SAMPLE BUILDING SURVEY

ON

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CLIENT

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DATE OF INSPECTION

xxxxxxxxxxxx

WEATHER

Dry & Overcast

JOB NO

15.0xxx

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
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BUILDING SURVEY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.01 Instructions

Our instructions were confirmed on XXXXXX. They were to carry out an inspection of the above property and submit a report on the condition and state of repair. We have not carried out any tests to services; our comments under this section of the report are restricted to a superficial and visual inspection only. Should you require appropriate tests to be carried out, we shall be pleased to make the necessary arrangements.

Our conditions of engagement are set out at the end of this report. All directions given within this report are made as viewed from XXXXXX and facing the subject property.

1.02 Limitations to Inspection

At the time of our inspection the property was generally fully furnished with fitted floor coverings laid in many of the rooms. Traditionally the hall staircase and the master bedroom had exposed floor surfaces with the original butt boarded configuration visible.

At the time of our inspection we were able to create a platform to gain access onto the inverted valley roof. Great care is needed because of the glazed rooflight over the staircase.

We were able to climb the roof slopes to see the main rear roof pitch which was not visible from ground level. Due to operative restrictions on the bathroom windows we were not able to see in detail the condition of the valley gutter separating the porch structure. This was inspected by use of camera survey.

1.03 Tenure

We understand the property is being sold freehold. Your solicitor should confirm this prior to exchange of contracts.

1.04 Situation and Description

Some buildings may not comply with the requirements for today’s new buildings. They may include harmful or hazardous materials. This report will provide details of such materials where their use is apparent from the visual inspection but with certain types of building it may be impossible to confirm the details of construction.

We would point out that potentially hazardous asbestos may well be incorporated in building structures including those of recent construction. Our report does not include inspecting for this material which in many places may be covered or unexposed; however, whilst fibres are undisturbed and intact the degree of hazard is likely to be minimal. We would advise specialist advice is sought where you intend to cut, remove or handle materials containing asbestos to include asbestolux, artex as well as asbestos sheeting and insulation etc. We would advise that disposal of asbestos under Health and Safety Guidelines onto a licensed site is likely to be expensive.
The property comprises of a semi detached dwelling house believed to have been constructed circa 1880 (plate 1). The building is constructed on a relatively steeply sloping site with the ground to the rear of the property falling away substantially beyond the terrace wall. The main site slopes from front to rear whereby the ground floor level at the front is just above ground level with the lower ground floor level to the rear being just above ground level to the rear. The cellar rooms are almost therefore completely below ground level. The buildings external walls generally exhibit solid proportions. They are constructed with a mixture of stone and render finishing. They are constructed under pitched and tiled roof coverings with the roof being of double pitched structure incorporating centre valley running parallel to the front elevation. The main floors are predominantly of suspended timber construction with some solid structure at lower ground floor level.

We understand from the vendor that at the time of purchase, or shortly thereafter, substantial eradication works were done with regard to dampness and a dry rot infection understood to be present to the rear of the living room, hall and area directly below. Sight should be seen of all guarantees for this. We also understand that the current vendor has had the rear main site/terrace retaining wall reconstructed; they have also strengthened the roof frame and given configurational visual appearance we would expect, although this has not been confirmed, that they have replaced the vestibule roof and carried out perhaps remedial render repair and redecoration.

There is good access to the surrounding local amenities within the xxxxxx area. There is fair access to xxxxxx. Given the elevation of the property there are good views from upper windows to the rear over xxxxxx.

The usual service connection would appear to be present i.e. mains water, drainage, gas and electricity.

1.05 Accommodation

The accommodation comprises:

On the ground floor: Entrance vestibule, hall, front living room, rear dining room, front study, fourth reception room rear right, staircase to lower ground floor and first floor

On the lower ground floor: Kitchen/breakfast room, cross hall, WC, front cellar with store off

On the first floor: Landing, 4 bedrooms, bathroom

Outside: Grounds to the front and rear
2.0 GENERAL CONDITION

We have not inspected any part of the property/building/structure that is covered, unexposed or otherwise inaccessible and cannot confirm them to be free from defects etc.

2.01 Externally

The exterior of the property/structure was inspected from ground level only unless stated below and foundations have not been exposed for examination. Our inspection was however undertaken with the aid of binoculars.

2.01.01 Chimney Stacks

(Including flashings etc.)

The property has 4 chimney stacks. The front right stack is a brickwork construction and situated above the party wall (plate 2). This is a shared chimney stack that forms a party stack under the Party Wall Act. The chimney stack incorporates leadwork flashings to the tiled roof junction. It appears to be a single flue pot to the top. The chimney stack is corbelled. The brickwork is well weathered; there are a number of areas where isolated repointing would be beneficial. The leadwork flashings and back gutter arrangement are generally aged and weathered but in fair condition (plate 41). Some ongoing maintenance and repair is therefore required to this chimney stack.

The rear right hand chimney stack appears to be a 4 flued chimney stack with lead flashings to the roof junction, again the stack is constructed with brickwork including corbelling (plates 10, 11, 12 & 37). There are 4 flue pots to the top of this chimney stack. There is an old aerial connection which would warrant improvement. Generally this brickwork is quite well weathered in places with a loss of surface face. There is evidence of bulging which needs investigation/repair (plate 12). There is also some deteriorated mortar joints. A degree of ongoing repair is required to try to preserve the integrity of the brickwork. Some of the haunching is slightly cracked in places, again this would warrant some maintenance/repair. There is, given the weathered face of some of the brickwork, a possibility that over time some localised stitching may become necessary.

The front left hand chimney stack is a tall chimney stack constructed with fair faced brickwork incorporating haunching to the top securing 2 no. flues (plates 3, 4 & 38). There is upper corbelling present. Again this stack is fairly well weathered. Slight leaning occurs to the right hand side. There is an aerial attachment. Some loss of surface face to brickwork is apparent with a degree of further repointing also necessary. The lead flashings are fairly well weathered including the back guttering (plate 38). As far as is visible generally this appears to be in average condition with average maintenance necessary. We did find evidence of some damp penetration beneath this chimney stack and your attention is drawn to our comments below.

The rear left hand chimney stack incorporates 3 flues (plates 5, 6, 39 & 40). There are 3 flue pots secured with cement sand haunching. Where visible these are in
average condition. The chimney stack has been reconstructed from just above roof line. There is a lead flashing to the back gutter, lead back gutter tray and traditional lead flashings and soakers (plate 39). The leadwork detailing is similar to that on the front chimney stack. It appears to be slightly more modern. The upper brickwork may well have been constructed with a Class B engineering brick. Generally whilst some minor weathering is apparent, the brick and pointing is in fair condition except to the lower retained brick section. In this position the brickwork is more weathered and there are deeper mortar joints which require some reconstruction.

Tall chimney stacks similar to the ones on the left can potentially leak, due to a lack of damp proof coursing material and aged, weathered brick and pointing surfaces. Whilst pointing and silicone treatment is often successful, it is not guaranteed. Sometimes similar stacks need to be constructed with a damp proof course or alternatively rendered. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Dampness.

Any unused flues should be properly ventilated internally and externally to prevent condensation and capped externally to prevent water penetration.

2.01.02 Roofs

(Includes inclined and Valley gutters)

The roof surfaces are inspected from ground level only except where stated below. Roof slopes or flat areas which cannot be seen are specifically excluded although attention has been drawn to their presence.

The main roof is double pitched with hips to the left hand side. The right hand party structure incorporates a constructed masonry parapet with render coverings and a mixture of clay coping stones. Some cracking to rendering is apparent, particularly to the centre valley area where a previous poor repair has been undertaken. There are concrete roof tiling lies on the coping here. The lead flashings to the parapet appear generally well weathered. A degree of further ongoing maintenance would be beneficial. The general render coverings would also benefit from some localised repairs/renewals, copings should be overhauled (plates 34, 36 & 42).

The main roof incorporates a double pitched structure with concrete interlocking tiles including half round hip and ridge tiles, bedded and pointed with sand cement mortar. A replacement tile next to the access light needs looking into. The reason for this is unclear. It is misaligned and investigation and repair is needed (plate 34). The general tiled covering is weathered. No significant damaged tiles were observed at the time of our inspection. Some slight cracking is apparent to the hip and ridge bedding and pointing joints with a need for maintenance. Generally the tiled covering appears to be in satisfactory condition.

In terms of the front and rear slopes there are traditional projected bay bonnets (plates 7 & 43). These adjoin the main roof sections with lead valley gutters. The tiling to the bay roofs is of plain concrete type incorporating half round tiles to the ridges and hips, bedded and pointed with sand cement mortar. At the time of our
inspection no obvious evidence of slipped or damaged tiles was observed. Isolated parts of the main bedding and pointing joints would over time benefit from some maintenance. The inclined valleys, as far as is visible, generally appear to be in fair condition.

