HomeSurvey

ISVA
Independent Surveyors & Valuers Association
PUTTING THE CLIENT FIRST

Name and Address of Client:

Date of Inspection:

Surveyor:

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report is a concise form of survey carried out by a suitably qualified surveyor and is in accordance with the 'Terms and Conditions' signed by the client.

DESCRIPTION

The property is a single storey detached bungalow which we have been told was constructed in circa 1968. The property was extended around 1990.

ACCOMMODATION

The accommodation within briefly comprises the following:-

Glazed link from the double garage or driveway, home office, short flight of steps to the main reception hall and cloakroom/WC, kitchen/breakfast room, sitting/dining room, inner hall, four bedrooms (master with en-suite bathroom and WC) and family shower room with WC.

CONSTRUCTION

The external walls are of rendered masonry construction.

The main roof is pitched and covered with tiles. Internally, the floor is of solid concrete construction.

The link extension has a flat mineral felt covered roof and a single skin of blockwork walls on one elevation and single glazed aluminium framed panels on the drive facing elevation. The flooring within the link is of solid concrete construction.

LOCATION

There are limited shopping facilities in the locality. There is a wide range of shops and other services in Truro which is approximately 6 miles away. Public transport is also restricted. However, we understand that there are bus routes from the centre of the village.

Branch line railway services are also available from Perranwell Station which offer regular services to the cathedral city of Truro or Falmouth where a greater range of amenities are available.

There are state schools in reasonable travelling distance.

We believe the property may be within a conservation area and a number of planning restrictions may therefore, be in force. Your legal adviser should make further enquiries about this and we refer you to our comments in Section 12.

The property is on a moderately sloping site. As such, the property may be more prone to flooding due to groundwater runoff and we refer to our later remarks in Section 11.

The property is located close to a mining area and your legal adviser should check whether any reports or agreements have been created which relate to this activity and the property. We refer you to our recommendations in Section 12.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has identified the local area as one in which, in more than 1% of dwellings, the levels of radon gas entering the property are such that

remedial action is recommended. It is not possible in the course of the inspection/survey to determine whether radon gas is present in any given building, as the gas is colourless and odourless. Tests can be carried out to assess the level of radon in a building. At a small charge test instruments and results are available by post from the HPA and other approved laboratories. The minimum testing period is 3 months. The HPA strongly advises against using shorter-term instruments as they can give misleading results. If tests have not been carried out, they are recommended. It has been the experience of the HPA that it is not expensive, in proportion to the value of the property, to effect the recommended remedial measures. You can obtain further information from the HPA, Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards at Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, OX11 ORO or at http://www.hpa.org.uk/radiation/default.htm or the environmental health department of the local authority. Further enquiries should be made by your legal adviser and we refer you to our comments in Section 12.

2. CIRCUMSTANCES OF INSPECTION

The property was occupied and furnished at the time of inspection. All floors were covered with fitted finishes.

Insulation in the roof space limited inspection of the ceilings. The height and configuration of the roof further restricted our inspection.

Each room has been inspected in detail and damp meter readings have been taken where possible without moving heavy furniture. Fitted carpets have not been raised unless reasonably practical at the edges.

ORIENTATION

The front of the building faces approximately south west and all directions in this report are given as if viewing the property from the front. The garage and drive are to the rear left.

3. SURVEYOR'S OVERALL OPINION

The property is considered to be a reasonable proposition for purchase provided that you are prepared to accept the cost and inconvenience of dealing with the various repair/improvement works reported. These deficiencies are quite common in properties of this age and type. Provided that the necessary works are carried out to a satisfactory standard, we can see no reason why there should be any special difficulty on resale.

See also Section 13: Summary of Condition and recommendations.

4. STRUCTURAL MOVEMENT

We are pleased to report that there was no evidence of recent major fractures or deflection to external wall surfaces or to the roof to suggest any major ongoing structural movement.

5. DAMPNESS, CONDENSATION & VENTILATION

DAMP-PROOF COURSE

The walls are likely to contain a bituminous felt damp-proof course.

The path surfaces to the rear of the property are within 200mm of the damp-proof course and must not be raised any more otherwise damp may be drawn up into the wall.

