

**Balment  
Keep**

CHARTERED SURVEYORS

**BUILDING SURVEY**

**Brixham  
Devon  
TQ5 9TS**



*For & On Behalf Of:*

*Report Prepared By:*

**Vince Keep MRICS**

**Our Ref:** VK/OGSW/

**Date:** January 2018

Dear

**Re: Brixham Devon**

Thank you for your recent instruction to carry out a Building Survey on your behalf on the above property. We confirm we inspected the property on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and set out below our report thereon.

**BRIEF**

Our instructions were to carry out a detailed examination of the property in order to undertake a Building Survey of the property known as .....Road, in accordance with the terms set out in our Email of 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018 and attached conditions of engagement.

Our inspection was limited to parts of the structure accessible from ground level both externally and internally and to accessible parts of the structure, which were exposed, and which could be inspected without the aid of a joiner or other specialist tradesman to expose concealed areas. We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure, which are covered, unexposed and inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such parts of the property are free from defect. Although some general remarks are included in this report, we have not tested the service installations.

This report is confidential and for your use only.

## SITUATION, DESCRIPTION & INTRODUCTION

This is a three storey mid terrace house, the original property dating back, we believe, to the late 1800s/early 1900s, and being of traditional construction for a property of this type and age.

Located a short drive from Brixham town centre, the property is within easy reach of all the usual local facilities.

On the day our inspection was made the weather was overcast with frequent showers. The weather preceding the survey had been typical for the time of year.

The front of the property faces approximately north-west. Directions given in this report are given as if facing the property from the front.

### *The accommodation comprises:*

**Ground Floor:** Entrance vestibule; entrance hall; two bedrooms; bathroom/WC with panelled bath (with electric shower over), low level WC and pedestal hand basin fitted.

**First Floor:** Split-level landing areas; through reception room; kitchen.

**Second Floor:** Loft room.

**Outside:** There is potential for on-street parking at the front, but the road is very narrow.

There are steps leading up to a shared path that runs along the front of the terrace, with steps leading up to the front entrance door to the subject property. At the side of the steps there is a random stone slab finished patio area.

The site slopes up towards the rear quite significantly, with some various concrete finished courtyard/patio areas. At the rear of the site there is a store room (used it would seem by the present owners as living accommodation), with a garage above.

The Health Protection Agency has identified the area in which the property is situated as one in which, in more than 1% of dwellings; the level of radon gas entering the property is such that remedial action is recommended. It is not possible during the course of an inspection/survey to determine whether radon gas is present in any given building as the gas is colourless and odourless. Tests can be carried out to assess the level of radon in buildings; these are available by post from the Health Protection Agency and other approved Laboratories. The minimum testing period is three months. The Health Protection Agency strongly advises against using shorter-term tests as they can give misleading results. If tests have not been carried out it is recommended that they be. Where radon is discovered, it has been the experience of the Health

Protection Agency that it is not expensive, in proportion to the value of the property, to affect the recommended remedial measures.

The property is located in a known historic mining area. A mining search should be carried out and this should be checked by your Legal Adviser. This report assumes no adverse findings.

We carried out our inspection with no-one in occupation (although there were goods stored in the store room underneath the garage which appears to be used as living accommodation). Floors were covered throughout, with some exposed floorboards.

We have been informed that the property is being sold Freehold with full vacant possession. Matters such as this should be checked by your Legal Adviser.

The rear tenement is probably part of the original property. The loft has been converted; the date of this is unknown, although, it is likely that this was carried out a number of years ago. The first floor has been completely opened up and an open tread (and poorly guarded) staircase leads up to the second floor. We believe that a chimney breast has been removed from the left hand side of the rear bedroom. Your Legal Adviser should ensure that all Local Authority Consents have been obtained for these works.

Under the Party Wall etc Act 1996, any works carried out to party walls must be notified to neighbours. Again, this should be looked into further by your Legal Adviser.

