



BUILDING SURVEY REPORT



Property:

Havencliffe House, Axmouth, Seaton EX12 4AB

Client:

Mr & Mrs I Griffin, 5 Varsity Row, London SW14 7SA

Report Date:

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1 PRELIMINARIES

- 1.1 **Instructions:** This report is prepared on the basis of email correspondence with the client on and around 13th November 2015 for the provision of a Building Survey in accordance with standard Terms and Conditions as supplied to the client and attached hereto.
- 1.2 **Date of Inspection:** 27th November 2015 (A second visit was made on 9th December with a contractor, to access roof space.)
- 1.3 **Weather Conditions:** The weather was bright and blustery with occasional light showers.
- 1.4 **Restrictions to Inspection:** Inspection was subject to occupancy and full furnishing although the owners were not present, access arranged via caretaker.
- 1.5 **Use of Report:** This Report is provided for the stated purpose and for the sole use of the named client. It is confidential to the client and his/her professional advisers and the Surveyor accepts no responsibility whatsoever to any third person.
- 1.6 **Limitation:** Neither the whole nor any part of this report or any reference hereto may be included in any published document, circular or statement or published in any way, without the surveyor's written approval of the form and context in which it may appear.

2 GENERAL REMARKS

- 2.1 **Brief Description and Age:** The property is a detached house that is Grade II listed as being of some architectural and historic interest and a copy of the brief listed building description is attached. This describes the house as early 19th century although this probably reflects the remodelling of an older building. As well as the main house there is a separate cottage, outbuildings and approx. 9.6 acres of pasture and woodland.
- 2.2 References to accommodation are in accordance with current use and/or as given in the agent's sale particulars. A copy of the agent's floor plans is attached.
- 2.3 **Aspect:** The front approach side of the property faces approximately north
- 2.4 **History:** The property history has not been investigated and is beyond the scope of this report. The development is far from clear but the principal features are from early 19th century, with later 19th century additions. The present owners have been at the property approx. 17 years and during that period have carried out extensive improvement and updating.
- 2.5 Alterations have included renovation and enlargement of kitchen, conversion and/or renovation of cottage (10 years ago), replacement pool house and garden room replacement/extension. A check of the online planning record at East Devon District Council indicates consent (planning and listed building consent) granted in 2004/05 for replacement pool house with enlarged garden room, and in 2007 for garden room replacement/extension. In 2003 an application for form enclosed swimming pool was refused. There is no record of application relating to the cottage – see Legal Issues below.
- 2.6 **Construction:** The main walls are principally of solid random stone construction. Parts have internal wall linings and finished thickness varies between 450 and 700mm. Single storey additions i.e. front porch (which may be later 19th century) appear to have solid brick walls.
- 2.7 Older buildings in the area are often built of cob (a compounded mix of clay subsoil, stone aggregate and straw binder) but no evidence was seen to indicate such.



3 LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

- 3.1 **Neighbourhood/planning/land use/contamination:** The property is in an elevated location fully exposed to the prevailing south-west weather, inevitably impacting on maintenance. It is close to Axmouth Harbour, Seaton and Axe Cliff Golf Club. The nearest adjoining properties just beyond the east boundary are former coastguard cottages.
- 3.2 The area generally is within the East Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty where some restrictions apply to permitted development rights. The site is also adjacent to the Axmouth - Lyme Regis Undercliff Nature Reserve a site of special scientific interest. There are two World War II pill boxes on the site it is not clear if these have any statutory protection, see Legal Issues below.
- 3.3 **Ground Conditions:** The house is on a gently sloping site which rises more steeply to the rear characteristic of greensand escarpment with a spring line between the permeable greensand and impermeable mudstone formation below. This reflects in the wet area and water source to the rear of the house. The site extends to the cliff where some nearby land slippage has occurred relatively recently, but does not appear to have affected the property directly. There are steep banks to rear of adjoining properties along the south boundary where some erosion could occur.
- 3.4 We have not carried out or commissioned a site investigation or geographical or geophysical survey and can give no assurance that the ground has sufficient load bearing strength to support any structures which may be erected in the future. In addition, we cannot provide any assurance that there are no underground mineral or other workings beneath the site or in its vicinity. However, the property is not within an area of known mining activity.
- 3.5 **Roads and Access:** Access to the property is direct from public highway.
- 3.6 **Radon:** The property is in an area where a small percentage of homes have potentially high levels of Radon gas that could affect health. See further advice under Section 11 below.
- 3.7 **Flooding:** According to the Environment Agency (the Government organisation responsible for flood control), the property is outside of the area affected by river or coastal flooding. It is conceivable that there could be some surface water run-off from the land to the rear of the house.

4 EXTERNAL INSPECTION

- 4.1 **Roof:** The main roof coverings were probably replaced about 25-30 years ago and are of man-made slate with traditional roofing underfelt and clay roll top ridge tiles. The slating appears to have been carried out to a reasonable standard and the house was probably completely re-slatted at one time. This also included some re-setting of parapet coping stones, which on the older parts of the building have been replaced with concrete copings.
- 4.2 The lead weather proofing at various abutments appears to be generally well detailed. Slate condition is variable with some surface weathering. The slates may be asbestos containing (or could be an early substitute material) and must be regarded as approximately half way through design life.
- 4.3 There is a valley gutter between two of the main pitched roofs which is visible from a window in bedroom six. The gutter has been lined with GRP (fibreglass) possibly covering older lead but this could not be confirmed. The work was carried out c. 15 years ago i.e. subsequent to the general re-roofing as is indicated by replaced slates to either side. This suggests that either the lead was not replaced when the building was re-roofed or that a fault subsequently developed. The gutter lining is not obviously defective but if in fact laid over lead differential thermal movement between the materials could cause in surface fracturing.



- 4.4 There are also gutters behind the parapet walls above the drawing room. It was only possible to see the east side (from window in bedroom two) photograph below. From the general appearance of the lead flashing the leadwork looks to be relatively modern but, again, the gutters have been lined with fibreglass subsequent to the main re-roofing.



- 4.5 As well as the main pitched roofs there are flat/low pitch lead covered roofs above the entrance hall and snug/cloakroom area. The age of these coverings is uncertain but they are of a reasonable standard with lead cover flashings at parapet wall junctions and under parapet coping stones. Lines of depression/distortion in the lead indicate old possibly original timber boarding.



