

MAIN ELEMENTS REPORT ON:

PREPARED FOR:

Date of inspection 2005

**A glossary of commonly used terms
is at the rear of the report**

GENERAL

I confirm that I have now carried out an inspection of the above in order to advise you of the defects which were apparent to the main elements of the building both internally and externally. As you are aware, a building survey has not been carried out and no warranty can be implied or given in this respect. The defects seen have been given below for your attention.

DESCRIPTION, SITUATION, AMENITIES AND ACCOMMODATION

The property comprises a two/three storey centre of terraced house, the main walls being of a solid brickwork nature, mainly rough rendered/pebble dashed and painted externally, carried under a primarily double lap clay tiled roof, the ground floor being principally of a timber suspended style.

(part removed for confidentiality purposes)

From the main entrance door, the ground floor hallway can be found with two reception rooms and kitchen. Stairs to first floor and landing, with three bedrooms, bathroom and separate WC and stairs to top floor with shower room with WC and bedroom 4.

Off-street car parking can be found to the front and a rear garden was also noted. A rear vehicular accessway had also been provided.

It should be noted that controlled parking can be found within the area and numerous bays have been drawn within the road for this purpose. Whilst the front garden is wide enough for two cars, only a single crossover has been provided from the road.

OBSERVATIONS

EXTERNAL

ROOF

The main roof surface is of a double lap clay tiled nature. To the front elevation the ridge had been recently repointed. General signs of wear could be seen to the tiles. A number of newer tiles were noted, particularly adjacent to the Velux windows, two having been provided to the front right hand side. General signs of hiping could be seen to the right hand side party wall, indicating some distortion of the roof frame. The pointing to the ridge tiles to the front gable end were worn, and moss growth could be seen. Isolated slipped tiles were noted

to the right hand side face of the gable, and indeed a number of tiles had been renewed. Wear was also generally evident to the verge tile pointing. Minor gaps could be seen to the valley tiles at the abutment of the right hand side gabled roof and front main roof, again suggesting slight distortion of the roof frame.

To the front right hand side, a dormer window could be seen. The side cheeks and upper covering appeared to be in zinc. Discolouration was noted and some staining could be found. A number of slipped and chipped tiles could be seen to the front right hand side face around the dormer. Further tiles had worn and perished, particularly adjacent to the internal return. Further repair and attention is required. The eaves tiles also required resetting. Ideally some form of flashing should also have been provided at the abutment of the main upper pitch and sloping surface to help ensure that water penetration does not occur.

Tiled drips could be seen to the head of the ground and first floor windows. A number of these tiles were also cracked, slipped or broken and overhaul and replacement is required, in part.

To the front left hand side of the gable, when viewed from the opposite side of the street, many tiles to the internal face had worn and flaked, cracked or slipped, and overhaul is required. You should bear in mind that when trying to replace one or two tiles it is likely that the tiles adjacent will also deteriorate, and if this is an overall indication of the deterioration of the tiles throughout then it may be necessary to carry out resurfacing of a larger area. This, however, can only be established when works commence, but is, however, likely. The front verge tiles were distorted, and if carrying out works to the tiles then these should be reset to allow for the surface water to drain internally. Noticeable discolouration could be seen to the main roof tiles to the base of the chimney, again suggesting that wear has occurred. Significant hipping could be seen to the party wall to the left hand side with No 64, and a number of the tiles had again slipped. Further displacement could also be seen at high level, again suggesting that this section of the roof has more noticeably deflected.

To the rear, the dormer roof from the loft extension took up the majority of the roof surface. The upper flat roof appears to be of a felted nature. You should bear in mind that flat roof surfaces by their very nature require periodic maintenance and attention in order to ensure they reach their maximum life span, and when laid well tend to have a maximum life duration of between twelve and fifteen years.

The original tiling to the rear main roof surface had not been changed, and again signs of wear could be seen. Hipping was noted, more noticeably to the left hand side party wall. Isolated tiles were worn and perished, further had lifted and slipped. Newer tiles in part could be seen to the base of the rear right hand side party chimney stack.

CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLASHINGS

To the party wall with No 64, a chimney stack could be seen. General repointing is required. A number of aials could be seen, and these would also benefit from being further secured. To the base of the chimney, metallic, what would appear to be, lead flashings were noted. Some signs of recent repointing could be seen. All four chimney pots were open, and if the chimney has been removed, in part, then ideally the flues should be covered and ventilated. Again, signs of wear and deterioration could be seen to the pointing to the internal face of the chimney.

