



**STRUCTURE ONLY
BUILDING SURVEY REPORT**

on

**LARK HOUSE
CORNSAY
DH7 9EP**



**STRUCTURE ONLY BUILDING SURVEY OF:
LARK HOUSE, CORNSAY, DURHAM, DH7 9EP**

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Our Ref: H/K/S2208062-report

7 October 2022

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on

LARK HOUSE, CORNSAY, DURHAM, DH7 9EP



SECTION A - INTRODUCTION

A1 INSTRUCTIONS

- A1.1 Verbal instructions were received on 26 August 2022 to undertake a Structure Only Building Survey of the above property on behalf of the client, Mr G Thompson.
- A1.2 Instructions were confirmed in writing by the surveyor on 26 August 2022. I acknowledge receipt of the client's acceptance of our standard Terms of Engagement. The signed acknowledgement and the agreed terms are attached at Appendix I of this Report.
- A1.3 I understand the structure only survey is required to accompany a planning application for redevelopment of the site.

A2 THE INSPECTION

- A2.1 The inspection was carried out on 28 September 2022 by myself, Heather Butterfield BSc(Hons) MRICS.
- A2.2 Weather conditions were dry with scattered cloud cover throughout the duration of my inspection.
- A2.3 My inspection has been carried out and the Report prepared in accordance with our standard Terms of Engagement (see Appendix I). As stated in paragraph 2.1 of these terms, I have not inspected covered or otherwise inaccessible parts of the property, or any areas where it was unsafe to do so. In particular, the following general restrictions to my inspection should be noted.
- The roof was inspected from the ground level.
 - A large proportion of the internal surface finishes have been removed from the house.



A3 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

- A3.1 The property comprises a two storey detached house in a rural location. Mapping records suggest that buildings have existed on the site for at least 160 years, however it is likely the main house is approximately 130 years old. External walls are of solid stone construction and the main roof is of pitched design with a natural slate covering. Internal floors are a combination of solid concrete and suspended timber.
- A3.2 The property has been extended to the front and rear to provide porch entrances.
- A3.3 Internal accommodation briefly comprises:
- On the Ground Floor:** Entrance porch, hallway, lounge, dining room, kitchen, rear entrance porch.
- On the First Floor:** Three bedrooms, bathroom.
- A3.4 The property occupies a largely rectangular shaped site in an exposed rural location. There are a range of outbuildings of varying design to the north and east of the site.
- A3.5 For the purposes of this Report, all directions left and right are taken from a position facing the element being described. The front elevation of the building faces approximately west.

Photograph 1

A4 LEGAL MATTERS

- A4.1 I have not had sight of the title deeds. I understand a right of way extends parallel to the front west boundary. I am unaware of any other rights of way or easements affecting the property. Your Legal Advisers will need to verify the ownership and responsibility for maintenance of the various site boundaries.

A5 EXPLANATORY NOTES ON THE REPORT

- A5.1 The condition of the various elements of the building both externally and internally are described under the relevant headings and advice has been given, as appropriate, regarding the level of any necessary repairs. Service installations, gutters and downpipes, joinery and internal fittings are all excluded, as outlined in the standard terms.
- A5.2 Photographs are referred to as appropriate within the main text of the Report. The photographs are listed separately and included at Appendix III.
- A5.3 Appendix II includes a number of Health and Safety issues which are encountered quite commonly in residential properties. These may not be specific to the subject property but are included for your general guidance.



SECTION B – THE EXTERIOR

B1 ROOF AREAS

B1.1 The main roof is of pitched design with a natural slate covering. It is clear from my internal inspection that the roof has been recovered in more recent years using salvaged slates. The covering was generally found to be in a satisfactory state of repair with cement bedded ridge tiles.

B1.2 In an exposed location, ridge tiles should be mechanically fixed into position to help resist wind damage, along with the verge slates. An isolated slate was missing to the front slope, most likely a result of wind damage.

Photograph 2

B1.3 There was no significant undulation to the external roof slopes which is unusual considering the extent of structural movement to the external walls and disrepair noted elsewhere. I do however note from my internal inspection that the underlying roof structure has been subject to strengthening and part replacement.

B1.4 The front porch incorporates a small dual pitched roof covered in natural slate. This is in very poor condition. Evidence suggests the slates are held in place in part with bitumen applied over plywood. This is an unusual very poor form of fixing and will have a limited effective life.

Photograph 3

B1.5 The rear porch incorporates a shallow pitched roof covered in bituminous mineral felt. The covering has been applied to a rudimentary standard and is in poor condition following previous patch repairs with sections of felt and liquid sealant.

B1.6 As noted later, the porch structures have been formed to a very basic standard and are not capable of retention.

B2 CHIMNEY STACKS

B2.1 There are brick built chimney stacks to the north and south gable walls. These have been subject to previous re-building, most likely following erosion of the original masonry. The stacks have subsequently been lowered in height, most likely as a result of movement to the gable walls which often results in leaning to chimney stacks. The north stack currently serves a stove to the rear dining room. The south stack is currently redundant.