- 4.6 **Rainwater Disposal:** Where there are rainwater gutters these are replacement pvc in 'fair' order with some patching over joints.
- 4.7 **Chimneys:** There are five main chimney stacks with cement rendered finishes although centre chimney (above kitchen) has hexagonal stone chimney shafts. Chimney pots are of varied age and design. The chimney stack on the front elevation looks as if it might have been relatively recently re-rendered. General condition is reasonable with lead flashings assumed renewed at time of re-roofing but there is hairline cracking on chimney stack at the east end, where there might be some loose of render key.
- 4.8 **Main Walls:** The main elevations are rendered with exception of rear kitchen wing (where rendering might have been removed on south side) and the walls are pointed to satisfactory standard of finish. Rendered finishes are in 'fair' order; sections have been re-rendered at various times with other ad-hoc repairs. There is some hairline cracking on parapet walls around the drawing room (and general weathering of castellated stone copings), and on south gable towards south west corner there is a previously repaired vertical crack possibly reflecting some slight settlement on this corner, or an old fracture/weakness in the wall. The present cracking is not obviously recent and there is no damage or disturbance to coping stones above.



- 4.9 There is also some hairline cracking on the west wall the pattern of which combined with some cracking and distortion to the rendered finish above the head of the drawing room doors suggests possible deterioration/decay of a lintel. (There is a fractured stone step to the doors and there has been further movement subsequent to repair but it is not obviously related to any movement on the main wall.)



- 4.10 There is evidence of long-standing movement around the north west corner of the building in particular west facing gable to sitting room and bedroom above, i.e. evidence of crack repair with some subsequent opening up. This includes cracking over the height of the wall on the junction between the two gables (a structural divide in the building) and above and below master bedroom window. The sill to

sitting room is also out of alignment, dipping towards the corner (and the shutters do not close properly). The cracking is hairline only and although subsequent to past repair does not appear to be particularly recent.



- 4.11 The return north facing wall (not the single storey lean-to) looks to have been relatively recently re-rendered. In the cellar area below there is some old fracturing evident to the right hand side of the chimney breast. The single storey part, which here covers the access to the cellar, is a later probably 19th century addition to the main building. The walls have rotated significantly out of upright, with a large joint gap between side wall and main building and there is also a large fracture on the north wall visible internally (photograph below) and with evidence of repair externally
- 4.12 The external render finish on this wall is not recent, in fair condition only. A rainwater downpipe on the corner simply discharges at the base of the wall not helping ground conditions. For general comment and advice see 10 below.



- 4.13 There has also been movement around the north west corner of the front entrance porch. There is a noticeable dip on the window sill and internally the floor finish is cracked and the door is catching on the floor. The porch side wall looks to have been relatively recently re-rendered. The rendered finish to north facing elevation including bell tower is otherwise in reasonable order.
- 4.14 **Joinery:** The windows around the house vary in age and style. On the main building the majority are original 19th century but there are mainly later 20th century windows around the rear wing/kitchen area. On the second floor there are pvcu double glazed replacement windows to dormers (unlikely to have been replaced with listed building

consent). The sash windows in gable walls here are deteriorating with wet rot, the window on the west side in very poor condition and beyond practical repair.

- 4.15 Windows around the first floor including later windows, e.g. bay windows to bedroom three and four are not particularly well fitting or draft proof. Many are not freely operating and have been 'painted shut', and there is some condensation damage to the joinery. In the master bedroom there is wet rot in the base of the frame, that should be repairable. The sill has been covered with lead. The window in the adjoining dressing room is not opening.
- 4.16 Windows do not have any lockable catches or security devices. There are a small number of cracked panes. Windows and doors around the ground floor have been maintained with some extensive use of filler repair e.g. around base of kitchen doors and window. There is rot in base of south utility door frame and the door threshold on north side to courtyard is loose.



- 4.17 **Conservatories and Porches:** The garden room (built following consent in 2007) is on cavity block base with good quality timber framing above double glazed and with a slated roof (natural slate) with lead weather proofing at abutments, fibreglass lined valleys and concrete ridge and hip and tiles.
- 4.18 The veranda has a swept profile roof supported on iron columns probably a later 19th century addition as front porch section. The roof looks to be original although is board and enclosed under, whereas the lean-to roof over the cellar area was replaced when the building was re-roofed. The roof covering is as the rest of the house, but there is a basic adhesive flash band material weatherproofing at wall junction. Some settlement has affected stone edging and tiled flooring.



5 INTERNAL INSPECTION

- 5.1 **Roof Spaces:** There is a small second floor area essentially within the roof space over the rear wing above bedrooms three and four. From framing and wall linings it is of long standing, possibly original but with some relatively recent refurbishment. In bedroom five there is a small trap door to small roof space above, just large enough to contain central heating header tank. The roof structure, as part exposed within the accommodation, is of original/traditional 3” by 2” rafters at 16” centres supported on adequate horizontal purlins spanning between centre load bearing wall and gable walls.
- 5.2 Ceilings are finished to the underside of the roof with a layer of mineral wool insulation over, plasterboard in bedroom five and pine match boarding in bedroom six. Linings in eaves storage areas include lath and plaster and mid-20th century fibreboard. There is some distortion of finishes on wall/ceiling junctions and on front eaves storage area in bedroom five some old damp staining. Floors deflect slightly where there has been some slight settlement either side of a centre partition wall below. Subject to limited inspection possible there is both old boarding and some replacement chipboard flooring. A local ‘soft’ area was noted just inside the door to bedroom five where some improvement is needed to board support.
- 5.3 Small roof spaces above recently renovated nursery and adjacent bathroom are not accessible. Roof spaces above master bedroom and bedroom 2 are accessed by external trap doors in gable walls, and only the south side over bedroom 2 was inspected. The roof is of good traditional construction with main support from king post trusses. Timbers are in satisfactory condition but the roof does not have any provision for ventilation and there are relatively high moisture levels. There is approx 200mm mineral wool insulation and therefore only partial inspection of ceiling joists could be made but these appear to be adequate and in reasonable condition. There are no obvious defects to timber support to centre valley gutter.