There are outstanding views from the property over Brixham town, the harbour and Torbay. You should note that although you have a right to light, you do not have a right to a view. Your Legal Adviser will carry out a local search to ensure that there are no proposed developments around the property.

We understand the council tax band is "D".

With regards the specific queries you have requested us to answer:

1. It would be possible to install a WC in the under-stairs cupboard. Having said this, it must be stressed that we were unable to find any inspection chamber covers within the curtilage of the property. There is a gulley to the rear left hand corner of the rear tenement and this does take both rainwater and kitchen sink/hand basin wastes. We would expect there to be drainage somewhere behind the property here, but this will of course have to be located and any new WC plumbed in. Local Authority Consent would be required for these works.
2. It would be possible to install an en suite facility at the rear of the second floor. Our previous comments regarding drainage etc should be noted.
3. It would be possible to partition off the staircase that leads up to the second floor. It must be stressed that the door opening that leads from the staircase into the first floor through reception room is quite narrow, being less than a standard door width, and the only way to keep the stairs at a reasonable width would be to move the partition at the side of the aforementioned door opening.

4. There is no reason why the storage platform could not be taken out of the second floor.
5. The wall that lies to the front left hand corner of the kitchen is the main rear wall of the house and some substantial structural work would be required if you wish to open up these areas. It appears to be a timber studwork partition lying between the stairwell and the rear reception area and moving this should be reasonably straightforward. One thing to note is that there is glazing in this partition that is non-safety glass. These areas are at different levels of course and steps would have to be installed.
6. We could find nowhere else in the kitchen to reposition the radiator to.
7. Issues regarding replastering and rewiring are dealt with within the relevant sections of this report.
8. You have asked us to provide photos of the store room underneath the garage. These are appended at the rear of this report.

Small areas of cracking and what are considered to be cosmetic defects, which can easily be put right when redecoration takes place and very small repairs, are not mentioned in this report where they are considered to be expected for a property of this type and age.

## CONSTRUCTION & CONDITION

### **ROOF**

#### *Construction*

The roof over the second floor is flat construction (basically two large dormer windows), presumably timber framed. This is finished in built-up felt. We have had sight of an invoice dated 22nd February 2016 indicating that the roof was re-covered, with the OS boards having been re-laid using furrings so as to provide an adequate fall with the provision of one sub-layer and two top layers of torch-on mineral felt. Formers and flashings were also replaced. The invoice that we have seen indicated that the ceiling was re-boarded using 12 mm plasterboard, with a plaster skim. The invoice makes no mention of insulation.

At the front and rear of these dormers, the remaining sections of pitched roof are finished in manmade slates. We cannot confirm whether or not an underfelt is provided.

It should be noted that the dormer that has been provided on the top floor has been built into the roof crooked.

On the front roof slope, we could see that the interlocking concrete tiles on the left hand adjoining roof appear to overlay the manmade slates. We have to assume that there is some form of flashing system provided here, hidden from view. On the right hand side, some individual flashings have been provided. We could see one lead clip is bent out of position. It is assumed that it is only the self-weight of the tiles that are holding these flashings in place.

At the rear of the dormers, there is again a manmade slate roof finish. On the left hand side, there is a cement capping covering the junction between the two roofs, with lead flashings provided down the side of the dormer. On the right hand side, there are again individual flashings which have started to buckle. Underneath the dormers themselves, there are some lead flashings, with adequate movement joints provided in the leadwork. We did note that leadwork has been used underneath the slates at the rear.

The rear tenement roof is finished in manmade slates. We could see no underfelt protruding from the eaves.

There are no access ways into any of the roof structures. We cannot therefore confirm the means of construction, timber has probably been used.

Moss and algae growth did quite severely restrict our inspection.

## *Condition*

The built-up felt roof finish provided on the top of the second floor was found to be in reasonable order. Where lead flashings have been provided around the chimney stacks, these have been chased into the render finishes on the chimneys. The flashings are rather untidy but are probably functioning satisfactorily.