Ground levels within the link building are high in relation to internal floor levels and this is particularly the case to the steps and in the boiler room. This is where the ground has been cut away to accommodate the different levels. In practice there is little that can be done about this other than robust damp-proofing solutions. To this end, it is assumed that a vertical membrane was installed during construction.

DAMPNESS

Ground floor walls were tested with an electronic damp meter at regular intervals (except where furniture, etc. prevented access). Where ground floors are covered with carpets and other fitted finishing's they could not be tested with the damp meter and therefore, comments cannot be given on whether they are suffering from rising dampness.

Particularly high readings were taken in the front right corner of the main bedroom. There has been some minor damage to decorations but there was no damp smell. The dampness also does not appear to track significantly into the floors although it must be expected that some rot to the floor coverings may have occurred or could occur in the future. This dampness is likely to have been caused by water penetrating through the roof coverings and then saturating the cavity fill. It may also be the case that the dampness is tracking up the cavity fill from the ground. Further investigations are needed but the likely solutions are to open up the cavity and remove the fill from the lower levels and fitting a tray in order that the cavity fill can no longer breach into the ground. The roof coverings should also be stripped back in the corner and the felt repaired and plastic formers fitted which is discussed later in Section 8 of this report.

High readings were also recorded within the boiler cupboard. This is likely to be due to either the breakdown of an existing damp-proof barrier or no damp-proof barrier having been installed. There is damp staining to the step within the boiler room and dampness within the walls. This dampness is however, concealed within the cupboard and providing non-perishable items are stored in the area and it is kept well ventilated then the dampness could be controlled to an acceptable level without undertaking any disruptive and costly works. However, if damp-proofing works are required then this will involve removing the heating system which will increase costs.

We were asked to pay particular attention to the inner hallway as there was a damp musky smell detected during a viewing of the property. This was investigated and there was no damp smell at the date and time of inspection. The walls were tested with the aid of a moisture meter at intervals of no more than 0.5 of a metre and throughout the height of the walls and flooring. We are pleased to advise that there was no sign of any dampness in this area at the date and time of inspection. Further enquiries were made of the vendor in this respect and it was reported that the shower trap was cleaned at this time and that it was left empty of water thereafter allowing smells from the foul drainage system to migrate into the accommodation. Externally, it was noted that there is a short piece of plastic soil pipe with an air admittance valve fitted at the top. The toilet was flushed at the time of inspection and there was a light gurgling sound within the sink which would indicate that this air admittance valve has seized. This will now draw the water out of traps as the vacuum is formed from the WC flushing. It would be advisable to

extend the soil vent pipe over the roofline and fit a balloon cage. Alternatively, the air admittance valve should be replaced as a precautionary measure. We refer to our later remarks in Section 10.

ACTION:- You should instruct a reputable damp-proofing contractor to investigate the cause of dampness within the corner of the bedroom and link building and provide quotations for any necessary works. Please also see Section 13.

CONDENSATION & VENTILATION

Whilst there were some minor signs of condensation within the main roof space, no other problems with condensation were noted at the time of inspection. However, condensation may be a problem for one occupier where it was not for a previous one. It can often be controlled by careful management of heating and ventilation rather than any physical works.

Ventilation within the roof space is inadequate. Although constructed in accordance with the practices used at the time of original construction, it is now considered desirable to provide additional ventilation to the roof spaces. This is to reduce the possibility of condensation occurring. Accordingly, it is recommended that further ventilation be provided at eaves level. By doing this, a through flow of air movement will be encouraged.

The easiest way of doing this is to drill a series of holes along the line of the eaves soffit boards and thereafter infilling these with preformed ventilation grills in order to prevent insects and birds gaining access to the roof space. Alternatively, roof slope or ridge ventilators may be installed.

Before carrying out any cutting and drilling operations to the boards, confirmation should be obtained that the PVC is not fitted over the top of an asbestos based material. Cutting and drilling of asbestos should not be undertaken unless experienced in this work. Following the provision of ventilation, loft insulation should be dressed back from the base of the roof slopes to prevent it from blocking the ventilators.

The en-suite bathroom and shower room are fitted with extractor fans which appear to be connected to roof slope vents. The extractor fans operated satisfactorily but it was noted that there are no overruns as would be recommended and improvements are advised.

The kitchen is fitted with a cooker hood which appears to be ventilated to the outside air through visible trunking/pipework in the roof space. This is satisfactory and there is no need for improvement.