- 5.4 There is a screwed down panel in the south gable to roof space over drawing room that is not easily accessed due to adjacent garden room roof, and this was not inspected.
- 5.5 **Ceilings:** Throughout the main accommodation the ceilings are principally of original lath and plaster construction but with some replacement where renovation has been carried out, for example plasterboard in main bathroom and pine match boarding in nursery and adjacent en-suite. The lath and plaster ceilings are on the whole in fair order with some hairline cracking. There is a small area where plaster is losing key in bedroom four and in bedroom two there is a hairline crack across the ceiling (north south) where the adjacent plaster is loose and sagging almost certainly as a result of plaster losing key with lathing.
- 5.6 There are some hairline cracks in bedroom one and evidence of repair around moulded cornice but no obvious loss of key. Ceilings in the reception rooms and entrance hall are lath and plaster in satisfactory condition with moulded cornices. The barrel ceiling in the drawing room is formed within the roof over assumed raised collar tie type construction. Throughout the remainder of the building there are mainly plasterboard ceilings with satisfactory plaster skim finishes.
- 5.7 **Lath and Plaster – General Note:** Commonly used before about 1940 and made of plaster (reinforced with animal hair) forced onto and between timber strips (laths). They can become unstable when the plaster becomes detached from the laths, and unexpected failures can occur when building works are carried out or lining papers are removed.
- 5.8 **Floors:** First floors are assumed of conventional timber joist construction and, subject to limited inspection possible, mainly softwood boarded as originally constructed although probably with some later improvement or alteration. For example bathroom floors may have been re-boarded. The general support appears to be adequate and there are no obvious deficiencies.
- 5.9 At ground floor the reception hall and main reception rooms appear to have suspended timber floors assumed as originally constructed. Where limited inspection could be made the boarding is in satisfactory condition. There is no obvious dampness, or related defects. However, there is some deflection of the sitting room floor the floor sloping away towards the north wall probably associated with historic subsidence on this corner of the building. Apart from the cellar area it is not clear what cavity exists under the floor and there is no obvious provision for ventilation inevitably therefore with some risk of a build-up of dampness and potential defects arising.
- 5.10 Through the other parts the floors are mainly of solid construction. There are some old air bricks on the external wall of the snug area and although this has an oak boarded floor it is thought from 'feel' that this is on a solid base, although could not be categorically confirmed. The hallway and inner hall have wood block floor finishes. There is limestone tiling in kitchen and other ceramic tiling through utility boot room areas.
- 5.11 **Walls and Partitions:** On the ground floor the partition walls are (with minor exception) of masonry (stone or brick) construction, most load bearing. There has been some reconfiguration and wall removal, and this includes a wall in the kitchen

where the concealed and assumed steel beam support over supports a main wall above between bedrooms five and six, that incorporates a chimney. In this renovated section of the building most of the external walls are lined (dot-and-dab adhesive) with plasterboard. Where there is some exposed masonry in the utility there are drill holes at the base of the wall consistent with chemical injection damp course but the extent to which this has been carried out is unconfirmed.

- 5.12 There are no unusual levels of dampness except in the cloakroom (where the wall is not lined) and where there is some damp related damage to plastered finish both on the external wall and internal brick partition.
- 5.13 In the main living rooms and bedrooms above the external walls are dry lined with lath and plaster subject to some plasterboard replacement (bedroom two and rear east wall of drawing room). The finishes are in reasonable order although inevitably the older lath and plaster subject to some softening and some deterioration of underlying timber battening is inevitable. There are however no obvious damp problems, with exception of the ceiling and wall finish to right hand side of window in master bedroom en-suite. There is no obvious roof problem and understood from the owners that an old chimney flue was removed in this corner. This is a reasonable explanation as old flues are often damp as a result of masonry/plaster becoming contaminated with old flue deposits – hygroscopic/moisture attracting salts.
- 5.14 Through the rear wing there are some internal partitions of timber stud construction with both older lath and plaster and more recent plasterboard linings. External wall finishes vary, for example recently refurbished bathroom adjacent to nursery has two external walls with plasterboard dry lining, one plastered on masonry. Overall, plastered finishes are in satisfactory condition.
- 5.15 **Fireplaces and Flues:** There are conventional open fireplaces in the three main reception rooms, none of which are original. The very attractive marble fireplace in the drawing room was replaced by present owner. The dining room has a mid-20th century minster stone fireplace surround and the sitting room a carved wooden surround that is not original. In the kitchen a fireplace and flue is used by the Aga.
- 5.16 First floor fireplaces have been removed and blocked up, for example a chimney flue formally serving master bedroom is now used for the central heating boiler. The garden room has a small stove that is flued to what must presumably be an original small chimney flue built within the wall of the main building with a small chimney stack above the parapet wall. It is understood from the owners that the flue was installed with a new flue lining.
- 5.17 **Joinery:** Most of the joinery fittings are original including panelled doors, moulded skirting boards, picture rails and some panelling. The main staircase is original with attractive mahogany bannister rail and decorative wrought iron balusters with matching possibly later secondary staircases.
- 5.18 Very local areas where dampness has affected joinery include rotten section of skirting in front porch (adjacent cellar door) and rot in plyboard timber window ledge in bathroom adjacent nursery.
- 5.19 **Cellar:** The cellar occupies a relatively small area on the west side of the building with deteriorating lath and plaster finish to underside of floor above. Walls and

floors are inevitably affected by some dampness. There is what looks to be a drainage point in the floor covered by concrete slab. A quantity of plastic tubing was noted adjacent to boiler of a type that is used with a commercial dehumidifier for example as may have been used following flooding.

6 SERVICES

- 6.1 **Note** comments on services in this report are made by way of general observation of the visible parts only. Only specialist tests will confirm the adequacy, efficiency and/or safety of service installations
- 6.2 **Electrical Installation:** Mains electricity is connected with main meter in one of the barns from where there is a supply taken by underground cable to the front of the house where there is a main switch. Circuitry in the house is protected by two labelled circuit breaker fuseboards with partial RCD earth leakage protection located in cupboard in inner hall.
- 6.3 There is a recently installed sub main to pool room where there is an RCD protected circuit breaker fuse board for pool installations including hot tub.
- 6.4 The cottage has a modern installation protected by RCD protected circuit breaker fuseboard, although it is not fully labelled. Outbuildings have older installations and a traditional wired type, unlabelled fuse board in barn.
- 6.5 **Gas/Oil:** Oil for heating is contained within an 1,800 litre integrally bunded oil storage tank located in the higher yard from where there are oil feed pipes to the various installations, i.e. some very long routes and pipes could easily become damaged during maintenance or other work if these routes are not accurately identified. 1,800 litres is quite a small storage capacity for the number of installations.
- 6.6 **Water Supply and Plumbing:** The water supply is from a private source. There is a wet area to the rear east side of the house (assumed natural spring line) from where water is collected into an above ground galvanised iron storage tank. Prior to this tank there is another small chamber into which water is piped probably collecting directly from nearby spring source(s). There is evidence of recent excavation and re-laying of pipes between the chambers, both blue and older black alkathene. From the main holding tank it appears that water is then piped to the pump room (store room on sale plan) where it passes through particle and ultraviolet filters, and there is also a pH conditioning unit. (Water is also supplied from the reservoir to nearby cottages and understood from the owners that the rights are for surplus water only, see Legal Issues below).
- 6.7 The precise plumbing arrangements could not confirmed but it is assumed there is a direct feed to the kitchen and other ground floor areas, the water then supplying two 50 gallon header tanks in the roof space, in cupboard on second floor. From here water is supplied by gravity to second floor installations and hot water cylinder. (It was noted at time of inspection that one of the tanks was overfull as ballcock not operating properly to cut off supply.)

