

INTRODUCTION

Instructions were received from ***** to carry out a Building Survey at *****. The survey was carried out in accordance with our Standard Terms and Conditions which had previously been forwarded to our client and a further copy is appended to this report.

The property was inspected on ***** the weather was bright but overcast. The property was occupied at the time of our inspection. Directions and room locations stated are as when facing the property from the front boundary.

THE PROPERTY

This property is a two storey semi detached house constructed, we believe, in the early 1930's.

The property is traditionally constructed with cavity brick outer walls set beneath a pitched timber roof clad with roofing tiles whilst internally floors were of suspended timber construction.

To the rear of the property there was an integral single storey back addition which was of similar age to the main structure.

The property was conveniently located for local shopping and leisure facilities at Eltham. There was a driveway to the right hand side of the property giving access to a single garage. As you may be aware, parking in ***** can be difficult and the road is often busy. This is particularly the case around Christmas.

Directly to the rear of the property is a supermarket car park which may give rise to some noise and disturbance. You are advised to consider this carefully and perhaps visit the property at various times to consider this more fully. It may be that night deliveries are made to the store.

The precise nature of surrounding commercial property, working hours and possible inconvenience or nuisance caused to the property should be ascertained by enquiries, by way of your solicitor and the vendor, including any possible change of use to which such property may be put to under the terms of existing planning permission, permitted change of use and use changes within the context of any Local or Borough Plan.

It was assumed that the Freehold interest in the property was for sale with vacant possession, but this must be verified by our client before contracts for sale are exchanged. Our client should also verify that there are no unduly onerous covenants attaching or affecting the land and that easements, rights of way, passage of drainage, etc, are all available for current and proposed usage of the property and gardens, before contracts are exchanged.

Accommodation

The accommodation to this property comprised:

Ground Floor Reception room one, reception room two, reception room three, kitchen, WC

First Floor Bedroom one, bedroom two, bedroom three, bedroom four, bedroom five (box room), bathroom, WC

THE ROOF

The roof was accessed by means of a loft hatch and timber retractable loft ladder of similar age to the property. This was located in the landing area.

The main roof was of pitched timber construction clad with plain clay tiles laid on sawn softwood battens. There was an underlay beneath the tile covering of bituminous roofing felt in visually satisfactory order.

Within the roof space it could be seen that the main roof to this structure was constructed conventionally in sawn softwood.

Roof construction was arranged traditionally as a double hipped end form with rafters spanning primarily from front to rear and ceiling joists spanning from left to right with binders running perpendicular above these.

To the central area a raised platform had been provided comprising joists running perpendicular to the ceiling joists supporting a substantial boarded area. This appears to be original to the property and, given that there is a dormer to the front of the property, it may be that one time it was intended to use this as a further room.

Purlins supported the rafters at approximately mid span and struts propped the purlins, being themselves conventionally supported by partitions beneath.

It was apparent that there were some longitudinal splits in the structural timbers. These splits were not thought to be structurally significant at this stage.

There was some discolouration to the roof timbers due to what appeared to be previous water ingress and condensation occurring.

There was no form of cross ventilation to this roof space. Although not required at the time of construction, cross ventilation is now considered a requirement under the building regulations and it assists in preventing build-up of condensation with its associated timber rot problems. Our client should note that this is not a defect and we would not expect to find cross-ventilation on a roof of this age, although cross-ventilation could be usefully provided at some point in the future.

The timber sizes utilising this roof space were reviewed and felt to be as we would expect in a property of this age and style but, as is often the case when inspecting older properties, the timbers are of a smaller cross section than would currently be required.

The roof timbers were inspected where visible and accessible for evidence of attack by wood boring insect and fungal decay and were found to be largely free from such defect, although you should be aware that we were unable to inspect every length and every face of timber.

There were a number of stored chattels in the roof space and this limited our inspection to some degree.

Should the opportunity occur to expose further timbers within the roof space, it would be prudent to inspect these for attack by wood boring insect and fungal decay and should there be any doubt whatever, a survey by a timber care specialist should be commissioned.

The dormer to the front of the property had been well constructed with timber cheeks and a pair of diagonal timber braces supporting the sides.

The feet of the rafters bore upon timber wall plates which were fixed to the head of the outer walls and the general arrangement was considered to be satisfactory.

