestos containing materials by sawing, drilling, sanding or breaking the material into pieces, etc. You are strongly advised not to perform any of the above tasks on any materials that are suspected of containing asbestos. It should also be appreciated that if the asbestos containing materials are of advanced age and replacement may be a consideration then this will need to be undertaken by someone with knowledge of asbestos and related health issues, using protective clothing. Disposal will also need special considerations. These factors will have cost implications and it follows therefore that replacing/renewing asbestos containing materials can be more costly than replacing non-hazardous materials. Further advice can be obtained from the Local Environmental Health Department or an asbestos specialist.

9.0 MATTERS FOR LEGAL ADVISERS' ATTENTION

Before exchange of contracts the following matters should be drawn to the attention of your legal adviser.

9.01 Statutory

We know of no adverse factors affecting the property at the present time. Your Legal Adviser should make the usual searches and enquiries. It should be borne in mind that any adverse factors revealed by such a search could affect the advice given in this report.

Your Legal Adviser should be requested to obtain confirmation that the conversion of the outbuildings to living accommodation and associated structural alterations were undertaken with all necessary Local Authority consents.

Owing to the age and type of the property there are certain aspects, such as ceiling heights, staircases, size of door openings, etc., which do not conform to current Health and Safety requirements. However, in such an instance there is no statutory obligation upon the owner to remedy this situation.

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9.02 Rights of Way, Easements and Shared Services

Legal Adviser to confirm that there is a satisfactory easement in existence to permit access onto adjoining land to undertake maintenance to the rear wall of the kitchen/utility.

There is a shared/vehicular access to the front of the property. Your Legal Adviser should be requested to confirm that all rights of way are satisfactory and define any maintenance liability.

The drains are likely to be shared with the neighbouring property. Your Legal Adviser should be requested to confirm that all arrangements are satisfactory and that connection is made to a mains adopted sewer.

9.03 Boundaries

Your Legal Adviser should be requested to advise on the ownership of boundary walls and fences. The rear boundary line is very close to the rear of the subject property. You may wish to consider the implications should be neighbour of the rear property decide to erect a higher structure than currently exists and the effects that this may have on the light within the subject property and its outlook. You are advised to consult your Legal Adviser on this issue and to whether you have any rights to prevent the erection of such a structure.

9.04 Environmental

No specific issues noted.

9.05 Guarantees/Warranties

Your Legal Adviser should be requested to obtain documentation in respect of recent timber treatments which should determine the extent of the treatment undertaken and whether there is an enforceable guarantee in existence.

Your Legal Adviser should be requested to obtain documentation in respect of recent damp proofing treatments again to determine the extent of the works undertaken and whether there is an enforceable guarantee in existence.

10.0 AGREED ADDITIONS TO THE SURVEY

No agreed additions to the survey.

11.0 MARKET VALUATION

“Market Value” is the estimated amount for which a property should exchange on the date of the valuation between a willing buyer and a willing seller in an arms-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 uninspected parts; the right to use mains services; and the exclusion of curtains, carpets etc., from the

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valuation. (If required, details are available from the Surveyor.) Any additional assumption, or any found not to apply, is reported.

**11.01
Valuation Statement**

I am of the opinion that the value of the property with the benefit of full vacant possession and in its present condition is the sum of **£370,000 (Three hundred and seventy thousand pounds)**

**10.02
Declaration**

I hereby certify that the Property has been inspected by me and that I have prepared this Report, including the opinion of Market Value.

**10.03
Sole Use of the Client**

The Report is solely for your use and your professional advisers', and no liability to anyone else is accepted. Should you not act upon specific, reasonable advice contained in the Report, no responsibility is accepted for the consequences.

SIGNATURE OF SURVEYOR

**SURVEYOR'S NAME AND
PROFESSIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS**

Russell Francis, FRICS DipHI

**NAME AND ADDRESS OF
COMPANY HEAD OFFICE**

Homesurv Ltd
Chartered Surveyors
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NORTHAMPTON
NN6 9BX

DATE OF REPORT

9 October 2009

Main roof structure and new lining to main roof covering



Additional purlin supported by additional struts



Metal plate to purlin and brick partition wall



A normal report would contain 15-20 photographs on average however this specimen report has been compiled with a handful of examples so that the file size remains suitable for a download.



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