- 6.8 The supply to the cottage looks to have been recently altered and there is a pressurised pump installation in the adjacent boiler house i.e. to provide water under pressure including for operation of combination boiler. It is assumed (bit not confirmed) that it has a direct feed from the storage tank.
- 6.9 The hot water in the house is provided via a factory lagged hot water cylinder in airing cupboard in the main bathroom heated indirectly by the boiler and with electric immersion backup. Hot water in the cottage is provided instantaneously by the combination boiler.
- 6.10 Plumbing is principally in copper pipe and appears to be reasonably arranged substantially renewed during present owner's occupation. Bathrooms are well fitted.





- 6.11 **Heating Installations:** The main house has conventional central heating with radiators throughout heated by Worcester Danesmoor oil fired boiler that was installed in 2003 and service record card indicates last service March 2015. There appears to be one main thermostat control, and radiators have thermostatic valves. The programmer is in the cellar close to the boiler. The boiler is 50kW output which should be adequate and is standard, non-condensing, efficiency.
- 6.12 As well as the open fires some background heating is provided in the house by the Aga oven which is oil fired and conventionally flued to chimney. It is in good condition but was not working at time of inspection. A small solid fuel stove has been installed in the garden room.
- 6.13 The cottage has independent central heating via Grant Vortex sealed system boiler. It also has a cast iron wood burning stove flued to chimney where there is a loose fitting (unsealed) asbestos cement type register plate. There is no direct air source for this stove, which would be required by current regulations.
- 6.14 **Alarms:** The house has limited battery smoke alarms only and no carbon monoxide alarms were seen. There is an intruder alarm system with zoned controls (and control panels front and rear) but with sensors through the main building. Details of door contacts were not confirmed but understood that the alarmed area does not cover to rear entrance/utility.
- 6.15 **Drainage:** Main foul drainage connections are to the courtyard area via both internal and external modern soils stack pipes and waste water gulleys connecting to underground pipework of traditional clayware. A chamber in the frontage indicates a main drain run towards the direction of the driveway. It is understood that there is a private drainage system, but the owners have never established the location of a septic tank (and information was never provided by previous owners).
- 6.16 (There is a w.c. adjacent pool pump house but the drainage route/disposal from this was not confirmed.)

- 6.17 Surface water is at least part combined with the foul system but there are a number of other surface water drains around the property – see 8.5 below.

7 ENERGY EFFICIENCY, VENTILATION, CONDENSATION

- 7.1 As being a listed building the property is exempt from any energy performance requirements.

8 THE GROUNDS

- 8.1 **The Site:** The approach to the property is over tarmac surfaced entrance drive leading to large gravelled parking and turning area at the front of the house. There are brick paved courtyards to the side, some surface damage occurring to older brickwork in front of the garage block. Close to the rear of the garages (and also cottage) there is a very high stone retaining wall at the base of which is a surface water drainage gulley with piped water from the yard above. There is other water seepage at the base of the wall and indications (from surface pipework) that some attempts have been made to improve the drainage around the back of the building.
- 8.2 To the rear of the house there is a landscaped courtyard with water feature and the pool area with good quality stone paved surroundings. The pool, which was covered, was not inspected. It is understood to have been originally installed about 20 years ago and has been subsequently refurbished. There are further paved terraces and patio areas beyond the summerhouse.
- 8.3 A sweeping lawn to the west side of the house is bounded by a modern concrete block wall with concrete pilasters this wall is of fair general standard only and has rotated slightly out of upright. There are mainly post and rail boundaries around the paddocks but section of stone wall boundary to front field. Along south side to cliff is a post and wire fence assumed to be the legal boundary beyond the post and rail. There are two old concrete wartime bunkers, not inspected.
- 8.4 To the east side beyond the buildings is a wet overgrown area of land. Adjacent to where some recent work has been carried out for the water supply there are some plants that look to be Japanese Knotweed (ill. below). See comment at 10 below.



- 8.5 The wooded area is almost exclusively Sycamore assumed self-seeded. There does not appear to be a clear physical boundary demarcating land ownership. There are a number of piped water features around the property including two ornamental ponds which are supplied with running water the overflow from which appears to be piped into the field, presumably to a soakaway. Water is also piped from the area to the rear of the barns to the rear of the garage block, where there appears to be a drain under the garage probably crossing the frontage and supplying water to a wildlife pond to the side of the driveway. Some surface water from around the property may be piped into these systems but this was not fully investigated.

9 OUTBUILDINGS

- 9.1 **The Cottage:** The cottage was completely renovated about 10 years ago. It is clearly an old building of substantial solid stone wall construction under a slate roof. The roof is of modern construction and it appears, from wall finish, as if the building may have been partially reconstructed and the front wall raised in height. The entrance porch is also a modern addition, walls with visible damp course.



- 9.2 Externally the roof covering is natural slate with vapour permeable underfelt, concrete ridge tiles and lead covered hips. A brick and rendered chimney stack is in reasonable order. There are high ground levels to either end of the building but at the rear there is a space between the cottage and high retaining wall adjacent. There is no access to this enclosed area other than by ladder. Wall finishes are in reasonable order, mainly old lime pointing to rear, more recent cement mortar pointing to front. There is a small rendered section on north wall which has some loss of key. Immediately adjacent to the north east corner where an old boundary wall has been cut back leaving a stone pillar the masonry is in poor condition.