Photograph 4

B2.2 Due to the age of the stacks, it is likely the mortar 'parging' lining the flues has thoroughly deteriorated leading to the escape of toxic gases and contaminants. This likely caused erosion to the stone gable walls, which have subsequently been partly rebuilt with brick.

B2.3 Lead flashing at the stack bases are in fair order.



B3 MAIN WALLS / STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

B3.1 External walls are of solid construction which have been in part faced with a cement render. Large sections of the render have deteriorated or have been hacked off in recent months to expose the underlying masonry.

B3.2 The property is located in an area of past mining activity. Whilst not uncommon for the north east of England in general, this site is at particularly high risk of ground movement due to the close proximity of former mine entrances and shallow mining activity.

B3.3 Trial pits have been formed to the north west and south east corners of the building which has identified the property has been constructed with simple shallow 'footings'. The lack of a substantial foundation is not uncommon for a property of this age, however due to the past mining activity and associated high risk factors, this simple form of construction will be incapable of accommodating any changes in the ground conditions, as per modern standards of construction.

B3.4 Considerable structural movement has occurred in particular to the north and south gable walls. This is likely worsened by the lack of lateral restraint to the walls and possible settlement of the rubble core. Previous restraints bars extending between the gable walls internally have been installed at high level a considerable number of years ago to help prevent further movement. However, these are suffering corrosion and due to their high level position are unlikely to be effective at strengthening the wall at low level where the bulging is concentrated.

Photograph 5

B3.5 More prominent bulging was apparent to the rear of the south gable which is accompanied by vertical cracking to the render. This is indicative of more recent movement, possibly worsened by changes in the ground conditions.

Photograph 6

B3.6 A single restraint has also been installed extending front to rear at first floor level. This has presumably been installed as a precautionary measure as no bulging was noted in these locations.

B3.7 The property is located in a particularly exposed location and is likely to be subject to wind driven rain. It is possible the render has been applied to the external walls to help prevent issues of water entry and conceal alterations. Although as noted later, the cement render is likely to worsen internal 'rising dampness' by trapping moisture in the masonry.

B3.8 The visible sections of the stonework have been formed to a relatively rudimentary standard at the time of construction with irregular sized stone with limited cross bonding in part, which has further likely assisted instability.



B3.9 Where masonry is exposed to the gable walls it is clear previous re-building has been completed with brick. It is likely the contaminants to the chimney flues eroded the original stone masonry which has subsequently been repaired with brick.

B3.10 There is noticeable distortion to the window openings to the front and rear. This is accompanied to the rear via cracking to the ground floor sills. This movement is likely to be associated with some settlement, possibly caused by the local ground conditions.

Photographs
7 & 8

B3.11 Whilst the external walls have clearly been in place for a considerable number of years, they have been subject to numerous repairs and rebuilding in an attempt to prevent further structural movement. However, due to the surrounding ground conditions, shallow footings, extent of structural movement, limited thermal efficiency, risk of dampness and risk of further movement, it would be unreasonable to undertake repair. Replacement with a structure suitable for the ground conditions and compliant with current Building Regulations is advisable.

B3.12 The front porch and rear porch extensions have been in place for a number of years. Nonetheless, these have been formed to a basic standard with walls of single skin concrete block construction with timber framing above to the front. The blockwork walls will be incapable of preventing penetrative dampness and will have extremely limited thermal efficiency. Furthermore, the extensions are built of rudimentary concrete slabs laid over loose rubble.

Photograph 9

B3.13 Vertical cracking has occurred to the rear extension at the junction with the main building suggesting some settlement following construction, most likely due to the inadequate supporting concrete slabs.

Photograph 10

B3.14 The porch extensions are not suitable for use in habitable accommodation and due to the extent of poor construction are beyond repair. Demolition is required.

B4 DAMP PROOF COURSE & SUB-FLOOR VENTILATION

B4.1 There is no visible damp proof course (DPC) to the external walls of the property which is not unusual for a building of this age and nature. As such, the internal wall surfaces will be more susceptible to dampness due to the passage of ground moisture.

B4.2 It is likely the cement render to the external walls will also trap moisture in the masonry, further worsening internal dampness.

B4.3 Drill holes to the external walls at low level suggest previous 'damp treatment' works have been completed, indicating an historic issue of dampness.



B4.4 The front and rear porch extensions have not been constructed with a DPC, albeit a damp proof membrane (DPM) is partly visible to the floor slabs; however, will be inadequate at preventing dampness to the walls. This combined with the single skin nature of the porch walls means they are likely to suffer chronic issues of dampness and condensation and are not suitable for a habitable property.

B4.5 There are no subfloors to ventilate.

B5 SUBSTANTIAL OUTBUILDINGS & BOUNDARY WALLS

B5.1 The site accommodates a range of outbuildings, as detailed separately below.