I would refer you to my earlier comments concerning the absence of a flashing at the abutment of the turn of the roof adjacent to the side dormer window. You will no doubt ensure that soakers have been provided below the side cheeks with the tile abutments. These could not be seen. Almost certainly, soakers have also been provided at the abutment of the side return and tile hanging. Having regard to the condition of a number of the tiles in this area it would also be prudent to allow for the replacement of the soakers upon full exposure.

Slight weakness could be seen to the rendering to the head of the tile hanging to the ground and first floor bays. It may be prudent to provide cover flashings in these areas. To the base of the dormer window a metallic cover flashing could be seen. This had been painted. Splits were noted, and whilst wedges could be seen to the flashing, it would appear that mastic has not been used below the window cill, and this should be provided. It should also be noted that a tile was missing below the flashing and I would generally refer you to my comments concerning the tiled roof in this vicinity.

From the rear, the chimney stacks were difficult to see due to the location of the rear dormer window. To the rear left hand side, again general signs of wear were evident to the party chimney stack pointing. The flashings again gave the impression of having been more recently renewed.

To the party wall to the rear right hand side, a further chimney could be seen. This appears to have been capped. No pots were noted. Wear in part could be seen to the brickwork pointing. The chimney appears to butt the side face of the dormer and stepped flashings had again been provided. These appeared of a leaded nature. Below the upper dormer windows and at the abutment of the rear tile hanging and rear main roof, flashings could be seen, again having been laid in lead. Lapping could be found which is good practice, as lead should be laid in no greater than 1.1m runs to avoid splits taking place.

EAVES GUTTERS AND RAINWATER PIPES

Between the premises, No 66 and 64, a central valley has been formed between the gable roofs. This is a regular problematic area, and it would be prudent to have this periodically cleared. You will no doubt clarify as to when the last time the valley was renewed. Signs of bitumen paint could be seen to the front face of the flashing that was exposed leading into the hopper head. It is likely that debris will be found from the roof surfaces with tiles, and the condition of the central valley should be established. Your solicitor will also no doubt clarify that the replacement of this is a joint liability with the building owners of No 64.

To the front of the valley, a cast iron hopper head and downpipe could be found. The pipe and hopper head had in fact been painted, albeit blistering could be seen, suggesting that corrosion has in fact set in. The pipe was partially obscured with a wall climbing shrub. Splits could be seen to the joints, and noticeable corrosion was evident at low level. It may be prudent to anticipate the replacement of the hopper head and downpipe in the near future. To the base of the tiled roof over the entrance canopy, to the right hand side, and downpipe, this was again in cast iron. The equipment was partially overgrown. Weepage could be seen to the joints, and signs of running over were noted. Again, heavy corrosion could be found to the rear face of the pipe. Deterioration was evident to the joints. When carrying out renewal, it may be prudent to renew all of the equipment. At high level to the right hand side of the gable, what appears to be a PVC gutter was noted directing the rainwater over the tiled roof, and this is highly likely to bring about the more rapid deterioration to the tiles and soakers in this limited area. Again, having regard to the siting of the dormer roof and main upper pitch, there is a possibility that blockages may occur to the base of the valley. It may be prudent to adjust the height of the guttering and possibly to provide a limited downpipe running over the adjoining roof, clipped to the side return to minimise water damage in the future.

To the rear, PVC equipment could be found. You should bear in mind that this form of guttering is relatively maintenance free, but suffers from thermal movement and expansion in the summer heat, and contracts in the winter cold, causing the joints to open up and leak. It is therefore common that over a period of time that leakage will occur, particularly from the corners, which can be seen by white salt staining to the undersides. The joint should then be opened up, mastic filled and re-clipped.

No clips were noted to the downpipe from the upper dormer. This may simply have been wedged in position, and this is poor practice. Continuous gutter runs could be found to the main eaves to both right and left hand side, and no downpipes were noted to the demise, downpipes being noted to both adjoining premises. Your solicitor will no doubt clarify any joint repairing obligations or easements that may exist in this respect. Slight signs of weepage to the main gutter joints and running over the gutters could be found. Some of the clips

appear to have become undone, noticeably to the centre and this should be checked. It is possible that very slight roof spread has occurred in this vicinity which may well have caused this particular occurrence.