- 9.3 External joinery is in satisfactory condition. The windows are modern storm proof non-traditional design with thin double glazed lights. The roof is of modern trussed rafter construction and insulated.
- 9.4 The cottage has a main solid cross wall and other partitions are timber stud and plasterboard. The main external walls are part plasterboard lined, part plastered on masonry. On the rear wall in bedroom one there are damp spots on the plasterboard lining, dampness tracking from the wall via the adhesive plaster dabs securing the plasterboard. It is not clear why there should be any particular dampness at this point although on the nearby gable wall there is a rainwater downpipe that is broken water therefore soaking into the adjacent ground, which is at high level. Wall finishes are otherwise satisfactory and there was almost certainly some comprehensive damp proofing around the ground floor area as part of renovation. The fittings, e.g. modern moulded panel doors and fitted kitchen with hardwood fronted units are of reasonable average standard.
- 9.5 **Garage:** The garage block appears to have been altered from a former mono pitch roofed building, gables raised in blockwork and with a modern pitched roof construction of relatively lightweight framework, but adequate for the covering of man-made slate with conventional roofing underfelt. Timbers are affected by some active woodworm (common furniture beetle). There is rainwater penetration on the south east corner due to poor detailing at roof/gable parapet junction.



- 9.6 Large timber doors are of fair standard only with simple padlock locking. Internally there is a new block partition wall, floors are all flagstone and around the walls there are areas of old timber panelling in deteriorating condition and detached from wall being almost free standing. Damp penetration is affecting old plastered finish on front wall.
- 9.7 **Storage Barn:** This building, which is not secure, is mainly of solid stone construction but partially re-built in block with stone facing and has a pitched roof with corrugated asbestos cement covering. The roof construction is adequate for the

present covering but timbers are affected by woodworm. Timber windows and doors are in poor condition.



- 9.8 **Stable Block:** This is a traditional building of stone construction with a traditional king post truss roof construction of reasonable standard and re-slatted with natural slate on roofing felt. There are original timber panel stable divisions, profile brick flooring and a timber storage loft. The lean-to at the east end is of more recent renovation with a new roof structure of reasonable standard but again with beetle damage. The covering is of man-made slate with conventional underfelt. There is some slate damage and leakage occurring on eaves affecting underlying timbers.



- 9.9 There is some general deterioration of eaves joinery and other windows and doors are of varied standard and condition. At the west end is a lean-to building assumed part of the original, a tack room that was locked and not accessed. There is higher ground level at the east end of the building. Immediately adjacent trees are potentially impacting on walls, and roof slates and guttering are being damaged by falling branches.
- 9.10 **Summerhouse:** This building is of circa 2005 construction, timber framed and externally rendered with natural slate roof with mitred hips, limestone tiled flooring and attractive Douglas fir boarded ceiling. It is of good standard and condition.
- 9.11 Other outbuildings include timber framed double glazed lean-to greenhouse of modern construction, covered area adjacent to rear courtyard with low pitched felted roof in reasonable order and a small timber garden summerhouse.
- 9.12 A concrete block and rendered pool room houses the equipment for the pool including oil fired boiler, pump and filter unit, and there is also supplementary water heating provided via solar thermal panels. The boiler is in generally fair order; it is older than the c. 2005 pool room, understood to have been recently serviced.

10 SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 **Overall Assessment:** The property has been generally well improved and maintained by the present owners although recently with attention lacking to some areas, such as outbuildings. It is an individual period property of reasonable standard with much interest and character.
- 10.2 There are indications of historic movement around the north west corner where there has probably been differential settlement over a long period of time in part as a consequence of the cellar which is only under part of the building. There is some fracturing in the masonry on both elevations but it does not appear to be recent and there is no obvious progression.
- 10.3 In addition, there does appear to have been some local subsidence affecting the adjacent single storey part. The walls enclosing the area leading down to the cellar have moved significantly out of upright. There are, again, no definite signs of continuing movement, but the wall has little lateral restraint and stability may have been compromised. Any further movement could cause damage and this will therefore need to be closely monitored. Inadequate drainage as noted (4.12) is likely to be adversely affecting ground conditions and requires attention.
- 10.4 Movement has also affected the porch. It is not felt to be structurally significant but again the situation will need to be kept under general check for any signs of progression.
- 10.5 Areas requiring general repair and attention are summarised as follows:
- a) extensive repair and/or replacement of lath and plaster ceiling in bedroom two,

- b) general overhaul and repair (with some minor replacement) is required to external joinery -windows and doors,
- c) investigation is required to check and confirm condition of lintel over drawing room doors,
- d) some local damp proofing and re-plastering is required, i.e. around cloakroom area,
- e) where dampness has been noted in cottage the situation may be improved by improving rainwater disposal but there is a risk of further deterioration requiring remedial work .
- f) a number of general repairs are required to outbuildings.

10.6 There are a number of implications for ongoing maintenance and areas where improvements can be made:

- a) regular attention will be required to clean and check roof parapet and valley gutters. Upgrade/replacement of pvc guttering should be considered,
- b) the exterior of the property will require quite frequent decoration and occasional render repair; some repair will soon be needed to kitchen chimneys,
- c) roof spaces have not been fully investigated and whilst there do not appear to be any particular structural issues there is a lack of ventilation and, with increased levels of insulation, risk of condensation occurring. Improved ventilation should therefore be provided most simply by in-line high level slate vents. A longer term objective should be to replace the existing roof coverings, i.e. with natural slate,
- d) the veranda along the west side would benefit from renovation,
- e) regular maintenance and attention is likely to be required around the site including tree management,
- f) there are a number of piped external water supplies to various water features and these will require generally checking and maintaining and some improvements required to site/surface water drainage, e.g. to rear of garage,
- g) the arrangement for the water supply is not uncommon but the storage facility is rather primitive and not really of suitable standard for drinking water. There is unlikely to be a problem with the quantity of supply but improved storage facility would be desirable, in particular if changing internal plumbing to a pressurised system for which a larger, perhaps underground storage reservoir would be more appropriate. It was not confirmed if the system filters are under a maintenance contract but it would be prudent to arrange for annual servicing i.e. by water engineering company.

10.7 **Further Investigations:** Overall the electrical installations appear to be reasonably arranged and whilst no particular defects were noted the fittings vary in age and

condition and a general check by an appropriately competent electrician is recommended.

