

BUILDING SURVEY

AT

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ON BEHALF OF

?????

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BUILDING SURVEY OF ?????

Further to your instructions to carry out a Building Survey of the above mentioned property.

We confirm that the following Building Survey Report has been carried out in accordance with the Practice Statements in the RICS Appraisal Manual and the Survey is independent of any interested parties involved in this transaction and conforms to the requirements of the Practice Statements.

The Building Survey was undertaken by Mr Philip Antino BSc (Hons) MSc MRICS FFPWS.

1.0 INSTRUCTIONS

- .1 We are instructed by ????? to prepare a building survey in respect of ?????
- .2 We were provided with sales particulars.
- 1.3 The survey was carried out on the morning of Wednesday 13th April at 7.30am. The weather conditions were mild and dry at the time of my inspection.
- 1.4 The inspection was carried out from each floor internally and from ground level externally. No opening up works were carried out and we were unable to inspect woodwork or other parts of the structure which were covered, unexposed or inaccessible and are therefore unable to report such parts are free from defect.
- 1.5 The property was unfurnished and vacant at the time of the inspection and the presence of close fitted carpets, other floor coverings and normal family furniture limited the inspection.
- 1.6 This report is prepared in accordance with our Standard Terms and Conditions of Engagement for Building Surveys, a copy of which has already been provided. It has been prepared solely for the benefit of the client stated at Section 1.1 and no liability is accepted to any third parties. This survey cannot be copied or disclosed to any third party without the expressed agreement with APA Surveying Ltd. This survey may not be divulged, copied, quoted or otherwise reproduced, and/or altered without

APA Surveying Ltd's expressed consent, and any request for such consent must be in writing. For the avoidance of doubt and for your information such consent is unlikely to be given, due to the confidential nature of this survey.

No local or formal enquiries of the Local Statutory Authorities or investigations have been made to verify information as to the tenure, the existence of rights of way and easements, etc.

This report does not guarantee that work carried out in the past has been carried out to statutory/mandatory regulations or to competent manufacturers' recommendations or to British Standards, Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates, etc.

2.0 DESCRIPTION

The property is semi-detached Grade II listed Georgian residence comprising of 5 bedrooms, 3 of which have en-suite bathrooms, separate family bathroom and 2 bedrooms.

The property extends over 4 floors (incorporating a cellar) and is advised by the agents located on a plot of approximately ¼ of an acre with a south facing rear garden. My clients should make the appropriate enquiries.

The property is being sold without the benefit of the converted 2 bedroom cottage (stable block). The property has to the left side (facing) a courtyard car parking area, with a shared right of way.

The property is located close to the market square of Rochford; however the property is also located close to the Southend airport. The property has been extended to the rear and remedial works have been undertaken to incorporate some strengthening/structural works within the roof void.

I understand the property is being sold with vacant possession following repossession.

I note the estate agents sales particulars suggest the property has a "Heritage award for restoration". I am not quite sure what they mean by this, but solicitors should make the necessary investigations.

The property has the benefit of two reception rooms located to the left and right of the front entrance hall, floor levels change significantly throughout the property which adds to the character of the Grade II listed status and makes for an interesting property. The kitchen/breakfast room with fireplaces located to the rear at the lower floor levels.

The property is within close walking distance to the local railway station.

3.0 STRUCTURE

3.1 FRONT ELEVATION (NORTH)

.1 Roofs and Chimney Stacks

Roof covering comprises an original clay peg tile to all elevations incorporating 3 no. dormer windows (see photograph no. 1). The tile covering is generally satisfactory given a Grade II listed property. There is evidence of any deflection within the main roof structure, I will comment further on this in section 10.

The ridge tiles which extend for the full width of the roof between the two chimneystacks positioned to both the east and west elevations. The chimneystack to the north east elevation appears generally satisfactory (see photograph no. 2). There is localised deterioration of the brickwork and some minor areas of pointing but is generally structurally sound no excessive deflection or distortion noted.

At the abutment of the chimneystack and roof covering is a mixture of a cement and tiled fillet. This is showing some slight deterioration and will require regular maintenance.

Moving across to the chimneystack on the west elevation the brickwork is deteriorated to a greater extent and there is evidence of localised repointing works having been undertaken (see photograph no. 3). A similar detail of a cement and tile fillet around the junction of the chimneystack and the roof is noted and I repeat my previous observations accordingly.

The junctions of the chimneystacks and the roof covering are the weakest areas in this roof construction, they should be closely monitored.

There are 3 no. dormers each having a lead covering forming the roof and the dormer cheeks (see photograph no. 4 – 6). The lead flashings extend down and lap onto the tile covering approximately 60-70mm on average, slightly narrower than I would have preferred. There should be, but it is impossible to confirm without removing the roof coverings, lead soakers positioned underneath the flashings and extending under the tiles.

It is quite clear that there has been very little maintenance in recent years and as a consequence paint coverings to the dormer windows have deteriorated, exposing the substrate timber (see section 6.2).

One would expect to see a degree of movement within a property of this age and construction and particularly I note that the left side of the right dormer (facing) has dropped. I will comment further on this internally, but this could only have occurred if the rafters which support the dormer window cheeks (sides of the dormer) has deflected or failed in some way (see section 10).

The roof covering has two different roof pitches, the first the more steeper to the lower section which incorporates the dormer windows and the second, which is slightly more shallow, extending up to the ridge height (see section 5.13).

Where the two pitched roofs adjoin there appears to be an adequate lap of tiles and no significant defects noted.

However, the centre section of the roof does appear to have dipped and deflected slightly and again I will comment on this in section 10.

.2 Fascia and Soffit

The fascia and soffit is clearly original incorporating a dentalled detail, paint coverings have been neglected but there is no evidence of any excessive rot or decay present.

.3 Gutters, Gullies and Downpipes

The guttering comprises a uPVC profiled 'ogee' system which extends the full width of the front elevation discharging to a downpipe located on the west elevation.

The downpipe has pulled away from the guttering and requires reinstating (see photograph no. 7). At the time of my inspection I noted some staining around one of the gutter coupling joints positioned between to the left of the entrance door, which indicates a failure in the gutter gasket. The guttering requires cleaning, reconnecting to the downpipe and all gutter seals to be checked accordingly.