Stable Block to East of Site

B5.2 There is a stable block to the east of the site, originally of stone construction, which likely pre-dates the house. This incorporates an attached lean-to to the west with a slated roof. This building is in a significantly dilapidated condition and large sections of the external walls have suffered from collapse or have been partly dismantled to eliminate health and safety hazards. The north wall leans noticeably and is beyond the acceptable limits, the stability of the wall is now compromised as a result.

Photograph 11

B5.3 The main corrugated metal clad roof is now partly supported by metal posts to the south. There is a significant risk of wind damage during storm conditions which could lead to collapse.

B5.4 Following prolonged water entry to the lean-to, the timber wall plate supporting the rafters at high level has suffered significant decay. Decay has also occurred to the north door lintel which will result in instability to the masonry above.

Photograph 12

B5.5 Due to the extent of disrepair the stable outbuilding is entirely incapable of economical re-use.

Storage Barn to North East of Site

B5.6 There is a second outbuilding to the north east of the site which is currently used as an open storage barn. This is predominately of steel frame construction with timber bracing and metal king post trusses to the pitched roof. Cladding to the walls and roof have been replaced in more recent years in corrugated metal and cement sheets. The barn is in sound structural condition with no significant disrepair noted.

Photograph 13

B5.7 It is presumed that the low level corrugated cement cladding does not contain asbestos due to its age. However, sections of dated cladding panels appear to remain to the north and these may potentially contain asbestos which can only be confirmed by specialist laboratory analysis. Investigations are advised and whilst the cladding does not pose a hazard in its current good condition, it must not be damaged.

Photograph 14



B5.8 To the west, a section of a much older dwarf brick wall remains at low level. Visible sections were found to be in fair order.

B5.9 This outbuilding is not at risk of imminent collapse and due to recent upgrading to the external cladding finishes, is capable of continued use for outdoor storage purposes.

Range of Outbuildings to West of Site

B5.10 There is a range of outbuildings to the north west of the site which likely pre-date the house construction. The original stone building is one and a half storeys in height with subsequent later extensions in brick and timber framed construction to the north and west.

Photograph 15

B5.11 These buildings are in a very poor state of repair. The roof to the stone built section is no longer in-situ. Timber lintels to structural openings have failed resulting in movement to the masonry and there is a risk of collapse to stonework above the internal door opening to the south wall. Further structural instability is likely to occur in the coming years as a large proportion of the remaining window and door lintels have suffered from woodworm infestation.

Photograph 16

B5.12 In addition, there is significant bulging to the west face of the west wall which is at risk of collapse and forms a hazard. Movement has likely been worsened by separation of the inner and outer leaves of stonework due to deterioration of the rubble filled core. Dismantling is now essential.

Photograph 17

B5.13 The makeshift timber framed lean-to to the west is also in poor condition with decay to timber props and purlins supporting the roof structure. There is a significant risk of collapse to the roof, particularly during storm conditions.

B5.14 Due to the extent of disrepair this range of outbuildings is well beyond economical repair.

B6 DRAINAGE BELOW GROUND

B6.1 Rainwater goods discharge into underground drains which extend to the north east of the site. I understand this discharges into a land drainage system.

B6.2 Foul water extends via underground drains to a septic tank adjacent to the east boundary. The septic tank is dated, and I recommend you engage a specialist to provide further advice regarding serviceability. The cost of future upgrading should not be underestimated and additional consents from the Environment Agency may well be required.

B6.3 I understand the septic tank discharges into a soakaway to the adjoining field which does not form part of your ownership. Clarity must be sought from your Legal Adviser to ensure suitable easements are in place.



SECTION C - THE INTERIOR

C1 ROOF SPACES

C1.1 Access was gained to the main loft space via a hatch to the landing ceiling. My inspection has been restricted to the single fixed board laid over the ceiling joists adjacent to the hatch. The roof structure is of conventional king post truss design supporting twin purlins and common rafters.

C1.2 The king post has been subject to previous strengthening to include metal gusset plates to joint the tie beams, principal rafters and king post. The lower purlins have also been scarf jointed and bolted, presumably following partial replacement, possibly to accommodate movement to the gable wall. Metal restraint straps have been installed more recently to a rudimentary standard to joint the purlins and gable wall. These are unlikely to be adequate to resist further movement.

Photograph 18

C1.3 Rafters have been replaced throughout during previous re-roofing. There is no visible lateral restraint ties to the rafter feet which increases the risk of 'roof spread' in the longer term.

C1.4 Timbers within the loft space have suffered woodworm. Whilst not uncommon for a property of this age, this will affect their structural integrity to a degree.

C1.5 There was no evidence of imminent instability to the roof structure, although it has been subject to previous ad-hoc repairs in an attempt to safeguard against further movement. There is a risk of further 'spread' in the longer term along with deterioration a result of woodworm infestation.