The manmade slate roof finishes underneath the dormers are in poor condition. We could see some damage on the slates to the front right hand corner. Some of the lead flashings previously referred to have started to buckle up and move. We would as a matter of course recommend that you budget for re-covering these roof slopes.

On the rear tenement, the roof finishes are now showing signs of age, again with a good deal of moss and algae growth on the top surface which did restrict our inspection. We noted one slipped under-slate down the left hand side and some minor damage to the slates. The clay ridge tiles are slightly uneven. These have started to spall very slightly. We would as a matter of course recommend that you budget for re-covering these rear roof slopes over the next five years or so. You may even find that they start to cause problems before this.

No through ventilation has been provided to any of the roof structures. This would not accord with modern standards and if water should penetrate into the roofs, conditions will be suitable for the growth of dry rot; also, condensation problems can prevail. We would recommend that through ventilation is provided.

Where the rear tenement roof meets up with the main property, 'Flashband' or similar has been used to the front left hand corner in an attempt to channel water towards the guttering system. Flashband is considered to be a short-lived inferior material and this should be replaced with leadwork or similar.

We were unable to inspect any of the roof timbers and cannot therefore confirm whether or not there are any issues of beetle infestation (woodworm). In the absence of any paperwork to show that the property has been treated against ongoing infestation, we would recommend further investigations by a damp/timber decay specialist. All recommendations should be carried out under an insurance backed guarantee.

It must be stressed that we cannot vouch for whether or not there is any insulation/vapour barriers provided within the roof structures as access is not available. Insulation is probably at a low level.

## CHIMNEYS AND FLUES

A single flue chimney stack is provided on the left hand side of the property. Here a single clay chimney pot is fitted, with a proprietary metal flue terminal protruding from the top. It is clear that this would have once been a much more substantial chimney stack which has now been reduced in size.

On the right hand side, there is a more substantial chimney stack. Here there is one clay chimney pot fitted, with a metal cowl provided over the top. There is another flue which does not appear to be properly terminated.

The left hand chimney stack evidently serves the subject property. The right hand stack appears to solely serve the adjoining property, although, it must be stressed that this will be considered to be a party structure and you will inevitably be responsible for paying for part of the maintenance of this.

The left hand chimney stack was found to be in reasonable order, with no significant defects being noted.

The render finishes on the right hand stack have started to deteriorate and, as previously stated, one of the flues is not properly terminated. We did note damp staining and high moisture meter readings on the right hand side of the subject property (in particular on the first floor landing, both at upper and lower levels), with some high moisture meter readings noted in the under-stairs cupboard on this side. It is clear that dampness is getting down through this chimney and remedial works are required.

The left hand chimney stack will serve the gas flame effect fire in the front reception area. Here there is an exposed stonework fireplace/hearth; all found to be in reasonable order. We did find a warning label on the fire dated "8.3.2017" indicating that there is a fault on the fire and that it should not be used. This requires further investigation by a specialist.

Above here there is a stone fireplace and hearth. We would not expect there to have been a fireplace up at this level in the past and we have to assume that this is a mock hearth. When we looked inside the storage areas at the front of the second floor, we found what appears to be the floorboards disappearing underneath the hearth, and we suspect that the hearth has simply been laid on top of the floorboards. There will be quite a lot of weight imposed here; we would recommend that the hearth is removed.



Other fireplaces at the property have been sealed off. Vents should be installed to avoid condensation problems occurring within the flues.

It must be stressed that the left and right hand walls at second floor level have been completely drylined. The fact that the chimneys butt up against the outside of these walls is of concern, as damp could be getting into the walls hidden from view. Our comments later on under the section on “Walls” should be noted.