3.1.4 Walls

The walls incorporate at low level a solid masonry construction which forms the lower cellar, with the upper main structural frame of the building comprising timber construction, incorporating a low level feather edge weatherboarding, at the remaining section having a rendered covering.

Commencing to the left side there is evidence of rot and decay within the feather edge boarding (see photograph no. 8) which is quite extensive (see photograph no. 9), this appears to be long standing. There is evidence of previous patch repairs with a filler being inserted into the rotted and decayed timber sections (see photograph no. 8 & 9).

There is generally hairline crazing and cracking noted within the rendered sections of the walls, which is not unusual given the age of the property and its form of construction.

There is a hairline crack extending from the right corner of the ground floor window up to the lower right corner (see photograph no. 10) of the first floor window.

The hairline crack then extends horizontally towards the middle window and turns down towards the front entrance door. There is a second hairline crack extending from the lower left corner of the porch entrance (see photograph no. 11).

There is a similar crack commencing from the top left corner of the ground floor window on the right corner (see photograph no. 12), which extends up to the underside of the lower left corner of the first floor window. A horizontal crack then extends towards the centre of the building. This would suggest that there has been some slight downward movement in the centre part of the building, which may have attributed towards the floor deflection (see section 4).

Furthermore, these cracks have previously been repaired clearly with some form of filler, albeit to a very poor standard and the rendering above the ground floor first window is starting to blister.

Moving across to the far right corner of the building, the weatherboarding is covered by a substantial amount of vegetation and ivy (see photograph no. 13) which restricted my inspection but this appears to be growing up and underneath the feather edge boarding penetrating into the main fabric of the building. This needs to be removed this will have a detrimental effect on the timber causing rot and decay.

Moving across to the front entrance as a consequence of neglect of maintenance, paint coverings have deteriorated exposing the substrate timber, which surprisingly appears to be generally sound, it should be anticipated that some localised rot will be present, (see photograph no. 14) but this requires a full redecoration as a matter of urgency (see section 6.1).

Generally the front elevation is showing some signs of distortion and unevenness, which is to be expected in a timber frame building of this age. No excessive or major defects were noted or present and the slight downward movement to the centre of the building is related to the hairline cracks being present. This appears to be limited to the timber frame element of the building as the lower brickwork which forms the basement area is not showing signs of any cracking or movement.

.5 Windows

The windows comprise traditional box sash single glazed Georgian windows, which appear to be generally satisfactory, I will try to open

each window internally and comment accordingly. No major defects noted, despite the clear evidence of neglect to the external decorative finishes.

.2 REAR ELEVATION (SOUTH)

.1 Roof and Chimneystacks

The property has a rather unique arrangement to the rear of the property which incorporates Fir Tree Cottage adjoining on to Fir Tree House (see photograph no. 29).

The main roof is predominantly of a single pitch, however where Fir Tree Cottage abuts (see photograph no. 30) the roof changes pitch similar to that matching. Fir Tree Cottage adjoins Fir Tree House it is quite clear that a series of valleys and flashings have been formed although inspecting these areas it was impossible from ground level.

There does appear to be a lead valley protruding through the flank wall (see photograph no. 31) of Fir Tree House where it abuts Fir Tree Cottage. This would appear to collect all of the surface water which falls between these two parts of the building and then discharges on to the lower roofs for dispersal.

The main roof covering comprises a clay peg tile extending for the full area of the roof. This is generally in a good condition there is however a number of localised broken tiles, which will need to be replaced. Gaining access to this area will be extremely difficult due to the unusual configuration of the adjoining properties and the lower single storey buildings.

There is now a third chimneystack on the main roof (rear elevation) (see photograph no. 32), which is showing some signs of deflection to the top corner (facing rear) leaning towards the left. However, this deflection is not excessive, but is likely to continue.

At the junction of the roof and the wall there is a lead saddle behind the chimneystack and around the lower sections of the chimneystack (see photograph no. 33) there is a tiled fillet where a number of these tiles are missing. This must be rectified as a matter

of urgency. There is no significant or excessive deflection noted within the rear elevation roof.

A further inspection of the two chimneystacks which have been referred to in section 3.1.1 was possible; some localised remedial repairs to the brickwork should be anticipated. Particularly with the cement/tiled fillet at the junction of the chimneystack and roofs.

Moving down to the lower roof these comprise of three areas, the first for the purpose of this survey is the monopitched roof which extends from the first floor rear elevation of Fir Tree House. This comprises a modern concrete interlocking tile extending down and lapping over the greenhouse/conservatory (see photograph no. 34).

Where the roof abuts the first floor elevation there is a lead flashing dressed under the feather edge boarding and where (see photograph no. 34) it abuts the single storey structure to the rear, further lead flashings have been provided. These appear generally satisfactory, no major defects are noted.

The second roof area is positioned over the breakfast room (see photograph no. 36) and comprises of a concrete 'Ludlow' interlocking tile. Broken tiles were noted however the natural finish to the tiles has eroded over the course of time and will need to be replaced.

The ridge tile extends for the full width of the roof, sections of pointing are missing and ridge tiles will require repointing. At the abutment of the chimneystack and roof is a cement fillet which has clearly deteriorated (see photograph no. 37) there are gaps between the fillet and the tiles; this should be replaced with a lead flashing. To the left side of this roof there is a fourth chimneystack. At the junction where this abuts the roof (see photograph no. 38) there is another cement fillet which should also be replaced with a lead flashing. There are no structural defects noted to this chimneystack.

The next section of roof is the glazed section over the conservatory/greenhouse. The glass is (see photograph no. 34 & 39) held in place by timber glazing beads which have clearly deteriorated due to

the lack of maintenance and to the excessive amounts of vegetation which is growing over the roof. This vegetation is also growing through the glazing and into the interior of the building. Some of this vegetation clearly belongs to the adjacent Fir Tree Cottage. This is legally a trespass and should be removed. The glazing beads will need to be replaced as a matter of urgency (see section 5.3).

.2 Fascia and Soffit

My inspection was severely restricted due to the difficulty of access, however it was quite clear that an extensive amount of decay was present within the fascia and soffit over the first floor rear bedroom window (see photograph no. 40). This coincides with an area of guttering which dips and consequently I believe water is overflowing the gutter due to inadequate falls and subsequently causing rot to occur. This section of fascia will need to be replaced.