MAIN WALLS

To the front elevation, these are of a solid brickwork nature having been rough rendered and painted above window cill height to the ground floor.

General blistering could be seen to the rendering, particularly to the first floor level and gable areas, and it is likely that hollow sections of rough render/pebble dash will be found. To the lower level, only minor hollow pockets of pebble dash could be seen. Signs of making good were noted around the windows to the reveals, almost certainly having been carried out after the windows were replaced. This had not, however, been undertaken to an aesthetically high standard. You should bear in mind that after full repair has been instigated then redecoration to the elevation will be required. The texture finish immediately below the first floor window and directly above to the gable was not entirely consistent, which would tend to suggest that some repairs have probably been carried out at some point in time. It may be prudent to clarify as to what repairs were undertaken in this respect.

The incidence of timber infestation and decay is common having regard to the embedded nature of timbers in this form of construction, and upon any major refurbishment programme, almost certainly additional works may be found including replacement lintels, bresssummers and their replacement of timbers when exposed. Having regard to this, it is of high importance that all avenues of dampness are excluded from the structure, for over a prolonged period both wet and dry rot will ultimately occur. You should bear in mind that the lintels to the head of the window openings to the front face would be more particularly at risk.

At low level, weakness could be seen to the brickwork pointing in part. Old signs of fracturing could also be found through the brickwork pointing, noticeably to the centre of the bay. Cracking could be found to the plinth which had perished in part, albeit signs of repair could be found. Two subfloor ventilation points were noted to the front face. It may be prudent to have at least one additional subfloor ventilation point provided to the bay. A further vent was noted to the recessed porch area to the right hand side.

You should bear in mind that where restricted ventilation occurs, coupled with dampness, the onset of wood beetle infestation to the ground floor timbers, together with wet and dry rot, is significantly increased.

To the front right hand side, the plinth was hollow. Corrosion could also be seen to the air grille at low level. Slight signs of distortion could be found to the head of the main entrance door and window opening. Fracturing could be seen to the brick wall between the demise and No 68, suggesting that this has pulled forward, albeit it should be borne in mind that there were no recent indications to suggest that deflection has recently occurred.

To the first floor internal return of the gable, extensive staining could be seen at the abutment of the tiles and pebble dash, and whilst some of the render appears to have been made good, I would refer you to my earlier comments, whereby this should be exposed, and you should allow for the soakers to be renewed.

It should be noted that between the ground and first floor bays, signs of making good could be seen between the window openings, again suggesting that the lintel may well have deflected slightly in the past.

To the rear, the walls had been pebble dashed and painted to their full height. Again, general signs of making good could be seen around the windows and doors, albeit not to a particularly high standard. It is possible that the lintels to the ground floor may also have been changed, and no doubt you will clarify this if possible. Some hollow pockets of pebble dash could again be seen. At low level the subfloor ventilation points had been upgraded and terracotta air bricks could be seen, four vents being noted, which is good practice. Deterioration was evident to the stone cill from the kitchen door.

At least three vents could be seen to the rear elevation providing an element of fixed ventilation within which is good practice. The grilles were again slightly corroded.

It should be noted that where pipework protrudes from the rear through the walls, making good had not been carried out to a particularly high standard.

The British Research Establishment has indicated, as a guideline, that cracking up to 4 mm wide within clay soils is generally acceptable on level sites, on sloping sites the variance is less. It should be noted that London Clay is susceptible to seasonal movement and whilst modern buildings are designed to cater for this, at times of excessive seasonal variations, cracking tends to occur to the structure, particularly at the weaker points between the openings and depending upon the site conditions and size of the fractures, will depend upon the severity and classification of damage. It should be noted that the fracturing seen to the property was within this parameter.

WOODWORK AND DECORATIONS

To the front elevation, the windows had been replaced in uPVC. You will no doubt clarify as to whether any guarantees or warranties are still available in this respect. The windows had not been fitted with trickle vents which is poor practice. No permanent fixed ventilation could be seen through the masonry to the rooms, and this is also poor practice. It is likely that the absence of through ventilation will increase the likelihood of condensation forming within.