C2 CEILING STRUCTURES

C2.1 Cosmetic ceiling finishes within the property have been removed. The ground floor ceiling structure consists of the underside of the first floor joists, as detailed in C4.

C2.2 A single boarded ceiling finish remains within the kitchen with a painted finish. This is presumed not to be an asbestos containing material, although this can only be confirmed by specialist laboratory testing.

C2.3 The first floor ceilings are formed by timber ceiling joists partly visible in the loft space and where ceiling finishes have been removed. The joists span north to south, in part supported by the tie beam to the timber truss. No significant instability was noted, although as detailed above, timbers in the loft have suffered woodworm infestation which could impact their integrity in the longer term.



C3 INTERNAL WALLS AND PARTITIONS

- C3.1 Internal walls are of solid and stud construction and the majority of the internal finishes have been removed. There is a central loadbearing 'spine' wall spanning north to south which supports the first floor structure and likely provides some supplementary support to the king post roof truss.
- C3.2 Bulging to the north gable wall has resulted in a large vertical open joint at the junction with the internal spine wall. As such the spine wall no longer provides any lateral restraint to the gable which will further worsen the risk of additional movement.
- C3.3 Open jointing was also visible at the junction with the south gable wall along with vertical cracking to the south wall within the rear bedroom, which coordinates with external cracking. The cracking and open jointing suggests more recent structural movement. Movement to this gable wall may have affected stability of the rear south bedroom chimney breast which has partly collapsed.
- C3.4 The fireplace within the dining room has been subject to previous rebuilding and the east stone prop is now not centrally positioned beneath the stone lintel above. Albeit no more recent movement was apparent.
- C3.5 Timber lintels are visible internally supporting the window and door openings to the external walls. No significant decay was noted.
- C3.6 There is no form of internal insulation applied to the external walls. As such they will have limited thermal efficiency in comparison to modern methods of construction and given the on-going energy crisis, this of increased relevance. This, combined with the increased risk of dampness and level of structural disrepair means it would be unfavourable to undertake repair works.

Photograph 19

C4 FLOORS

- C4.1 At ground level the floor is of concrete construction. All coverings have been removed with the exception of ceramic tiles to the kitchen. A small 'trial pit' has been formed within the rear south east corner of the kitchen. It is clear the floors have been subject to some partial replacement in more recent years within the kitchen and front entrance hallway, possibly in response to movement. The replacement concrete slab is slender in design which will be at increased risk of movement, particularly considering the poor compacted 'fill' to the underside.



- C4.2 The lounge floor has suffered considerable movement, sloping to the north west corner with visible cracks. This could be a result of a combination of factors including inadequate thickness and strength of the concrete, poor compaction of the underlying fill and possible loss of support to the underside.
- C4.3 There is no form of insulation to the ground floor structure and there is unlikely to be any damp proof membrane to the dated concrete floors. Whilst not uncommon for a property of this age, this will significantly increase heat loss during the winter months and moisture transfer from the ground. These factors, combined with the current poor condition makes it unfavourable to undertake repairs in an attempt to provide modern habitable accommodation.
- C4.4 The first floor structure is of suspended timber design. This is largely visible from ground level following removal of plaster finishes, with the exception of the rear east bedroom.
- C4.5 There is evidence of a woodworm infestation to the timber joists, particularly to the front of the property which will affect their structural integrity.
- C4.6 There is considerable 'bounce' to the front floor structure which has likely been worsened by the lack of any 'noggins' which would improve rigidity.
- C4.7 At first floor level within the north east bedroom there is a significant slope towards the rear. This is likely a result of structural movement to the external walls, which the timber joists rely upon for support.
- C4.8 A further significant slope was apparent to the rear south bedroom floor. This is also associated with movement to the external walls which the joists rely upon for support.
- C4.9 Whilst some undulation to suspended floor structures in a property of this age can be accommodated, the extent of unevenness is considerable and not within tolerable limits. As such, the first floor structures in their current condition are not fit for purpose.

SECTION D - SUMMARY

D1 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

- D1.1 The property has suffered substantial structural movement. This has likely been worsened by the nature of the approximate 130 year old construction and site conditions. This, combined with defects to the remaining building fabric and high risk of further structural movement, means it is beyond economical repair. Extension structures have been formed to a very poor standard of construction and require demolition.



D1.2 The outbuildings are generally in a particularly dilapidated condition with walls in such a poor state of repair they are at risk of collapse and currently form a hazard.

D2 LIMITATIONS OF THE INSPECTION

D2.1 As previously stated, the survey and inspection have been undertaken in accordance with the agreed Terms of Engagement, and the general limitations encountered during my inspection are detailed at paragraph A2.3 of the report.

D3 DISCLOSURE

D3.1 This Report is for the sole use of the named client and is confidential to the client Mr Thompson and their professional advisers. No liability can be accepted for any loss sustained by a third party.

