

**RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEY  
OF  
Wadebridge, Cornwall, PL27**



**FOR  
Mr S**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Firstly, may we thank you for your verbal/written instructions; we have now undertaken a Building Survey (formerly known as a Structural Survey) of the aforementioned property.

The Building Survey takes the following format, there is an introductory section (which you are currently reading) and includes a synopsis of the building and a summary of our findings, our Summary Upon Reflection, written after we have reviewed our findings, followed by sketch plans of the property. We then go through a detailed examination of the property starting with the external areas working from the top of the property down, followed by the internal areas and the buildings services. We conclude with the section for your Legal Advisor and our final comments and also attach some information on the property market.

We are aware that a report of this size is somewhat daunting and almost off-putting to the reader because of this. We would stress that the purchase of a house is usually one of the largest financial outlays made (particularly when you consider the interest you pay as well).

We recommend that you set aside time to read the report in full, consider the comments, make notes of any areas which you wish to discuss for whatever reason and call our office to discuss the matters further on 0800 298 5424.

We obviously expect you to read the entire report but we would suggest that you initially look at the summary, which refers to various sections in the report which we recommend you read first so that you get a general feel for the way the report is written.

As part of our service we are more than happy to talk through the survey as many times as you wish until you are completely happy to make a decision. Ultimately, the decision to purchase the house is yours but we will do our best to offer advice to make the decision as easy as possible.

# **REPORT FORMAT**

To help you understand our Report we utilise various techniques and different styles and types of text, these are as follows:-

## ***GENERAL/HISTORICAL INFORMATION***

*This has been given in the survey where it is considered it will aid understanding of the issues, or be of interest. This is shown in "italics" for clarity.*

## **TECHNICAL TERMS DEFINED**

Throughout the Report, we have endeavoured to define any technical terms used. This is shown in "Courier New" type face for clarity.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**



We utilise photographs to illustrate issues or features. In some photographs a pencil has been used to highlight a specific area (with this property we have taken approximately one hundred photographs in total and we have enclosed a sample of these within the report).

## **ORIENTATION**

Any reference to left or right is taken from the front of the property, including observations to the rear which you may not be able to physically see from the front of the property.

## **ACTION REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

We have used the term **ACTION REQUIRED** where we believe that there are items that you should carry out action upon or negotiate upon prior to purchasing the property.

Where a problem is identified, we will do our best to offer a solution. However, with most building issues, there are usually many ways to resolve them dependent upon cost, time available and the length of time you wish the repair/replacement to last.

## SYNOPSIS

### SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

A rear extended bungalow sitting on a sloping site in a secluded location at the end of a cul de sac.

Wadebridge has a reasonable range of facilities which are situated a good walk away from the subject property.

Wadebridge is located in North Cornwall on the Camel estuary, much of the surrounding area is designated an area of outstanding beauty. Wadebridge also has good road links with the A39 and you are a relatively short distance away from the Cornish coastline.

### EXTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS



Rear Elevation



Front Elevation



Right Hand Side Elevation



Left Hand Side Elevation

# SUMMARY OF CONSTRUCTION

## EXTERNAL

Chimneys:	Rendered
Main Roof:	Pitched concrete tiles
Rear Roof and Garage Roof:	Flat and covered with a felt
Rainwater Goods:	Plastic
Walls:	Painted render finish
External Joinery:	Plastic windows with painted timber fascias and soffits

## INTERNAL

Ceilings:	Plasterboard
Walls:	Solid (assumed)
Floors:	Suspended timber floor (assumed)

## OUTSIDE

To the front is a good size garden, which includes a driveway down to the detached single garage and also off road parking. To the rear is a more modest similar size garden, which is mainly laid to lawn but includes several mature trees and leads down to a stream. From here are good views of the surrounding countryside.

**The above is explained in full in the main body of the Report along with the technical terms used. We have used the term assumed as we have not opened up the structure.**

# **ACCOMMODATION AND FACILITIES**

## **Ground Floor**

The ground floor accommodation consists of:

- Entrance hall
- Lounge
- Kitchen/Dining area
- Two Double Bedrooms (although one is presently used as a single room)
- A much larger family bathroom than we would normally find, which the rear double bedroom has direct access to.

The layout we are advised was built to allow good access for anyone in a wheelchair or having difficulty of movement.

## INTERNAL PHOTOGRAPHS

Please note that some of the photos may have been taken with a concave lens, to enable us to show you as much of the room as possible, which does make the photos slightly blurred.



Kitchen/Diner, looking towards the dining area



Kitchen Area



Main Lounge



Bathroom



Main Bedroom

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Summaries are dangerous as they try to précis often quite complex subjects into a few paragraphs. This is particularly so in a summary about someone's future home when we are trying to second-guess what their priorities are, so it is important the Report is read in full. Having said all of that, here are our comments:-

We would comment that the property is presently in good order. However there are various areas we wish to highlight:

### 1) **Roofs**

There are extensive flat roofs to the rear of the property and over the garage. These are ten years old and generally it is considered that felt has a life of 20 years, however as there is relatively little fall on the roof, we feel they probably have a reduced life span and some repairs are likely to be necessary within, say, the next few years.

We would estimate costs to be in the region of a few hundred pounds over the next few years with the replacement cost of this type of roofing being in the thousands of pounds. The quality of felt used dictates the expense, as it would be very difficult to put a fall on the roof we would suggest that you go for a high performance felt when the roof has to be renewed.

The plastic roof over the covered porch way to the right hand side of the property next to the garage, leads to an awkward roof detail, which will need watching and the gutters regularly cleaned.

Please see the Roofing Section of this Report.

### 2) **Trees**

You have extensive Leylandii to the left hand side of the property which is now approximately the height of the property. These needs cutting back and needs regular and constant maintenance. We discussed this with Mrs Clarke, who is in agreement with this and advised that she had been unable to get anyone to do the work this year. We are finding that there is generally a skill shortage and that you should be prepared to carry out the work yourself.

We would also draw your attention to the mature Acorn tree to the rear of the garden, which we are advised has a Tree Preservation Order on it. This is of considerable height and again will need regular maintenance and management by an arboriculturist. Mrs Clarke advises that a specialist has advised her that there is no need to carry out any work. We have no way of establishing the quality of this information, but we would comment from our knowledge of trees we feel that some maintenance is required.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** An arboriculturist to carry out work on the tree within the next year.

We would estimate costs to be in the region of a few hundred pounds, but this really is a guesstimate as it is outside our area of expertise.

Please see the Tree Section of this Report

### **Purchase Price**

We have not been asked to comment upon the purchase price in this instance, we have however referred you to sources of general information on the housing market within the Information on the Property Market Section, which can be found in the Appendices at the end of the Report.

### **Every Business Transaction has a Risk**

Every business transaction has a risk, only you can assess whether that risk is acceptable to you and your circumstances. You should now read the main body of the Report paying particular attention to any “**ACTION REQUIRED**” points.

### **Final thoughts**

Please also see our comments in the Summary Upon Reflection Section, which is just before the layout plans of this report. These comments were added after we had reviewed this report whilst still in draft format.

## **MORE ABOUT THE REPORT FORMAT**

Just a few more comments about the Report format before you read the actual main body of the Report.

### **TENURE**

We have assumed that the property is to be sold Freehold and that vacant possession will be available on completion. Your Legal Advisor should confirm that this is the case.