The original timbers could be seen below the tiled drips and these will require periodic redecoration. No flexible sealants were noted around the frames to the reveals, and these should be provided in order to avoid water penetration occurring, for if this is allowed to persist over a prolonged period of time this will encourage softness, rot and decay to set in, coupled with penetrating dampness internally, which in turn will lead to the deterioration of the plasterwork and decorative finishes and lead to the onset of wet and ultimately dry rot to internal adjacent timbers. This must of course be avoided where at all possible.

You should also ensure that sealants are provided below the window cills as these had also, been omitted. I would also refer you to my comments concerning the cover flashing below the dormer window.

To the dormer window itself, the original timbers were noted. Signs of newer external architraves could be seen, albeit this was not to a high standard, the timbers not having been scribed well. Piecing in of timber was also noted. Open joints and blistering could be found and it is probable that upon full and close examination that rot and decay will be found around the framework. If possible, comments will be made from within the bedroom.

General signs of wear and deterioration could be seen to the decorative finishes to the main entrance door. A fixed window was noted adjacent to the door, this being of a plastic coated aluminium style. Signs of blistering could be seen to the decorative finishes to the soffit of the canopy, and again periodic redecoration is necessary. General weakness could be seen to the lintel between the pier and main wall. This appears to be laid in four sections. If only the external section has now deteriorated then it is likely that the remaining will be sufficient. When taking down and renewing the gutter and downpipe this should be thoroughly checked and exposed. It may be necessary to piece in a new front facing panel. Again, after preparation, either cover flashings or mastic should be used to help avoid the reoccurrence of this.

I would refer you to my earlier comments concerning the pebble dash, for after this has been made good redecoration should be undertaken. You should also bear in mind that the tiles to

the front right hand side below the dormer had been painted, and again after repair it may be necessary aesthetically to redecorate.

To the rear, the windows and doors had all been replaced in uPVC. To the upper dormer, trickle vents were noted, albeit no trickle vents could be seen to either ground or first floor, and I would refer you to my earlier comments.

The kitchen door appears to have dropped on his hinges, and distortion could be seen to the hinges. Gaps were also noted around the reveals and framework to the ground and first floor areas and these should be made good and flexible sealants provided on completion.

A high level, redecoration is required to the rafter ends and gutter boards, particular attention being necessary adjacent to the soil vent pipe. The decorative finishes to the rear main wall were also showing signs of wear.

SOIL PIPES AND GULLIES

To the front centre, a gully could be seen. The grille was partially blocked and should be cleared. An external pipe was noted in this vicinity. The tap had been sited over a gully which is good practice. The pipe and tap had not, however, been insulated, and this should be upgraded. The downpipe to the centre appears to discharge into a central gully. Having regard to the current layout of the garden, the gully was primarily in the adjoining front garden, and it may be prudent to establish as to whether this is a joint gully and/or the responsibility of the adjoining owner. It would be good practice in any event to rod the traps through.

To the rear, the main soil vent pipe could be found, the lower section being in cast iron. Signs of staining could be seen, and corrosion was noted to its rear face. Some weepage is occurring which would appear to be emanating from the first floor bathroom joints, albeit staining could also be seen at high level. The connection and pipework should be checked and it may be prudent to allow for some repair in this respect.

A hopper head and downpipe could also be found to the rear main wall which had corroded and should be renewed. To the rear right hand side, a further PVC hopper head and downpipe could be found. A slightly awkward detail could be seen. Signs of backing up could be found to the pipe, the lower section being in the original cast iron, and it may be prudent to renew the lower section and to allow for an open run into the gully. Again the gullies to the rear should be cleared and rodded through. A poor entry angle was noted from the pipes from the ground floor, and signs of backing up and running over could be seen. The main soil vent pipe discharges directly into the system.

Within the rear terrace, an inlaid inspection chamber could be found. This was, however, too heavy to lift. To the rear main wall, an external tap could be seen. This had not been sited over a gully. Again the pipework had not been insulated, and this should be upgraded.

FENCES, BOUNDARIES AND PAVED AREAS

To the front, low rise boundaries only could be seen. To the left hand side, a timber picket fence was noted. To the right hand side, the adjoining owners had built up a low rise brick wall.