The main roof is accessed via a cover hatch. This is old quality zinc coverings incorporating wired glass and a basic timber frame with lead flashings to the main tile junction (plate 34). It does not fit entirely squarely. It has some limited clips, however, lifting this off and on due to the glazed rooflight below is particularly difficult. The arrangement is not untypical in a building of this type. The lower glazed borrowed light frame has been re-putted, presumably from previous damage. It may become beneficial to improve both the hatch and possibly fix or make up a temporary platform to facilitate access out which can easily be removed.

Between the 2 slopes there is a centre valley. This appears to have been coated with fibreglass. The last section is of lead (plate 34). The overall visual alignment appears fair, although some debris in the lower section suggests perhaps slight ponding. Generally minor cleaning would be beneficial. No immediate significant splits or damage was apparent at the time of our inspection.

In terms of the vestibule roof this is a small corrugated perspex roof covering incorporating basic flashing detail to the house wall, draining to a valley gutter (plates 28 to 32). There is a perimeter parapet which is coped to the front and partly side. Some of the sheeting incorporates flash banded joints. The parapet structure generally appears fair, although rendering is slightly cracked in places and may over time warrant some repair. The rear verge is coverboarded and this would benefit from maintenance. The true condition of the valley could not easily be seen from site vantage points. This may well necessitate a general clean. Enquiries should be made to confirm whether or not the valley has recently been repaired.

2.01.03 Rainwater Equipment
(Excludes Valleys)

Without rainfall at the time of inspection, we cannot advise on watertightness and effectiveness of these items.

The external gutters to the property predominantly appear to be of plastic material (plate 1). To the front, drainage is believed to be towards the right where there is a vertical downpipe in the party wall position. Ultimately this discharges to a neighbouring gulley arrangement (plate 24). The visual condition of this arrangement appears fair.

To the side and rear we suspect that drainage runs, including that to the centre valley, to a downpipe. The downpipe discharges behind the vestibule. It runs across into the vestibule hopper. The hopper and downpipe then discharge down, running along the garden wall and into one rainwater butt, there appears to be an adjoining butt, it is unclear whether these are linked (plates 15 & 16)? There is no immediate
suggestion of any actual site ground drainage which may become necessary. Further investigation and appropriate improvement where necessary will be required.

All gutters, downpipes and gullies should be regularly cleaned out to ensure rainwater remains free flowing.

2.01.04 Main Walls

Wall structures can include cavities and ultimately bear onto footing or foundations. These structural items have not been opened up so we cannot confirm their adequacy/condition.

Since 1918 High Alumina Cement and Calcium Chloride Additives have been incorporated into pre-cast concrete units and some insitu concrete mixes. Since 1974 their use has been banned because water and calcium silicate/chemicals cause loss of strength and failure/collapse.

With buildings of this type and age there is a risk that HAC (High Alumina Cement) may have been incorporated within added concrete members. Given the form of construction this is, however, thought unlikely and there is no immediate evidence of pre-cast concrete fabrication having been incorporated.

The type and nature of concrete, additives and its condition can, however, only be confirmed by testing and therefore it is not possible to confirm specifically that they will not give rise to future problems.

The front elevation is fair faced sandstone and dressed ashlar stonework being in the region of 400mm thick suggesting brick backing. The side and returns are some 250mm to 260mm thick to the upper levels with a thicker structure to the lower ground floor with stonework present to the rear right but the remaining sections to the rear and left are rendered. Upper areas are therefore believed to be 9 inch solid brickwork. Lower areas may again be brick and stone.

2.01.04.01 Facings

The sandstone to the front elevation is generally weathered with some loss of minor surface face in places. This arrangement is not untypical given its age. The pointing system is generally of a traditional slightly recessed back mortar joint. There is evidence of some failure in localised positions, particularly beneath a number of the sills, e.g. first floor bay. This is not untypical given the buildings age, there will be a need for some isolated ongoing repointing. In terms of the main dressed stonework this appears to have been repaired in the past. It is possible that to some extent a cosmetic, but typical stone dust, reconstituted stone repair has been undertaken. The overall finish is somewhat patchy in places (plate 23). A number of the sills do not have adequate weather grooves, requiring attention. At ground level there is a stone string which is heavily weathered in places and will over time require a degree of repair.
The left hand elevation of the rear section to the lower ground floor beyond the rear porch door is of stone. The upper sections appear to be constructed with rendering (plate 17). There is evidence of some slight areas of hollowness behind the vestibule back door. There is a reasonable weather drip here to the render face. The rendering also shows evidence of some scarring to the front section above the vestibule roof with a need for some improvement. A number of isolated cracks were noted to the rear part of this rendering. To the front there is a more significant area of hollowness and cracking directly in front of the front door to the vestibule (plate 26). This will be causing significant water penetration into the lower ground floor. The lower stone string here is of basic weathered configuration warranting some maintenance. The rendering which is cracked, hollow and blown needs to be renewed.

To the rear elevation the majority of the upper area is rendered. The rendering shows a number of minor scars and some limited cracking, although generally this is in quite good order except for a number of minor gaps around pipework. Visually the rendering appears to be satisfactory. Some of the sill sections are however worn with a need for some ongoing maintenance. The lower stone sections to the right hand side are generally weathered (plate 19). This has been to some extent repaired and repointed, although parts of the softer dressed stone lintel are somewhat patchy this is not untypical. The proud pointing system can trap moisture against the stone, although again this is not untypical. Visually the sections here appear to be in fair condition.

The lower bay section, as far as was visible, is again rendered. Again the main sill sections of stone are fairly well weathered with some ongoing maintenance required. The rendering and quoin areas otherwise appear to be in fair condition.

The left hand return at lower ground floor level is constructed with stone (plate 17). Some previous repointing has taken place with a sand cement mortar. In places the stonework is exfoliating. There is an old flue hole which needs improvement (plate 13). Generally this area appears to be more heavily weathered and a degree of further repointing, particularly the step/wall joint, would be beneficial. We found evidence of water penetration to the rear of the vestibule adjoining the frame and further repair work is required to the frame and wall here. The main vestibule to the rear appears to be of timber frame construction to the upper level over the door. This is single skin. Your attention is drawn to Statutory Matters. The weatherboarding is discussed later. A large section of glazed leaded light opening is present with external chipboard present because of smashed glass (see later). Upgrade and repair work is required here, see External Decorations. The lower plinth appears to be 9 inch solid structure. This runs down to the lower WC window and below this there is rendering. The general condition of this wall area, particularly the adjoining garden wall area, is poorer and this together with the step return structure warrants some further improvement (plate 67).

There appears to be a hole cut in the lower wall, perhaps from a former boiler flue. This is an open aperture, the exact lintel structure is unclear, stonework appears to
be bridging. Further investigation would be beneficial. This area should ideally be sealed up to prevent water penetration.

The subject property’s vestibule projects directly in front in the party wall line position with exposed brickwork being painted with masonry (plate 25). This adjoins the garden wall. As far as was visible, from the pavement, the wall finished face appears to be in average condition. There is however the need for some ongoing maintenance (redecoratio

n) over time. It is also possible some further localised repointing will become necessary. This returns to the front where there is dressed stonework quoins and heads around the door and a freestone wall over. The pointing to this section is poor warranting improvement. The general condition of dressed stonework appears to be satisfactory.

2.01.04.02 Structural Stability

In buildings of this type and age it is likely that timber lintels exist over openings. Where water penetrates, this can cause dampness, decay and structural movement. We cannot obviously see the condition of any concealed timbers. We have, however, carefully examined opening heads both internally and externally.

On the whole there is no evidence of any excessive deflection or cracking over opening heads. This includes the ground floor bay where large Bessemer beams will exist. On this basis, the condition of concealed timbers is thought to be fair. We cannot, however, rule out the possibility that inferior timbers may need to be replaced over time.

The building itself is elevated substantially above a steeply shelving rear garden. To the rear of the property a large retaining wall structure exists which we understand has been rebuilt. It is thought unlikely that the property’s footings rest above this level, however, this cannot be strictly confirmed without exposure.

The building itself shows evidence of some longer standing movement. Some of the floors slope slightly, both to the front and rear. There is also the presence of a structural alteration between the breakfast room and kitchen at lower ground floor level (plate 99). We understand that steel beam work was installed by the owner in this position. There was no evidence of recent cracking at lower ground floor level, the boxing appeared to be in good condition. There is however evidence of slight scarring to the rear cross wall as you enter the living room (plates 51 & 52). This is believed to be a consequential effect of installation of this large beam. No recent cracking was observed however on the hall side.