### **IS THE PROPERTY MARKET GOING UP OR DOWN?**

We have not been asked to provide a market valuation for you on this property or a worth value. We do, however, feel it is essential to understand when and if you are buying the property at the right level we have therefore for your information attached details of some sources of general information on the property market.

### **ESTATE AGENTS – FRIEND OR FOE?**

It is important to remember that the estate agents are acting for the seller (usually known as the vendor) and not the purchaser and therefore are eager to sell the property (no sale – no fee!). We as your employed Independent Chartered Surveyor represent your interests only.

### **TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT/LIMITATIONS**

This report is being carried out under our standard terms of engagement for Residential Building Surveys.

## **SUMMARY UPON REFLECTION**

The Summary Upon Reflection is a second summary so to speak, which is carried out with our thoughts a few days after the initial survey. We would add the following:-

The problems we have identified relate to maintenance issues with the exception of the link roof between the two flat roofs, which is a poorly detailed design feature, which will have to be lived with unless you wish to incur a fair bit of expense. Providing you are happy to accept these we see no difficulty with proceeding with the purchase.

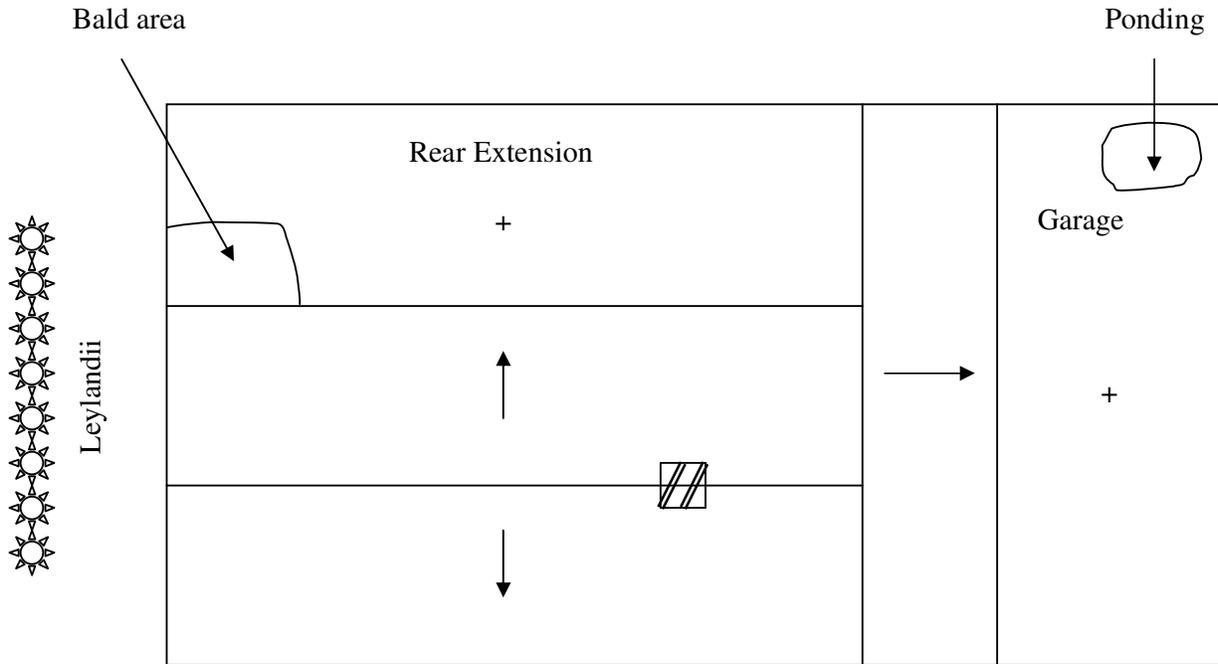
The other thing that has come to light is the lack of planning permission on the rear extension, although we did see a Building Regulation approval. This may simply be because this size of extension does not need planning permission; nevertheless your Legal Advisor should investigate this matter.

For any work required we would always recommend that you obtain at least three quotations for any work from a qualified, time served tradesperson or a competent registered building contractor prior to legal completion. If you so wish we can prepare specifications and obtain quotations for the work, whatever you do don't allow the estate agent to organise the quotes as he will utilise people he regularly uses who know they have to keep in with him/her to get further work and therefore are very keen to please the estate agent, as opposed to you the real client and at the end of the day it doesn't take long to organise.

We would ask that you re-read the Report and contact us on any issues that you require further clarification on.

# ROOF LAYOUT

REAR



FRONT

## Key

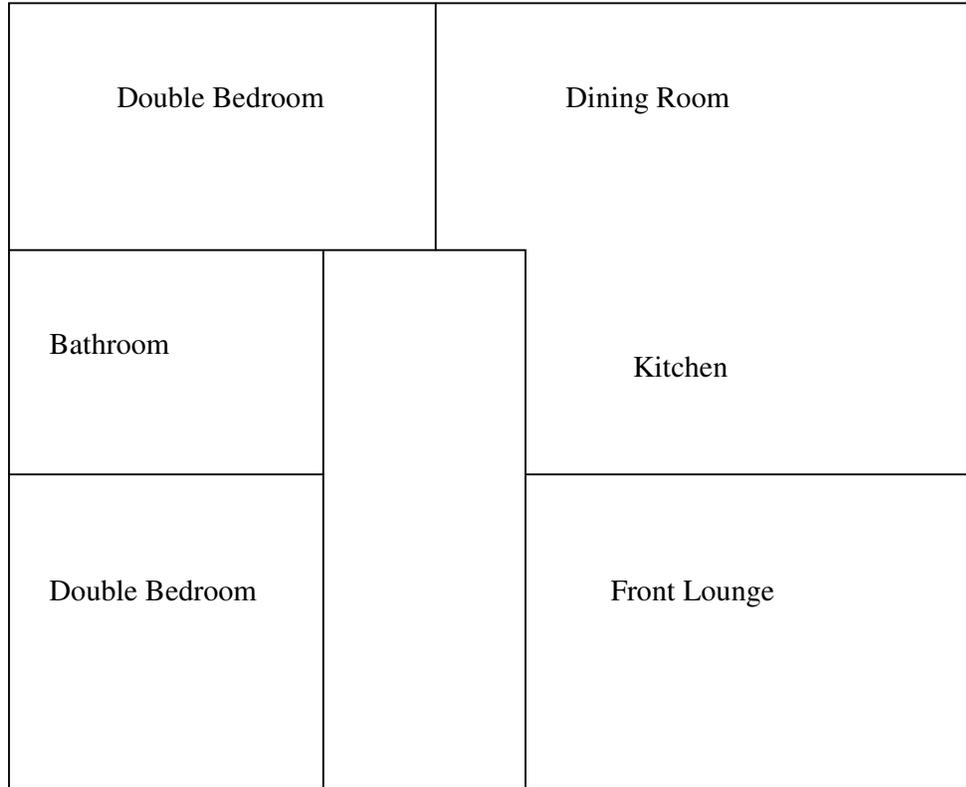
+ = Flat

→ = Direction of fall

Not to Scale

**FLOOR PLAN**

REAR



FRONT

Not to Scale

# EXTERNAL

## CHIMNEY STACKS

There is one chimney to this property.

### Chimney

This is a centrally positioned chimney with a painted render finish, which looks in reasonable condition. There is a lead flashing, which we consider to be the best type of flashing available.