Fascia and soffits to the lower breakfast/dining room appears generally satisfactory no defects noted.

.3 Gutters, Downpipes and Gullies

The guttering throughout is a continuation of the ogee plastic guttering. I am particularly concerned with the main roof guttering which is not aligned properly and consequently is allowing water to overflow and saturate the fascia and soffit over the first floor window (see section 3.2.2). This guttering will need to be removed and realigned so as to ensure surface water is removed correctly. Guttering to the conservatory/greenhouse has vegetation blockages, this needs to be cleared. The guttering to the breakfast room appears generally satisfactory.

.4 Walls

The walls where accessible are predominantly solid load bearing masonry construction laid in a Flemish bond with a weather struck pointing incorporating a mixture of yellow stock and soft red bricks.

There is no evidence of any structural deflection or movement occurring, no subsidence present. The brickwork is generally structurally sound.

The first floor rear elevation walls have a timber cladding, no evidence of any excessive rot or decay was noted, however I would advise that it is likely that some localised rot will be present especially considering the rot and decay to the fascia and soffit, this could have extended into some of the sections of weatherboarding.

.5 Windows

First floor windows comprise traditional softwood casement windows. There is evidence of some rusting to the hinges, all associated with a defective guttering. Paints covering generally have been neglected, there is excessive deterioration of paint coverings to the conservatory/greenhouse, which requires immediate attention, and the windows and doors to the breakfast room are generally sound although clearly localised repairs have been undertaken throughout the property's lifespan and decorative finishes have been neglected. Remedial works should be anticipated as a consequence of the decorative finishes recommended in section 6.1.

.3 FLANK WALL (EAST)

.3.1 Roof and Chimneystacks

There is no roof elevation to the main house, the roof extends to the gable detail (see photograph no. 15). Where the roof extends across the gable there is a tiled overhanging detail, all perfectly satisfactory, no defects noted. I was able to inspect the chimneystack noted further deterioration to the brickwork at localised areas (see photograph no. 16). The chimneystacks will need careful monitoring. No excessive deflection was noted.

There is a single storey roof to the rear (see photograph no. 17) which incorporates a similar clay tile, I note that some of the tiles are broken and where this abuts the gable wall (see photograph no. 18) a tiled fillet has been used to seal the roof junctions. There is no evidence of any excessive deflection to this roof. Localised repairs however will be necessary to replace the broken tiles.

There is a small chimneystack to the gable elevation, no evidence of any structural deflection noted. At the junction of the chimneystack

and roof is a tiled fillet, localised repairs and very poor repointing to the brickwork has been undertaken.

Moving onto the gable elevation there is a similar (see photograph no. 19 & 20) verge detail although to the rear elevation of this structure there is a different use of tile (see section 3.2.1).

There is a small glazed roof to a utility room entrance located between the main house and this rear addition, moss and lichen sitting on the roof requires cleaning and removal. The lead flashing around the perimeter of the roof extending up behind the feather edge boarding appears generally satisfactory, no evidence of any defects noted.

.3.2 Fascia and Soffit

Fascia and soffit to the lower rear roof appears generally satisfactory, no excessive deflection or distortion noted. To the main gable roof there is a bargeboard detail positioned to the underside of the overhanging tiles, no major defects noted.

.3.3 Gutters, Downpipes and Gullies

There is a modern plastic gutter to the rear single storey extension, again the downpipe has pulled away from the guttering, which requires reconnection (see photograph no. 20), no other defects are noted.

The main roof guttering discharges to a downpipe positioned on the left corner of the East elevation and I reiterate my concerns regarding the downpipe to the front North East corner.

There is a fourth downpipe which collects the surface water from the rear elevation of the rear addition. A note of caution should be exercised here that all of these downpipes discharge directly onto the hard surface courtyard and consequently there appears to be no adequate surface water drainage.

Certainly during periods of heavy rainfall and during the winter this would create significant hazards for anyone walking around the courtyard. It could also have a significant problem with the surface

water being absorbed below through the hard standing surface (deteriorated pointing) and being absorbed into the structure of the building.

.3.4 Walls

The single storey structure comprises solid load bearing masonry construction and appears to be generally satisfactory (see section 5.3). There is a significant crack between the freestanding brick pier to the right of the garage gate (see photograph no. 21) and this structure. However, the single storey structure appears generally structurally satisfactory no evidence of any subsidence noted.

At ground level there is a cement plinth (see photograph no. 22) which is clearly damaged and blown, this will need to be hacked off and repaired, moisture could be penetrating the building (see section 5.3).

Rather interestingly, to the right corner behind (see photograph no. 23) part of this rendered plinth has fallen away exposing a slate tile. This appears to run the full length of this elevation of the wall, this has clearly been used as form of barrier to prevent water being absorbed into the structure of the building, a damp problem does exist (see section 5.3).

Moving around the front of the single storey structure, no evidence of any structural movement or deflection noted and the oriel window appears structurally sound with a lead covering over.

Moving along the flank elevation of the main house this comprises of two elements of construction, solid masonry and timber frame with feather edge boarding. Parts of the masonry will obviously rise the full height of the building and form the chimneybreasts throughout the property.

There is an access doorway to the cellar area, although cannot be opened externally for obvious security reasons.

There is a timber box frame structure on the side elevation below the ground floor window, which houses a vent pipe for the foul drain (see section 8).

The feather edge boarding is showing signs of deterioration particularly more noticeably to the right corner of the ground floor window (see photograph no. 24) where a modern silicone material has been used to seal the gap between the boards and the window frame. Some of the boards are loose and lifting.

Furthermore, rather disappointingly the boards appear to have been painted with a textured paint covering, which is certainly not within keeping of the character of the house, but to remove this would be a major exercise both in time and cost.

Furthermore, this heavy paint covering can be hiding a multitude of defects, rot and decay.

Moving across to the front side entrance door some deterioration is noted to the joinery generally due to neglect of maintenance and there is localised areas of decay present within some of the timber boarding, this is to be expected with a property of this age (see section 5.10).

However, there was no evidence of any deflection or major structural defects to this elevation.

.3.5 Windows

The windows comprise traditional box sash units, which have had localised repairs undertaken, quite clearly sections of timber have been replaced, and cut into the frame, this is evident by the now exposed joints.