To the rear of the bay there is evidence of some cracking to the first floor. This was not traced externally (plate 22).

To the rear of the utility no recent cracking was observed internally, however, there is evidence of some minor fracture cracking to the sill sections (plates 20 & 21). This runs down to the head of the stone arch string which occurs at this point but
was not traced on the sandstone pointing system. Hairline cracking is present to part of the stonework lintel over the kitchen window. A previous scar has been filled, we suspect this may have been cramped. No significant recent movement was observed here suggesting the repair work has proved satisfactory.

The front bay appears to have settled slightly away from the main building, evidenced by slight sloping of sills, however, no recent fracture cracking was observed suggesting this movement is longstanding and historic.

The stress cracking noted to the ground floor left hand return render (in front of the door) was not traced internally within the property. This tends to suggest again that the front corner of the property has settled slightly but this is not recent. Most of the cracking is believed to be the result of water penetration and hollowness.

It is our overall impression that substantially there are a large number of minor areas where movement has clearly occurred over time, however, there was no evidence of any significant or recent movement at the time of our inspection.

It is apparent there is a substantial amount of damp penetration present within the WC. This is to some extent effects the beam structure directly above the WC opening. This is below the vestibule floor plate. It is unclear whether or not timbers remain in this zone. We understand the zone may have previously been treated for dry rot. The condition of these timber lintels is unclear, however, at the time of our inspection we saw no direct evidence of any structural cracking distress. Given the extent of moisture noted in the zone there is a risk however that timbers may be affected by dampness.

It is understood that you wish to install a larger beam here. Certainly this is a supporting wall structure, probably taking the vaulted/structural floor to the vestibule. It may well also take loading from the main hall floor. It is therefore likely that whilst a further large aperture could be installed, this will require structural design.

2.01.04.03 Damp Proof Course/Damp Membranes

Without exposure the true conditions of damp proof course, damp proof membranes and cavity trays cannot be determined. We have carried out a visual examination for their presence and an Electrical Moisture Meter has been used at intervals to test for moisture (indication of defect/breach).

Between internal and external cavity wall leaves damp proof membranes should exist. Cavity trays would normally exist over opening heads in cavity walls. These elements cannot be inspected without exposure. A careful examination was made around apertures during our inspection (see dampness).

We have not been able to trace the position of a physical or injection damp proof course. There is the possibility directly above the stone front corbel that perhaps slate work was used in the original building. Below this in lower ground floor only
tanking would prevent lateral damp penetration. Most of these areas are drylined, see later. There is evidence of some dampness, see Dampness.

It is understood that a chemical injection damp proof course may have been installed. The exact locations and positions of this are unclear. There certainly should likely to have been a full injection course to the front and left hand side below the timber floor plates at ground floor level just above ground level. This should ideally be linked to any vertical tanking which is linked to the horizontal lower ground floor damp proof membrane. It is likely further tanking is required beneath the vestibule structures, particularly at the front where drylining is present, and to the immediate returns to prevent lateral damp penetration. Again a physical or injection damp proof course would be required to the left of the vestibule, within the vestibule party structure and to the front of the vestibule.

To the rear of the building we have not been able to trace a physical dpc. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Dampness.

Enquiries should be made to confirm the existence of any injection damp proof guarantees. Full details should be seen to confirm there are full guarantees from a bonafide company still in existence. This should include where necessary any appropriate tanking, injection and replastering work.

2.01.05 Windows/Doors/Cladding

(Includes eaves boards, soffits and bardge boards)

We have tested operations where accessible and where they were not locked.

The coverboarding detail and vertical match boarding to the rear of the vestibule appears to be basic at roof level with evidence of significant rotting to parts of the vertical boarding over the door requiring repair. Clearly the window to the left of the door has leaded light composite coloured glazing and its timber construction is in poor condition. This appears to have received impact damage. Glazing is broken (plate 69). As a consequence external chipboarding has been applied outside. This is poorly protected. A further repair improvement is required to the original window. This is likely to constitute specialist work. The back door to the vestibule could not be opened. This has a cat flap. It is of timber construction with single glazing. It incorporates a mortice lock. Visually the door is in average condition but may well require some general maintenance depending upon if the impact damage to the framework or the window has caused any issue.

Below this there is a poor quality single glazed timber framed window to the original WC. Again this requires some improvement. The main front entrance door is of traditional design, being timber framed with large knob. This includes a mortice and Yale lock. The door includes a timber frame and borrowed light over. The overall visual condition to this area appears generally to be satisfactory. The glazing is in satisfactory condition. The operation to the door proved relatively positive. The lower ground floor back door incorporates a timber frame with timber
boarded door, partially single glazed. Again this has a mortice lock. Its operative condition appears to be satisfactory. The frame and door are generally in fair condition. There is a slightly awkward step out with small stonework threshold detail. Given the age of the property this sort of detail is not untypical, although it requires care when entering and exiting.

The main property’s roof areas incorporate timber projected fascias with underlying soffits. From ground level these are worn in places, e.g. partway along the side. They generally appear to be in average condition with average maintenance to be expected.

There is some possibility that parts of the soffits slope slightly, see Roof Spaces. No significant opening of jointing was noted at the time of our inspection.

The majority of the property’s windows are vertically hung timber frame sliding sash units. At the front of the property these are less weathered, although there is evidence in localised positions of some deterioration, wet rot etc with a need for repair. We also noted some of these have been brush sealed, e.g. bedroom. Others are draughty with polythene fitted to the inside of the study window preventing testing. Some limited operative testing was undertaken and generally where tested operations were found to be in average condition. The perimeter frame seals to the masonry warrant some further improvement, possibly masticing or lime pointing in localised positions. There is evidence internally of some condensation, not untypical with these units. Some of the windows were security locked, including front right and the bathroom windows, preventing testing. The upper units of these windows are likely to require more general renovational work. Windows to the front and those to the bathroom on the side are generally in average condition with some ongoing maintenance repair works required.

To the rear similar windows exist. Due to exposure these are more significantly affected by wet rot (plate 54). They include most of the first floor windows and the bay windows. In places new sill sections and some new lower sash sections will need to be provided, e.g. left lower ground floor breakfast room window. Again some of these were security locked inhibiting testing, e.g. rear right ground floor. There is again evidence of some condensation in places. The window perimeter seals are again in poor condition and there is evidence of water penetration beneath a number of the sills, see Dampness, believed to be caused by defects to the window framework and the condition of sub-sills.

The kitchen window is a timber casement unit, locked shut. Both the sill section and the inner framework is heavily deteriorated with wet rot present (plate 53). Significant repair work is again required. To parts of the rear windows, particularly the lower sashes to the ground and lower ground floor, there is evidence of significant deterioration to the lower sash framework, again some repair work, if not replacement of units, will become necessary.
Throughout the property many of the sashes have traditional vertical sash cords. In the rear right top floor window the upper sash has been propped up suggesting cords may have failed (plate 45). Significant wet rot is noted to the prop and the frame. Generally the cords are fair but they are heavily worn and it is likely that over time a degree of further cord replacement work will become necessary over time.

2.01.06 External Decorations

Properties of this age and type can incorporate lead residue within the paint. Whilst this is not untypical it can increase future maintenance cost.

The decorative condition to the render surfaces is generally relatively modern and in fair condition. After localised repairs some redecoration is to be expected.

With regard to the main joinery sections both to the front and rear the decorations have significantly deteriorated. There is a need for considerable redecoration to include stripping back to bare wood, primer, 2 undercoats and 1 hard gloss coat. Repairs to the sub-straights will be required prior to this. Your attention is drawn to our comments above with regards to the potential risk for “lead in paint”.

All external decorations should be properly maintained to a high standard to prevent decay to the components which it protects.

2.02 Outside

2.02.01 Outbuildings

Our advice is limited to items/defects likely to have a material affect on value.

To the rear of the property in the bottom of the garden there is a timber framed shed with boarded elevations and pitched roof covered with bitumen felt (plate 56). Generally this is of basic configuration in average condition, although the felting to the roof is becoming old. Ongoing maintenance and repair is to be expected to the shed.

2.02.02 The Site

Only major visible defects in boundary fences, walls, retaining walls, paths and drives are reported. Reference to potential hazards such as flooding and tree roots are included where these are readily apparent.

It is recommended that your solicitor makes enquiries as to whether the property is affected by potential Mining/Radon/Methane Hazards and on this basis; appropriate tests should be arranged prior to proceeding further. We did not however at the time of our visual inspection note any signs of the property being affected by these defects. The National Radiological Protection Board, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, can arrange for radon levels to be measured free of charge or contact the local Council Environmental Health Officer. (Some properties in the area have been identified as being affected by radon gas emissions. Further advice should be obtained from the National Radiological Protection Board).
We have been advised that the property is in an area identified as higher than average for Radon Gas emissions. This does not necessarily indicate the presence of Radon Gas in any particularly property in this postcode.