We would comment that unfortunately we were unable to see the flaunchings or the chimney pot at its base. However, in this age of property they are likely to need some work in the next five or ten years.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Check the flaunchings and the chimney pot and recheck the whole chimney when work is carried out to the rear roofs, commented upon later on in this report.



Note the lead flashing to the base of the chimney, which is a good detail

### Flashings Defined

Flashings prevent dampness from entering the property, usually at junctions where materials change. Such a junction is the one between the chimney and the roof.

### Flaunchings Defined - Also known as Haunchings

A low, wide cement mortar fillet surrounding the flue terminal on top of the chimney stack to throw off rainwater.

Finally, we have, made our best assumptions, on the overall condition of the, chimney stacks from the parts we can see. The inspection has been from ground level within the boundaries of the property (unless otherwise stated). A close inspection may reveal latent defects.

Please also see Chimney Breasts, Flues and Fireplaces Section of this Report.

## **ROOF COVERINGS AND UNDERFELTS**

*The roof coverings and underfelts section considers the condition of the outer covering of the roof. Such coverings usually endure the extremes of climate and temperatures. They are susceptible to deterioration, which ultimately leads to water penetration.*

*The underfelts function is to prevent wind and minimise water damage. Dependent upon the age of your property this may or may not be present, please read on:*

We will consider the roofs in three areas, the main pitched roof, the rear flat roofs including the garage roof and the plastic roof over the covered porch way.

### **Main Roof**

This is a concrete tile clad pitched roof. Concrete tiles come in two forms; nibbed - this is where ridges on the back of the tiles allow fixing to the roof battens and the roof structure; and is what is termed "mechanical" or interlocking fixings - this is where troughs or grooves in the tiles allow the fitting of the joining tiles together as well as the nibs previously mentioned. In this instance, the property looks to have interlocking concrete tiles which, if correctly laid, gives a very firm and strong roof covering.

There is a very minor amount of moss growth present on roof slopes. This can, in extreme cases, impede the run-off of rainwater, lead to gutter blockages and cause water penetration, which in turn may lead to rot or other defects in nearby timbers.

From ground level, the roof covering showed nothing out of character for its age and type.



Layer of moss, this is not unusual on concrete tiles.

## Sarking Felt

We found a Hessian reinforced felt within the roof space. This is good practice and our general random visual inspection found it all to be in a condition that we would expect for this age of property i.e. there are some areas where the sarking felt is coming away, but not excessively, and these are generally around the foot of the roof where it meets the flat roof.

## **Rear Flat Roofs – Rear extension roof and garage roof**

*Whilst these roofs are called "flat", present building regulations and good building practice presently requires a minimum fall of 12 degrees.*

*Flat roofs are formed in a variety of materials. Difficulties arise when the water is not discharged from the roof but sits upon it, as this can soon lead to deterioration which flat roofs are renowned for.*

This property has a bituminous felt covering with a mineral felt to the perimeter. Flat roofs with bituminous felt coverings have a limited life expectancy dependent on standards of workmanship, the quality of materials and the degree of exposure. A life span of 10-15 years, possibly longer up to 20 years, can normally be anticipated though failure can occur earlier. In this instance you are ten years through this life expectancy.

We would comment that the roof is not particularly good quality. This is based on the deflection that we found in it when we were standing upon it, which is above average for what we typically find (and the lack of fall).

The decking is very important for this type of roof as it gives a firm base, or not as in this case, upon which the felt bonds. Without this the contraction and expansion, which occurs during the summer and winter months, causes the bonding to break between the felt and the decking.



General view of rear extension roof



There are various bald areas to the flat roof as can be seen in this photo.

## Ponding to Garage Roof

This has moved on to the next stage on the garage roof where ponding was visible (there was light rain during the course of our survey). Ponding is literally puddles on the roof, this then leads in the winter months to freezing of the water which changes the expansion and contraction characteristics around it, which in turn causes splitting in the roof. We therefore would comment that the garage roof has an even shorter life span.



General view of garage roof, note the ponding (puddles) to the far end of the roof.



Close up of the ponding.

## Ventilation to Flat Roofs

The latest Building Regulations require flat roofs to be ventilated. Building Regulations are not retrospective but the reason for the requirement is to make sure that any moisture that enters the roof construction is dispelled by way of ventilation. We would suggest that if the opportunity arises ventilation should be provided. This will stop the possibility of fungal growth above the ceiling in the flat roof area.

Also it could not be established if there is insulation within the roof or a vapour barrier, without the vapour barrier and combined with inadequate ventilation there will be an increase in the risk of wet or dry rot.

## **Plastic Roof over Covered Porch way/Linked Corridor**

There is a fairly awkward roof detail between the bungalow and the garage. This no doubt has been added at a later date. It does serve its function fairly well and consists of a single pitched plastic roof on a timber frame giving dry access to the garage.

However you should be aware of the limitations of this; in some areas close to the fixing bolt water is now starting to get through. Having said that, we would anticipate a life in the region of five years plus, but not the valley gutter, please read on.

Our main concern is the gutter detail that is caused between this roof and the garage roof, which will need regular cleaning to avoid it leaking. This is a very poor design detail and it would, in our opinion, have been better for the water to have discharged onto the flat roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Clear valley gutter regularly.



Photo of link between the two flat roofs.



Close up shows that some of the fixing points are starting to leak.



The pencil indicates where the valley gutter is. This is a poor detail and will need regular cleaning to stop water coming in through the roof in this area.

Finally, all flat roofs have been inspected from ground level and also via a ladder with the aid of a x16 zoom lens on a digital camera.

## **ROOF STRUCTURE AND ROOF VOIDS** **(ALSO KNOWN AS ROOF SPACE OR ATTIC SPACE)**

*The roof structure or framework must be built in a manner which is able to give adequate strength to carry its own weight together with that of the roof covering discussed in the previous section and any superimposed loads such as snow, wind, foot traffic etc.*

The main roof is accessed via the loft hatch located in the entrance hall. We are pleased to see that there is a loft ladder, roof light and approximately half of the area has secured floorboards. This makes the roof space a lot easier to access and use.

The perimeter of the roof space has been viewed by torch light, which has limited our viewing slightly.

The property has what is known as a cut timber double purlin roof. This is best explained with a sketch.

### Purlins Defined

The purlin is the horizontal timber member usually running from gable end to gable end and parallel with the walls which supports the jack or common rafters (the angled rafters forming the slope to the roof).

### Cut Roof Defined

This means a roof that was made at the building and was cut to size as opposed to the modern concept of prefabricating in a factory, transporting to site and lifting into place

This roof also has prop supports, which sit on internal walls, so care should be taken to seek professional advice if any internal walls are to be removed.



General view. Note the blockwork to the end gable indicating that this is a blockwork built property



This is the end of the purlin, often a weak area, in this case no dampness was found.



This shows where the pitched roof meets the flat roof, which can be a problem area, again nothing was found.



Another general view of the roof showing the chimney in the centre built of blockwork and the brace to the 'A' frame of the roof.

### **Condition of Timber**

We have inspected the roof for active woodworm and structural defects to the timber and wet rot but our examination was impeded by insulation and the fixed flooring, which covered part of the timber structure. Therefore, it is feasible that there are problems in the roof, which are hidden although we did not identify anything the only way to be 100 per cent sure is to have the roof cleared and checked.