We did note that there is a recess in the large cupboard on the left hand side of the rear ground floor bedroom. We have concerns that the chimney breast has been removed from here. We took measurements from the right hand party wall up to the face of this wall and found a discrepancy of 490 mm indicating that a chimney breast may well have been removed. This would have been structural work and would have required Local Authority Consent. Our previous comments should be noted.

## **RAINWATER FITTINGS**

PVC gutters and downpipes have been provided at the property.

We did note water dripping from the top sections of downpipe at the front. These do require attention.

The front downpipe runs into the ground and we did note a metal pipe protruding from the retaining wall at the side of the steps that lead up to the front entrance and water presumably runs out onto the path here. Water obviously percolates through the wall at the front of the path as we could see no ponding issues at the time of our inspection. It should be noted however that this can be a hazard during extreme weather conditions.

At the rear of the property, PVC rainwater goods have been provided. A downpipe to the rear left hand corner runs down into a gully; presumably rainwater then runs into the mains drainage system – an arrangement that would not comply with modern recommendations but would have complied with recommendations applicable when the property was first built.

## **WALLS**

### ***Construction***

Main walls at the property measure between 400 and 600 mm in thickness. These will be of solid masonry construction, finished externally in a painted render (with some painted stonework and rough render finishes on the rear tenement). Inside, walls are lined in plaster, with some drylining systems provided. It must be

stressed that we cannot vouch for the condition of walls behind drylinings.

### ***Condition***

We tapped external render and internal plaster at random accessible positions, we did note some slightly hollow plaster finishes in patches around the property and inevitably some patch repairs will be required. We did find some hollow finishes on the external render, with some evidence of made-good cracking. We did note some cracks, particularly around window/door openings. These cracks will have occurred due to thermal movement and repairs can simply be carried out when the property is being redecorated. Our previous comments regarding dampness coming down from the chimney stack should be noted and plaster finishes will inevitably have to be renewed here.

We took electronic damp meter readings to random accessible position low level walls throughout the property – we did obtain high readings in the front right hand corner of the entrance vestibule; slightly high readings at the rear of the rear bedroom; and high readings between the entrance hall and the bathroom, and inside the under-stairs cupboards. In the under-stairs cupboards, there are no timber skirtings in direct contact with the damp masonry, however, the staircase is built into the wall on this side of the building. There are timber skirtings provided elsewhere and there is of course concern that timber decay can be occurring, hidden from view. We were concerned to find that some of the high readings between the entrance hall and the bathroom were at quite a high level above floor finishes. It may be that some of the dampness here has been caused by leaking rainwater goods or similar.

It must be stressed that we cannot vouch for the condition of walls behind drylinings. There is always a risk that there is timber decay hidden from view and we would recommend that your Legal Adviser checks that the drylining systems have been installed by a specialist, under a specialist guarantee. If this is not the case, we would recommend that sections of drylining are exposed and checked for the way in which they have been installed, and upgrading works carried out where necessary. This also relates to the studwork walls at second floor level and the dry-linings in the outbuildings.

A damp/timber decay specialist should attend site and report upon rising/ penetrating damp. All recommendations should be carried out under an insurance backed guarantee. It is normally possible to inject chemical damp-proof courses into these walls. This is not

always 100% successful (due to the rubble infill nature of the walls) it is with the use of a waterproof plaster that the process is normally completed. It should be noted that after plaster becomes damp, it will often become hygroscopic. It will then continue to attract moisture from the air and will not dry out properly unless it is replaced. If it is replaced, a waterproof additive should be used in the plaster mix. Timber skirtings have to be taken off and checked for timber decay and if they are put back into place or renewed, they must be properly isolated from any damp masonry. Redecoration works are of course required as part of the process.

If it is found that there are any cob construction walls (which is extremely unlikely here) the situation is very different...these walls do not suit damp proof courses, in this situation the dampness has to be managed, again we would recommend specialist advise.

At two positions in the bathroom, there are very thin walls which have been drylined on the inside. These will inevitably have a very low thermal efficiency.