- 10.8 It is recommended that further advice is obtain from a water engineering company on the water supply installation, allowing for some upgrade. You may wish to consider obtaining full chemical and bacteriological tests of quality. See also 11.14 below.
- 10.9 The Japanese Knotweed looks to be the early stages and no obvious infestation was seen adjacent to buildings. However, this is an invasive plant that needs to be dealt with effectively, for which it would be appropriate to seek further specialist advice.
- 10.10 It has not been possible to confirm the disposal of foul drainage and in view of the age of the installation it is recommended that a further inspection is arranged by a drainage contractor, who should also check and confirm condition and disposal of surface water drains around the building.
- 10.11 You are advised to obtain builder/contractor quotations for any recommended works prior to commitment to purchase. Any price guides that have been provided are for general guidance only, and are net of VAT.

11 STATUTORY, LEGAL AND OTHER ISSUES

- 11.1 You should ask your solicitor to make further enquires and/or advise regarding the following matters:
- 11.2 **Tenure:** Freehold. It will be important to check and confirm boundaries including where no clear boundary structure on east side, and ownership of boundary wall on west side.
- 11.3 **Rights of Way:** There are no obvious rights of way affecting the property.
- 11.4 **Easements:** There are no obvious easement requirements. The property is subject to rights to the water supply for benefit of adjacent cottages on west side.
- 11.5 **Outgoings:** The property appears from on-line enquiry to be in Band H for council tax purposes.
- 11.6 **Guarantees:** There are assumed to be no relevant building warranties. With reference to 5.11 it has not been confirmed if any professional treatment, i.e. with benefit of guarantee was carried out.
- 11.7 **Trees:** For HSE advice on managing risk from trees see - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/lau/lacs/23-22.htm>
- 11.8 **Town and Country Planning:** The planning record does not appear to be complete, in particular with no evidence from the on-line record of consent for the cottage renovation. There are numerous works carried out subsequent to listing that might not have received planning consent including the general re-roofing (and replacement of coping stones, possible structural alterations in kitchen, second floor dormer windows, greenhouse replacement, pool pump room).

- 11.9 It is assumed the wartime Pill Boxes are not scheduled or listed, but this should be confirmed. The pool pump room appear to be on the site of a former Pill Box and it was not confirmed on site if this remains in place (below ground) or if it has been destroyed.
- 11.10 No formal searches have been undertaken and verification should be obtained from your solicitors that the position is as stated in our report, that the property is not adversely affected by local authority proposals and that there are no outstanding statutory notices. The property is situated within an area administered by East Devon District Council.
- 11.11 **Building Regulations:** You should ask your legal advisor to check and confirm:
- a) Building regulation approval and completion for cottage renovation.
 - b) Building regulation approval and completion for structural alterations in kitchen (date not confirmed)
 - c) Building regulation approval and completion for garden room
 - d) HETAS registered installer certificate for wood burning stove (garden room and cottage)
 - e) Part P certification for electrical works (e..g cottage and pool room)
 - f) OFTEC registered installation for central heating boiler (cottage)
- 11.12 **Listed Buildings and the effects of ‘Listing’:** If a building is listed all parts of the building are affected regardless of Grade, including the garden and outbuildings. Listed building consent is likely to be required for anything other than simple like for like repair and regardless of any requirement for planning permission. The property owner at any time is liable regardless of when any unauthorised work was carried out.
- 11.13 **Septic Tanks:** Under the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Amendment (England) Regulations 2014 (SI 2852) it is a requirement that the vendor of the property gives you written details of the waste water system and the details of discharge from a separate tank or small sewage treatment plant. This will normally be included in the property information form. You should ask your legal advisor to check and confirm.
- 11.14 **Water Regulations:** The Private Water Supplies Regulations 2009 require the local authority to periodically inspect and test all private supplies, other than for single private dwellings, with associated costs to the owner of the supply. Further enquiry is required to establish if such inspection has been carried out.
- 11.15 **Asbestos:** This report is not an asbestos survey but possible asbestos containing materials seen include roof slates, barn roof. Such materials are quite common in older properties and are not generally a problem unless damaged or disturbed. Fibre release from deteriorating materials can be a health hazard, and the presence of such materials can therefore be an issue on resale. You should therefore consider replacing asbestos materials when the opportunity arises. Maintenance work

involving cutting or drilling, or in any way disturbing asbestos containing materials should not be attempted without first obtaining specialist advice. Licensed contractors may be required and this inevitably adds significantly to costs. Further advice is available from the Health and Safety Executive - <http://www.hse.gov.uk/asbestos/>.

- 11.16 **Radon:** Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas found in many parts of the south-west that can be a health hazard if it seeps into buildings in sufficient quantities. Modern home are appropriately designed but older homes will not have been subject to any special precautions. Remedial measures are usually straight forward and relatively inexpensive. The only way of establishing the true risk is to have tests carried out but these can take three months of recording. Further advice can be obtained from the Environmental Health Officer of the Local Authority or the Health Protection Agency (www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/services/radon/home.htm). Tests on Radon levels in buildings can be arranged but take three months of recording.

12 BUILDINGS INSURANCE

- 12.1 The current reinstatement cost in present form including outbuildings, site clearance and professional fees (excluding VAT except on fees) has been estimated at £[]. Gross external floor area of the accommodation is approximately [] sq.m. ([] sq.ft.). Please note that this is not a valuation for any other purpose. It does not relate to the market value of the property.