### **Water Tanks**

The roof once housed a water tank, there is no longer a need for such a water tank as the property has had a replacement combination boiler, although we know many plumbers who would argue it is far better to have a water tank as this gives you a reserve of water.

Finally, we would ask you to note that a general inspection of the roof timbers has been made, we have not examined every single timber because some parts of the roof are inaccessible and it is simply not practical.

## **RAINWATER GOODS**

*Rainwater goods is the term given to the rainwater gutters and the rainwater downpipes. Their function is to carry rainwater from the roof to the ground keeping the main structure as dry as possible.*

*Defective rainwater goods are a common cause of dampness that can, in turn, lead to the development of rot in timbers. Regular inspection and adequate maintenance are therefore essential if serious problems are to be avoided.*

These are plastic. We noted the gutters generally needed a good clean, particularly the rear gutter next to the flat roof, which is full of shingle from the flat roof.

**ACTION REQUIRED** - We would always recommend that the rainwater goods are cleaned out, the joints are checked and the alignment checked to ensure that the gutters fall towards the downpipes.

Finally, gutters and downpipes have been inspected from ground level. We were not able to make a close inspection of the roof level rainwater goods (our ladders are not long enough) and therefore cannot identify the type of material 100 per cent or the condition. Our comments have therefore been based on our best assumptions.

## **WALLS**

*External walls need to perform a variety of functions. These include supporting upper floors and the roof structure, resisting dampness, providing adequate thermal and sound insulation, offering resistance to fire and being aesthetically presentable.*

### **Rendered Walls**

The external walls are rendered. We are always wary when we see rendered properties as it usually means they have been rendered for a particular reason. In this particular case we believe it is part of the original aesthetics and we would consider the render to be in an above average condition, although we would also advise that they were painted approximately two years ago, so the paintwork could be hiding latent defects.

### **Hairline Cracking**

We were only able to note one area of hairline cracking. This is to the rear of the property. We discussed this with Mrs Clarke who advised that this has been there almost as long as the extension itself (we are advised that this was finished in 1995) and was due to initial settlement, which is very common where properties are extended. Having said all of that we would reiterate our comment above that the property was painted only two years ago and therefore it could be hiding cracks, although we could not see any despite our best endeavours.

### **Bell-mouth Drip Details**

The drip details indicate the quality of the original rendering. We were pleased to note them to the base of the property, although they are not to the windows, as they tend to be on the better quality work.

### **Stone Cladding**

There is stone cladding in part to the front of the property. We are advised this is an original feature and Mrs Clarke commented that she was not particularly keen on it, which is what we tend to find for general opinion on cladding. You should be aware that when you come to sell the property that people often make their initial decision from an external picture and this may put some people off purchasing – we know it is fairly strange to be talking about selling the property before you have even purchased it, but we feel these things are all important in the overall scenario of whether you should buy it.

Render Defined

A sand and cement external coating applied in two or three coats or layers.

Bell-Mouths Defined

A bell-mouth is a curve at the base of a wall which throws the water away from the structure therefore preventing dampness.

**Lintels**

Where the window and door lintels are concealed by render and plasterwork we cannot comment on their construction or condition. In buildings of this age concrete and metal lintels are common which can be susceptible to deterioration which is unseen particularly if in contact with dampness.

Finally, the external walls have been inspected visually from ground level and randomly via a ladder within the boundaries of the property.

## **FOUNDATIONS**

*The foundations function, if suitably designed and constructed, is to transfer the dead or superimposed load through the soil so it can suitably carry the loads. Many properties prior to the 19th Century have little or not foundations, as we now think of them, with a minimum depth of around one metre filled with concrete.*

As this property is fairly new we would expect the foundations to be approximately three foot deep and probably concrete. Ironically the rear section of the property, which is the 'new' extension, would be expected to be deeper as current Building Regulations now require, generally, a minimum of one meter depth. We say ironically as the extension is not as high and is not pitched and therefore will not have the same weight loadings upon it, but this tends to be the way we have moved into a very 'belt and braces' type of construction, which is particularly ironic when you think that many buildings prior to the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century were built without foundations at all.

### **Building Insurance Policy**

You should ensure that the Building Insurance Policy contains adequate provision against any possibility of damage arising through subsidence, landslip, heave etc.

Finally, no examination has been made of any foundation to the building because to do so requires extensive excavation. We therefore cannot confirm 100 per cent the stability of the walls the foundations support but we have drawn conclusions from the surface evidence available at the time of the inspection and our general knowledge of this type of construction.

Likewise, we cannot comment upon how the foundations are constructed, we can only offer you our best assumptions, which we duly have done.

## **TREES**

Damage to foundations and underground services can be caused by trees and shrubs. There are a number of these in the vicinity of the building. One tree in particular, a large Acorn tree, looked to be mature and at its full growing height. However, you really do need specialist arboriculturist advice about this, particularly as we are advised it has a Tree Preservation Order on it.

Although there were no signs of structural damage attributable to trees at the time of the inspection the possibility of future problems cannot be ruled out. Trees and shrubs should not be allowed to overgrow the property though total removal of trees or pruning should not be undertaken without specialist advice as this could also result in damage.

Please also refer to the External Areas Section.

## **DAMP PROOF COURSE**

*The Building Act of 1878 required a damp proof course to be added to all newly built properties within the London area. It also required a minimum foundation depth of 225mm and an oversight of 150mm. These requirements were gradually taken up (or should that be grudgingly taken up) throughout the Country.*

All modern properties should incorporate a damp proof course (DPC) and good building practice dictates that a differential of 150mm (6 inches) should be maintained between the damp proof course and ground levels. In this case, no damp proof course could be seen, however we did not find any dampness internally.

Full details are set out within the section of this Report specifically dealing with dampness.

Finally, with rendered properties, it is not often possible to inspect or even identify if there is a damp proof course in a wall, although sometimes the edge of the damp proofing can be seen. Very often the exact position is covered with mortar or render and is not visible. We have made our best assumptions based upon our findings during the course of this inspection.

## **AIR BRICKS**

The floors to this property are suspended timber. This means there should be a through flow of air beneath. Subfloor ventilation is essential in discouraging rot and on no account should the air bricks be obstructed. In this case air bricks are present although they have been blocked in part to the rear of the property by the ramp. It is possible they were never added to the right hand side.

We do not feel that this is such a severity as to require additional air bricks, however we would advise that when you come to sell the property the Building Society or Bank's surveyor may insist upon such air bricks being added, as strictly speaking this is technically correct.

## **EXTERNAL JOINERY**

*The external joinery part of this section covers windows, doors, fascias and soffits. Windows primary functions are to admit light and air, but they also have thermal and sound properties. The doors allow access and egress within the property. Another element of external joinery is the fascias and soffits. These offer protection to the rafter feet and also allow the securing of guttering.*

### **Fascias and Soffits**

The fascia is hidden behind the guttering in this instance and therefore we cannot see it, although it is common for this type of detail to have some deterioration to the timber. From what we could see it is painted white and in reasonable condition. However, as Wadebridge is subject to sea air re-painting is likely to be required more regularly than you have probably been used to. We note for example to the rear of the property fascia, the plastic link between the two flat roofs shows some signs of rusting present from a nail fixing.

### **Windows**

The windows have been replaced over the years with plastic double glazed windows.