D3.2 The Report should not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written authority of the Surveyor.



Heather Butterfield BSc(Hons) MRICS
Wakefields Chartered Building Surveyors

7 October 2022



APPENDIX I

TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

and

SIGNED ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



Lark House,
Cormsay



STRUCTURE ONLY BUILDING SURVEY SCHEDULE OF PARTICULARS

Client:	[REDACTED]
Property Address:	Lark House, Cormsay, Durham, DH7 9EP
Client's Description of the property:	3 bed detached house
Purpose of the Report:	Survey to accompany planning application
Agreed Exclusions (over and above the limitations contained within the standard Terms of Engagement):	None
Additional Services requested (outside the standard terms):	
a) to be engaged directly by the Client	None
b) to be engaged by the Surveyor	None
Proposed Date of Inspection:	Wednesday 28 September 2022.
Agreed Fee:	
a) for standard service	[REDACTED]
b) for any additional services, as specified	Not Applicable
Basis of Payment:	Full payment required prior to release of the report

I/We confirm that I/we have read and accept these particulars and the enclosed Terms and Conditions of Engagement in respect of the provision of a Structure Only Building Survey Report.

I/We authorise you to proceed with the survey of the above mentioned property and I/we agree to pay the fee stated as follows:

Cheque enclosed
(Payable to 'Wakefields')

Debit/Credit Card

BACS

Signed: [REDACTED]

Date: 28/8/22

BACS Payment:

S2208062
26 August 2022





STRUCTURE ONLY BUILDING SURVEY –TERMS & CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

1.0 THE STRUCTURE ONLY BUILDING SURVEY

- 1.1 A Structure Only Building Survey is essentially a detailed visual inspection of all parts of the building structure which are readily visible from within the curtilage of the site and adjacent public areas, without damaging in any way the fabric of the building.
- 1.2 The inspection will be carried out by a Chartered Surveyor, who will advise the client by means of a written Report as to his/her opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the building structure. The surveyor will use all of the care and skill to be reasonably expected of an appropriately qualified and experienced Chartered Surveyor.
- 1.3 Subject to express agreement to the contrary, the terms on which the surveyor will undertake the Structure Only Building Survey are set out below.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

- 2.1 Accessibility / Safety: The Surveyor will inspect as much of the internal and external surface area of the structure as is safe and practicable but will not inspect those areas which are covered, unexposed or not reasonably accessible. The Surveyor will follow current guidance given by the RICS and by the Health & Safety Executive on safe procedures to be adopted in carrying out surveys of this type.
- 2.2 Externally: An external inspection will be made from ground level of all exposed parts of the building structure, with the aid of binoculars where necessary. Foundations will not be inspected except where already exposed. Flat roofs to single-storey parts will be inspected where possible by means of a standard surveyor's ladder (up to a maximum of 3 metres above ground level) or from adjacent windows. It may not be possible to inspect flat roofs of two or more storeys although, if prior warning is given and specific arrangements are made by the Client with the present owner to provide safe access to such areas, an inspection may be carried out at the discretion of the surveyor.
- 2.3 Internally: All exposed internal surfaces of the building structure will be inspected and tests will be carried out with a moisture meter as appropriate to determine the existence of internal dampness. Internal joinery and fittings are excluded from a Structure Only Survey. If the property is furnished, lightweight furniture may be moved, but not heavy furnishings or fitted items. Built-in wardrobes, fitted kitchen units or other cupboards containing stored goods will not be emptied. The surveyor will not attempt to remove securely fitted covers or housings to any concealed areas without the express permission of the owner.
- 2.4 Roof Voids: The Surveyor will inspect the roof voids if there are available hatches of a suitable size. The Surveyor will have a ladder of sufficient height to gain access to a roof hatch not more than 3 metres above floor level. It may not, therefore, be possible to inspect all roof voids. Where accessible, the surveyor will normally enter the roof void where safe to do so but, in the event that insulation material has been laid at ceiling level concealing the timber joists and/or where no suitable boarding has been laid, it may only be possible to inspect the roof void from the access hatch itself. No insulation material will be lifted or moved by the Surveyor.
- 2.5 Floors: The Surveyor will lift accessible sample loose floorboards and trap doors, if any, which are not covered by heavy furniture, plywood or hardboard, fitted carpets or other fixed floor coverings. The Surveyor will not attempt to raise fixed floorboards without the express permission of the owner or where there is any risk of damage being caused. Where the boards are lifted, the sub-floor is inspected by way of an inverted 'head and shoulder' inspection at the access point. If it is safe to do so, the surveyor will enter the under-floor area to carry out a more thorough inspection. In this respect, 'safe to do so' can be defined as: an adequately sized access panel; a minimum of one metre between the floor void surface and the underside of the joists; and a lack of obvious hazards in the floor void (for example, sharp and uneven oversite, hazardous and obstructive electric or gas pipes, and so on).
- 2.6 Structural Elements: The Surveyor will make an overall assessment of the stability and condition of the main structural elements of the building based purely upon a visual inspection, but no structural or other calculations will be undertaken. If the Surveyor has any reasonable doubt about the adequacy of a particular structural element, advice may be given regarding the need for further investigations to be carried out.