There was no access to inspect the structure of the flat roof above the rear single storey extension. This appeared to be constructed of timber joists spanning from front to rear which would have had a decking, possibly of plywood, laid over onto which the asphalt covering had been laid. Similarly we were unable to inspect the structure of the flat roofs over the front bays.

The main roof space was not insulated and we strongly recommend that mineral fibre-type insulation is laid between the joists. There were indications that the rear flat roof was also not insulated.

Roof Coverings

The roofs were covered with plain clay tiles which appeared to be original. Generally speaking these were in satisfactory order although one or two had slipped slightly and there was slight evidence of some deflection and general settlement in the roof pitches manifesting itself as slight opening of tiles joints adjacent to the hips most evident at the front.

The mortar beds to the ridge and hip bonnets were in generally fair condition although in places these appeared to have become somewhat friable and fallen away and some localised repointing and repair would be beneficial.

To the rear of the property the flat roof had been finished with asphalt with, what appeared to be, a lead flashing to its perimeter. This was of some age and the asphalt was not beginning to deteriorate with significant ripples and splits evident and a large number of sizeable bubbles.

There was no evidence of any leakage at the time of inspection below this roof but given its condition future leakage cannot be ruled out. We are of the view that you should consider replacing the cover to this roof in the near future as it is approaching the end of its serviceable life. Ideally it would be preferable to replace this with asphalt in view of the extended life span of this material although it would be slightly cheaper to lay a felted covering. You should be aware, however, that felted coverings of this type have a typical life span in the order of 7-10 years.

Similarly the two flat roofs to the front of the property above the square bays were formed in lead. These appear to be original and the lead was now beginning to deteriorate as a result of thermal action and some splits were evident. No internal leakage was present at the time of our inspection but again this cannot be ruled out in the future. We are of the view that both of these flat roofs require attention and replacement.

To the left flank of the property were a pair of chimney stacks and to the right flank a single chimney stack. These were rather tall and narrow in profile and all had developed very slight inward leans.

These leans were felt to be within acceptable limits and appear to be historic. Leans such as these were caused as a result of the previous use of the flue for solid fuel heating. The waste gases from these were very often sulphurous and this condensed from the inner face of the flues as a mild form of sulphuric acid which affects the mortar joints and this can result in some misalignment such as this.

The rear left hand stack had developed a horizontal fracture at approximately three quarters height and this, again, is typical of a sulphurous attack. This flue may have deteriorated more significantly than others and some localised high level reconstruction may be necessary.

The flue to the rear of the property passing through the roof space and through the rear roof pitch served the gas boiler and was in rather better order. This flue also exhibited some indications of sulphate attack, particularly to the render within the loft space, but we do not consider that any immediate remedial work is necessary to this portion of the structure.

The abutments between flues and roof pitches were weathered with lead flashings and, again, these appeared to be original and were beginning to approach the end of their serviceable life and may require some attention in the near future although there were no indications of any significant leakage through these.

We were unable to inspect effectively the flat roof above the front dormer.

The rainwater goods had generally been replaced with upvc guttering and downpipe although some sections of cast iron downpipe had been retained. These were in generally fair order with the exception of that to the rear right hand side which had cracked on the joint and this section should be replaced.

Gutters and downpipes appeared adequately sized. As the inspection was not carried out during heavy rain, the rainwater goods were not observed in operation. Debris in gutters required clearing out.

MAIN WALLS

The walls were of brick and block or brick and brick cavity construction found to be approximately 270 mm in thickness. We were unable to identify the presence of any cavity wall insulation.

The walls were inspected for evidence of significant structural movements and, generally speaking, there were no indications of significant structural movements or settlements to the main walls at salient points.

We did, however, note to the rear left hand side of the property some historic movement had occurred. This was manifesting itself as raking fracturing in the internal chimney breast of the main reception room and to the spine wall in reception room two.

Further fracturing was evident around the rear left hand flank window and around the left hand rear elevation window to the single storey extension.

There were no indications of any movement at first floor level nor any indications of movement occurring within ceilings or doors and windows binding.

We are of the view that the rear left hand corner of this property has many years ago suffered from slight subsidence. The extent of this is very limited and there were no indications that this was ongoing nor any indications of typical cause such as tree roots or drainage. In conversation with the vendor, he confirmed that the cracks had been present for very many years and, in this instance, we have no reason to doubt him.