We removed a screw-fixed panel on the left hand wall within the storage platform at second floor level. Here we found a void behind the timber framed wall and here we found no insulation or vapour barrier provided. The second floor will inevitably have a very low thermal efficiency. Here we did note a flexible metal flue rising up next to this void and then, as far as we could establish, into the chimney.

The masonry paint finishes were found to be in reasonable order, although, these have started to become marked/streaked in places, and where a boiler flue has been installed at the rear the finishes require some making good. Internal walls/partitions were found to be in reasonable condition. Internal decorations are dated and marked and require renewal.

## **WINDOWS, DOORS & JOINERY**

UPVC double glazed windows and doors have been provided throughout the property. We could see no marks on the front entrance door to indicate that safety glass has been used. In the front reception room, the bottom double glazed unit is leaking. The top hung window is a very poor fit. Above here on the left hand window, there are two leaking double glazed units. On the right hand window, there is one leaking double glazed unit. At the front of the second floor, there are tilt and turn windows provided, however the left hand window will only operate in the bottom hung position, whilst the right hand window is very difficult to operate,

although, it does operate in both the tilt and turn positions. At the rear of the property, the rear entrance door has no marks on it to indicate that safety glass has been used. Safety glass does appear to be fitted into the double doors leading into the kitchen. Here there is a cat-flap fitted in the passive door, although, the cat-flap is damaged. Up at second floor level, the tilt and turn windows are difficult to operate. When these are opened in the side hung position, they strike the ceiling. One of the side window double glazed units is leaking.

There is a timber framed double glazed roof window in the kitchen. Again, we could see that the double glazed unit is leaking and requires renewal.

A large number of the windows at the property have low level glazing, with no indication on the glazing to indicate that safety glass has been used. There are no window limiters fitted and these are a potential hazard, particularly for small children, etc.

We did note one cracked pane at the rear of the second floor.

We cannot vouch for the condition of the other double glazing seals. Any guarantee/FENSA certification paperwork available in respect of the windows and doors should be obtained by your Legal Adviser.

The letterbox flaps on the front entrance door are quite badly corroded and the finishes on some of the window/door furniture are damaged.

UPVC fascia boards and soffit boards have been fitted; all found to be in reasonable order.

Inside the property, panelled timber doors have been provided. It should be noted that there is no door fitted at the front of the kitchen or between the main entrance hall and the rear lobby area. The door between the entrance vestibule and the entrance hall is a multi-pane fully glazed door, which appears to have non-safety glass fitted. A number of the doors have been over-boarded, presumably to upgrade their fire rating. The over-boarding has probably been done using plywood or similar, but there is of course a chance that asbestos cement sheet could have been used. Without carrying out destructive testing, we cannot confirm this one way or the other. Asbestos cement products are a potential health hazard. If they are worked upon or disposed of, special health and safety precautions must be taken and this does increase the cost of the work. We tested the doors and generally they

functioned satisfactorily. The door leading into the rear reception room does not quite latch properly.

There is a sliding door provided between the stairwell and the through reception room. This is fully glazed in what appears to be polycarbonate sheet. Our previous comments regarding the non-safety glass fitted in the partition next to here should be noted.

The stairs were found to be reasonably firm, level and even. We could see no clear evidence of any ongoing beetle infestation (woodworm) in the under-stair timbers, but this can be ongoing but hidden from view. Our previous comments regarding infestation in these older properties should be noted. The stairs leading up to the second floor are open tread stairs with poor guarding at the side. These would not comply with modern Building Regulation Standards. The right hand handrail on the staircase has come away.

Kitchen units are dated but in reasonable order.

## **CEILINGS**

Ceilings throughout the property are of lath and plaster and replacement plasterboard. A timber boarded ceiling is provided in the through reception room. It must be stressed that we cannot vouch for the fire resistant qualities of the timber boarded ceiling. The boards are finished in varnish and this may be a significant fire hazard.