- 2.7 **Services:** With the exception of underground drains, service installations are specifically excluded from a Structure Only Survey. Gutters and downpipes are also excluded. Drainage manhole covers will be lifted where accessible and practicable in order to carry out a limited inspection of underground drains, but heavy duty cast iron covers, sealed or block paved covers will not be lifted. No tests will be undertaken on the drains, but the Surveyor will report if it is considered that further tests are advisable. Tests are not carried out to determine mobile communication coverage or Broadband availability.
- 2.8 **Inaccessible Areas:** The Surveyor will identify any areas which would normally be inspected but which were inaccessible during the survey. While no assumption can be made about the condition of any inaccessible areas or other elements contained therein, the Surveyor will indicate where, for reasons established during the survey, it is considered that access should be obtained for a more detailed inspection of such areas.
- 2.9 **The Site:** Only outbuildings or substantial boundary walls forming an integral part of the main building structure will be inspected. Detached garages, boundary fences, paved areas and external grounds are specifically excluded.
- 2.10 **Flats or Maisonettes:** As the main structural elements of flats and/or maisonettes are invariably shared with at least one other property, a Structure Only Survey is not considered appropriate. The responsibility for maintenance of the structural elements of larger blocks of flats usually lies with the management company rather than individual owners.
- 2.11 **Environmental Issues:** Environmental issues are not considered to be within the scope of a Structure Only Survey. Any obvious or potential health and safety hazards will be reported, but only to the extent that they are apparent from the elements of the property forming part of the inspection.

3.0 THE REPORT

- 3.1 Subject to express agreement to the contrary and any amendments or additions agreed in writing with the Client prior to the inspection, the Surveyor will provide a detailed, written Report on the basis of the inspection, as outlined above.
- 3.2 The Report will be a comment upon the overall quality and condition of the building structure. Advice will be given on significant defects affecting the building structure and/or likely to give rise to significant expenditure in the near future.
- 3.3 The Report will not give an inventory of every single defect, some of which may not materially affect the reasonable use or enjoyment of the property. It should be stressed that the Report is not a guarantee against hidden defects or in respect of any defects which may occur at some future date.

4.0 DELETERIOUS OR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS AND CONTAMINATION

- 4.1 Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the property. However, the Surveyor will advise in the Report if, in his/her view, there is a likelihood that deleterious material has been used in the construction and, in such cases, specific enquiries should be made or tests should be carried out by a specialist.
- 4.2 The presence of asbestos will be noted if encountered during the inspection, but it must be appreciated that such materials are often only visible after opening up parts of the structure, which may not be possible, subject to the limitations of the inspection.
- 4.3 The Surveyor will advise in the Report if the property is in an area where, based on information published by the Health Protection Agency, there is a significant risk of radon. In such cases the Surveyor will advise that tests should be carried out to establish the radon level.
- 4.4 The Surveyor will not be required to comment upon contamination issues such as the existence of noxious substances, landfill or mineral extraction as these matters can only be established by appropriate specialists. Where, from local knowledge or from the inspection, it is considered that there may be relevant concerns regarding possible contamination, advice will be given as to the importance of obtaining a specialist report.



5.0 CONSENTS, APPROVALS AND SEARCHES

- 5.1 The Surveyor will assume 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.
- 5.2 The Surveyor will assume that all relevant bye-laws have been complied with and that all Building Regulation, Planning and other consents required have been obtained. In the case of new buildings, significant alterations or extensions which require statutory consents or approvals, the Surveyor will not verify whether such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or his/her legal advisers. Drawings and specifications will not normally be inspected by the Surveyor.
- 5.3 The Surveyor will assume 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.

6.0 FEES AND EXPENSES

- 6.1 The Client will pay the Surveyor the agreed fee for the Report and any expressly agreed disbursements. VAT will be payable in addition. Unless otherwise expressly agreed by the Surveyor, full payment will be made by the Client prior to release of the written Report.

7.0 VALUATION

- 7.1 No valuation is included in a Structure Only Survey.

8.0 ADDITIONAL SERVICES

- 8.1 The surveyor may provide, for an additional fee, extra or additional services as may be requested by the Client at the time of taking instructions, subject to such additional services being clearly specified and agreed in writing by the Surveyor.
- 8.2 In the event that any specialist report is subsequently engaged by the Surveyor on behalf of the Client, the specialist contractor will be directly responsible to the Client for the advice given, either written or verbal, and settlement of any fees will be subject to agreement between the Client and the specialist contractor.