Further advice can be obtained from the National Radiological Protection Board information hotline on 0800 614529, fax: 01235 833891.

We have been advised that the property is on the edge of a flood plain. Your solicitor would be advised to make enquiries about whether or not the property has ever been flooded.

Situated to the front of the site the main boundaries comprise of a brick and stone wall to the left which is coped running up to the vestibule (plate 25). There are stone gate pilasters each of the ungated entrance with a stonework wall to the right and a rebuilt brickwork party quoin wall to the left. The left wall is leaning, particularly joining the vestibule (plate 25). This appears reasonably longstanding. Both front and left walls will require a degree of repointing. Enquiries should be made to confirm the new pier to the left hand front corner which appears to be a party pier structure and reconstructed not too long ago (plate 70). The right brickwork wall is substantially damaged and leaning and will require some reconstruction/repair (plate 73). The front includes a clay tile on the path. There are raised borders with similar slight paved sections and a number of large shrubs, some of which need substantial management. This made the inspection of lower parts of the building walls very difficult.

To the rear of the property the buildings lower ground floor opens up onto a raised terrace patio. This is set with clay block tiles. It leads up to the vestibule via a stone tread and brick staircase (plate 65). The rear edge is finished with a small approximately 300mm high brickwork wall stone coped forming the edge of the terrace beyond which there is a steep drop. There is a gap between the stone retainer to the vestibule and the left hand garden wall generally of unfinished area and in need of a clean. The brick and stone staircase to the vestibule is in average condition although worn. There is a need for some maintenance to the house wall junction (see previous comments).

The patio is in average condition although there is evidence of some settlement possibly due to poor compaction. We understand that the main retainer for this terrace was reconstructed the detail of which is enclosed within the appendix (plates 58, 63 & 64). The external facing brickwork shows evidence of some slight bulging although this maybe simply the outer skin (plate 64). There was no fracture cracking. There is no edge protection to the terrace which would be beneficial for safety purposes and you may wish to provide this over time.

The terrace leads down to the lower garden which is a relatively steep slope somewhat un-tended (plates 58 to 61). The steps leading down are of stone again there is no edge protection which you may wish to provide for safety purposes. The lower land is in need of tending including the bushes, shrubs and general ground
areas. It runs to the rear boundary where there is a further slope without retaining feature.

The left hand boundary comprises of a brickwork wall to the top section laid on ground slope in average condition, although in need of some general pointing and maintenance (plate 67). This seems approximately in the terrace position to run to a possible fence. In this position there are substantial climbers running down the garden boundary area making it impossible to determine the true construction of the boundary. We suspect mostly fenced but this cannot be confirmed. Certainly there is a substantial lean to the feature which is present and this area may well require reconstruction in terms of the boundary feature.

The right hand boundary includes a part brickwork retaining wall structure with predominantly a partial fencing feature again in need of some general maintenance and repair. The rear boundary appears to possibly be on different levels. The upper section is a post and wire fence, the lower section appears to be a railed fence (plates 57 & 62). It is unclear where the boundary actually lies. There is no retaining feature here. The ground just shelves away and there is the possibility that over time a retaining feature may need to be introduced. The arrangements in this part of Bristol are not untypical although further maintenance and repair work to the boundary is necessary.

We have been advised that the property is located in an area of higher than average historical industrial land use and average risk of industrial pollution. This does not necessarily indicate the presence of pollution in any particular property in this area. We would expect your solicitor to carry out standard searches. If necessary, further enquiries can be made from the Department of Environment Agency.

We are advised that there are a larger number than average waste processing sites in the vicinity of this property. Whilst there was no evidence of this immediately around the property, you may wish to make enquiries of the Environment Agency on this matter.

We are advised that the building is situated in a former mining area and an NCB report should be seen prior to proceeding.

2.02.03 Drainage

Within site boundaries inspection chamber covers have been lifted where visible and accessible. This is to facilitate a visual inspection. The drains have not been tested and it is not possible to comment on hidden areas. Unless stated it is assumed that the drains are connected to the main sewer, or an alternative and acceptable means of disposal.

The limitations of our inspection means a drainage test is advisable prior to proceeding further with the purchase of the property.

Running up through the vestibule is a soil vent pipe possibly of asbestos cement or cast iron material (plate 78). Through the roof area this appears to be of plastic with a projected traditional cowl. The pipe is boxed in within the lower WC after it has
penetrated through the vestibule floor slab. Around appliances to the first floor generally plastic pipework appears to be present and this is of an average age.

Plastic pipework is again present to the lower ground floor WC area where accessible. From this position it would appear that the drainage runs down the vestibule floor there is an inspection chamber which is tiled in with metal surround (plate 79). We were not able to lift this and it cannot be confirmed that there is a double seal screw down cover as required under regulation, over time this will need investigation and if necessary improvement. We would expect that the drainage runs to the rear. It is possible that the drain may run in front of the main retaining wall or perhaps goes beyond this, enquiries should be made on the matter prior to proceeding.

The kitchen sink incorporates old plastic pipe work which will require some maintenance (plate 80). This together with a washing machine drain runs to an open gulley adjoining the back door. It is assumed that the gulley drain then runs to the drainage run, however, it cannot be confirmed that this drainage does not run to a soakaway. This would not normally be permitted however without opening up and testing we cannot confirm where this gulley drain runs to.

It is likely that the mains drainage runs across the slope at the rear of the garden but we have not been able to determine exactly where. Sight should ideally be seen of the Local Authority maps confirming the relationship of mains drainage to given an indication as to the subject property’s drainage prior to proceeding.

The above ground system is generally a mixture of ages and in average condition with average ongoing maintenance to be expected.

2.03 Internally

The interior of the property was inspected from floor level only. Furniture, wall hangings, floor coverings, insulation material and stored goods have not been moved.

2.03.01 Roof Spaces

It should be noted that the inspection of the roof space is confined to details of design and basic construction. Timbers have not been individually examined for defect although, where defects have been observed as part of the general examination, such defects are stated.

Access was afforded to the front roof space which has a traditional rafter frame with some purlins and struts (plates 81 & 88). The frame is protected by an old bitumen 1(f) felt. Generally the framework is in average condition.

Further propping and strutting has been provided to the rafter frame to presumably accommodate the additional concrete tile loading. The beam work appears substantially long and we cannot confirm that this would justify although we believe that the alterations have been present for some considerable time. There is no direct evidence of any significant distress to the propping framework. The general
alignment to the roof coverings otherwise appears fair. There is a need to block and seal a number of the purlin penetration points to the brickwork party structures.

The brickwork party walls are generally in average alignment and condition including projected chimney breast. There is evidence of some dampness to these suggesting defects to the external parapets and chimneys. General maintenance will be required to external areas. Conditions are conducive for fungal attack where timbers are in contact with this.

As far as is visible the centre valley appears to have been reconfigured at some stage in the past. The age of this is unclear (plate 87). More modern boarding is present at some point but this in itself is also quite dated. There are a number of isolated damp stains beneath the valley suggesting leakage although these generally tested dry suggesting older leaks.

Your attention is drawn to our previous comments about the lift off cover hatch. Some slight daylight was noted around this with a need for repair/improvement.

Access was again afforded to the rear roof space (plates 89 & 94). The configuration of the framework including the inclined valleys of the bay junction and the presence of additional alterational props is again similarly to that on the front. The overall condition to these areas is similarly to that to the front. There is again a need for further blocking in of some of the purlin bearing points.

Like with the front roof space there seems to be a lack of ventilation to these roof areas which should ideally be introduced. Some limited vents are present but further could be provided to reduce the possibility of condensation occurring.

2.03.02 Ceilings

Within the accessible roof space where visible it would appear that the majority of ceilings to the top floor of lath and plaster configuration. Some of the ceilings incorporate cornices e.g. first floor front left bedroom, living room, dining room, hall, study and utility (plates 110 & 111). Others incorporate central roses e.g. hall, living room and dining room. Most of these features appear relatively aged and we would suggest that many of the ceilings are therefore of lath and plaster configuration. It is always possible that some plasterboard or boarded ceilings have been introduced. The type and material content of ceiling linings cannot be determined without further destructive testing and opening up. There is always the possibility that such lining boards can incorporate asbestos fibres. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Statutory Matters in this respect.