The decorative finishes have been neglected and as a consequence some shrinkage of the timbers has occurred, it should be anticipated that some minor localised rot may be present in sections of the windows but nothing that could not be easily rectified as part of a general maintenance programme.

.4 FLANK WALL (WEST)

.4.1 Roof and Chimneystacks

My inspection of this elevation was limited due to the unusual arrangement of Fir Tree Cottage and the garden which runs along the side. Fir Tree Cottage being constructed to the rear elevation of Fir Tree House (see photograph no. 25).

There is a similar construction detail with the roof to this elevation with an overhanging tile, although a bargeboard has not been provided to the underside of the tiles. Sections of the mortar pointing between the tiles have deteriorated, creating gaps which need repointing (see photograph no. 26 & 27).

A more detailed inspection of the chimneystack was possible from this elevation, which appears generally satisfactory, no major structural deflection or distortion noted.

.4.2 Fascia and Soffit

There is fascia or soffit to this elevation.

.4.3 Gutters, Downpipes and Gullies

There are no gutters or downpipes to this elevation.

.4.4 Walls

The wall construction comprises again a mixture of masonry and timber frame with feather edge boarding. The masonry incorporates the cellar area and extends for the full height, partially visible at ground floor level forming the chimneybreasts. The remaining area (see photograph no. 25 & 28) is a feather edge boarding.

The feather edge boarding appears to be generally satisfactory, some slight deterioration is noted and again appears to have been painted with a textured coating which is disappointing.

There is undoubtedly some localised areas of rot and decay occurring, particularly (see photograph no. 28) which is approximately centre of the wall and 1m above where the brickwork

terminates. There is within the lower chimneybreast brickwork evidence of some deterioration to the brickwork having occurred.

.4.5 Windows

There are no windows to this elevation.

4.0 FLOORS

4.1 SUSPENDED

Suspended floors throughout the property at ground floor level when immediately entering the building clearly slope and deflect towards the rear/middle of the building. It is not unusual in a property of this age to find some deflection and distortion having occurred, especially where there is a significant change in the floor levels, however this is excessive. In the middle of the property the floor changes level by approximately 700mm in floor level with steps leading down into a rear lobby providing access to the adjacent kitchen/utility room and cloakroom.

There is excessive deflection noted within the floors as you rise up each level, this is particularly noted in the master bedroom when walking across the room the floors flex under my weight and cause the windows to rattle. The fact that the floor have dropped throughout the property is not unusual because the floors at each subsequent level are supported on partitions which are subsequently supported on the first floor floor joists which from the inspection of the cellar (see section 5.14). As you rise up the building the degree of deflection in floor levels actually increases.

Flexing was also noted within bedroom no. 2 and bedroom no. 4, which causes me concern. Other areas of the floors are flexing slightly, but given the age of the building, are not unusual. I have highlighted where this is excessive.

.2 SOLID

Solid floor construction to the rear is unlikely to incorporate any form of insulation or damp proof membrane. The floors comprise a mixture of carpet and tile finishes, no evidence of any major defects, settlement or distortion noted. The conservatory floor is below ground level and the damp course (if one exists) is bridged (see section 5.3).

5.0 ACCOMMODATION

5.01 LOUNGE

Positioned to the right of the property incorporates an open fireplace, the flue should not be used unless checked and cleared. Clearly debris is falling down the flue. Fireplace incorporates a stone surround and hearth.

To either side of the chimneybreast there are two alcoves, no evidence of any major structural cracking noted. Some hairline cracking noted to the left alcove where the timber frame abuts the brick chimneybreast and at the top corner where the arches spring from the left and right side of the chimneybreast. There are minor cracks associated with movement and two very different materials, one being rigid and one being more flexible.

A moisture meter was used to check for levels of dampness commencing to the right alcove and then clockwise around the room. The very first reading recorded (see photograph no. 41) a moisture content of 40%.

Moving across to the centre of the alcove the moisture reduced to 8% which is acceptable and then various readings across the front of the property, again recorded levels of between 8% & 12% moisture content, all of which are perfectly acceptable, and these are the type of readings that I would expect in a timber frame building.

To the right of the door, again various readings were undertaken, all of which were perfectly acceptable and within the levels that I would expect in a normal house.

However, to the left side of the alcove high levels of dampness was recorded of approximately 40% (see photograph no. 42), which then reduced to acceptable levels.

Both to the immediate left and right sides of the chimneybreast there is a problem with dampness, which will need to be monitored, some remedial works should be undertaken but could be treated as part of a general redecoration and maintenance.

There is a series of hairline cracks above the door opening extending to the ceiling and across the ceiling into the room and one approximately 200mm above the light switch extending diagonally through the ceiling. This is related to downward deflection which has occurred within a partition housing the door and the floor separating the hall and lounge and this distortion is also noted in the doorframe. This appears to have been longstanding and the door has been shaped to accommodate this distortion (see photograph no. 43).

The degree of deflection in the floor is highlighted by the gap between the bottom of the door and the floor (see photograph no. 45). At its maximum it is approximately 65mm, however, this does appear to be historic.

5.02 ENTRANCE HALL

Upon entering the entrance hall there is noticeable downward movement in the floor towards the rear steps which leads to the lower entrance hall. There appears to be some movement in the floor area immediately adjacent to the steps leading down to the lower area, however this appears possibly to be a hardboard or plywood that is lifting and no excessive movement is ongoing. The steps leading down are structurally sound, no major defects present.

A moisture meter was used to check for levels of dampness in the lower lobby area, commencing on the right side of the stairs (when descending) no adverse levels were noted.

Readings taken on the upper floor entrance landing were all acceptable, no adverse levels were noted.

There is some hairline cracking in the top left corner of the lounge door towards the ceiling which is again related to the movement that has occurred. There is cracking from the right corner of the dining room door towards the ceiling which again is related to movement which has occurred and clearly there has been historic movement within the door opening itself.

The deflection that has occurred is evident and quite clearly there appears to be some general flexing within the frame of building and floor. I will comment further on this in section 13.

5.3 KITCHEN

The kitchen has an arrangement of wall and floor mounted units with a painted finish and granite worktops. I assume the Aga is included within the sales details but this should be confirmed by instructing solicitors. Generally the kitchen installation is of a reasonable standard.