9.0 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

- 9.1 In the event that the Client has a complaint regarding the standard of service received from the Surveyor, a formal complaints handling procedure will be followed, with provision for independent mediation or arbitration, should this prove necessary. A copy of the Surveyor's authorised complaints handling procedure is available upon written request. Using this procedure will not affect the Client's legal rights.
- 9.2 The Client may only rely upon the Surveyor's advice and Report for the purposes described in these Terms and Conditions and the accompanying letter, or otherwise communicated to the Surveyor in writing prior to agreement of the fee.

10.0 MISCELLANEOUS

- 10.1 Unless expressly provided, no term in the agreement between the Surveyor and the Client is enforceable under the *Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999*, by any person other than the Surveyor or the Client.
- 10.2 Where the Client has instructed the Surveyor to make investigations which cause damage to the Property (on the basis that the Client has obtained the owner's prior consent), the Client will indemnify the Surveyor against any loss or cost arising.

11.0 DISCLOSURE

- 11.1 The Report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his/her professional advisers and no liability can be accepted for any loss sustained by a third party. The Report should not be reproduced in whole or in part without the express written authority of the Surveyor.



- 11.2 In accepting these terms and conditions of engagement, the Client agrees to keep the Report confidential, disclosing its contents only to his/her own professional advisers. In particular (but without limit), the Client must not disclose the whole or any part of the Report to the owners of the subject property, their estate agent, another prospective purchaser or any other person who may intend to rely upon it for the purpose of any transaction.



APPENDIX II

HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

GENERAL GUIDANCE



HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES –GENERAL GUIDANCE

The following information is not intended to be specific to the subject property but is provided for your general guidance. Where considered relevant by the Surveyor, specific health and safety issues identified during the inspection have been raised within the main body of the Report. However, due to the limitations of the inspection, it may not have been possible to identify all relevant matters and the following guidance is therefore intended to provide general advice on a range of issues which can be encountered, particularly within older residential properties.

Where appropriate, references have been included to organisations from which additional information or advice can be obtained.

ASBESTOS

There can be certain materials in the fabric of older buildings, often concealed, which contain asbestos fibres. Examples of such materials include some older types of textured plaster, insulation boards, certain floor tiles, pipe lagging, flues and roofing materials, including corrugated sheeting.

While these materials may not pose a significant hazard if in good condition or well sealed, asbestos fibres could be released upon their removal, or during repair or alteration works. Specialist advice should be obtained if you suspect that any such materials may be present in the property.

(Contact the Health & Safety Executive for further advice: www.hse.gov.uk or HSE infoline: 0845 345 0055)

LEAD PAINT

The use of lead in modern paint products is now strictly controlled, but there are often high concentrations of lead in older paint layers, which may have been covered with successive layers of paint built up over the years.

You should be aware of potential hazards in such situations, which include the risk of small children or animals chewing painted woodwork and the release of lead particles when sanding, scraping or burning off old paintwork. Suitable precautions must be taken when carrying out such work.

(Contact DEFRA for further information: www.defra.gov.uk or defra helpline: 08459 33 55 77,

LEAD WATER SUPPLY PIPES AND PLUMBING

Normally, the amount of lead in water supplies in this country is well below the maximum levels permitted by the EC. There can, nevertheless, be localised high concentrations of lead where, for example, deterioration has occurred to the extent that lead is dissolved by the water passing through the pipe. The Water Supply Authority has a duty to ascertain and monitor the quality of the mains supply, but this duty does not extend to old water pipes or other plumbing contained within buildings.

Lead water pipes should generally be replaced at the earliest opportunity but, if you have any doubt about the quality of the water supply or excessively low pressure, tests can be carried out by a specialist consultant.

(Contact the Drinking Water Inspectorate for further advice: www.dwi.gov.uk or telephone 020 7082 8024)

COLD WATER STORAGE

The majority of new properties built since the mid-1990's do not have cold water storage tanks, with water fed directly from the mains to the taps within the property. However, the majority of residential properties still have some means of cold water storage, often located within roof voids. It is imperative the tanks are insulated to prevent freezing in winter months and condensation in the summer. The tanks must also be fitted with lids to prevent excessive moisture within the roof void and also to prevent debris and vermin contaminating the water.



Galvanised metal and copper tanks can corrode internally, leading to further contamination, leakage or possible catastrophic failure. All water storage tanks must, therefore, be checked regularly and, if there is any doubt about their condition, further advice should be obtained from a reputable plumber.

(Contact the Institute of Plumbing & Heating Engineers: www.iphe.org.uk or telephone: 01708 472 791)

GAS INSTALLATIONS

It is recommended that all gas fittings be checked and serviced by a Gas Safe registered engineer at least once a year. Annual checks are a legal requirement for tenanted properties.

When purchasing a property, servicing records should be requested from the present owner(s) as a matter of course, but you should also consider entering into a service contract with your gas supplier or an alternative, reputable Gas Safe registered engineer.