We have carried out a pressure test on these, which is literally applying pressure to check the amount of deflection. We find the better quality windows deflect the least; we would therefore class these windows as good quality based upon this measure.

In this case we were pleased to see that the windows have trickle vents, again a good indication that they are good quality.

We would draw your attention to the fact that sealed double glazed units can fail, particularly as a result of poor workmanship during installation. Failure of the seal leads to condensation between the two panes of glass and simply replacing the affected units may not provide a satisfactory long term solution.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would suggest an annual spring check of the mastic to the windows, as this is probably the weakest area of plastic windows.

Enquiries should also be made by your Legal Advisor into the existence of any transferable guarantees.

#### Trickle Vents Defined

Small vents to the windows to allow air movement inside the property to stop a build up of fumes or humidity.



The pencil indicates the trickle vent.

### **Doors**

There is an aluminium door to the front of the property, two plastic doors to the rear of the property together with sliding French doors. Unfortunately we forgot to check the French door, but would comment that all other doors opened and closed satisfactorily.

Finally, a general and random selection and inspection of the fascias and soffits, windows and doors has been made visually to give an over-view of the general condition. Please also see the Internal Joinery section.

## **EXTERNAL DECORATIONS**

*The external decorations act as a protective coat for the building from the elements. Where this protective covering has failed, such as with flaking paintwork, the elements will infiltrate the structure. This is of particular concern as water is one of the major factors in damage to any structure.*

In this case, external decorations are in good order. We would however comment that you really should not underestimate the amount of time or the frequency that the redecoration of the render will require. If you intend to carry it out yourself this will take up several weekends of good weather or alternatively a fair amount of money, not to mention the difficulty of finding a good tradesman if you have it redecorated professionally.

We would not expect redecoration to be needed within the next two years. This of course depends upon the quality of the existing decoration. As they always say with painting it is very much in the preparation that has or has not been carried out that makes the difference.

Finally, ideally external redecoration is recommended every four to five years dependent upon the original age of the paint, its exposure to the elements and the materials properties. Where painting takes place outside this maintenance cycle repairs should be expected. Ideally redecoration should be carried out during the better weather between mid-April and mid-September.

Please see our comments in the External Joinery section.

## **INTERNAL**

### **CEILING, WALLS, PARTITIONS AND FINISHES**

*In this section we look at the finish applied to the structural elements such as the plasterwork applied to the ceiling joists, walls or partitions, together with the construction of the internal walls and partitions. The concept of internal finishes is relatively modern. Partitioning developed originally to separate the livestock from the human occupants. Finishes have developed from this very functional beginning to their decorative nature of today.*

#### **Ceilings**

From within the roof space we could identify the ceilings as being formed in plasterboard. The ceilings are lightly Artexed.

There have been various press articles recently warning about the asbestos content of Artexing. Some of it comments about how this has been over hyped and that the Health and Safety Executive have made a mistake in the classification of Artex.

Artex is a trade name, similar to Hoover, and is also often termed 'textured paintwork'.

We suggest if you do want to do anything to the Artex that you consult a suitably qualified tradesperson at the time to get the latest opinion upon it.

#### Plasterboard Defined

The usual name for Gypsum plasterboard which is building board with a core of aerated gypsum, usually enclosed between two sheets of heavy paper, used as a dry lining.

#### **Internal Walls and Partitions**

These are generally solid throughout, which we feel is good practice (although it is not carried out on many new housing that we see) as it reduces the amount of noise transfer between the rooms, although the layout of this property is fairly good in that respect as the front bedroom is separated from the rear bedroom by the bathroom.

Finally, ceilings, walls and partitions have been inspected from floor level and no opening up has been undertaken. The type of materials employed cannot be ascertained fully without damage being caused.

We cannot comment upon the condition of the structure hidden behind plaster, dry lining, other applied finishes, heavy furniture, fittings and kitchen units with fitted back panels.

## **CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES AND FIREPLACES**

There is a chimney within the front lounge, this is used as a flue to the gas fire. In our question and answer session with Mrs Clarke she advised that the fire was regularly used although not recently due to the good weather (this week excluded!)

At the time of the survey no chimneys were in use. Any chimneys that you do not propose to use should be capped and ventilated to prevent dampness.

We would always recommend the use of carbon monoxide monitors

Finally, it is strongly recommended that flues be cleaned and checked for obstruction prior to use to minimise the risk of hazardous fumes entering the building.

Please also see the Chimney Stacks section of this Report.

## **FLOORS**

*Functionally floors should be capable of withstanding appropriate loading, preventing dampness, have thermal properties and durability. In addition to this upper floors should offer support for ceilings, resistance to fire and resistance to sound transfer.*

No exposure was carried out due to the restrictions of fitted carpets, floor coverings etc. The comments are based upon our experience and knowledge of this type of construction.

### **Ground Floor**

This was found to be a suspended floor, which is fairly unusual for this age of property due to the cost involved and is more typically found in Victorian properties. We believe it has possibly been used due to the slope of the site and possibly the difficulty of getting hold of ready mix concrete in the quantities needed. The extension has been carried on in a similar vein; we were shown the floorboarding that was used (there are off-cuts within the garden).

We were unable to access any of the floors due to fitted carpets etc throughout. Mrs Clarke was concerned that we may damage some areas. We therefore had to resort to an educated guess for what is occurring based upon our general knowledge of this type of construction. We therefore believe that it is likely the rafters are running from the front to the back of the property, the same way as the roof rafters, and this is also the shortest span, which is generally what builders go for as this is the cheapest option.

The reason this is important is that this takes the airflow available under the property, which would be from front to back, which would mean that airbricks are most important within the front and back of the property. As already commented in the Air Bricks Section a few of the air bricks are blocked to the rear due to the ramp and this may therefore give an outside chance of wet rot or dry rot in this area.

#### Joist and Floorboard Construction Defined

These are usually at first floor level consisting of a joist supported from the external walls, either built in or, in more modern times, sitting upon joist hangers, sometimes taking additional support from internal walls, with floorboards fixed down upon it.

## **DAMPNESS**

*In this section we look at any problems that are being caused either by rising damp of lateral damp. It is essential to diagnose the source of the dampness and to treat the actual cause. There are also other sources of dampness such as condensation, which may inadvertently by the inexperienced eye be considered to be lateral dampness or rising damp.*

### **Rising Damp**

*Rising damp depends upon three components, the porosity of the structure, the supply of water and the rate of evaporation from the wall surface. The water rising from the ground will tend to rise in the raw materials and will continue to do so due to capillary action to varying degrees of intensity and height.*

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal wall surfaces. Our tests found no signs of dampness. We would however comment that you should take care that earth backed up around the property to the front does not bridge the damp proof course. We would suggest that this is shovelled away slightly. Please do not take this out of context, it will simply take a few hours out in the garden.

### **Lateral or Penetrating Dampness**

*This is where water ingress occurs through the walls. This can be for various reasons such as poor pointing or wall material, inadequate rainwater goods or corroded downpipes.*

Readings taken are typical fro this age and type of property.

### **Condensation**

We can see no obvious signs of condensation, however, it depends upon how you utilise the building. If you do your washing and then dry it in a room without opening a window you will, of course, get condensation. Common sense is needed and a balance between heating and ventilation of properties. Normally opening windows first thing in the morning resolves most condensation issues.

Finally, effective testing was prevented in areas concealed by heavy furniture, fixtures such as kitchen fittings with back boards, and wall tiles etc.