In overall terms the ceilings appear relatively level and true. Some scar cracks are present particularly to older cornices e.g. living room, dining room and the bay areas. On the whole the ceilings are in relatively good condition for their age.
We noted substantial staining to the WC ceiling believed to be caused by water penetration with a need for almost certain renewal (plate 128). Renewal of the lining has also occurred in the inner store ceiling which is boarded (plate 95). This appears to be plasterboard. It is not skimmed, there is some polythene projecting out suggesting the framework may have been partially damp proved where it bears into the walls below ground level. We have, however, found some evidence of dampness here and further investigation and remedial work is required.

In the cellar to the front we have not been able to determine the condition of the ground floor bearing plate. The lining material appears fair with some isolated areas of dampness noted. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Dampness.

2.03.03 Walls And Partitions

The internal partitional structures are believed to be a mixture of configuration. It is clear that some stud work structure exists. This is likely to be of timber framed configuration. The type and material content of lining cannot be confirmed without destructive examination. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Statutory Matters with regard to materials which can contain asbestos.

A number of internal partitions are of masonry construction believed to be single brickwork. These partitions are plastered. The internal face of external walls is generally plastered. Where we tapped plaster linings these were found to be in fair condition, although there was evidence of some hollowness particularly beneath windows to the upper levels. A degree of further replastering is to be expected. The extent of this is not untypical given the buildings type and age. We have also found evidence of some dampness in places, see below. Damp plasterwork often requires some localised repair work to prevent salting and further deterioration. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Dampness.

In particular the plasterwork within the lower ground floor WC is of substantial poor quality condition and some of these areas are dry lined (plates 114, 124, 127 & 129). Whether there are timbers behind is unclear. Much of this is damp requiring further tanking work. In addition the linings to the cellar appear to be of dry lining materials. Again these were substantially damp where tested. The condition of any concealed timbers is unclear. Further re-tankaging and damp proofing will be required in the cellar. This includes the inner cellar where brickwork is visible. There are generally little plaster finishes in this area. Dampness was recorded to the brickwork where tested. Further tanking and damp proofing is therefore required to the inner cellar.

It is apparent that a structural alteration has taken place to the building. It appears that the cross wall between breakfast room and kitchen has been removed. There was no evidence of any significant recent movement above this. We understand that a steel RSJ was incorporated. It would therefore appear that this is performing satisfactory. There is evidence however of some slight distress to the openings on the second cross wall at ground floor level. Hairline cracking occurs over the living
room door head on one side. Such movements are believed to indicative of the slight shifting which occurred when the steel work beam was installed. Generally these are not visible to both sides of the walls and the minor distress is characteristic of older movement which is not yet been made good.

Above the WC hallway entrance there is possibly a timber beam. The amount of load this carries is likely to be relatively reduced although it probably incorporates both the hall floor and vestibule floor structures. There is clearly a bigger aperture at ground floor level. It is understood you wish to install beam work here. Certainly there will be a need for structural support configuration in this position. Steel RSJ’s adequately sized are likely to need to be introduced and these will need to be properly damp proofed. The condition of the concealed timber work including the floor frame and any timber lintels currently over the aperture is unclear. In this position there was a noted previous dry rot by the current owner (see later).

It is also understood you wish to incorporate a new wall with doorway to open the left of the hall into the current WC. This could be introduced by a lightweight stud work partition ideally with metal stud to reduce the possibility of future rotting.

2.03.04 Chimney Breasts, Fireplaces and Flues

We cannot advise on the condition of flues, flue liners or the practicality of using chimneys. All solid fuel flues should be swept before use.

There is a projected chimney breast with fireplace surround in bedroom 4. This appears to serve the single flue chimney stack above.

In bedroom 3 there is a further chimney breast again with a fireplace and surround. Parts of the inner flue appear to be packed with paper. Below this in reception 3 a similar fireplace exists (plate 106). Both these chimney breasts appear to have older flue systems and are conceivable that both will need proper sweeping and cleaning. Your attention is drawn to our comments below. Fireplace and surround are visually in fair condition. Beneath this in the kitchen there is an Aga believed to serve the kitchen flue (plate 126).

In the front left position of bedroom 1 there is again a fireplace present. The fireplace and surround are in fair condition and this includes a hearth. We again traced some debris behind the flue shutter suggesting cleaning will be required. Beneath this in the sitting room there is an attractive period fireplace and surround visually in fair condition (plate 105).

In the rear left position there again appears to be 3 chimney breasts one at each level. Fireplaces are present at each level some with hearths visually in average condition (plates 102 & 103).

It is unclear how many of the flues can actually be used many of the surrounds are present but they do not have generally adequate fire burning grates etc. It is clear
that some of the flues appear to require sweeping. Generally the fireplaces and surrounds form a relatively attractive feature and are in average condition given the buildings age.

The Aga is believed to be gas fired enquires should be made to confirm this.

2.03.05

Floors

Floor timbers that are covered have not been inspected and accessible corners or any coverings were lifted where possible to identify the nature of the surface beneath.

The main first floor appears to be constructed with suspended timber. Where boarding was exposed or was visible this was a traditional butt boarded Victorian floor finish. The exposed boarding is worn and in average condition with some open joints. A number of minor loose boards were noted to the first floor with a need for refixing. Generally the floors slope slight particularly to the front bay and into the rear bay, however, this is believed to be indicative of longer standing settlement. The bathroom floor has a more modern strip floor finish visually in average condition.

The main ground floors are predominantly believed to be of suspended timber. Again there is evidence of general sloping into the front bay and to the rear bay characteristic of longer standing settlement. The floors appeared relatively firm where tested. Again where exposed butt boarded floor boarding is present. The entrance vestibule floor may be of suspended solid structure we have not been able to determine this. The floor finish which is tiled visually appears to be in satisfactory condition. The floor appears relatively firm.

To the lower ground floor the majority of floors appear to be of solid construction. In the cellar and inner cellar where exposed a screed floor is visible (plate 96). In part in the inner cellar there appears to be some form of polythene membrane (plate 96). Some dampness was recorded to parts of this floor where accessible possibly the result of condensation. There will be a need to adequately tie the damp proof membrane within the floor to the damp proof course to prevent damp penetration. Some further finishing work is likely to be required with regard to this floor especially behind the linings to the cellar room. The floors appeared reasonably level. They were firm where tested.

To the WC and cross hall there is a tiled floor finish with replacement tiling present to the inner floor but possibly original older tiles to the WC (plate 97). The overall visual condition to these floor surfaces appears fair. They are reasonably true and level. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Dampness. The full condition of the floor in the understairs cupboard area could not be determined because of substantial stored effects which prevented access.

The kitchen breakfast room area is split (plate 98). There is a partial tiled floor system believed to be of solid construction. There is also a timber boarded system
believed to be of suspended timber. Only limited sub floor timber vents were present to the rear. Given the landlocked nature (no ventilation possible to the front) of the floor void ideally internal vents should be introduced to help with ventilation. The suspended timber floor where tested appears to be relatively firm. Some dampness was however recorded particularly adjoining the solid floor to the front. Some further remedial treatments are likely to be necessary.

To the front of the ground floor in the bay area some limited sub floor vents are present however these have not been extended to the study floor. Such floors are potentially vulnerable. We understand that in the sitting room there may well have been a previous dry rot outbreak. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Dampness. It is unclear how the sitting room floors and front study floors have been damp proofed as parts of these especially the study are possibly slightly below ground level.

2.03.06 Dampness

A moisture detecting meter has been used in chosen accessible positions to test for dampness. Without moving furniture, floor coverings, fixtures and fittings it is not possible to confirm all surfaces are free from dampness.

In the main roof space some damp staining is apparent to inclined valleys believed to be of longer standing origins. Damp staining is also present to parts of the timbers beneath the centre valley gutter again appearing to be older in nature. Damp readings were, however, detected to parts of the parapet and chimney breast structures believed to be consistent with water penetration especially those to the left hand side. External remedial works are required to eliminate this. Timbers in contact with these areas do have conditions conducive for fungal attack.

At first floor level some moisture readings were noted to the upper left hand chimney breast structures in bedrooms 1 & 2 caused by water penetration. Isolated damp readings were also noted beneath the bedroom 2 rear bay windows believed to be due to the condition of external masonry seals and joinery. Moisture readings were noted to the rear of bedroom 3 consistent with joinery problems to the window and water penetration. Some plasterwork replacements in these areas will become necessary after external repairs.

To the ground floor a careful inspection was made of the sitting room. Slight damp readings were noted behind the chimney breast. This is in the zone where previous dry rot was treated. Moisture readings were also noted to the front of the study. Readings were noted to the right hand wall of the vestibule and to the front left corner of reception 2 again believed to be in the zone of previous dry rot treatment. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Timber Decay. These areas do suggest potential for rising damp and further treatment work appears to be required including some replastering.
Moisture readings consistent with water penetration to the rear of the vestibule were also noted due to the basic provision of rear walling i.e. basic boarding and junctions to the door frame.