Signed



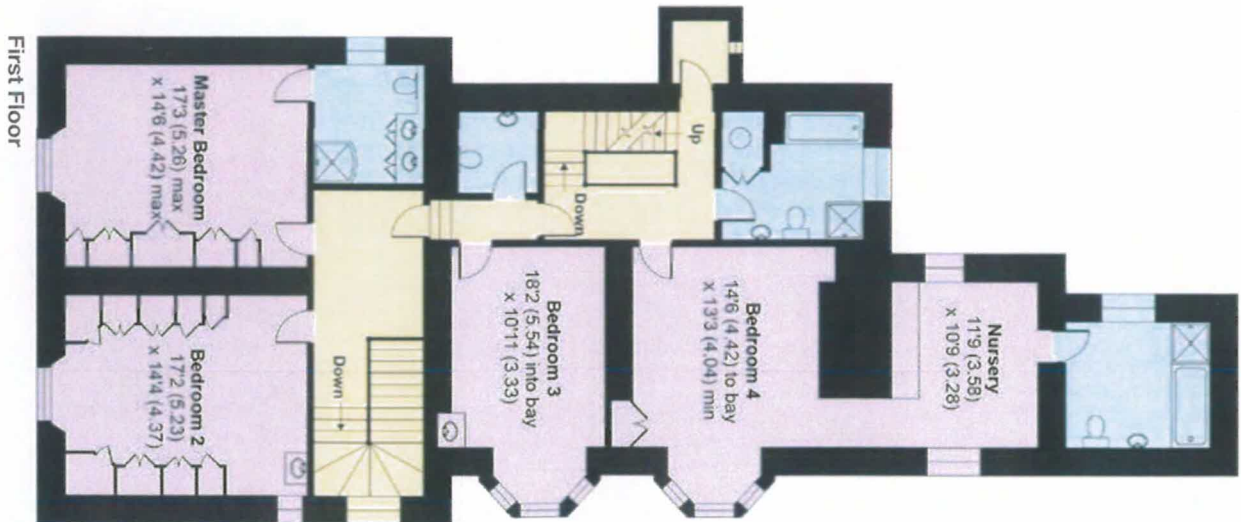
K J Luxton

Date 10th December 2015

Approximate Gross Internal Floor Area
 Main House: 5,804 sq ft / 539 sq m
 (Excludes restricted head height and store room)

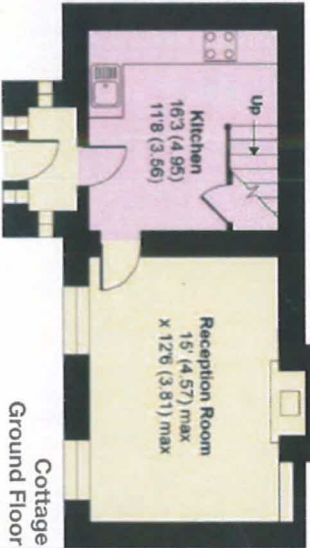
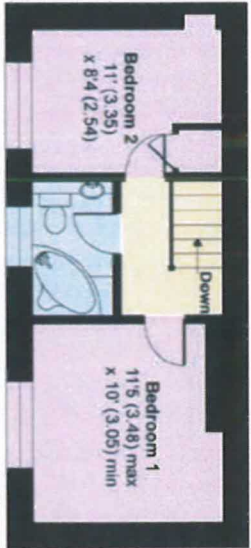
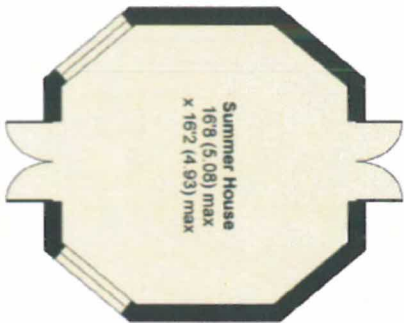
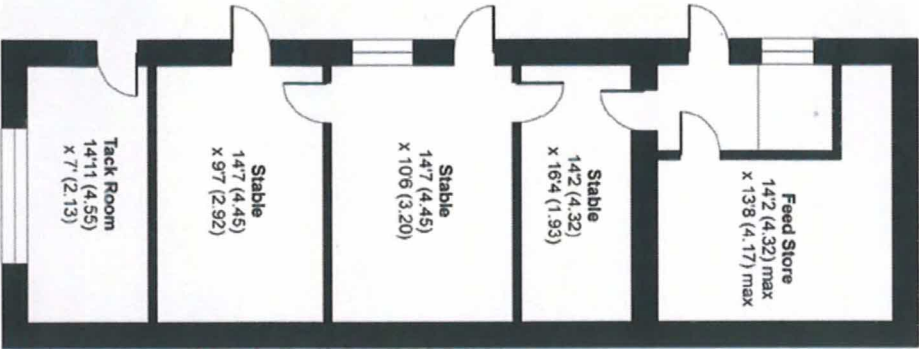
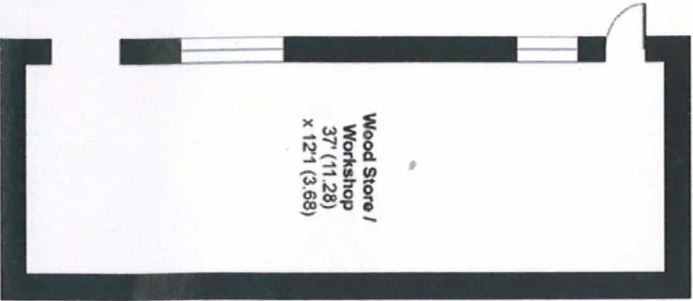


- Reception
- Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Kitchen/Utility
- Storage
- Terrace
- Recreation



This plan is for layout guidance only. Not drawn to scale unless stated. Windows & door openings are approximate. Whilst every care is taken in the preparation of this plan, please check all dimensions, shapes & compass bearings before making any decisions reliant upon them.

Approximate Gross Internal Floor Area
 Outbuildings: 2,190 sq ft / 204 sq m



Images of England

[Back To Results](#) [Non Print Page](#)



© Mr Steve Beck

IoE Number: 87717
 Location: HAVEN CLIFF HOUSE, SEATON ROAD
 AXMOUTH, EAST DEVON, DEVON
 Photographer: Mr Steve Beck
 Date Photographed: 18 September 2007
 Date listed: 08 May 1967
 Date of last amendment: 08 May 1967
 Grade II

The Images of England website consists of images of listed buildings based on the statutory list as it was in 2001 and does not incorporate subsequent amendments to the list. For the statutory list and information on the current listed status of individual buildings please go to [The National Heritage List for England](#).

SY 29 SE	AXMOUTH	SEATON ROAD
14/26		
8.5.67		Haven Cliff House
		II

SY 29 SE AXMOUTH SEATON ROAD 14/26 8.5.67 Haven Cliff House II House. Early C19 stuccoed Gothic house situated on hillside overlooking the mouth of the River Axe. Slate roof. Two storeys. Three bays. Two gables to left, with coping and finials, right hand single storey with embattled parapet. Pointed arch sashes with intersecting glazing bars, ground floor casements, right hand with flat head. Verandah across front and left hand return with tented roof on thin iron posts. Wings at rear with small tower at side with battlements, lancets and clock face. Tall stuccoed

chimney stacks.

Please note that the inclusion of a listed building on this website does not mean it is open to the public.