With any property that has shown movement in the past there is always the possibility that further movement can take place. We do not, however, consider this to be an exceptional risk. It is relevant that the damage described above has taken some 70 years to develop. It is normal for such movement to be visually monitored; that is, examined periodically.

The risk of further movement was thought likely to be slight or occurring over an extended period and on a gradual basis.

Some local stressing was occurring in the brickwork, manifesting itself at the corner of the window openings or between window openings. Cracking was due to normal expansion and contraction due to thermal or moisture movement in the brickwork.

Such cracks tend to open up and move with temperature and moisture changes in the structure.

Until recently, the inner and outer skins of cavity walls were tied together with galvanised finish steel wall ties. There have been occasions where these ties have suffered corrosion to the point where they have lost their tying effect between the two wall skins. There was no visual indication that such a particular problem required further investigation. There is, however, a small potential risk with all property of this type and age.

The pointing, or mortar joints, between the bricks was deteriorating markedly at the front elevation. This was now very friable and, in our view, requires repointing sooner rather than later. Should this not be undertaken then water will continue to penetrate into the cavity and this may cause deterioration in the cavity wall ties.

The general arrangement in properties of this type and age is that timber lintels are incorporated above the windows. Unfortunately without works of exposure, we are unable to confirm whether such lintels are present. We have seen instances where timber lintels set into solid bricks walls of this age have decayed as a result of penetrating dampness through the obviously thinner depth of brickwork externally. Once again, unfortunately, without works of exposure it is not possible to confirm absolutely whether timber lintels have deteriorated but we saw no evidence to suggest that such deterioration is or had occurred.

The rear and flank elevations to the property were largely pebble dashed.

The pebble dash finishes to the flank and rear were, where accessible, randomly hammer tested. Pebble dash was found to be in generally satisfactory order but there were patches of hollow and off key pebble dash. These may continue to deteriorate as moisture finds its way between the pebble dash and brickwork. In the medium term some remedial work may become appropriate.

The pebbling was becoming a little sparse in places but there were no significant indications that this required attention in the near future although some attention in the more medium term, say 5-10 years, may become appropriate.

It was possible to identify that a bitumen-based damp proof course had been incorporated. This was evident to the front elevation but had been obscured behind the pebble dashing to the flank and rear elevation. This may have been bridged by the concrete plinths formed at the rear of the property onto which the original coal bunkers had been provided.

Where accessible, walls were tested selectively with a moisture meter, and were found to be free from significant levels of rising dampness.

Similarly when areas around windows and window sills were checked there was no significant evidence of any ongoing damp penetration.

There was some evidence of historic damp penetration to the left hand side of the single storey extension approximately at its abutment with the rear of the main portion of the property. This was checked with an electronic moisture meter and found to be dry at the time of our inspection.

Partitions and Internal Walls

The internal partitions were generally of masonry construction. At ground floor level the partitions were generally of load bearing construction providing intermediate support to first floor joists thereby reducing the depth of these.

At first floor level the partitions running from front to rear were of load bearing construction although care should be taken in removal or alteration of any other partitions. Accordingly it would, we believe, be necessary to provide some additional support should the partition dividing bedroom 5 and the bathroom be removed.

At ground floor level the rear elevation brickwork to the first floor is supported in the main reception room on a substantial downstand beam. We would expect this to be formed in steelwork although unfortunately without works of exposure, it is not possible to confirm the size or suitability of this steel without causing damage.

The condition of the plaster internally appeared generally satisfactory, although pockets of loose plaster were detected when walls and/or partitions were tapped. Care should be taken to avoid dislodging plaster when the wallpaper is stripped. In properties of this age, it is common for plaster to pull away from the wall when wallpaper is stripped and this can loosen further areas of plaster.

There were minor shrinkage cracks occurring at intersections between materials.

The internal walls and partitions were inspected for evidence of significant structural movements and, again, were found to be largely free from such defect although some fracturing as a result of the previously noted movement in the rear left hand corner was recorded. We consider this to be longstanding.

FLOORS

Floors within this property were of suspended timber joists covered with softwood floor boarding. The first floor joists spanned between walls and/or partitions, whilst the ground floor joists were no doubt upon a system of fender walls which reduced the distance of span, and consequently joist depth.

There was some vibration in several of the rooms when a test was applied to the floors, but this was not of significant magnitude.

Owing to carpet and other floor covering throughout the property, floorboards and joists could not be inspected.