A moisture meter was used to check for levels of dampness, commencing from the left wall (adjacent to the unit) and then moving clockwise around the kitchen.

Readings were satisfactory up to the first double socket which is to the left of the radiator. To the right of the socket 40% moisture readings were recorded, continuing along to the radiator the readings then dropped to acceptable levels. Commencing on the right side of the radiator up to the fireplace, no adverse levels were noted. However, in the left side of the chimneybreast 30% moisture content was noted, which continues around the front edge of the chimneybreast.

To the right side of the chimneybreast further dampness recorded with levels of 90% and this is particularly evident due to the swelling of the skirting that has occurred (see photograph no. 45).

Continuing across towards the left side of the kitchen bay window significant dampness recorded around the pier (see photograph no. 46) which is starting to deteriorate the plaster and the joinery. Continuing across the bay window levels were between 18% were noted on the left side and on the right side acceptable levels of 10%.

There is clearly a problem with rising damp within the kitchen area which will need specialist works to be undertaken, this will involve removal of all plaster surfaces possibly chemical injection (see section 3.2.4).

There is some staining to the ceiling over the centre of the bay window occurring within the roof structure. There is nothing evident externally which would suggest the roof covering is defective but clearly dampness is a problem which will need investigating. This may require taking a section of the ceiling away or part of the tiles.

There is some general hairline cracks at various locations throughout the kitchen which could all be attributed to the fact that the property is now vacant and buildings do tend to crack when they are not occupied, especially buildings of this age.

Moving into what I have described in section 3.2.1 as the conservatory/ greenhouse, there is clearly a substantial problem with dampness, high levels of dampness were noted within the walls and as a consequence vegetation is growing through the floor junctions (see photograph no. 48 - 50) and to the flank wall this vegetation is as a consequence of the adjoining owners cottage which is a trespass.

Vegetation is being allowed to grow up and onto the roof of the greenhouse/ conservatory in several locations. The issue of this trespass needs to be resolved before the completion of the purchase.

To the left side of the doors leading to the kitchen (see photograph no. 52) excessive dampness mould spores are noted forming. I am little concerned to note that the floor within this area is below the ground level and therefore the damp course has been bridged, accordingly substantial works will have to be undertaken to bring this up to an acceptable standard if it is to be used for occupation.

There is also evidence of leaks occurring where the glass roof abuts the chimneystack (see photograph no. 53). It may be more economical to demolish and start again, given the property's listed status, there may be some difficulties as the conservatory/greenhouse may be considered as part of the property's heritage. I would recommend that enquiries are made with the local authority planning departments.

5.4 MASTER BEDROOM

Located to the left side of first floor level there is a continuation of the distortion within the door opening and cracking extending through to the ceiling, and the flexing occurring within the floor joists (see section 4.1).

There are some significant cracks within the plaster ceiling where the ceiling is bowing, which all indicates further deflection occurring.

I am particularly concerned to note the cracking to the right corner of the flank wall window which extends from the window cill down to the skirtings. This is recent and this is as a consequence of the partition which separates the en-suite bedroom and dressing area having recently moved down and is associated with the excessive deflection in the floor.

Clearly movement is ongoing which requires further investigation in the floor structure. Stepping through into the dressing area the floors change level and become somewhat more stable, possibly due to the short spans of the floor joists. There is an en-suite bathroom which comprises a pedestal washbasin, close coupled WC with an exposed saniflow maceator and a shower cubicle. Hairline crack is noted within the ceiling at the junction of the tiles and the plaster surfaces.

There is a further fireplace again debris is falling through the flue this needs to be cleaned. No water was running at the time so I was unable to check whether the saniflow maceator and toilet flushes adequately or check for any leaks.

I am however rather concerned that the attachment to the shower unit has been replaced with a corroded metal cap.

General hairline cracks are noted and of course there is no obscure glass to the window.

To the left of the fitted wardrobes there is significant cracking occurring within the plaster surfaces in the wall which has blown indicating some movement and deterioration of the stud partition having occurred.

The fireplace to the main bedroom area has been sealed but no airbrick provided. This should have been provided to prevent condensation building up in the chimney flue.

.5 BEDROOM 2 (RIGHT FIRST FLOOR)

There is a continuation of distortion within the door opening and cracking extending to the ceiling as previously mentioned in section 5.1, 5.4 & 5.10. There is an exposed fireplace, and cannot be used unless checked.

To the left and right of the chimneybreast there are two built in cupboards, clearly to the left significant deflection has occurred at some stage, and this is highlighted by the profile of the door and doorframe.

To the right side no evidence of any major cracking or movement occurring but some hairline cracks are noted above. There is flexing in the floor (see section 4.1), which is causing me concern.

.6 BEDROOM 3 (FIRST FLOOR REAR)

This is probably the smallest of the bedrooms and is not part of the original construction but has clearly been formed to create a small bedroom with a family bathroom adjacent.

Hairline cracking noted within the plaster ceiling, the ceiling dips over the bedroom window having pulled away from the rafters. It is unlikely that the roof void has been insulated (see photograph no. 56 – 59). This section of ceiling needs to be taken down and reboarded and skimmed over.

To the left of the radiator where the flank wall abuts the rear elevation wall there is a hairline crack starting at skirting level which increases in width towards the ceiling indicating that this wall is pulling away from the rear elevation. This will need to be exposed and some strapping provided to tie the two elements together.

.7 BEDROOM 4 (TOP FLOOR RIGHT SIDE)

There is an exposed fireplace which should have the flue cleaned before use. To the left and right sides are built-in wardrobes. The ceilings have clearly dropped because the cupboard door to the right now rubs across the ceiling and cannot open properly. There is hairline cracking noted at the junction of the chimneybreast and the flank wall within the left hand cupboard area and to the rear elevation roof two diagonal hairline cracks extending across over the bed. Hairline cracks extend throughout the ceiling where some movement has occurred.

There is an en-suite bathroom which incorporates a bath, close coupled WC with another saniflow and maceator and pedestal washbasin, no water was connected therefore I cannot check the adequacy of these appliances.

Hairline cracking is noted to the junction of the dormer and internal partition. Plaster surfaces having pulled away from. Hairline cracking is noted within the ceiling. Moving back into the bedroom there is excessive deflection within the floor (see section 4.2).