BUILDING SURVEY Terms & Conditions

General Description

The service will be carried out by a Charter Surveyor who will provide a written report that describes his/her opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the identified property. The surveyor will carry out his/her duties with the skill and care that can reasonably be expected from an experienced chartered surveyor.

The Building Survey service is for people who are seeking a professional opinion about the condition of a property and is based on a detailed assessment. Therefore the inspection is more extensive than for other levels of service and a considerable time will be spent at the property.

The surveyor will inspect all parts of the dwelling and will assess the interdependence of the different parts of the structure, especially the way in which the roof, walls and floors act together. Where the surveyor is concerned about a hidden problem or defect, he/she will try to identify these and explain the risk posed and what action should be taken. Recommendations for further investigations will usually be the exception.

The Survey Inspection

The extent of inspection will depend on a range of specific circumstances (including health and safety considerations). The following critical aspects may help to distinguish this from inspection at other levels of service.

1. **Windows** – an attempt will be made to open a reasonable proportion of windows.
2. **Roof spaces** – roof spaces will be inspected that are not more than 3 metres above floor level using a ladder if it is safe and reasonable to do so. The roof structure will be inspected with particular attention paid to those parts vulnerable to deterioration and damage. Thermal insulation will not be moved but it will be usual to lift small corners so that thickness, type and the nature of the underlying ceiling can be identified and assessed. A small number of lightweight possessions will be moved to allow a more thorough inspection where permission from the owner can be obtained. In recent years, the lofts of many homes have been insulated with thick layers of thermal insulation. Usually it is not safe to move across the material and this may restrict what can be inspected.
3. **Floors** – we will closely inspect the surfaces of exposed floors and lift corners of any unfitted carpets and other floor coverings where practicable. We will assess all floors for excessive deflection. Where the boards are lifted, we will look at the space beneath by way of an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection. If it is safe to do so, we will enter the underfloor area to carry out a more thorough inspection as long as the access panel is big enough, the space beneath the floor is deep enough and it is safe to do so.

4. **Furniture and occupiers possessions** – we will move lightweight, easily movable, non-fitted items where practicable, safe and where the owner/occupier gives permission.
5. **Services (for example heating and hot and cold water)** – we will not perform or comment on design calculations or test the service installations or appliances but will observe their normal operation in everyday use. This usually means:
 - a) Operating lights and extract fans where appropriate.
 - b) Asking the owner/occupier to switch on the heating appliances/system.
 - c) Where appropriate to the assessment of the system, turning on water taps, filling and emptying sinks, baths, bidets and basins, and flushing toilets to observe the performance of visible pipework.
 - d) Lifting accessible inspection chamber covers (where it is safe to do so), identifying the nature of the connections and observing water flow where a water supply is available. On dry days, this may involve pouring water into open gullies so drainage layouts can be identified.

We will advise you that further tests and inspections will be required if the owner/occupier does not provide evidence of appropriate installation and/or maintenance, or the client requires assurance as to their condition, capability and safety.

6. **The grounds** – we will carry out a thorough visual inspection of the grounds including, where necessary and appropriate, from adjoining public property. Assessment will include such external features as retaining walls, gardens, drives, paths, terraces, patios, steps, hard standings, dropped kerbs, gates, trees, boundary walls, fences, non-permanent outbuildings, rights of way, and so on. Inspection will also include the inside and outside of all permanent outbuildings not attached to the main dwelling. This includes garages, summerhouses, substantial greenhouses, toilets and leisure buildings, but not the leisure facilities inside, for example swimming pools, saunas, fitness gyms and so on.

The Survey Report

The report will reflect the thoroughness and detail of the investigation and will:

- a) Describe the form of construction and materials used for each part of the building in detail and outline their performance characteristics. This is especially important for older and historic buildings.
- b) Describe obvious defects and state the identifiable risk of those that may be hidden.
- c) Outline remedial options and, if it is considered significant, explain the likely consequence if the repairs are not done.
- d) Propose a timescale for the necessary work including recommendations for further

investigation prior to commitment to purchase (only where appropriate and necessary).

- e) Discuss future maintenance of the property and identify those elements that may result in more frequent and/or more costly maintenance and repair than would normally be expected.
- f) Identify the nature of risks of the parts that have not been inspected. We will also make it clear that you should obtain any further advice and quotations as may be appropriate before you enter into a legal commitment to buy the property.

Dangerous Materials, Contamination and Environmental Issues

We do not make enquiries about contamination or environmental dangers but if a problem is suspected recommendations will be made for further investigation.

We will assume that no harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction, and do not have a duty to justify making this assumption. However, if the inspection shows that these materials have been used, this will be reported and your further instruction obtained.

We do not carry out an asbestos inspection or act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. With flats it is assumed there is a duty holder (as defined in the Regulations), an asbestos register and an effective management plan in place and that none of these presents a significant risk to health or needs any immediate payment. We do not undertake to consult the duty holder.

We will note the presence of lead water supply pipes and give general advice if these materials can be seen. However, you must appreciate that materials are often concealed within the construction of the building. If lead pipes are a concern further specialist reports may be recommended.

We will advise if the property is in an area where, based on information published by the Health Protection Agency, there is a risk of radon. In such cases we will advise further tests to establish the precise radon level.

We will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines that can be seen during the normal course of inspection. We cannot assess possible effects on health. For obvious reasons we cannot report on any underground cables.

Consents, Approvals and Searches

It will be assumed that the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions or covenants, which apply to the structure or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the property. It will be assumed that all building regulations, planning permissions and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings, alterations and extensions which require statutory consents or approvals, we will not verify whether these have been obtained but will identify where these consents may have been required. You should ask your legal advisor to

follow up on these matters. We will not inspect drawings and specifications unless specifically requested by you.

It will be assumed that the property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a local search and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a statutory notice and that neither the property nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

Referral Fees

We do not pay a referral fee or equivalent inducement to any party who may have recommended our services to you.

Restriction on Disclosure

The report is for your private and confidential use. You must not reproduce it completely or in part. Third parties (with the exception of your professional advisors) cannot use it without express written authority. Any other persons rely on the report at their own risk.

As an RICS Registered Business, we may be required to disclose the report to RICS Regulation as part of its work to ensure that RICS Professional Standards are being maintained.

Complaints

We will do our very best to provide you with an excellent service. However, if you believe that you have cause for complaint; the company has a complaints procedure, a copy of which can be given to you on request.