It was, however, possible to lift carpets and floor coverings in a number of areas including all reception rooms and bedrooms and in these areas there was no significant evidence of any attack by wood boring insect or fungal decay although we did note that a number of the boards appeared to have been lifted and relayed, almost certainly when rewiring and plumbing work had been undertaken to the property.

Should the opportunity occur to expose floorboards, perhaps when carpets are being renewed, floorboards should be lifted and timbers inspected for woodworm or fungal attack. should there be any doubt whatsoever, a survey by a timber care specialist should be carried out.

There was a system of sub-floor ventilation which appeared to provide sufficient draught to prevent moisture build up with its rot potential.

To the main hall area a narrow strip oak-type flooring had been laid but elsewhere plain floorboards had been provided which had been covered with linoleum and then carpet.

The general arrangement with floors such as this is that the upper floor joists span into the front and rear walls of the property. The joist ends are normally in direct contact with the wall and as a result can be subject to high levels of dampness.

Quite often some timber deterioration can occur to the joist ends and, whilst none was detected during our inspection, without complete exposure of each joist end timber decay in these areas cannot be absolutely ruled out. Typically this decay takes the form of wet rot although in some circumstances dry rot has been known to develop.

The larder floor was of solid, presumed concrete, construction and in visually acceptable condition. Floors such as this should incorporate a damp proof membrane to limit or prevent rising or penetrating dampness but, unfortunately, one cannot confirm whether one is present without destructive examination.

Random readings with an electronic moisture meter were taken across the surface of the floor and no significantly high levels of dampness were recorded suggesting that any damp proof membrane present is performing effectively.

It was not possible to lift carpets and confirm whether any shrinkage cracking or other deterioration had occurred to the surface of the concrete flooring.

Unfortunately we are unable to confirm the manner of construction of this floor or any underlying fill without works of destructive examination.

CEILINGS

The ceilings to this property were generally of the original lath and plaster and in generally fair order although some slight fracturing was noted particularly to the rear at first floor level and this may be due to some slight roof spread occurring in the past but this is not considered to be structurally significant at the current time. Elsewhere slight fracturing was detected to the lath and plaster sections of ceiling and these may require some minor repair at the next decoration.

Patch repair of lath and plaster ceilings is notoriously difficult and it is often a more practical solution to replace the ceilings completely with plasterboard and a skim coat of plaster.

Overall we felt that the ceilings were typical for a property of this age and style.

DECORATIONS

The external decorations to this property were in satisfactory condition, indicating that redecoration had occurred within the last three to five years.

It is usual to find some areas of soft timber which require appropriate attention at redecoration.

Internally the decorations were in fair condition and no doubt our client has inspected these and has formed an opinion as to whether to redecorate or not in the short term.

JOINERY

The joinery throughout this structure was typical to the period of the house and, therefore, somewhat dated by today's standards but otherwise in satisfactory condition, except insofar as qualified herein.

Staircase

The staircase rose from ground to first floor level and was a substantial timber unit with half landing. The half landing gave access to a balcony at the front of the property which was constructed of concrete and appeared to be partially cantilevered out from the front elevation and partially supported upon a pair of brick piers. The arrangement of this was satisfactory.

The staircase itself was a carpentered timber unit secured with glued and wedged joints and other recognised methods of construction. There was good head height to the length of the flight and an adequate handrail and balustrade. One or two loose treads were present but these could easily be resecured.

Built-in Cupboards

There was a small understair cupboard and an airing cupboard to first floor. A small low level cupboard had been provided to reception room two which utilized some of the understair space and recessed vanity cabinets had been provided above the wash basins in the bedrooms.

Kitchen Fittings

The kitchen was fitted with the original range of timber kitchen units and retained the original Butler sink and timber drainers. Quite obviously the kitchen is now considerably out of date and no doubt you have inspected the kitchen area and formed a view as to whether refurbishment and refitting is appropriate or otherwise. In our view the kitchen area would benefit from some refurbishment and this is likely to have a positive effect on the value of the property.

Doors

The front door to the property was a timber unit fitted with a night latch and five lever lock and found to be in satisfactory operable order. The back door was a timber unit fitted with a single lock and security to this could be enhanced.

At the rear of the property were a pair of Crittal metal-framed single glazed french doors in fair order although the door handle had broken.

To the half landing on the stairs there was a pair of Crittal french doors giving access to the front balcony but these could not be inspected as these and the adjoining windows had been insulated with cling-film!