## **INTERNAL JOINERY**

*This section looks at the doors, the stairway and the skirting boards.*

### **Doors**

There are a mixture of door types, the majority are veneer finished, although there is a glazed panel door to one of the bedrooms which may not be appropriate depending upon how you wish to use it. There is also a glazed panel door between the rear bedroom and the bathroom. Again this may not be appropriate depending on how you wish to use the house.

### **Skirtings**

The property generally has standard modern 2½-inch skirtings with a painted finish.

### **Kitchen**

The kitchen is to a reasonably standard in our opinion and suitable for use, although it may not be to your personal taste.

Finally, it should be noted that not all joinery has been inspected. We have taken a random sample and visually inspected these to give a general overview of the condition. Please also see the External Joinery/Detailing section.

## **TIMBER DEFECTS**

*This section considers dry rot, wet rot and woodworm.*

### **What is Wet Rot or Dry Rot?**

*Wet and Dry rot are species of fungi that initially need moisture to allow their airborne spores to germinate. Dry Rot can grow rapidly when conditions are good and if water continues to enter a building unchecked, wetting internal wood. Wet Rot can also spread throughout the timber in a property over a short period of time.*

### **Dry Rot and Wet Rot**

No evidence was found of any dry rot or wet rot or indeed the conditions that would promote it, however there is an outside chance, and it is an outside chance, that it is present.

### **Woodworm**

The roof space was inspected for woodworm and there were no obvious visual signs of it or indeed signs that past woodworm activity had caused any structurally significant damage, however, if you wish to be 100 per cent certain the only way would be to have a check when the property is emptied of furniture and various stored items and the secured boarding. Although we think it is unlikely there is active woodworm you can never be 100 per cent certain.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** If you wish to be 100 per cent certain get the property checked when it is empty of fixtures, fittings and furniture etc.

## **INTERNAL DECORATIONS**

You may wish to redecorate to your own personal taste. It is very difficult to advise on how frequently redecoration should take place. This very much depends upon the use and abuse the decoration gets, for example, within hallways this tends to be greater than for example within a spare bedroom.

We would draw your attention to the fact that removal of existing decorative finishes may cause damage to the underlying plasterwork necessitating repairs and making good prior to redecoration.

## **THERMAL EFFICIENCY**

It is very difficult to comment upon thermal efficiencies in a building of this age and type. For example, many requirements of present Building Regulations, which cover thermal efficiency, would not be appropriate to this type of structure as they are designed for modern buildings, which are constructed to different standards.

We would, however, comment as follows:-

### **Roofs**

Roof insulation was present although not to current Building Regulations requirements of 200mm.

### **Walls**

We are advised that the walls are cavity although we have no way of being certain of this. We would comment that the rear extension walls are likely to be cavity as it is common practice today, however in the mid-1960s a variety of construction techniques were used and it is therefore difficult to comment upon the thermal properties.

During our question and answering session with Mrs Clarke she advised that the walls generally felt colder in the older part of the property, which would indicate that there is no insulation present.

### **Windows**

The property has double glazing throughout, which has good thermal values.

### **Services**

Service records should be obtained. It is essential for the services to be regularly maintained to run efficiently.

We are advised that the property has a British Gas Three Star contract, which should mean that the boiler is running efficiently.

## **Summary**

We would therefore conclude that the property has above average thermal properties for its age.

We would also advise that an energy rating is likely to be required for future house sales.

Further information can be obtained with regard to energy saving via the Internet on the following pages:-

*HTTP//www.est.org.UK which is by the Energy Saving Trust and includes a section on grant aid.*

*or alternatively www.cat.org.UK*

*or www.ecocentre.org.UK for an alternative technological view.*

## **OTHER MATTERS**

### **Security**

No security system was noted. It is a personal decision as to whether you feel one is necessary. As a matter of policy we do not comment upon layout and design. We suggest you contact a member of NACOSS (National Approval Council for Security Services) Telephone No 01628-637512, or your local Police Force for advice on a security system.

### **Smoke Alarms**

A single smoke detector was noted. The current Building Regulations require that they be wired into the main power supply. Obviously in a property of this age, this is difficult as it would mean having surface mounted wires or cutting wiring into the plaster.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** We would recommend, for your own safety, that battery operated smoke detectors are installed in each room and should the opportunity present itself during redecoration, they be wired in to the electricity supply. We would also advise that if you wish to have any general advice the local fire authority is usually happy to give advice.

### **Insurance**

We would always recommend staying with the existing insurance company, then if there are any problems you should not have the difficulty of negotiating with two insurance companies passing the blame between each other.

## **SERVICES**

This survey does not include any specialist reports on the electricity supply and circuits, heating or drainage, as they were not requested. The comments that follow are based upon a visual inspection carried out as part of the overall Building Survey.

Services and specialist installations have been visually inspected. It is impossible to examine every detail of these installations without partially dismantling the structure. Tests have not been applied. Conclusive tests can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors. The vendor should be requested to provide copies of any service records, test certificates and, ideally, the names and addresses of the installing contractors.

## **ELECTRICITY**

The electric fuses and consumer units were located within a cupboard unit on the sink side of the kitchen. The fuse board looked relatively new. We discussed this with the owners during our question and answer session and were advised that the electrics were checked as part of the extension work in 1995, although we have not seen an IEE certificate relating to this work.

We would add that visible wiring and fittings are of a modern type. If there is no record of an electrical test having been undertaken within the last five years, it is recommended that the installation be tested by a competent electrician (NICEIC registered) and all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be re-tested every five years.

## **GAS**

The boiler is located within the garage, this is a Valliant combination boiler. We are advised that this is relatively new. We noted it is vented external air, which is a legal requirement, and as mentioned earlier we are advised that it has a British Gas Three Star servicing contract, although the sticker we normally see from British Gas was not present and dated with the last service date.

All gas appliances, pipework and flues should be the subject of an annual service by a competent engineer, i.e., a member of CORGI (the Council of Registered Gas Installers); works to gas appliances etc., by unqualified personnel is illegal. Unless evidence can be provided to confirm that there has been annual servicing we would recommend that you commission such a service prior to use to ensure safe and efficient operation.

As a matter of course it is recommended that the entire gas installation is inspected and made good, as necessary, by a CORGI registered contractor. Thereafter the installation should be serviced annually.

# **PLUMBING AND HEATING**

## **Water Supply**

The controlling stopcock is located in the covered porch way, two carpet tiles in, or thereabouts, from the rear kitchen door (we suggest you get the owner to show you this as you are unlikely to find it otherwise. The Water Board controlling stopcock, we believe, is the one to the right hand side just outside the entrance to your driveway. The stopcock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness.

It should be noted that the supply pipe from the Water Company stopcock to the internal stop tap is the responsibility of the property owner. During our question and answer session we were advised by Mrs Clarke that for some time brown water ran from the pipes. This has been resolved by the re-laying of the pipe and is normally associated with old cast iron pipes.

We were also advised that a fair amount of pressure has been applied by the Water Board for her to transfer onto a water meter, although she is not on one at present in our experience the lack of a water meter tends to be a benefit when you come to sell the property.

We cannot comment on the condition of the water service pipe to the building. It should be appreciated that leaks can occur for some time before signs are apparent on the surface.

## **Water Pressure**

When the taps were run to carry out the drainage test we checked the pressure literally by putting a finger over the tap and this seemed reasonable.