To the rear of reception 2 moisture readings were noted beneath the windows again consistent with defects to the dining room windows.

To the lower ground floor particularly in the cellar readings consistent with lateral penetrating damp/rising damp were noted with some slight dampness noted to the front wall ceiling junction. Substantial staining occurs to the WC ceiling and a significant amount of dampness was noted within the WC to the walls including almost full height to the right hand wall again in the zone beneath where we understand dry rot was treated. Readings consistent with rising damp were noted to parts of the cross walls in the hall area including the staircase match boarding frame base. Readings consistent with rising damp were also noted beneath the kitchen sink. It is apparent particularly to the front of the property that further damp proofing work including tanking work will be required to the cellar zones to eliminate dampness. This will also be necessary in the WC and parts of the hall.

There is a need to fully isolate all timbers in contact with damp masonry and carry out some specialist timber treatment, possibly further injection course work. Full details should be seen of any existing guarantees for the main damp course injection, prior to proceeding.

In view of our findings the property should be inspected by a proprietary firm of damp proofing specialists. A detailed report should be obtained on all dampness prior to proceeding.

2.03.07

Timber Infestation

Again our inspection has been limited by stored items. Infestations and infections may exist behind areas which are not accessible.

Where water penetrates this causes conditions conducive for fungal attack (wet and dry rot) to adjacent timbers.

We have to accessible timbers both in the floor boarding areas and roof spaces found evidence of beetle infestation. Unless there are bonafide full guarantees we recommend you assume it to be ongoing. On this basis further specialist treatment work will be required.

We have been aware that the front of the sitting room left return and the area adjoining the vestibule was previously treated for a dry rot outbreak. We understand there are still some guarantees. We have however found evidence of dampness to some timbers and in particular to wall parts close to where timbers will exist. To the ground floor skirting boards no significant rotting was noted. The condition of the floor frame is, however, unclear. We have found evidence of fungal infection to a
number of the skirting boards in the lower hall. Parts of the staircase newel base and the match board timbers also appear to be slightly affected at lower ground floor level (plate 130). Initially this appears to be wet rot, however, in the previously treated zones there are significant areas of dampness to timbers which may well incorporate timbers. The condition of concealed timbers is unclear.

Rotting was also noted to the inner cellar door frame which is loose and in poor condition requiring renewal (plate 96). This is also affected by rotting.

It is likely that further damp proofing and timber treatment work will be required to eliminate the fungal infections present. To some extent the scope of this can only be determined by further opening up of the concealed timber areas. Whilst previous dry rot treatment did take place, which may still be under guarantee, the effectiveness of which cannot be fully gauged given the fact that similar areas appear to be damp and this must run a risk of a further outbreak being present. We have however at this time found no direct evidence of this.

In view of our findings the property should be inspected by a proprietary firm of timber specialists. A detailed report should be obtained on all fungal infections and beetle infestation prior to proceeding.

2.03.08 Internal Joinery

The skirting boards, window boards and architraves are generally of timber construction. Most of these are of original period features although some replacement sections have been introduced over the years. With the exception of the door frame bases and lower ground floor skirting boards the general condition of door frames, window boards and architraves is fair with average maintenance considered necessary. Those to the lower ground floor are, however, likely to require a degree of replacement particularly where rotten.

The lower ground floor staircase is of straight flight timber construction with a timber handrail. This has vertical matchboard timber. The main newel post is slightly soft and damp to the base. The edge of the matchboard timber is also slightly soft and damp. Further treatment and remedial work to the staircase is likely to be necessary. We have not been able to gain access to the understairs cupboard to determine the condition of timbers to the rear of the stair. Where tested the staircase appeared relatively firm.

There is a step between the study and living room. A door opens over this not permitted under current regulation but this is not untypical in an old building. The step up is in average visual condition.

The staircase running between ground and first floor level is of timber construction. This includes quarter landings along with a timber handrail and balustrade. The arrangements are of an older style configuration not in compliance with today’s regulations, e.g. handrail heights and gaps. These arrangements are however not
untypical in a building of this age. The staircase appeared relatively fair although worn. Where tested this appeared generally satisfactory.

The kitchen fittings are generally of timber construction. These include a timber worktop and some limited wall hung units. One of them incorporates back glazing to glaze the under staircase cupboard. Generally the kitchen is relatively worn. It is anticipated that you have allowed to renew this. It is of an older style and whilst functional will over time require a degree of maintenance. Ideally it would be beneficial for some renewal to take place.

There a number of cupboards within the property including a cupboard in reception 3. There is also a limited cupboard in the lower ground floor hall the latter of which appears to have some dampness and decay to parts of the door frame. The cupboard to reception 3 visually appears fair, although will require some maintenance.

The property has a number of different door styles. The majority of doors are of 4 panel timber construction with knob furniture. Some of these have been modified to incorporate glazing e.g. half glazed doors to the kitchen, WC, front right ground floor room and bathroom. Such modifications are not untypical but may not meet today’s regulations. Many of the doors have an older latching system typical of their age. The handling system to the dining room is poor warranting improvement. There is a traditional vertically boarded door with gate latch hinges to the cellar and adjoining store door. Visually this is in average condition although the framework is showing evidence of some minor rotting. The door to the inner room is poor with the frame needing renewal and the door re-hanging. The doors are generally in serviceable condition, a number have minor split panels not untypical given their age. Generally where tested operations proved fair, although a degree of minor easing and adjusting is required in some limited positions.

2.03.09 Internal Decorations

The decorative condition to the walls and ceilings within the property is generally fairly good. There are some blemishes and marks. A number of the areas particularly the lower ground floor WC will require comprehensive redecoration. The decorative condition to the cellar area is also poor warranting improvement.

The WC incorporates older poorer quality wall tiling. There is some limited basic tiling to the kitchen. The bathroom tiling is again dated being of period style but visually fair and serviceable.

2.03.10 Energy Efficiency and Conservation

We recommend enquiries are made with regards to the presence and type of insulation to all concealed roof spaces, wall cavities and floor structures.

Where cavity wall insulation has been used we recommend you obtain all guarantees for its installation. Some foams can cause damage to the building’s fabric performance and may be a health hazard.
The extent of insulation to wall cavities, e.g. rear vestibule, is unclear and full enquiries should be made on this matter prior to proceeding. The extent of insulation to the single skin timber framed rear wall of the vestibule is unclear and this is likely to be limited warranting improvement.

There is only a limited amount of insulation laid between the ceiling joists in the front roof space. Approximately 100mm is laid to the rear roof space between ceiling joist and the rear roof space. In places this requires further adjustment. The extent is not untypical given the buildings age; however, it would not meet today’s requirements. On this basis, some improvement work is therefore likely to become necessary. It would be beneficial for this to be undertaken to conserve energy.

We observed no direct evidence of any low wattage lighting fittings at the property or bulbs. Some improvements could be made to try and reduce energy consumption.

The property does not appear to have a condensing boiler. This is not untypical given its age. Again for energy conservation purposes over time some improvements will become necessary.

You will be aware that heating and energy conservation has now become a vogue topic. The requirements for further updating, improvement etc are generally required throughout housing stock, however, in this instance due to the age of some components e.g. boilers there is a more urgent necessity. Your attention is drawn to our comments under Services.

2.04

**Services**

No tests have been carried out. Only major defects and deficiencies readily apparent from a visual inspection are reported. Compliance with regulations and adequacy of design, condition or efficiency can only be assessed on receipt of testing information. Should you require any further information in this respect, it is essential that you obtain reports from appropriate specialists before entering into a legal commitment to purchase.

Specialist advice should include information relating to non-return and anti-syphon valves where required by appropriate Regulations.

2.04.01

**Electricity**

Without a specialist’s test it is not possible to confirm the condition or functioning of the wiring circuits. All regulations change frequently and circuits/systems may not comply with current standards. We recommend you obtain confirmation that circuits have been wired to current IEE standards or a certificate is obtained from an NIC EIC electrician prior to proceeding.

The property appears to have a 3 phase incoming 100amp supply (plates 112 & 113). There is mains earth fitted. The meter is located adjoining the entrance supply in the inner main hall. It is boxed in within a cabinet. Adjoining this is a relatively modern trip fuseboard. Around this generally PVC cabling appears to exist.

The majority of the lighting fittings within the property comprise of pendant fittings. Many of these have relatively narrow PVC core cable suggesting possibly only
limited earthing (plate 110)? Some of them are quite heavily soiled suggesting significant age. In a number of limited positions alternative fittings exist including a wall bayonet fitting to the inner hall, spotlights in the bathroom, spotlights in the cellar. Many of the lighting fittings are somewhat dated which is not untypical in a building of this age. Most of the controls appear to be of traditional flick switches in white plastic boxes predominantly flush mounted within wall surfaces at the usual conventional height. They are however soiled again suggesting age. A number of different switching systems exist including a pull switch to the bathroom and some dimmers are present e.g. bedroom 1 & 2.