Needless to say, if you do decide to remove the timber boarded ceiling in the through reception room, you may well find that you have to provide a completely new ceiling finish.

Some of the older lath and plaster ceilings do undulate slightly and we noted some made-good cracks. Lath and plaster ceilings will tend to lose their key to the support timbers over the years and at the time of each comprehensive redecoration contract inevitably repair works are required. Sometimes whole ceilings have to be renewed. We do not believe that any of the ceilings are unstable at present.

## **FLOORS**

Floors throughout the property are of suspended timber construction, except to the ground floor of the rear tenement where solid floors have been provided. There is also a solid floor in the under-stairs cupboards.

In the under-stairs cupboards we did note some cracked finishes and slightly high moisture meter readings. Elsewhere, where we were able to take moisture meter readings, these were acceptable indicating that a suitable damp-proofing system has been installed and is functioning satisfactorily.

We tested the suspended timber floors for excessive spring (which would denote undersized or rotted floor joists) and none was noted at the time of our inspection. A reasonable amount of through ventilation has been provided by the provision of regularly positioned airbricks. Our previous comments regarding beetle infestation (woodworm) in these properties should however be noted.

It should be noted that the floor level in the rear of the hallway is at more or less the same level as the outside ground level, and this is a potential water entry point.

Where exposed floorboards were found, some of these have become damaged in the past and have been patch repaired, and some of the floorboards are uneven. There are a number of squeaky boards. The only way to resolve this will be to provide additional fixings.

## **SERVICES**

As already stated, the service installations have not been tested but some general remarks are set out below for your guidance.

### *Electricity*

Mains electricity is connected to the property, with a modern style meter marked "Certified December 2013" and a modern style mini circuit breaker board being located at high level in the entrance vestibule.

There is a relatively small number of power outlets provided and we did note some surface fixed wiring.

We tested lights throughout the property and they all functioned satisfactorily. We were unable to test any of the wall lights at second floor level as there are no lamps fitted.

The Institute of Electrical Engineers does recommend that electrical circuits are tested each time a property is sold or every ten years (whichever is sooner) and in the absence of any paperwork to this effect, we would recommend further investigations by an NICEIC registered electrician.

## *Gas*

Mains gas is connected to the property, with the meter being located in a purpose built enclosure fixed on the front elevation. The door on the enclosure is damaged.

Gas is fed to the wall hung balanced flue boiler located in the kitchen and also to the gas flame effect fire. Our previous comments regarding the warning label on the fire should be noted.

We have been shown paperwork indicating that a new boiler was installed in February 2016. All relevant paperwork should be checked by your Legal Adviser. Gas appliances should be serviced annually by a Gas Safe engineer. In the absence of any such paperwork, we would recommend further investigations.

We did note a condensate pump system provided underneath the boiler, with a pipe running from here underneath the floor. This pipe then appears to come up under the sink and has then been run into the waste pipe that will normally serve a washing machine or dishwasher. Needless to say the way in which the waste is run should ideally be changed.

## *Water*

Mains water is connected to the property, we do not know whether or not this is metered.

We ran water at the various sanitary fittings and flushed the WCs, and an adequate supply of water was found to be available.

Sanitaryware was found to be dated and marked but serviceable.

## *Heating*

Heating is provided at the property by traditional pressed steel radiators and an electric heated towel rail provided in the bathroom.

Radiators appear to be of a reasonable size when compared with the sizes of the rooms that they heat and most of the radiators have thermostatic valves fitted.

## *Miscellaneous*

There is no mains operated smoke detector system provided at the property.

There is no intruder alarm.

There is an extract hood over the hob in the kitchen. The extract fan in the bathroom was not working at the time of our inspection.

## **DRAINAGE**

The property is, we understand, connected into the mains drainage system. Matters such as this should be checked by your Legal Adviser.

We found no inspection chamber covers within the curtilage of the property and we cannot therefore vouch for the condition of the underground drainage system. The drains should be exposed, an inspection chamber installed, and the drains checked for any defects.