The majority of the garden had been laid in key block. This was uneven and had compacted where the car wheels predominantly stopped, suggesting that inadequate preparation had been undertaken in the first instance. Some moss growth could be seen between the paviours. It is likely that water retention will also occur. Re-laying will be necessary.

To the rear, the boundaries were mainly of a close boarded nature. These were generally windswept, and wore more evidently to the right hand side. A vehicular accessway had also been provided. You will no doubt clarify both rights of access and liability for its upkeep.

A crazy paved terrace and path could be found and slight unevenness was noted. What would appear to be a bedding area had been removed, and making good to the end of the terrace had been carried out to a modest standard only.

It should be noted that to the adjoining premises, to the left hand side, a single storey extension could be found. It would appear likely that the right hand side flank wall of the extension has been built as a party wall. It may be prudent to clarify the position in this respect. In addition, a vent has also been provided to the limited roof void, flush to the wall, however it would be prudent to clarify in any Party Wall Awards or Agreements as to whether any specific rights have been entered into or agreed.

TREES AND OUTBUILDINGS

To the front, a small tree has only recently been planted by the Local Authority in the pavement. No significant vegetation could be found. It should be noted that only a single crossover has been provided from the road to the driveway and it may be prudent to provide a double crossover.

To the rear, a number of small trees and shrubs could be found. To the rear of the garden what appears to be an apple tree was noted. You should ensure that the vegetation is

regularly maintained. To the rear of the garden a timber shed could be seen which appeared generally worn, albeit serviceable, repairs now being required.

You should bear in mind that the area, being predominantly of London Clay is highly susceptible to ground fluctuations caused by prolonged hot, dry and/or cold periods, particularly when exacerbated by vegetation growth. Below average rainfall occurred during the 1990s and this led to many claims for subsidence, particularly where adjoining vegetation was found. The Summer of 2003 was also particularly bad and many new claims for subsidence were made. It is therefore of the utmost importance to ensure that the vegetation is adequately managed to minimise the risk of any future subsidence occurring. It is common practice for buildings within the area to be insured for subsidence, albeit subject to a policy excess, and you will no doubt ensure that suitable and adequate insurance is available.

The possibility of future movement cannot be ruled out. Should plaster cracking internally or fracturing externally be noted, then the situation will of course have to be reassessed, however on the basis that the vegetation is attended to then the risks involved which would apply to the demise are those which would generally prevail within the area, and this is well known to the majority of insurance companies. You should bear in mind that having regard to the history of movement within the recent past, a number of building insurers are also insisting that as part of the policy that there is a positive obligation to attend to local vegetation, otherwise this could render the policy void.

INTERNAL

CEILINGS AND WALLS

Areas of hollow wall plaster could be found throughout the property. It is also likely that some of the skim finish has also separated. You should bear in mind that in any redecoration this may lead to areas of replastering being required. Plaster cracking could be found throughout the property, noticeably to the head of the doorway openings. Some of the ceiling plasterboard fixings were also noted. It would appear likely that the majority of the plaster cracking is due to the refurbishment works in the past, and the loft conversion.

DOORS AND FRAMES

The doors were not to a high standard. A number of warped and poorly fitting. A few caught on the floors when fully opened. The paintwork had perished and open joints could generally be found. It should be noted that not all of the door jambs had been upgraded. The doors were not fire rated. No intumescent strips had been provided and the doors were not self closing.

It should be noted that the door, particularly to the rear kitchen leading to the garden was difficult to operate and appeared to have dropped on the hinges, this should be adjusted. Daylight could also be seen through the door frame to the rear reception room, also suggesting that deflection has occurred. It should be noted that the doors and frames internally were generally out of true, the heads of the doors not being well fitting. You should however bear in mind that internal deflection is extremely common in buildings of this age, style and calibre and I would also refer you generally to my comments concerning the plaster cracking that could be found to the head of the doors, which almost certainly has been brought about in part due to the loft conversion.

FLOORS AND PARTITIONS

The floors appeared generally out of true, it should however be noted that the ground floor had mainly been overlaid with a laminate flooring and this may well have buckled giving a greater appearance of deflection of the floor itself. It should however be noted that flexing could be found to the rear reception room floor to the right hand side and I would refer you to my later comments. Loose and creaking flooring was noted to the front bedroom and it maybe prudent to consider the screw fixing of some of the floorboards. There were indications that some of the internal partitions had dropped, again as a consequence of the loft conversion, particularly from the front bedroom adjacent to the hallway itself.