External lights comprise e.g. bulkhead side steps; where present these are again dated.

In terms of the main power fittings where visible 13 amp switched sockets are present mostly flush mounted within wall surfaces. Many of the rooms appear to have 1 double socket and 1 single socket. Again many of the fittings appear relatively soiled. They clearly appear to be somewhat dated.

It would appear that more recently some electrical work has been undertaken to the fuseboard area hence the new consumer unit. It is however apparent that much of the lighting fittings and the power fittings are somewhat aged. It is possible that the recent work to the consumer unit area does mean that there is adequate earthing etc but enquiries and information about the previous works should be seen to confirm this prior to proceeding. It is, however, apparent that a degree of further updating and ongoing improvement will be required to the electrical system. In a building of this type, size and age it is however not untypical, the scope of which cannot be determined without a specialist test.

Sight should be seen of the NICEIC certificate for rewiring prior to proceeding. If a current certificate does not exist the property should be inspected by an NICEIC registered electrician and a detailed report obtained prior to proceeding.

2.04.02 Gas

We recommend that enquiries are made of the local Gas Board with regard to the age and likely condition of all systems and pipework connected to this property. Their recommendations should be followed with regard to checking and servicing systems prior to proceeding.

Gas is connected. The meter is located in the cellar (plate 115). There appears to be no earth bonding? The plumbing here appears predominantly to be of copper.

2.04.03 Oil/Solid Fuel

Some of the fireplaces appear to be capable of burning solid fuel but the condition of flues cannot be determined without testing.

2.04.04 Plumbing And Heating
Our inspection was naturally limited to visible parts of the system. We were therefore unable to inspect plumbing covered e.g. by panelling or beneath floorboards etc. In older style properties it is quite possible that obsolete lead pipework, which can have an adverse affect upon health, is connected e.g. cold water feed pipework etc. With regard to central heating systems, it is recommended that the system to include all plumbing and radiators etc. is fully tested and serviced by a suitable central heating specialist e.g. Gas Safety Registered Engineers for gas systems, prior to proceeding further.

We have traced an adaptation to the incoming supply (plate 116). Leadwork appears in the inner cellar. From this there appears to be an old tap which is broken off with an inner traditional gas valve tap. There is a water scaler on this supply. We suspect this is the incoming water supply but enquiries should be made to confirm this. Beyond the lead incoming supply copper plumbing appears to be present.

Around appliances generally an older copper plumbing system was noted with some traditional metal flexible connections to plumbing fittings.

We have not traced any cold water tanks. We expect the property is mains connected with mains pressure present. Hot water appears to be provided from the Megaflow Heatiae Sadia unvented cylinder located in the WC (plate 129). It is unclear whether or not this is primarily heated from the boiler or Aga and enquiries should be made.

In addition to the above it would appear that the hot water to the kitchen sink is served from the boiler (plate 125). We understand from discussion with the Son of the owner that this is the case.

Situated within the breakfast room is a wall hung boiler with fan assist flue (plates 15 & 125). This is gas fired. It appears to be a combination boiler of Eco max type not being modern condensing. We believe this provides the primary hot water for the radiator system.

Throughout the property there is a pressed steel radiator system generally of an average age. Many of the radiators incorporate thermostatic radiator valves.

The heating radiator and plumbing systems appear a little dated but are reasonably modern. Where tested water pressure proved fair. Some ongoing updating is to be expected.

Sight should be seen of all servicing documentation for the hot water and central heating system prior to proceeding.

2.04.05

Sanitary Appliances

The bathroom fittings include bath, WC with close coupled cistern and pedal stool basin. They also include an integral built in shower unit (plate 122). The shower unit could not be tested. The shower incorporates an Aqual X cubicle visually appearing to be serviceable. Where tested water pressure was fair to the other fittings. The fittings are a little dated but not untypical in a building of this type.
There is no mechanical extract ventilation from the bathroom and ideally this could be provided to reduce the possibility of condensation. Generally the fittings are in average condition and considered relatively serviceable.

There is a single utility sink located in the rear right reception room. There is no mechanical extract fan to this unit. It is likely you will wish to renew or replace this unit to return it to a reception room. The sink is generally dated.

The kitchen fittings include a recessed Belfast china style sink with 2 no. pillar taps. The general condition of this appears fair. The seal perimeter is however poor warranting improvement.

The WC incorporate WC and basin visually again soiled and aged but considered serviceable. Again there is no mechanical extract fan to this room and this would be beneficial to reduce the possibility of condensation occurring. There is moisture present within the room which suggests that condensation along with black spot mould growth which suggests that condensation is occurring here. It is possible that the levels of moisture from penetration and other sources are sufficient to create black spot mould growth rather than traditional condensation. Ventilation should however be provided to help ventilate the room.

In addition the cellar incorporates a mechanical extract vent (plate 114). This was tested and proved to function, although we have not been able to trace the outlet. We suspect it may be of very narrow vent grill adjoining the front hardstanding but enquiries should be made to confirm this prior to proceeding. The unit is clearly quite dated. Over time it is likely to require a degree of modernisation.
3.0 STATUTORY MATTERS

We have not been made aware of any adverse planning, highway or other statutory proposals that are likely to have an adverse affect on the property. These matters should, however, be confirmed by your Solicitor prior to exchange of contracts.

Your attention is drawn to our conditions of engagement on asbestos containing materials. This is not something we are specifically asked to advise on, however, on a prima-facie basis you should be aware on the comments made in this report and that asbestos fibres have been used in many materials for example; textured coatings (e.g. artex) sprayed lagging, insulating boards, paper and paper products, cement products, roofing felts, textured paints, adhesives, sealants, putties and some forms of pvc. The removal alteration or disposal of materials containing asbestos is now restricted under current Health & Safety Guidance. Should this be required this will increase future costs. Where materials containing asbestos are removed care should be taken and specialist advice sought. This building is relatively modern and these risks are therefore proportionally limited. If required, we can arrange for samples within this property to be tested for asbestos content and obtain advice as to any appropriate measures.

Properties of this type incorporate party wall/boundary wall structures. Repair works within the vicinity of the boundary/party walls require the agreement of your neighbour under the 1996 Party Wall etc Act. It is often necessary to serve appropriate Notice to carry out repairs.

Access to repair the vestibule flank wall would have to be by agreement with your neighbour. It is possible that you will have to invoke the 1992 Access to Neighbouring Land Act. Your solicitor should familiarise yourself with this Act prior to proceeding.

The covering of an existing roof frame with modern tiling (different) now requires Building Regulation Consent. Sight should be seen of the appropriate approvals for this prior to proceeding.

You should be aware that works to the electrical system, plumbing, heating and insulation systems are now governed by the requirement for Building Regulation Consent where alterations, adaptations or improvement work is undertaken.

It is understood that the current owner has reconstructed the large retaining wall to the rear and sight should be seen and any appropriate Local Authority Approvals for this prior to proceeding. We understand they also install the current additional prop work to the main roof frame and again sight should be seen of any structural calculations or approvals for this. It is possible in respect of the latter than no formal approvals exist. The former may well have occurred well before Party Wall Legislation took place. Enquiries should be made to determine whether or not there were any former neighbour’s disputes as a consequence of this.
More recently it would appear that the perspex roof has been put on top of the vestibule. This has limited simple frame perspex spanning from the wall rail to the valley. This will make future cleaning difficult.

It is understood that formerly this property was partially used as a Solicitors Conveyancing Practice. It should therefore be confirmed that there is a full residential use on the building prior to proceeding.

Given the condition of some of the boundary walls particularly the rear and left hand rear garden together with the front right garden there is a need for your solicitor to confirm your liabilities for these areas prior to proceeding.

In order to affect some of the damp proofing work to the property particularly in the WC it is anticipated that Party Wall Notices will need to be served as part of the remedial work.
**4.0 SUMMARY**

This is a substantial town dwellinghouse situated in a relatively popular area having fairly good views to the rear of the building. The rear of the building and rear left of the building is substantially open to the elements as a consequence of its location and elevation. Regular maintenance to such areas will therefore become necessary to prevent water penetration.

At the time of our inspection it is apparent that further works are required as follows:

1. An overhaul to the chimney stacks, parapets and flashings particularly the free-standing left hand chimney stack. Some of these will require a degree of brick stitching over time.
2. Repair work to the general tiling with particular general maintenance to the central and inclined valleys.
3. Repair work to the external joinery particularly to the rear of the building where new sections will need to be provided.
4. Overhauling to the joinery and redecoration.
5. Some general further repointing to the building particularly to the left hand lower area.
6. Upgrading of the damp proofing systems particularly to the cellar and inner cellar area.
7. Investigation of damp timbers and appropriate timber treatment and remedial repair.
8. Modernisation of the kitchen.