Clearly, the deflection in the floor which is tied into the roof structure and the dormer construction due to the building being a timber frame is the contributing factor to the distortion within the dormer as referred to in section 3.1.1.

Access to the loft area was restricted due to the size of the loft hatch opening and the pitch of the roofs. However (see photograph no. 60 - 65) it is quite evident that there has been extensive recent strengthening works undertaken throughout the whole of the roof area. This is due to a failure in a number of the rafters (see photograph no. 64 & 65) which have split as a consequence of either age or overstressing.

Indeed, a series of timber ties have been installed throughout the full length of the roof to increase the triangulation of the roof and to stop the roof deflecting (see photograph no. 60, 61 & 63) to tie the ceiling joists which have deflected significantly and to stop them also failing. There is also evidence of woodworm which may be active. Considerable works have been undertaken and from my inspection it would appear to have been on an ad hoc basis and without any real structural engineers design input.

Furthermore, there is no insulation provided to the loft area and climbing through this loft area due to the introduction of the additional ties and struts would be an extremely difficult activity to achieve.

There are a number of what appear to be 50mm x 25mm battens used to support rafters and tie them to the ceiling joists, but these are clearly under compression because they are deflecting and inadequate.

.8 STAIRCASE/LANDING

Commencing at the first floor level there is a landing which runs along the rear elevation of the roof void linking the fourth and fifth bedrooms. This has been lined with a tongue and groove boarding which restricted my inspection, although there is clearly some deflection having occurred. It is

unlikely that this part of roof has been insulated. The landing appeared structurally sound.

The staircase leading down to first floor was sound to foot no excessive deflection, movement or distortion having occurred.

Moving on to the first floor landing as previously advised the floor has clearly dropped towards the rear. Where the floor landing changes level adjacent to bedroom no. 3 and family bathroom, however no flexing or movement was noted adjacent to the bathroom.

Moving down the staircase to ground floor level again no excessive deflection or distortion was noted. Balustrading comprises original timber features all sound and no defects noted.

.9 BATHROOM

The first floor bathroom comprises a close coupled WC, pedestal washbasin and bath, deflection is noted within the ceiling having pulled away from the rafters, there is an access hatch to a small loft area, this provides access to a roof void which extends across the adjacent small bedroom no. 3.

The rafters appear to be sound extending from the upper floor areas of the main single roof down onto the external wall (see photograph no. 56 – 57). There is a bitumen based underslating felt to the roof area, which may contain asbestos (see section 13).

There is a considerable amount of debris laying within the roof area, lathe and plaster redundant water tanks etc, all of which should be removed. There is very little insulation and where it has been laid it is inadequate and intermittent (see photograph no. 56 - 57).

There is no evidence of any excessive deflection or distortion having occurred within the purlins and supporting timber struts, but this is an extension to the original house. This is evident by the external lathe and plaster that remain in part of the walls and the rendering.

5.10 DINING ROOM

Located on the left side there is an external entrance leading onto the courtyard, clearly historic movement has occurred and this is demonstrated by the deflection in the door opening (see photograph no. 54), the door does not close properly is slightly warped and does not engage with the latch. There is a significant gap between the door and the floor matching that of the lounge and the distortion within the door is clearly evident.

There is a hairline crack in the top left corner of the doorframe up to the ceiling. The wall that extends across the dining room separating the rear part and front part is clearly deflected down towards the door which leads through to the rear lobby area.

A moisture meter was used to check for levels of dampness along the front elevation until the immediate area to the left of the door leading onto the courtyard. A moisture meter recorded 90% moisture within the wall plaster is softening and blown in areas and a significant problem with dampness exists. It is also evident by the discolouration and deterioration of plaster surfaces (see photograph no. 55). No adverse levels of dampness were noted within the dining room.

The chimney flue will have to be swept before use.

5.11 CLOAKROOM

The cloakroom is above average size and contains WC with a high level cistern. The water was not turned on at the time of my inspection so I was unable to flush the toilet, the toilet is dirty and stained, I was unable to check the waste outlet to the washbasin for any leaks.

There is no evidence of any significant cracking or movement noted. The moisture meter did not record any adverse levels of dampness.

.12 UTILITY ROOM

This has a side access door from the courtyard area and contains an Alpha CD 50 boiler which was not operating at the time of my inspection. This will need to be checked by a suitably qualified engineer, remedial works initiated accordingly.

There is plumbing for a washing machine, however the utility room is somewhat limited in space.

A moisture meter was used to check for levels of dampness, various levels recorded between 10% & 18% which is marginal, this would indicate a slight problem with dampness, and this could be due to the fact that the property has been vacant for long periods of time.

There is no evidence of any major structural cracking, some hairline cracking at junctions of walls and ceilings which is general movement and does not cause me any concern.

.13 BEDROOM 5 (THIRD FLOOR LEFT SIDE)

Excessive deflection noted within the floor, again having occurred which extends through into the en-suite bathroom which incorporates another saniflow system corner shower unit, pedestal washbasin and WC. I was unable to check whether these were working adequately. There is hairline cracking where the partition separating the en-suite from the bedroom area abuts the front elevation wall. This is all related to the movement identified and commented upon in section 5.7. For the avoidance of doubt the roof extends the full width of the property as commented on in section 5.7.

There is evidence of staining to the top left corner of the dormer window which indicates a potential leak; this will need to be investigated. This has clearly run down the dormer cheek where it abuts the (see photograph no. 66) roof causing the discolouration and crazing within the paint coverings. Hairline cracking in the ceiling again as previously advised.

Double switch socket to the wall is loose and needs reinstalling.

.14 CELLAR

The cellar area extends across the full width of the property but for approximately half its depth. This explains why the floors levels change significantly.

There is a high level of dampness within this cellar area, which is to be expected because it has not been tanked whatsoever. However, there is access to the exterior through the doors to the left (east elevation).

There has been localised repairs undertaken to the timbers with inadequate additional pieces of timber nailed on to floor joists, presumably in the mistaken belief that this would increase their structural stability.

The joists having been built into the supporting walls, some deflection and movement is noted due to bowing and deflection of the main rear basement wall, it is extremely likely that there is a very shallow or no foundation to this wall. This has contributed to the floor distortion.

There is a timber post (see photograph no. 67) which should provide support, however this has deflected and is extensively rotted and has woodworm and wet rot.