To the rear of the property at first floor there was a door leading from bedroom three to the flat roof area and, again, this was found to be in generally fair condition.

Internally doors were generally of flush-faced timber construction and found to operate effectively although several of the doors were binding slight and required some easing and adjusting. The doors to the rear left hand side of the property were very slightly out of square but not so significant as to cause any particular concern.

The ironmongery was generally commensurate to the age of the house although one or two rather poorly matched units had been provided. Ironmongery in general required some easing and adjusting but otherwise the doors to this property were felt to be in satisfactory order.

Windows

The windows to this property were of Crittal design single glazed metal-framed construction and original to the property. As is quite common, window panes have a tendency to crack in metal windows due to pressure exerted on the panes by corrosion to the frames and several panes had broken although the windows themselves had generally been well maintained.

Our client should be aware that metal windows tend to give poor thermal insulation and may be subject to condensation in winter months.

The bottom sills to several windows had contracted wet rot, no doubt due to poor and inadequate redecoration, thus exposing the timber to condensation internally and weathering externally.

As is common with windows of this age and style some rust and deterioration was beginning to show through the paintwork and several catches and casement stays had broken away. The windows were fitted with after market security locks and a number of the casements had been screwed shut and would require reopening.

Windows were generally in a satisfactory condition. Those windows not frequently opened were stiff to operate.

We understand that you may wish to replace the windows to this property. It is important in our view that you confirm with the local authority that this property is not in a conservation area as this will have a bearing on the style and arrangement of window which you would be allowed to install. It is our view that, if possible, you should attempt to retain the appearance of the Crittal windows.

Skirtings, Picture Rails, Architraves and other Timber Trims

(Some of these elements may not be present in the subject property.)

These were inspected and seen to be in visually satisfactory order where accessible although our client should note that sections were concealed behind fixtures and furnishings.

SERVICES

These were inspected and are commented upon here for information purposes, but the services were not tested as pointed out in our terms and conditions.

Electrical Installation

The property was connected to mains electricity. The incoming main appeared to be a 60 amp single phased service terminating in the understair area with a rewirable fuse panel adjacent, the fuses having been replaced with circuit breakers.

The installation appears to us to be some 20-25 years old and cable distribution is generally by upvc twin and earth type cabling.

The general provision of socket outlets is not good and will need significant enhancement. Generally speaking, socket outlets are of the single socket variety and are surface mounted.

No tests were undertaken on the installation but the usual operation of socket outlets and light fittings was randomly verified and found to be in order.

It was out view that in order to provide an adequate number of socket outlets to this property that rewiring should be considered as it does not appear wholly feasible to modify the existing installation.

Rewiring typically costs in the order of £ per point, that is socket outlet and lighting point with an additional £ for the consumer unit. We therefore recommend that our client allows a budget in the order of £ these works.

It is a recommendation of the electrical regulations that installation are inspected and tested for safety every five years. We saw no indication that such testing had been carried out within that period and our client may consider it prudent to arrange for such a test.

We do not consider that any remedial or repair works will be necessary to the electrical installation but should our client require absolute confirmation then an inspection and report could be obtained from a qualified electrical engineer. If required we could obtain this for you.

Gas

The property was connected to a gas service, this service appeared to have been run in steel gas barrel and copper pipework and served the kitchen and boiler areas only.

The meter was located in the garage and had been run in steel gas barrel into the property. Rather unusually the supply pipe running through the garage was surface mounted and we do recommend that this is secured and protected against any impact damage.

As a normal routine safety precaution, we recommend that the gas service, together with any gas appliances included in the sale of the property, be inspected and tested for safety by a qualified gas fitter. Any recommended service or replacement works should be carried out.

Communications

The property was connected to a telephone service and there appeared to be a television aerial, although the alignment and serviceability of same was not checked.

The property had an alarm system which appeared operable although it was of some age and may not suit our client's requirements.

Cable television may be available and you are advised to make your own enquiries in this regard.

Cold Water System

There was a traditional system incorporating water storage at high level feeding all sanitary accommodation except the kitchen sink, which was mains fed.

The cold water storage tank was a plastic unit located within the roof space. There was a support system for the tank which had a normal ball valve, overflow, and mains connection.

The rising main, where seen, was in lead pipework. A stopcock was provided to the rising main in the kitchen.

Much of the internal distribution pipework is also of lead.