TIMBERS AND FITTINGS

Almost certainly high internal temperatures will prevail as general signs of splits and gaps could be seen to the window sills and skirtings, this was more noticeable adjacent to the radiators. I would also refer you to my comments concerning the open joints to the doors. Built in shelf units and cupboards could be found which were generally to a fair standard, the treads and risers to the stairs were slightly loose and creaked and again this may well be heat induced, re-glue and screw fixing of the blocks should be undertaken. Whilst the windows had been changed to the ground and first floor, these were of a slightly older nature and some of the window rubbers were showing signs of deterioration.

CHIMNEY BREASTS AND FIREPLACES

To the front reception room, an open fireplace was noted, I would refer you to my later comments having regard to the gas facility. To the bedroom above, the chimney could not be seen as this was enclosed with the cupboard. The rear chimney had been removed from both ground and first floor, however this is likely to have remained within the loft room itself having been panelled over. To the right hand side, again a small flue appears to have been removed from the ground floor kitchen and this is likely to be found to the rear of the shower

facility within the loft itself. It would be prudent to clarify that where the chimney breast had been removed, that these have been adequately supported. I understand from the vendor that the work was undertaken some five years ago, albeit no Party Wall Notices or Awards were entered into. You should bear in mind that where the chimneys are no longer actively used, these should be capped and ventilated.

KITCHEN AND BATHROOM FACILITIES AND DECORATIVE FINISHES

The property has been subject to modernisation over the course of the last five years. The kitchen units were generally in a fair state, albeit the worktop was worn and had been poorly joined. Deterioration was more evident to the front face of the worktop itself and around the sink. It is likely that the top itself will have to be replaced in the medium term. Within the bathroom, hollow, loose and defective tiles could be found, more particularly around the bath itself. It should be noted that the internal decorative conditions were of a mixed nature and it would be prudent to allow for general redecoration to the ground and first floor after the property has been vacated.

WOOD BEETLE INFESTATION, ROT DECAY AND DAMPNES

You should bear in mind that wood beetle infestation is common in buildings of this age, style and calibre, albeit from the timbers possible to see, no infestation was readily evident. I would however refer you to my comments concerning the rear reception room floor which flexed and this may well suggest that some defects will be found upon full exposure.

Within the kitchen, higher than normal moisture readings could be found to the rear main wall to the rear of the plaster, the area should be kept under observation, this could be due to defective pipework, spillage or condensation and is unlikely to be due to a defective damp proof course. It would be prudent however to reinspect in say three to six months time to establish the condition at that point.

I understand from the vendor that no works have been carried out in the past to the property. As indicated above, it would be prudent to have specialist reports in the near future to establish as to whether there is any change in the condition of the masonry following your own occupation. No tests were however undertaken.

VENTILATION, CONDENSATION AND INSULATION

As previously advised, almost certainly the building has been heated too high in the past, it should be noted that extremely poor ventilation can be found within and this undoubtedly has

led to the splits within the timbers. Ideally the ventilation through the walls should be upgraded and fixed permanent ventilation provided to all habitable areas.

Within the bathroom, mould growth could be seen to the sealants and grouting in part suggesting that the room is subject to condensation. A mechanical vent could be found, albeit no permanent fixed vent had been installed.

You should bear in mind that condensation can occur as a result of certain climatic conditions outside the property, as a result of lack of ventilation or insulation, or inadequate heating in a property, or as a result of defective construction, design or habits of its occupants. There are special paints with anti-condensation and fungicidal properties available for use on the internal wall surfaces prone to mould growth. A control of condensation is of vital importance and the following matters should be implemented.

To fully ventilate rooms to the outside during and immediately after cooking, washing or bathing, whenever the windows show signs of misting. To restrict the drying of washing indoors only to rooms with open windows and closed internal doors, and to avoid the use of fuelless oil and gas heaters or tumble dryers not ventilated to the outside.

Adequate heating will help prevent surface condensation, internal wall and ceiling surfaces should be made as air-tight as possible to reduce the passage of water vapour into the walls and roof spaces. Adequate insulation should be provided to help prevent the occurrence of condensation in cold internal surfaces such as at the junction of external walls and internal walls.