(Contact Gas Safe Register for advice & approved contractors www.gassaferegister.co.uk or telephone: 0800 408 5500)

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

Regulations for new electrical installations are regularly updated. Consequently, unless your property is newly built or has recently been completely rewired, the installation may not comply with the most recent regulations. That is not to say that the system is necessarily unsafe, but the IET Regulations do recommend that electrical installations be tested periodically and, unless a recent test certificate can be provided, you would be well advised to have the installation checked by a reputable electrician.

Alterations to existing electrical installations now fall under the scope of Building Regulations, whereby the majority of work (other than very minor alterations) can only be carried out by suitably qualified contractors, who must provide proper certification upon completion of any works undertaken.

(Contact the NICEIC for advice & approved contractors: www.niceic.org.uk or telephone: 01582 531 000,

SAFETY GLASS

Current Building Regulations require safety glass to be used in critical locations such as doors, partitions and low level windows, although small panes of conventional glass can be used in such locations, subject to specific maximum sizes. It is still very common to find non-safety glass in such locations and, as it may not be possible to visually identify the type and thickness of glass, specialist advice should be obtained from a reputable glazier where appropriate.

(Contact the Glass & Glazing Federation for advice and a list of registered contractors: www.ggf.org.uk,

STAIRCASES AND BALUSTRADES

The design of some open tread staircases within houses built typically in the 1960's or 1970's would not comply with modern Building Regulations. In addition, replacement balustrades installed within many houses are of an inappropriate design and potentially unsafe. Typical problems include flimsy balustrades at landing level and wide gaps between spindles (these gaps should be no less than 100mm).

While there may not be any legal responsibility to upgrade existing staircases or balustrades, proper advice should be obtained with a view to undertaking suitable works where a potential safety hazard exists.

(Contact your Local Authority Building Control department for advice on current regulations)



POLYSTYRENE TILES

Polystyrene ceiling tiles and other polystyrene based products are potentially hazardous due to the poisonous fumes that can be given off during combustion, and the speed and intensity at which the material can burn and spread fire.

Polystyrene tiles are still available for sale, but the current products are now legally required to contain fire retardant chemicals, which reduce the dangers significantly. Unfortunately there is no obvious way to ascertain whether a particular tile is safe or not, and therefore all such materials should ideally be removed as a precaution, particularly from any high risk areas such as kitchens.

FIRE RISK IN HOMES / SMOKE ALARMS

Regulations have recently been introduced requiring smoke detection to be fitted to residential properties, but these regulations only apply to new homes.

Smoke detection is vital and a wide variety of alarms are now available, including mains and battery operated models. Some modern intruder alarms can also be integrated with smoke detection. Regardless of the type of system, regular maintenance is vital to ensure satisfactory operation when needed.

(Contact your local fire service or log onto: www.firekills.gov.uk providing advice on a range of fire related issues)

CONDENSATION AND MOULD

The issue of mould in buildings and associated health problems is attracting increasing pub
There is currently no authoritative scientific study in the UK which demonstrates that exposure to any kind of airborne mould is toxic to human beings, although there may be an increased health risk to vulnerable groups such as those with specific allergies, asthma or other lung diseases.

Moulds will grow in all buildings given the right conditions, but the control of condensation can significantly reduce this risk. Factors which affect the likelihood of condensation occurring include the level of insulation within the building structure, the provision of ventilation both through windows and by mechanical means, together with the general use of the building by occupiers and, in particular, the use of appliances which produce high levels of moisture vapour.

(Further information on research into mould can be obtained from the RICS at: www.rics.org)

CHIMNEYS AND FLUES

In most circumstances, it will not have been possible for the surveyor to inspect the interior of chimneys or flues or to establish whether such flues are suitably lined.

All chimneys and flues should be checked on a regular basis and, if necessary, cleaned to remove potential obstructions and/or soot deposits. Blocked or partially obstructed flues are unsafe to use and can increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning. This risk is not confined to gas fires or boilers, but includes open fires, solid fuel and oil burning appliances. Carbon monoxide detectors are available from a variety of sources and can be an effective way of identifying a potential risk.

(Further information on carbon monoxide can be obtained from www.dti.gov.uk/homesafetynetwork,



APPENDIX III

PHOTOGRAPHS



Schedule of Photographs

1. General view of front elevation.
2. Missing slate to front roof slope.
3. Slates to front porch roof.
4. Lowered chimney stack.
5. Restraint to south gable wall.
6. Vertical cracking to render.
7. Distortion to front windows.
8. Distortion to rear windows.
9. Front porch.
10. Vertical cracking to rear porch.
11. Stable block.
12. Decayed wall plate to stable block lean-to.
13. Storage barn.
14. Possible asbestos cement sheets to storage barn.
15. Outbuildings to north of site.
16. Lintel to internal door to north west outbuilding.
17. Leaning wall to north west outbuilding.
18. Gusset plate to roof truss in loft.
19. Vertical open jointing to internal wall.



