Lead pipework is no longer permitted due to health reasons. Old lead pipes can also develop leaks. Should our client be concerned about the use of a lead pipe, a replacement PVC main would be more suitable and replacement of internal piping should be considered.

Internal pipework should be replaced in adequately sized copper service pipe. The lead pipe was buried in plaster in places. The lime in the plaster will attack the lead and cause it to become pitted and we recommend older lead pipe be renewed.

However, in hard water areas such as this there is evidence that the furring-up that takes place within the lead pipe work does significantly protect against any lead contamination.

The general arrangement appeared serviceable.

This property was not fitted with a water meter.

Hot Water and Heating System

There was a combined system of hot water and central heating and this was quite traditional, in that the boiler fired a primary circuit which included calorifier within the indirect copper cylinder, and steel, water-filled radiators. There was a plastic header tank at high level to provide water supply to this primary circuit which was suitably vented by expansion pipe. Hot water was from the secondary form of heating in the cylinder, and draw off points were provided at the normal locations.

The boiler was a substantial floor-standing Potterton Kingfisher 2 Unit located in the kitchen. This was vented by means of a galvanised metal flue which passed through the existing chimney stack.

The unit was of good size and, although no tests were undertaken, it was working at the time of our inspection and hot water was felt at usual draw off points. The timeclock is located adjacent to the boiler whilst the thermostat is located in the main bedroom.

The hot water cylinder is a little small and is located in the airing cupboard and is perhaps a little small for a property of this size with the number of draw off points required.

It may be that an enlarged hot water cylinder would be preferred.

Space heating was by means of pressed steel panelled radiators augmented by an electric fire in reception room two. These were in visually satisfactory order although of some age and appeared to be adequately sized for their duty.

Our client is advised to ascertain details of the service history of the installation from the vendors.

If the installation has not been regularly serviced a test should be carried out by the Gas Board.

We do not consider, from our visual inspection, that any extensive remedial or repair works will be necessary to the hot water and heating installations but should our client require absolute confirmation, then an inspection and report should be obtained from a qualified plumbing and heating engineer and any recommended works undertaken. If required, we could obtain this for you.

Hot water pressure was found to be generally acceptable whilst cold water pressure was found to be a little limited in places particularly to a number of the bedroom wash basins. It may well be that the service pipes have substantially furred up inside thereby reducing pressure. A number of the taps were rather stiff to operate and had almost certainly not been used for some considerable period of time. The taps to the wash basin in the bathroom were not operational.

Sanitary Fittings

The bathroom was fitted with a bath and wash basin of original provision. The wash basin is damaged and not serviceable and requires replacement. The separate WC is in visually fair order the WC was a low level vitreous china wash down WC suite complete with plastic seat and cover. The WC was in acceptable order and flushed efficiently upon release. The taps to both appliances were defective and required overhaul.

The ground floor WC appeared to have a recent replacement pan and cistern and was in generally fair order.

Wash basins had been provided to bedrooms one, two and five and although in acceptable order the service pipework to these was all of lead work and they did not appear to be in regular use.

No doubt you have inspected the bathroom area and formed a view as to whether refurbishment and refitting is appropriate or otherwise. In our view the bathroom area would benefit from some refurbishment and this is likely to have a positive effect on the value of the property.

The taps to the bathroom area were all stiff to operate.

Plumbing

The internal hot and cold water distribution was generally of lead pipework. This was in visually satisfactory order with neatly formed bends and joints where visible and accessible. We are unable to report upon sections of pipework and joints that may be concealed within walls or floors.

We do recommend that the sections of lead pipework internally are removed and replaced with correctly sized copper pipework. Similarly the wastes should be replaced with plastic or metal bottle traps which could discharge via the original routes to the external drainage system.

The WCs discharged to a cast iron soil stack to the right hand side of the property and the bathroom discharged to a cast iron waste at the rear of the property. The immediate service pipes leading from the various fixtures to the external hoppers were of lead and there were a series of rather unusual lead vent pipes at the rear of the property. These should be replaced if possible.

The ground floor WC discharged directly to the ground whilst the wash basin discharged to a gully at the front of the property by means of a further section of lead pipe.

It is inevitable that there will be some internal corrosion to cast iron plumbing which should be monitored from time to time for defects. Replacement in plastic pipework would be appropriate at such time.

The gulleys were inspected where visible and accessible and seen to be in generally satisfactory order.