In the short/medium term further work will be required to:

i. Ventilate the roof spaces.
ii. Improve roof space insulation.
iii. Update/modernise the electrical system.
iv. Update/modernise the sanitary fittings.
v. Carry out some updating of the plumbing systems.
vi. General upgrading and repairs to the rear of the site particularly with regard to boundaries.

In view of our findings we would recommend you obtain detailed estimates for the repairs which are necessary prior to proceeding.
5.0  CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT ON BUILDING SURVEY

1. Unless stated within the report we have not been able to view the condition of chimney flues and we cannot comment on their functioning.

2. In any building/structure it is not always possible to carry out a full inspection, the inspection being limited due to occupation, stored effects, fittings and fixtures. In particular where furniture, closely fitted floor coverings and stored personal effects are present our inspection will be particularly limited. In view of this, whilst a careful inspection will be made, we will not be able to comment on concealed/inaccessible woodwork, the fabric, structure or services and we cannot therefore confirm these areas have no defects.

3. The report has been produced for you and your professional advisor’s use. The report’s contents, and the report, should not be passed to third parties without our written consent. Without such consent, we cannot accept any responsibility to any third party.

4. Our report will be limited to those parts of the property which can be readily accessed. This includes flat roofs requiring ladder access up to 3 metres high (unless prior arrangement is made). In the case of flats our inspection will be limited to those accessible parts on the interior, common parts and external grounds. The inside of other flats will not be inspected unless prior agreement is made.

5. We have not carried out any tests on the services, (Electric, Gas, Water, Plumbing, Heating, Mechanical Extract/Air Conditioning, Drainage). Inspection chambers will be raised (weight and access permitting). We cannot therefore report on these areas in detail however a visual inspection will be carried out.

6. Unless a prior agreement is made a Fire Insurance Assessment will not be provided.

7. We have made a number of assumptions in order to create this report. They are:

   a) No High Alumina Cement or Calcium Chloride additive or Detrimental Material were used in the construction/alteration of the building.

   b) The building/property has no unusual or onerous restrictions, encumbrance or outgoings.

   c) Lead residue/oxides are not present in any paintwork.

   d) Within isolated parts of the South West ‘Radon’ gas has occurred to potentially dangerous levels. We have not carried out any tests and specialist’s advice should be sought.

8. Please note in accordance with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors requirements we have a complaints handling procedure.
6.0 MAINTENANCE

It is important to maintain a building in good repair in order to protect one’s investment and to alleviate serious defects becoming established. On this basis periodic inspections should take place and for your assistance we detail below the following items:-

EXTERNALLY

Chimney Stacks

Carry out regular inspections of flashings to chimney stacks to ensure that they are not lifting as this will cause damp penetration. A high level of care should take place if chimney pots are handled as they are made of clay, heavy and often brittle.

Roof

Repairs to the Roof should be carried out by specialist firms of contractors. It is recommended that the roof space is examined at least twice a year in respect of timbers as well as the plumbing contained therein. Diligent attention is required where a valley configuration exists and particular attention should be paid to cracked and dislodged tiles/slates as well as hip and ridge tiles. It should be ensured that there is adequate ventilation into roof void areas as any ingress of water could result in dry rot becoming established.

Rainwater Equipment

Inspect and clear rainwater gutters at least twice a year to remove leaves and debris. Ensure that joints are sound, well secured to brackets and regularly redecorate metal goods.

External Joinery

Timbers subject to wet rot can be far more serious than is often thought. It is essential, therefore, to replace and repair defective joinery and to carry out regular redecoration. It is generally accepted that late summer is the best time to redecorate when woodwork is at its driest. Ideally all paintwork should be burnt off, treated, sealed and primed prior to redecoration.

Masonry

External Pointing should be checked and, if cracked, repaired. Any defective masonry should be renewed with suitable second-hand matching masonry. Defective external finishes such as render should be made good in order to ensure that the building stays waterproof.

A particular problem that is now becoming apparent is wall tie failure, particularly in houses that are approximately 50 years old. Unfortunately in reports prepared in respect of properties of a cavity construction, it is not possible to comment upon the condition of wall ties, although we would be pleased to put you in touch with a specialist firm. Failure often takes the form of increasing gaps along the horizontal mortar lines and this should be particularly monitored.
It is important to periodically walk around the house to ensure that air bricks are clear of blockage and that the external levels are well below the damp proof course.

**Drains**

Lift inspection chambers at least twice a year and ensure that there is no blockage.

**INTERNALLY**

**Dampness**

Inspect for any signs of damp staining which is usually due to the following items:-

a) External penetration  
b) Internal leaks  
c) Condensation

Dampness can lead to fungal attack (wet and dry rot) and deterioration to both the integrity of the structure and decorations. If there is evidence of dampness, initially trace it to the source and rectify it immediately. Damp penetration can lead to decay to unexposed timbers and can cause dry rot. Estimates can be obtained from specialist firms of damp proofing experts and if it is considered that the matter is serious, a firm of this type should be contacted immediately.

**Timber Infestation**

Usually the most serious form of infestation is dry rot. It thrives in damp, unventilated and humid conditions where fungus will breed. This fungus removes the moisture out of the timber and forces it to loose all its inherent strength. It can spread within a building through the plasterwork and walls in a very short period of time and repair work is normally extremely expensive and can run into thousands of pounds. It is not uncommon for a serious attack of dry rot to become established in weeks rather than months.

There is an increasing degree of beetle infestation, especially in view of recent mild winters, and visible timbers should be checked on a regular basis, e.g. under stairs and roof void, etc. Treatment with the benefit of a long guarantee can be undertaken by a specialist firm of eradicators and again normally a free inspection can be obtained.

**Floors**

When floorboards become loose, it is recommended that they are refixed in order to prevent accidents and so as not to result in undue wear to carpets and other floor coverings.
Services

All services should be regularly inspected in the interest of safety and it is essential that annual servicing takes place to central heating boilers and gas appliances in order to ensure that the system is operating as efficiently as possible as this will reduce fuel bills.

Boundaries

Work to these structures is now controlled by the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 and the Access to Neighbouring Land Act. The procedures laid out in “the Act” should be followed when any repair/maintenance is undertaken near/to a party/boundary wall.

Flats/Letting Houses

Maintenance, repair etc. to blocks of flats/buildings containing flats may be affected by the Construction, Design and Management Regulations 2007 and all effects caused by this Act should be investigated at the inception of the project.

Local Authority Controls

Listed, Planning and Building Regulations, as well as Conservation Area policies, can affect repair/maintenance works and where appropriate advice should be obtained from the Local Authority at the inception of the project.

Asbestos

The supply/application of paint or varnish containing asbestos for use at work was prohibited in 1988. Asbestos may, however, still be present in some existing paint or textured coatings e.g. artex. When these are removed care should be taken. These materials should not be scraped off dry or sanded down. If required, we can organise samples within this property to be tested for asbestos content.

The risk of contracting an asbestos related disease is dependent on a variety of factors including the accumulative dose that person has been exposed to, the length of time since first exposure and the type and size of asbestos fibres.

The potential fibre release from asbestos is determined by 3 main factors: -

1. The type of material and its properties and the kind of asbestos used in its manufacture.
2. The integrity of the material and the condition of any sealant or enclosure.
3. The location of the material, i.e. its accessibility and susceptibility to damage, and the use of the area or building where the material is used.
As a general guide, the following are listed in approximate order of ease of fibre release:

- Sprayed lagging and coatings.
- Insulating boards, composite products and insulating blocks.
- Cloth, ropes and yarns.
- Millboard, paper and paper products.
- Asbestos cement products.
- Bitumen roofing felts, semi rigid asbestos bitumen products and damp proof courses.
- Asbestos/paper backed vinyl flooring.
- Un-backed (homogeneous) floor tiles and vinyl flooring.
- Textured paints and coatings containing asbestos.
- Mastic putties, adhesives and sealants.
- Asbestos reinforced plastic and PVC and plastic.

The main remedial measures available are:

- Do not touch the material, leave it in place without sealing and introduce a management system.

- Effectively seal (e.g. encapsulate or protect by mechanical means - board materials, etc.) and introduce a management system, leaving the material where it is.

- Remove and dispose of the asbestos.

The actions vary in detail depending on the type of material, its location, accessibility and condition. If required, we can arrange for samples within this property to be tested for asbestos content and obtain advice as to appropriate measures.
For and on behalf of
Michael Knight
Chartered Building Surveyors