The Water Board have to guarantee a certain pressure of water to ensure that things like boilers, particularly the instantaneous ones have a constant supply of pressured water (they would blow up if they didn't!).

## **Cold Water Cistern**

We have not found a water tank. We can only assume that the water directly feeds to the taps. The original idea behind a water tank was to help water pressure and give an emergency supply of water.

## **Plumbing**

The plumbing, where visible, comprises copper pipework. No significant leakage was noted on the surface, although most of the pipework is concealed in ducts and floors.

## **Heating**

Our limited inspection of the hot water and central heating system revealed no evidence to suggest any serious defects but we would nevertheless recommend that the system be tested and overhauled before exchange of contracts and that a regular maintenance contract be placed with an approved heating engineer.

The heating was turned on for approximately ten minutes and a random selection of the radiators checked. We found them all to be warm to touch.

## **Soil and Vent Pipe**

We found an internal plastic soil and vent pipe, which terminated within the roof space with what is known by its trade name as a Dergo valve. Technically this is a one way inlet valve which basically means it discharges the odours into the roof space, which does sound not particularly nice, however we have never found any problems with this.

## **SANITARY FITTINGS**

*In this section we consider the overall condition of the sanitary fittings such as the bathroom, the kitchen, the utility room and the cloakroom.*

Generally sanitary fittings have been kept in good order.

We found that the mastic to the shower was starting to deteriorate and we would recommend that the mastic be replaced.

Finally, it is important to ensure that the tiling and seals are properly made and maintained at the junction between wall surfaces and baths, showers etc., as damp penetration can lead to the development of fungal decay in concealed areas. This may not become apparent until a major attack has developed necessitating extensive and costly repairs.

## **MAIN DRAINS**

*The sanitary system, as we know it now, came into being some 100 years ago during the Victorian era and works so successfully today it is often taken for granted. It is only in recent years that re-investment has taken place to upgrade the original drainage systems.*

We are advised that the foul drains from the property discharge into a public sewer; this should be confirmed by your Legal Advisor prior to exchange of contracts, who should also provide information in respect of any common or shared drains including liability for the maintenance and upkeep of the same. (When Mrs Clarke originally purchased the property some ten years ago it was all on a septic tank.)

### **Manholes**

For your information, there are a number of manholes, more than we would normally expect; this is due to the extension. There are two plastic manholes to the right hand side that have been added for the extension, there is the traditional manhole in the garden, which was covered by a plant pot when we inspected it, and there is one at the very end of the garden prior to it going into the sewerage pipe that can be seen running along side the stream.

During our question and answer session with Mrs Clarke we were advised that at one time the drains regularly backed up, this was due to a problem further along the drainage system as these are shared drains. The problem with shared drains is that you cannot influence what other people put down their drains!

Manholes are required to be provided in the current Building Regulations at each change of direction or where drainage runs join the main run.

#### **Manhole One (Middle right hand side of the property)**

This is a plastic pre-formed manhole unit which was clear and free flowing at the time of our inspection.

#### **Manhole Two (Right hand side towards the rear corner)**

This is a plastic manhole and was free flowing at the time of our inspection.

Manhole Three (To the rear of the property opposite the far left hand bedroom)

This looked to be brick built with a cement haunching and was free flowing at the time of our inspection.

Manhole Four (To the end of the garden)

This is more a rodding eye than a manhole, it did not look to have any other outlets coming into it, although it is difficult to see due to its depth. This was free flowing at the time of our inspection.

Rodding Eye Defined

This is a small access hatch that is used for rodding the drains should they block.

We have only undertaken a visual inspection of the property's foul drains by lifting covers and running water from the sanitary fittings within the house.

It must be emphasised that the condition of the property's foul drains can only be ascertained by the carrying out of a test; such a test has not been undertaken. Should there be leaks in the vicinity of the building then problems could occur, particularly with respect to the stability of the building's foundations. Drainage repairs are inevitably costly and may result in damage being caused to those areas of the property beneath, or adjacent to, which the drains have been run.

**Rainwater/Surface Water Drainage**

We have been unable to determine the ultimate means of surface water disposal discharging via the rainwater goods from the property's roof areas.

Surface water drains have not been tested and their condition or effectiveness is not known. Similarly, the adequacy of soak-aways has not been established although you are advised that they tend to silt up and become less effective with time.

Please also see our comments within the Rainwater Goods section.

## OUTSIDE AREAS

### GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS

#### Garage

We have commented upon the garage roof within the Roofing Section of this Report. This is probably the roof that will next need attention. We noted staining within the garage, we checked these with a damp meter and found that the dampness is not coming through, or it wasn't at the time of our inspection. We discussed this with Mrs Clarke who advised us that the stains had been there for many years.

The garage is block built with a rendered finish. To its left hand side there is the poor detailing of the plastic roof over the covered porch way, which may lead to dampness on that side. It should not be a major problem if there is a minor leak unless you are using the garage to store perishable goods etc.

The garage has a concrete floor and has the benefit of a sink at the end of it and looks to be of such a length as to allow both a car and the use of the end of the garage.



This appears to be old staining.



You can see the yellow damp meter has been used in the centre of this photo to check the dampness. We found no readings over and above those we would normally expect.

#### Timber Shed

We were specifically asked to mention the timber shed as it was missed in Mrs Clarke's report! This is a standard timber shed! The shed has been used as a tool shed in the past.

## **EXTERNAL AREAS**

Whilst we note the boundaries, these may not be the legal boundaries. Your Legal Advisor should make further enquiries on this point and advise you of your potential liability with regard to any shared structures, boundary walls and fences.

The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property.

### **Front Garden**

A good size front garden with two driveways, one leading to the single garage and the other used as a parking area. It did look as if at one time the driveway went down the left hand side; this was possibly an access to the old septic tank.

The left hand boundary is usually the responsibility of the subject property. This means that the Leylandii that we have mentioned previously is your responsibility to keep well maintained.

### **Leylandii**

This type of tree is very quick growing and can restrict light, possibly even leading to the devaluation of the subject property. Leylandii is presently very topical due to the nuisance which can be caused. The action group “Hedge Line” are actively partitioning central Government to provide legislation relating to these trees.

### **Rear Garden**

Not the usual larger rear garden, but nevertheless a reasonable size which benefits from having a stream at the end of it and we like the way that you have the formal garden and then the steps down into the wilder area, so to speak.

We have already mentioned the Acorn tree and we would refer you to the Trees Section of this Report.



General view of the garden.



The stream.

### **Neighbours**

At the time of our inspection the neighbours on the right hand side were not in, so we cannot comment further.

## **POINTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISOR**

If you wish to proceed with your purchase of the property a copy of this Report should be forwarded to your Legal Advisor and the following points should be checked by him/her:-

- a) Responsibility for boundaries.
- b) Rights for you to enter onto the adjacent property to maintain any structure situated near or on the boundary and any similar rights your neighbour may have to enter onto your property.
- c) Obtain any certificates, guarantees or approvals in relation to:-
  - i) Timber treatments, wet or dry rot infestations.
  - ii) Rising damp treatments.
  - iii) Cavity wall insulation.
  - iv) Double glazing Roof and similar renewals.
  - v) Central heating installation.
  - vi) Planning and Building Regulation Approvals.
  - vii) Any other matters pertinent to the property.
- d) Confirm that there are no defects in the legal Title in respect of the property and all rights associated therewith, e.g., access.
- e) Rights of Way e.g., access, easements and wayleaves.
- f) Liabilities in connection with shared services.
- g) Adjoining roads and services.
- h) Road Schemes/Road Widening.
- i) General development proposals in the locality.
- j) Conservation Area, Listed Building, Tree Preservation Orders or any other Designated Planning Area.