To the left of the chimneybreast located on the west elevation significant cracking is noted within the brickwork (see photograph no. 68), none of this is visible due to the vegetation of the adjacent garden Fire Tree Cottage.

It may be that this cellar was part of the farm/dairy originally. There is extensive cabling laid throughout which has not been properly covered with conduits or trunking.

The consumer unit is fitted to the front elevation wall comprises a modern MCB unit.

Timber posts which was not part of the original construction installed, presumably to provide some stability to the flexing floors.

All of the floor joists and underside of the floorboards have been whitewashed. Extensive deflection has occurred, some of the joists have failed (see photograph no. 71 & 72) and the floorboards are no longer sitting on some of the floor joists. This would account for deflection in the floor.

I am particularly concerned about the staircase leading from the cellar to the interior of the property (see photograph no. 75), one of the risers has fallen away. There has clearly been remedial works undertaken to a very poor standard and extreme caution must be exercised when using these stairs. Urgent works are required. This is a significant hazard that must be attended to immediately.

6.0 DECORATIONS

6.1 EXTERNALLY

Externally decorative finishes have been neglected and as a consequence exposing sections of the timber where clearly some rot and decay has occurred. There is evidence of long term decay which is not unusual in a property of this age. However, I would recommend that all of the joinery be stripped back to expose the substrate timber, localised repairs to be undertaken and decorative finishes reapplied.

Disappointingly, to the majority of the feather edge boarding, (particularly to the flank elevations) have received a textured paint covering, which is certainly not within keeping of the characteristics of the property, stripping this will be a costly and time consuming process, but if it is intended to restore this property to its natural listed beauty and heritage, it is something that should be considered.

Most certainly to the front elevation all the joinery should be stripped back as previously advised.

6.2 INTERNALLY

Internally the property is decorated throughout with an emulsion paint covering, all appears to be generally satisfactory except where areas of dampness have caused to the walls. Those areas have been commented upon within the various rooms.

7.0 FOUNDATIONS

The foundations cannot be inspected without undertaking considerable excavations and causing damages to the adjacent hard landscape surfaces. We will however comment on any issues which we feel may indicate that the foundations and the adjacent landscaped areas have been affected by any external influences.

Sub-soil throughout the south-east is predominantly clay and potentially susceptible to shrinkage and heave if excessive amounts of more moisture are removed or added to the soil. Therefore, consideration must be given to the presence of trees and vegetation within the demised premises and within the adjacent properties and/or public highways. The removal of a tree(s) in their entirety at one time can sometimes have a greater effect on the soil and on the

structures within the vicinity than leaving the tree in position. We would recommend that any pollarding, crowing or removal of trees should only be undertaken with the advice of an arborist.

Consequently, trees with shrubs should not be allowed or encouraged to grow unchecked and should be periodically inspected and the growth restricted. The uncontrolled growth of trees and other shrubs or vegetation can also have an adverse effect on the underground drainage, should this become damaged, the subsequent escape of water from these defective drains could adversely effect the soil causing heave. Heave is the opposite to subsidence, subsidence is a consequence of dessication (moisture removal). Heave is an additional moisture which cause the ground to swell.

Where appropriate within this report we shall advise of any trees that may cause us concern regarding potential influence and/or effects on saturation, whether they are within the demise of the property or other ownership.

We would however recommend that on exchange of contracts you insure the property for all risks cover, which must include subsidence, heave and land slip.

8.0 GARDENS AND FENCES

To the front of the property is a garden which has brick walls to both the east and west elevations which extend from the front of the house down to the public footpath.

Across the front elevation there is an original iron railing and gate finished with a fleur de lys detail. Not unsurprisingly some deterioration has occurred and some of the wrought iron is missing.

There is a mature tree located to the left side of the property which is in full bloom and certainly needs to be pollarded, an aboroculturist should be asked to give advice.

To the right side of the property is Fir Tree Cottage and to the left side are two other buildings which were originally part of the same property. I am advised from discussions with locals that all of this area was originally part of a dairy farm. The cottage (26a) was the stables and all of the land behind Fir Tree House, which is now developed, was originally open fields. To the left side of the property there is vehicular access which leads to a courtyard area.

The courtyard is enclosed by brick walls to the rear; certainly there appear to be a right of access shared between the properties. I do appreciate that 26a was originally part of the same property which has subsequently been sold. Solicitors must identify what the arrangement is for access and parking have been made.

I have been advised by a neighbouring owner that the extent of Fir Tree House extends to the cobbled area (for want of a better description) and no vehicle access is afforded to the adjoining properties. Solicitors must be asked to check. To avoid any disputes regarding neighbourly matters I recommend that these enquiries are undertaken and any concerns clarified before exchange of contracts.

The rear garden has a side access from the courtyard area opening on to a small paved terrace and the remaining area of the garden which is above average size is laid mainly to lawn with flowerbeds to the full perimeter of the gardens. Concrete posts timber panel fence extends to the boundaries. Solicitors should identify liability/ownership for the maintenance and repair of these boundary fences. The garden has unfortunately been neglected due to it being unoccupied but has established and mature vegetation which could with loving care be restored to create a very pleasant environment. No major issues noted save for the issue of rights of access to the courtyard.

9.0 SOIL WASTE AND VENT PIPES

9.1 RAIN WATER DRAINAGE

There does not appear to be any surface water drainage.

.2 FOUL DRAINAGE

The property is believed to be connected to the main sewer; legal advisors should make the usual checks in respect of drainage system.

The investigation of the underground drainage system was restricted because the inspection covers were either blocked with dirt and debris and/or inaccessible and could not be opened.

9.3 ABOVE GROUND PIPES

There is no soil waste vent pipe externally save for a stub stack positioned on the east elevation housed within a timber frame. This is a modern plastic construction and appeared satisfactory.

10.0 ROOF STRUCTURE (INTERNAL)

I have commented on these where access was afforded from the various rooms. I am however extremely concerned with the main roof structure which has had extensive works carried out to try and stabilise what clearly is excessive deflection as a consequence of the failure of some of the rafters which have split under the loads. I will comment further on this in section 13.

11.0 SERVICES (UTILITIES)

11.1 ELECTRICS

A detailed investigation and examination of the electrical circuits and wiring has not been carried out and would therefore advise that a NICEIC registered electrical contractor be instructed to prepare a report accordingly.