It should be noted that within the loft drawings, no eaves cupboard is detailed to the front, however as this has been opened then the area should be fully insulated. You should bear in mind that access to the front void is problematic due to the differing floor levels.

SERVICES

Gas. Connected to the company's main supply, the meter can be found to the front elevation. A gas fire was noted within the front reception room with electronic ignition which is good practice, albeit the isolating valve should be upgraded. You should bear in mind that no permanent fixed ventilation could be found to the room and this must be provided should you wish to utilise the gas fire. No tests were however undertaken.

Electricity. Connected to the company's main supply. A modern meter and consumer board could be found to the understairs area and signs of earthing were noted. I understand from the vendor that the property was rewired approximately five years ago. The mechanical vent

to the first floor WC was extremely noisy. A number of spotlights could be found throughout the property and you should have regard to the fire spread risks. It would be prudent to clarify as to whether the openings have been upgraded in this respect. A number of the transformers appeared defective as the spot lights did not all operate evenly when turned on, the light fittings within the bathroom and shower were the wrong style for these rooms. It should be noted that within the kitchen itself a socket had been sited too close to the sink. It would be prudent to allow for some minor adjustment and possibly upgrading the vent to the WC itself. No tests were however undertaken.

Water. Connected to the company's main supply, cold water being directly at mains pressure. I would refer you to my external comments concerning the soil vent pipe where leakage was noted, signs of staining and leaks could be seen around the mixer tap to the kitchen.

Within the kitchen itself a Vaillant combination boiler could be found, it would be prudent to clarify and confirm that this has sufficient output for the property having regard to its extended size. Within the boiler itself there is a timer and thermostat, the hot water having been set nearest the highest level. It should be noted that modern radiators and thermostatically operated valves could also be found. There should however be relatively easy access to a top up facility for the boiler water pressure itself, however this could not be seen and may well be to the rear of the dishwasher that can be found under the worktop below the boiler. At the time of my inspection the heating system was not in use, water had however been heated to a relatively high level. Within the upper shower room an electric shower fitting was noted, this was not tested. No tests were undertaken.

INTERNAL ALTERATIONS, PLANNING PERMISSION AND BUILDING REGULATION CONSENT

The property has been subject to a loft conversion and the vendor was able to show me letters from the Local Authority confirming that the loft was undertaken under permitted development and indeed that a Certificate of Completion had also been obtained from the Building Regulation department dated the 1st December 2004. It would however be prudent to clarify as to what works were undertaken after the final inspection itself as the doors were not fire rated or self closing and of course having regard to the front cupboard within the loft room, inadequate insulation now prevailed. I understand that the provision of the steelwork was not undertaken with Party Wall Notices in place.

You will note my earlier comments concerning the removal of the chimneys and again I understand that this was undertaken by building contractors, albeit Party Wall Notices had

again not been issued. It has been assumed that works would have complied at the time with Building Regulation requirements.

TENURE

I understand that you will be acquiring the freehold interest in the above, which I have assumed to be free from onerous restrictions and encumbrances. The rights of way over the rear vehicular accessway should be clarified.

Your solicitor should also advise you as to whether there are any highway developments, environmental or planning proposals which may materially affect, directly or indirectly, the property, whether any Tree Preservation Orders exist. Your solicitor will also no doubt advise you with regard to the ownership and maintenance of the perimeter boundaries, obtain any certificates of guarantees for damp-proof coursing or timber treatment, establish any boiler maintenance contracts or heating installation guarantees, advise you with regard to any mining or other subterranean activities if known to have taken place, or as to whether any flooding has occurred to the property, ascertain any contributions with regard to maintenance and upkeep of the front highway or other access ways and check as to whether there has any been any boundary disputes. It would also be prudent to establish that where applicable all works carried out to the property have been undertaken with full Planning Permission and/or Building Regulation consent.

OPINION AND ADVICE

The property was generally well presented, having been subject to noticeable works of repair, modernisation and alterations over the course of the last five years. It should however be noted that external repairs and some internal improvements were found to be necessary and these have been given in greater detail above.

Structurally the building has experienced slight signs of distortion, however there were no indications to suggest that this was of a recent or active nature, internally the plaster cracking is almost certainly being brought about due to shrinkage of the building materials and the altered loading following the loft conversion itself and again this is entirely consistent with this style of work.