- k) Confirm from enquiries that no underground tunnels, wells, sewers, gases, mining, minerals, site reclamation/contamination etc., exist, have existed or are likely to exist beneath the curtilage of the site upon which the property stands and which could affect the quiet enjoyment, safety or stability of the property, outbuildings or surrounding areas.
- l) Our Report assumes that the site has not been put to contaminative use and no investigations have been made in this respect.
- m) Any outstanding Party Wall Notice or of the knowledge that any are about to be served.
- n) We strongly recommend that Envirosearch or a similar product is used by your Legal Advisor to establish whether this area falls into a flood plain, old landfill site etc., and brought to its logical conclusion. If your Legal Advisor is not aware of the system please ensure that they contact us and we will advise them about it.
- o) A Radon report should be carried out – although we are advised that one is already in existence. A copy of this should be obtained.

## **LISTED BUILDING AND CONSERVATION AREA**

From our investigations the property has not been identified as being Listed or in a Conservation Area.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm the above and carry out any searches he/she feels are necessary.

## **PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL**

### **Planning**

From our investigations with the Local Authority, North Cornwall District Council, we have found no planning for the extension. However this may not be needed as properties can be extended by 70 cubic metres without permission. Formal written application would be needed to the Planning Department to confirm this. We would absolutely insist that your Legal Advisor carries out a check on this matter.

This was confirmed by the Planning Department.

### **Building Control**

We have seen a copy of the Building Regulation Approval with work having been finished Christmas, from North Cornwall District Council. Although this does not guarantee quality it is a good assurance.

Your Legal Advisor should confirm this and carry out any checks he/she feels necessary.

Finally, an extract from the book “Sold”!

“When you receive your full structural survey (now known as a Building Survey) or House Buyers Report, do remember that you have requested a list of the property’s faults so it is unlikely to make cheerful reading. Every property has its faults but what you are looking for are the serious ones. If your Report does reveal a serious problem that you had not anticipated when making your offer, the first thing to do is to decide whether you want to take on the repairs if an adjustment is made to the price. If you do, then get quotes for the work as quickly as possible and present your case in a fair manner. Most people are reasonable under such circumstances and will compromise but inevitably there are those who are sufficiently confident of their position to say take it or leave it. In a very active market, prices may have moved up sufficiently to cover the extra expenditure in theory and the vendor will not hasten to point this out but remember that he has probably got a vendor pressing him to proceed quickly and starting with a new purchaser will cause him delay”

It is our policy not to offer a conclusion to ensure that the Building Survey is read in full and the comments are taken in context.

**If you would like any further advice on any of the issues discussed or indeed any that have not been discussed! Please do not hesitate to contact us on 0800 298 5424.**

## **REFERENCES**

The repair and maintenance of houses  
*Published by Estates Gazette Limited*

Life expectancies of building components  
*Published by Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and  
Building Research Establishment*

Surveying buildings  
*By Malcolm Hollis published by Royal Institution of  
Chartered Surveyors Books.*

House Builders Bible  
*By mark Brinkley, Published by Burlington Press*

# **APPENDICES**

## **LIMITATIONS**

Our limitations are as per our original Terms and Conditions of Engagement.

## **CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The report has been prepared in accordance with our Conditions of Engagement and should be regarded as a comment on the overall condition of the property and the quality of its structure and not as an inventory of every single defect. It relates to those parts of the property that were reasonably and safely accessible at the time of the inspection, but you should be aware that defects can subsequently develop particularly if you do not follow the recommendations.

## **ENGLISH LAW**

We would remind you that this report should not be published or reproduced in any way without the surveyor's expressed permission and is governed by English Law and any dispute arising there from shall be adjudicated upon only by the English Courts.

## **SOLE USE**

This report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his professional advisors. Any other persons rely on the Report at their own risk.

## **ONLY HUMAN!**

Although we are pointing out the obvious, our Surveyors obviously can't see through walls, floors, heavy furniture, fixed kitchen units etc. they have therefore made their best assumptions in these areas.

As this is a one off inspection, we cannot guarantee that there are no other defects than those mentioned in the report and also that defects can subsequently develop.

## **WEATHER**

There was slight drizzle at the time of the inspection and it was generally overcast. The weather didn't hamper the survey.

Finally, we would add that some defects only become apparent upon physical occupation or are only present as a result of the extremes of weather (which are becoming a more frequent occurrence). As you are probably aware the year 2000 was the wettest year on record and this may have adverse effects on lots of buildings in years to come.

## **OCCUPIED PROPERTY**

The property was occupied at the time of our survey which meant that there were various difficulties when carrying out the survey such as stored items within cupboards, the roof space and obviously day to day household goods throughout the property. We have, however, done our best to work around these.

## **NOT LOCAL**

It should be noted that we are not local surveyors to this area and are carrying out the work without the benefits of local knowledge on such things as soil conditions, aeroplane flight paths, and common defects in materials used in the area etc.

## INFORMATION ON THE PROPERTY MARKET

We used to include within our reports articles on the property market that we thought would be of interest and informative to you, however we were concerned that in some cases these did not offer the latest information. We have therefore decided to recommend various websites to you, however it is important to realise the vested interest the parties may have and the limits to the information.

There are four main sources of information as far as we are aware:

[www.landreg.org.uk](http://www.landreg.org.uk)

This records the ownership of interests in registered land in England and Wales and issues a residential property price report quarterly, which is free of charge. The Land Registry is a Government body and records all transactions as far as we are aware, although critics of it would argue that the information is often many months out of date.

[www.rics.org.uk](http://www.rics.org.uk)

The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors offer quarterly reports via their members. Although this has been criticised as being subjective and also limited, historically their predictions have been found to be reasonably accurate.

[www.halifax.co.uk](http://www.halifax.co.uk) and [www.nationwide.co.uk](http://www.nationwide.co.uk)

Surveys have been carried out by these two companies, one now a bank and the other a building society for many years. Information from these surveys is often carried in the national press. It should be remembered that the surveys only relate to mortgaged properties, of which it is generally considered represents only 75% of the market. It should also be remembered that the national coverage of the two companies differs and that they may be offering various incentives on different mortgages, which may taint the quality of information offered. That said they do try to adjust for this, the success or otherwise of this is hard to establish.

[www.hometrack.co.uk](http://www.hometrack.co.uk)

From what we can see this is an internet based company who say they offer independent property research (in fact they say they are the only independent company), although they also advise that they are part of a property related group that has bought and sold over 60 million pounds worth of residential property, which indicates that they may have a vested interest. They do also comment that they have carried out their own independent surveys and they have at least two Hometrack recommended estate agents in each postcode area. We would refer you to the 'About us' section within their website to understand better where their information is coming from. We would comment that we have been pleasantly surprised with the quality of information provided by the company.

[Motleyfool.co.uk](http://Motleyfool.co.uk)

We also like the Motley Fool website which is a general financial site and although it is selling financial services and other services they do tend to give a very readable view of the housing market.