Drainage

The system of drains, as far as could be ascertained, was a combined one. This is where surface, waste and foul water discharges to the same sub soil disposal system.

There were a number of inspection chambers to this property and those to the rear, flank and front of the property were lifted and the appliances were flushed or discharged and a positive flow of the water was seen to pass through the system adequately.

There was a further inspection chamber to the very front boundary of the property on the left hand side and when this was lifted it was apparent that some local blockage appeared to be present and we do recommend that this cleared or perhaps inspected by a specialist contractor as it is likely that underground drainage pipework is of some age and obviously this could not be inspected due to its concealment.

If total confirmation on the adequate operation of this installation is required, then a test should be commissioned from a specialist drainage contractor.

EXTERNAL AREAS

To the front of the property was a substantial front garden laid to lawn with a rather uneven tar macadam drive to the right hand side.

At the rear of the property the garden was generally laid to lawn and bedding and in fair order although the hard standings directly to the rear of the property were a little uneven and broken up. Similarly the pathways to the perimeter of the garden were somewhat uneven and we do recommend that these are relayed level.

To the left hand side of the rear garden at approximately mid distance there is a substantial mature cherry tree. It is possible (but unlikely) that the roots to this tree are in close proximity or touching the foundations of the rear elevation of the property.

To the rear right hand side of the garden there is a rather dilapidated shed and there is a greenhouse in average condition.

The garden fences were generally in satisfactory order, if a little aged, and there is a gate access to the rear of the fence giving access to Sainsburys car park. You are advised to verify whether there is any easement or right of access through this. Your solicitor may be able to help in this regard.

To the right hand side of the property is a single garage. This is of brick construction with a pitched timber roof again clad with roofing tiles. This original to the property. This is in generally fair order with the exception of the front elevation where there is inadequate support above the garage doors and the brickwork has deflected markedly. The garage door frame appears to be providing all of the structural integrity in this area. Some localised repair is considered necessary. The garage is a little small for modern car usage.

To the left hand side of the property there is a narrow accessway between the flank wall and the boundary and we do recommend that this is infilled in view of the security risk this represents.

STATUTORY PERMISSIONS

This property appeared to be located in a residential district, but our client is advised to ascertain from searches or other source that the property does lie within an area which is allocated for residential purposes, or that existing use rights or planning permission for same exist. Our client is also recommended to consult the Local Planning Authority personally concerning redevelopment or other proposals which may affect that property indirectly by changing the character of the locality, and which would not necessarily be revealed on an official search.

LIMITATIONS OF SURVEY

The property was occupied and fully furnished with fitted carpets and other secured floor finishes which limited the inspection of the interior of the rooms to some degree. For this reason, and due to the concealed nature of the construction, it was not possible to inspect every piece of timber and therefore it cannot be guaranteed that an insect or fungal attack is not present somewhere in the property. Where necessary, comments are made based upon the structure visible and any other indications.

All inspections of the exterior of the building were from ground level.

No legal documents were available at the time of the survey.

There was no available access to inspect structures of flat roofs, consequently we were unable to report that such structures are free from attack by wood boring insect or fungal attack. Our client should be aware that fungal attack in particular can occur following previous leakage and this may not be visible. If a flat roof has leaked prior to recovering, it is probable that some element of decking and structure will require replacement concurrently with the covering.

The foundations were not exposed but it is thought that the property is situated on London clay. This type of subsoil is prone to shrinkage and it is therefore recommended that insurance cover for ground heave, settlement and subsidence is taken out.

This report is for the private and confidential use of the client for whom it is undertaken, and shall not be reproduced in whole or in part, or relied upon by third parties, except our client's legal representative, strictly in connection with the purchase of the property.

This report does not constitute a Schedule of Decorative Condition and Minor Defects, but is based on the main structural condition of the property.

It was assumed that several fixtures and fittings, including soft furnishings, would be included within the sale of this property and therefore pass with the purchase to our client; however, our client should verify this fact and have a schedule of such items precisely worded and included within the contract or covering letter. These items do not of course form part of the structure and have therefore not been referred to within the report.

We have assumed that the property is erected on suitable land that has not been designated as contaminated. No investigations of surrounding ground has been undertaken.

The report reflects the condition of various parts of the property at the date of inspection. It must be expected that defects can arise between the date of the inspection and your taking occupation of the property.