Whilst the main defects have been given in detail above, the works of repair and improvement which will require your attention in the short to medium term include the further overall of the main roof surfaces with particular attention being required to the front and front left hand side slope of the gable itself. You should bear in mind that as works are being undertaken further and additional repairs almost certainly will become necessary and evident. Distortion could

be seen to the roof frame itself with hiping being evident to the party walls and slight roof spread to the rear.

The left hand side chimney stack required more immediate attention with general repointing, ideally where the flues are no longer in active use, the pots should be covered with ventilated cowls. The soaker detail to the front tiled roof required upgrading, particularly to its return edge and adjacent to the low level verge tiles, due to running over timber defects noted.

Ideally the cast iron hopper head, gutters and downpipes to the front should be stripped and renewed, you would be advised to check the central valley for deterioration as this is a common defect. It should be borne in mind that slight roof spread could be found noticeably to the rear.

To the main walls, overhaul is required to the pebble dash to the front and in part to the rear, making good of the decorative finishes will be necessary on completion. Poor quality making good had occurred in the past around the windows and doors where they had been renewed and further upgrading should be carried out to avoid water penetration occurring. On completion of the repairs, flexible sealants are necessary. It should be borne in mind that not only has slight deflection occurred to the front main wall having regard to the fracturing seen and distortion between the windows but also to the front right hand side where the entrance canopy appears to have pulled forward. The plinth at low level and particularly below the canopy was hollow and should be renewed, it would be prudent to provide permanent fixed ventilation to the masonry to all of the habitable rooms. This will help regulate internal temperatures, minimise the future warping, twisting and plaster cracking and hopefully eliminate any condensation that is occurring within.

Overhaul is required to the timbers to the dormer window, however partial upgrading will be necessary to the lintel to the porch to the left hand side as deterioration could be found due to poor detailing from the roof above. After the pebble dash has been repaired to both front and rear, redecoration should be undertaken. It would also be prudent to provide flexible sealants around the windows and below the sills themselves. It would be prudent to clarify as to whether any guarantees are available concerning the windows and doors. To the rear, gaps could be seen to the rear reception room door frames and the kitchen door required adjustment having dropped on the hinges.

The rear soil vent pipe should be checked as leakage could be seen, general making good is required around the pipework itself. The shoes and pipe should be adjusted into the gullies and the pipe to the external tap insulated, the defective soil pipes replaced, the gullies ideally cleared and rodded through.

It should be noted that general unevenness could be seen to the front crazing paving driveway and ultimately it maybe necessary to take up and relay. You would also be advised to check the liability for the rear access road. Internally the kitchen will require replacement in the near future, albeit the work top more imminently, the doors and frames were out of true and poorly fitting and had not been adequately upgraded. The floors were out of true and flexed in part and poor insulation and ventilation was generally noted. After the property has been vacated, almost certainly redecoration will be required.

On the basis that the external repairs are put in hand by you then it is likely that outgoings of between £5,000 - £7,000 would be incurred. Should you need to lift up the crazing paving to the front, reconsolidate and upgrade the load bearing capabilities of the driveway then a further £2,000 - £3,000 may also be incurred in this area. It should be noted that the above figures have been provided purely for guidance purposes, and should not exclusively be relied upon, for should firm estimates be required then building contractors should specifically be asked to tender in this respect. You would be advised to obtain prices prior to exchange of contracts.

It should be noted that the above figure does not include the cost of major roof repairs, supports to the chimney (if found to be necessary), modernisation, internal alteration or redecoration, as these will tend to depend on your own taste and requirements, the above figure also excludes VAT.

On the basis that all of these factors have been given full consideration by you and you feel that these have been adequately reflected in the purchase price, then I would confirm that there would appear to be no single reason as to why the acquisition of the above should not proceed.

It should be borne in mind that building defects are constantly evolving and can also arise from changing weather conditions between the date of our inspection and your taking occupation of the property. Vandalism has also been known to occur particularly when buildings are left vacant prior to occupation, and adequate security arrangements should be made or maintained where appropriate. This is a matter between you, the vendor, and the estate agents where applicable.

The Report has been provided for your use and is confidential to you and your professional advisers and should not be reproduced in whole or in part without written authority. No

responsibility will be accepted for any other person and The Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999 will not apply.

Russell Spiro FRICS