This is probably a shared drainage system. All rights and responsibilities in respect of the maintenance of this should be checked by your Legal Adviser.

Surface water drainage at the rear relies on one gully provided just to the rear of the property. If this is not kept clear, or indeed if it cannot cope with surface water during extreme conditions, flooding inside the property will occur. We would recommend that you arrange to have the surface water drainage arrangement checked for satisfactory operation.

## **SITE & OUTBUILDINGS**

### ***Garage / Storage Area***

The garage and the storage area underneath have a flat timber roof finished in built-up felt (the lower level rear roof also being finished in built-up felt). The walls are single skin masonry, drylined on the inside, and we cannot vouch for the condition of the walls behind the drylinings. Our comments in the main report should be noted. The floors are concrete.

There is a hand basin installed in the storage area. This area has obviously been used for habitable accommodation and we would not expect there to be any Local Authority Consent for this. There is only a cold supply to the hand basin and the waste obviously exits out into an adjoining property. We very much suspect that this does not run into any drainage system.

The felt roof over the garage is showing signs of age. It must be stressed that these have a limited lifespan. It is important that your Legal Adviser confirms how recently the roof was re-covered. At the time of our inspection, we could see no signs of leakage. The flat roof over the rear part is in poor condition and obviously will have to be renewed very soon.



We did note movement cracks on the sides of the garage and the storeroom below showing that there has been some settlement but nothing of any major significance.

We did note some dampness in the walls of the garage and only non-perishable goods should be stored in here. Where boundary walls butt up against the garage damp is evidently getting in.

Dampness has been getting in through the left hand wall to the storage area and we could see corrosion in the reinforced concrete floor above. Down the left hand side of the building, some of the render finishes have been replaced and we assume that water has been getting in here in the past. There are no upstands on the roof on each side and water is probably running down the sides of the outbuilding. The problem may of course have been resolved, although, we could see water droplets in the area previously referred to and we suspect that this is an ongoing issue.

We took electronic damp meter readings inside the storage area underneath the garage. We did obtain some high readings which may be due at least in part to condensation. It must be stressed that we were unable to reach the walls on the roadside elevation due to furniture, etc, and there is a risk that there could be damp ingress occurring hidden from view. Our previous comments regarding the issue of the drylining systems should of course be noted. Because this area is subterranean, we would expect damp problems unless a proper damp-proofing system has been installed. Only non-perishable goods should be stored in these areas. As previously stated, drylining systems should be opened up at regular positions so that the way in which these have been installed can be checked and upgrading works carried out as necessary.

Where timber fascia boards are provided, these have started to become affected by timber decay. The finishes on the front door are damaged. The up and over garage door is quite difficult to operate. This was unlocked at the time of our inspection (as was a pedestrian access door at the rear). You should make sure that these doors function properly and can be locked.

It should be noted that there are “Artex” type ceiling finishes here. These finishes can have an asbestos content. Our previous comments regarding asbestos products should be noted.

The bulkhead over the staircase is low and quite difficult to negotiate. The bottom riser to the stairs in the storage area has a smaller rise than the other steps; a potential trip hazard.

The garage and store room are basic buildings but arguably suitable for their purpose. It must be stressed that they are not suitable for habitable accommodation.

### *Site*

Where steps lead up to the path that runs along the front of the property, the finishes are in quite poor condition on the steps and the path. There is a substantial retaining wall running along the front of here. This does lean outwards very slightly but does not appear unstable. The stonework does require a complete overhaul. Your rights and responsibilities should be checked by your Legal Adviser. Where there is a raised patio area at the front of the house, this has retaining walls around the perimeter and these were found to be in reasonable order. The paving slabs are uneven presenting some trip hazards. There is no guarding around this area; this is a potential hazard, particularly for small children, etc.