11.2 GAS CENTRAL HEATING

A detailed examination and inspection has not been carried out to the boiler and or gas appliances and central heating system and would therefore advise that CORGI registered engineer be instructed to carry out an inspection and report accordingly.

Recommendations

- Obtain correspondence of existing servicing contracts.
- Service all appliances before use.

12.0 LEGAL ISSUES

A copy of this report should immediately be passed to legal advisors with the request that, in addition to the necessary searches and enquiries, they check and confirm that each and every one of the items referred to in this report are investigated. All these matters should be concluded before exchange of contract.

The ownership and/or obligations for maintenance and extent and the position of the properties boundary should be fully identified.

To check with the Local Authority for planning and building notifications and approvals for all building works and any car access onto the property that has been obtained (if applicable) and all statutory inspections have been made.

To ensure that a comprehensive estimate for works which may be needed prior to exchange.

To obtain a valid service agreements or CORGI certificates for the central heating in this property. Date of original installation, the name of the service company and when testing/ servicing was last carried out, should also be determined.

To obtain a valid NICEIS electrical certificate (if appropriate).

13.0 SUMMARY

The underslating felt could possibly contain asbestos and should therefore be tested accordingly.

Furthermore, whilst asbestos is a known hazardous material, it only presents a health risk when it is damaged. If the various elements are eventually identified as containing asbestos, but left intact, then they should pose no significant effect for the occupants unless they are interfered with.

However, the owners should be aware that at any time that works are undertaken in their property, they must make it known to any contractors, of the presence of asbestos and its location.

Once the material has been tested, and if the analysis proves positive, then the appropriate advice and guidance should be taken from the licensed asbestos contractor.

Having inspected the property it is important to recognise that when purchasing a listed building one does not become an owner but a '**custodian**' of a building that has architectural significance and importance. It may be due to its design, period, form of construction, and as a consequence this being a timber frame building one has to be fully aware of the inherent problems of timber frame construction, especially in a listed building.

Timber frame buildings will always move to a greater extent than traditional or modern masonry constructed properties. Accordingly it is extremely unlikely that the property will ever be free of any kind of cracks which would normally appear at the junctions of ceilings and walls due to general flexing within the structure. The

occupiers just have to accept that living in a listed timber framed house has unique issues.

However, it is quite clear that this building has experienced a significantly greater amount of movement than one could associate with acceptable levels. I am particularly concerned there has been extensive works within the main roof void with the introduction of timber ties to bind the two rafters together. This is because the rafters were clearly spreading outwards where a number of rafters have split and failed.

There has also been an attempt to eliminate the clear downward movement occurring in the ceiling. Very crudely they have attempted to eliminate this by providing undersized timber struts to tie the ceiling joists to support the ceiling joists with these new ties. I do not think that these remedial works have been properly considered and appear to have been applied on an ad hoc basis.

I also have a concern with the deflection which is occurring within the various floor levels, all originating from the problems associated with the failure of some of the floor joists in the cellar.

As I have advised one has to accept a certain degree of movement and defects within a property of this age and construction but not I believe to the extent that currently exists. I would advise extreme caution before continuing.

There will be a need to undertake significant works to stabilise the buildings structure, this should include probably forming flitch beams within the floors, which requires steel plates to be bolted to the joists or installing further joists. It is not insurmountable but it should be reflected within the purchase price of the property.

I am particularly concerned with damp issues and the trespass of vegetation from the adjoining owners' property which is clearly growing through the fabric of the building; the conservatory/greenhouse has a floor level below the external ground level, therefore any DPC is bridged. To make this structure free of damp it would be more economical to demolish and reconstruct. There are certain constraints which need to be investigated with the local authority planning and indeed listed buildings department. It may not be part of the heritage but these enquiries should be made.

There are problems with dampness throughout which needs to be addressed. In a property of this age this is not insurmountable but of course need to be considered fully.

The property is lacking in insulation and I am not quite sure how it is achieved the efficiency rating that is demonstrated on the sales particulars. This property will be extremely expensive to heat.

There is also a need to carry out localised joinery repairs to the windows, feather edge boarding rot and decay has clearly occurred, again this is to be expected in a property of this age. However the deterioration has been accelerated by the lack of maintenance to the external decorative finishes.

The property being in the majority being clad with timber requires a high level of external decorative maintenance. One has to appreciate that a property of this age and construction will also have a significantly higher general maintenance responsibility. Being a custodian of a listed building is a very pleasurable experience, but can also be extremely onerous in both time and money for the maintenance and repair.

Having considered the property in its entirety whilst there are a number of major issues which need to be addressed I do not think these are insurmountable and providing they are taking on board with a full expectation of what is needed and properly reflected in the value of the house.

I was concerned to note the property was in line with the flight path of Southend Airport which creates significant and potential long term problems.

It should also be explained that there may be further issues identified once these works are undertaken, where defects are found to exist which are not visible through the non destructive survey. The costs need to be properly considered.

14.0 LIMITATIONS

We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible, and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

We are not aware of the content of any environmental audit or other environmental investigation or soil survey which may have been carried out on the property and

which may draw attention to any contamination or the possibility of any such contamination. In undertaking our work, we have been instructed to assume that no contaminative or potentially contaminative uses have ever been carried out in the property. We have not carried out any investigation into past or present uses, either of the property or any neighbouring land, to establish whether there is any contamination or potential for contamination to the subject property from these uses or sites, and have therefore assumed that none exists.

However, should it be established subsequently that contamination, seepage or pollution exists at the property or any neighbouring land, or that the premises have been or are being put to a contaminative use, this might reduce the value of the property.

This report is provided for the stated purpose and for your own sole use. It is confidential to you and your professional advisers. I accept responsibility to you alone that the Report has been prepared with skill, care and diligence reasonable to be expected of a competent Chartered Surveyor, but I accept no responsibility whatsoever to any parties other than you. Any such parties rely upon the Report at their own risk. Neither the whole nor any part of the Report nor any reference to it may be included in any published document, circular or written statement nor published in any way without my written approval of the form and context in which it may appear.

Signed

Mr P Antino BSc (Hons), MSc, MRICS, FFPWS

Date: 14th April 2011