No special tests have been made at this stage on cements and concretes used in the construction and accordingly we are unable to report that concretes are of a suitable strength and free from the presence of high alumina cement, chlorides, sulphates or other deleterious materials. As regards concretes below ground, we cannot confirm these suitable for ground conditions if the sub-soils contain sulphates or other damaging constituents.

All property owners are advised to ensure that the property is insured from the moment of exchange of contract for a sufficient sum against all usual perils including fire, impact, explosion, storm, tempest, fire, flood, burst pipes and tanks, subsidence, land slip, ground heave and public liability.

Walls were inspected for dampness with a handheld electrical resistance-type meter. In carrying out this part of the inspection, no furnishings, wall hangings and the like were moved nor areas exposed. Consequently we are unable to offer a firm warranty that no dampness exists in these areas. Should you require a more comprehensive inspection, please arrange with the vendors to remove all wall hangings and to move all furnishings away from the wall to allow us full access.

We have not undertaken an energy efficiency assessment of this property but our client should be aware that older properties of this type are not as energy efficient as more modern properties and properties constructed with newer materials and insulation.

No tests have been undertaken of the services installations and our report is based on a visual inspection only. Our client may consider it prudent to commission tests and reports by specialised electrical, gas and plumbing engineers to confirm absolutely the condition and performance of these installations.

We have not specifically inspected this property for the presence of asbestos or other deleterious materials. Where we have reason to believe during the normal course of our inspection that an asbestos-based product may have been used we have drawn this to your attention. A more detailed and dedicated asbestos inspection may identify asbestos-based products over and above that identified in this report. Asbestos-based products do require specialist removal, you are advised to ensure that, should any asbestos be identified, specialist arrangements for its removal are made.

In properties which may have been decorated prior to around 1980 there is a risk that lead based paint will have been used, this risk increases proportionately as the date of decoration becomes earlier and by 1980 lead based paints had been eliminated. There is evidence that these can present a significant risk to health in certain circumstances with children being particularly susceptible. No tests have been carried out to ascertain whether lead based paint is present to this property and these can be completed at extra charge. In certain circumstances specialist removal may be required and the cost of this can be considerable.

We have not specifically considered the impact on this property of external environmental issues including aircraft and traffic noise, odour from neighbouring and proximate property, disturbances arising from the usage of neighbouring and proximate property, noise transmitted to the subject property from neighbours or regular excessive parking and traffic not evident at the time of inspection. You are advised, if concerned in these regards, to visit the property and locality at varying times to ascertain whether these adversely influence the property in any way.

SUMMARY

This property is in generally fair condition for its age and style. Although in need of some modernization it has clearly been well maintained in the 50 years that the vendor has been in occupation. Prompt attention would appear to have been given to areas requiring repair.

There is some evidence of historic foundation movement to the rear left hand side of the property but we are of the view that this is longstanding and there are no indications of any activity in the recent past, say within the last ten years or so.

Some works of improvement are required primarily attention to the rear flat roof, bathroom and kitchen areas. It is important that pointing is undertaken to the front elevations and some repairs are necessary to the chimney stacks which could, if they are to be put out of use, be removed in their entirety.

All property requires ongoing maintenance on both a reactive and preventative basis and this is no exception. The extent of this was not considered unduly onerous given the age and style of the property.

Other than the key defects noted in this report there are, as you would expect, a number of other more minor issues which have not been individually discussed, for instance slight deterioration of external joinery and general wear and tear on internal joinery and other components. It is inevitable that owning a property such as this will require items such as this to be maintained and renewed over time.

Property values in this area have risen significantly over recent years, and to some degree these rises have exceeded the averages for the London region as a whole, consequently if there is a realignment in the market we do feel that prices in this area are more susceptible to an equally disproportionate fall. There is evidence that at the current time property prices in this area have not risen over recent months and in some cases slight reductions have been noted. You are advised to consider carefully the potential for further falls in value to occur and must understand that we are unable to predict on your behalf future movements in values with any accuracy.

Having said this we understand that your offer of £ has been accepted and, although we did not undertake valuation work, this does appear to be competitive for a property of this size and type in this location.

We confirm that this property was inspected by BSC MRICS, Chartered Building Surveyor and the report was prepared by him. We also confirm that we have no direct or indirect interest in this property or this transaction.

Should our client have any queries regarding the contents of this report, please contact us on our usual number

Chartered Building Surveyor

All content and descriptions in whole or in part

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