The terraced areas at the rear rely upon some quite substantial retaining structures. On the left hand side, the retaining structure has moved and the finishes have started to crack. A metal bar has been installed rather haphazardly in an attempt to hold back the finishes. Here some quite significant repair works are required.

The guarding around the terraced areas is extremely poor; a potential hazard, particularly for small children etc.

Where there are timber fences provided, some of these are showing signs of age. Down the left hand side, the fences are starting to become affected by timber decay. It is important that your Legal Adviser confirms who owns and who is therefore responsible for the various boundaries around the site.

## SUMMARY

Listed below are works, which we believe should be carried out at the property to bring it up to a good standard:

1. The manmade slate roof finishes require attention and will probably have to be renewed very soon. Through ventilation should be provided to the roof structures. Insulation to the roofs will probably have to be upgraded to bring the property up to present standards.
2. In the absence of any paperwork to show that the property has been treated against ongoing beetle infestation, we would recommend further investigations by a damp/timber decay specialist. All recommendations should be carried out under an insurance backed guarantee.
3. The right hand chimney stack requires an overhaul and one of the flues requires properly terminating. You will have to speak to your neighbours about this. Damp affected plaster will have to be replaced and decorations renewed as necessary. The second floor hearth should be removed. Sealed off flues should be ventilated.
4. The rainwater goods at the front require attention.
5. At the time of the next comprehensive redecoration contract, rendering and plaster repairs will be required.
6. Damp/timber decay specialist to report upon rising/penetrating damp. Dry-linings should be exposed and checked as necessary. All recommendations should be carried out under an insurance backed guarantee.
7. The windows and doors at the property require an overhaul, including replacement of leaking/damaged double glazed units. You will probably find that most of the windows have to be replaced. Safety glass should be fitted to all vulnerable glazing and window limiters fitted as necessary.
8. NICEIC registered electrician to test electrical circuits.
9. The drains should be located, exposed and checked for any defects. The adequacy of the surface water drainage arrangements at the rear should be checked.
10. Some general maintenance work is required to the garage, the underlying workshop, and the site generally.

We trust the above report provides you with the information required and if we can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to let us know.

Yours sincerely

**Vince Keep MRICS  
Complete Surveying Services  
Chartered Building Surveyors**

PHOTOTGRAPHS



**Photo 1 Rear elevation – general view.**



**Photo 2 The left hand part of the front roof slope is in poor condition.**



**Photo 3 The right hand part of the front roof slope is in poor condition.**



**Photo 4 Some damage noted to the slates at the front.**



**Photo 5 The right hand chimney stack requires attention.**



**Photo 6 Damp noted at the side of the staircase.**



**Photo 7 Damp noted at the side of the staircase.**



**Photo 8 Damp noted in the understairs cupboard.**





**Photo 9 Damp noted in the downstairs cupboard. These floor tiles have been loosely laid and we did note some dampness underneath.**



**Photo 10 The hearth on this fireplace should be removed.**



**Photo 11** Rising damp noted here. Note some of this is quite high up on the wall.



**Photo 12** Where we gained access into the timber studwork around the second floor we found no vapour barrier and no insulation.



**Photo 13 Right hand side of the garage and store room below.**



**Photo 14 Right hand elevation of the out building. Note cracking above window opening and crooked window at upper level.**



**Photo 15. Left hand elevation to the outbuilding. Note repairs have been carried out to the render in the past.**



**Photo 16 Damp has been getting in through the roof here.**



**Photo 17 Corrosion and dampness noted in the concrete floor to the garage.**



**Photo 18 Movement cracks in the garage.**



**Photo 19** Movement cracks in the garage.



**Photo 20** Dampness noted inside the garage.



**Photo 21** The retaining wall at the front requires some general maintenance.



**Photo 22** The retaining wall at the front requires some general maintenance.



**Photo 23 The path at the front requires attention. Here we could see no significant rainwater ponding.**



**Photo 24 The retaining walls at the rear require repair.**