As said before, the walls within the link building are formed in a single skin of blockwork and as such will be very prone to condensation dampness. The link building is also single glazed and again heat loss and condensation may be a problem.

6. INSULATION

Insulation within the main roof space is set at an adequate depth. However, it is quite patchy where it has been removed to install and service or install the central heating, the solar panels and downlighters. You are advised to fit heat covers over downlighters in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines and complete the layer of insulation throughout the roof spaces.

The loft access hatches are draught stripped and insulated and this is satisfactory. However, the tunnelling to the Velux roof light over the cloakroom/WC is not insulated. Heat loss and condensation are likely to be encountered and we recommend that this area is insulated with at least 100mm of rigid foam insulation.

The hot water cylinder has been factory pre insulated and this should give good protection against heat loss.

It appears that cavity wall insulation has been introduced since original construction. Your legal adviser should make further enquiries about this with current owners and we refer you to our comments in Section 12. Although we found no evidence of any significant defects, external surfaces should be kept in good condition as damp penetration has been known to occur with this method of insulation in exposed areas. However, as said before there may be breaching through the insulation layer in the right corner of the main bedroom and we advise that the blockwork is opened up and that a barrier is formed between the ground and insulation material. The insulation may also have been saturated through wind driven rain penetration at the top of the walls and further investigations are required.

As said before, the walls within the link building are formed in a single skin of concrete blockwork as is the study/home office. These walls have been dry lined with plasterboard but the wall thicknesses would suggest that this does not contain insulation or a vapour barrier. These walls will be prone to condensation dampness and full consideration should be given to upgrading them with thermal board. The easiest way of doing this is to fit a vertical membrane directly against the wall surfaces, such as a John Newton membrane, to which thermal board could be attached using standard plasterboard adhesive. Window cills and reveals will need to be re-trimmed along with skirting boards and some pipework.

As said before, the aluminium framework is fitted with single glazed panels. These are also likely to be prone to heat loss and condensation problems. Ideally, these windows should be upgraded to incorporate sealed double glazed units. It may be possible to retain the aluminium frames and fit stepped sealed double glazed units within the existing framework. It was also noted that these are not formed in safety glass and they could be a hazard. This is also the case with the access door from the car park.

The flat roof over the study/link is unlikely to be insulated in accordance with current recommendations of Building Regulations. Improvements should be undertaken when the roof is next recovered.

7. TIMBER DEFECTS

Whilst there was no visible evidence of frass (powdered wood) to indicate any wood boring insect activity and no other significant staining to indicate the presence of any wet or dry rot decay, it must be appreciated that insulation and the height and configuration of the roof severely limited our inspection. Some deterioration to the timbers may be found when the roof coverings are stripped back to carry out repairs as discussed in Section 8.

8. THE EXTERIOR

ROOFS

The main roof is of offset pitch design covered with roman style concrete tiles over a cut timber rafter and purlin structure supported on modern prefabricated trusses. The roof structure has been over felted which precluded an inspection of the underside of the tile surfaces or of the battens and we are therefore unable to comment on their condition.

The main roof is set in three principle sections; that over the bedroom wing and the other over the sitting room. There are lead flashings at roof abutments. The roof extends to the rear left over the kitchen and this is of simple pitch design with matching profile coverings to the rest of the roof but with a smooth finish. There are lead valley gutters at roof intersections.

The roofs over the link building is set in two levels which are both covered with mineral felt.

The roof pitches appeared reasonably uniform with no sign of significant sagging or distortion.

The coverings have weathered but are in satisfactory condition for their age with no serious disrepair evident. However, the older tiles are showing signs of erosion and they could/may have become permeable and replacement in the short term may be required and should be anticipated. As we are unable to remove any tiles for an inspection of the undersides, the risk of such defect being present will have to be accepted as part of the property purchase. Our inspection of the tile surfaces was further restricted by a significant layer of moss growth throughout the older roof coverings. Again this is likely to be an ongoing problem as the surfaces of the tiles are very rough which allows moss to gain anchorage. We recommend that the moss growth is carefully cleaned from the roof slopes and ridges and that a detailed inspection of the tile surfaces is undertaken. It is likely that a few will be broken and will need to be replaced but this should not be onerously expensive and is not a matter of great concern.

The solar panels to the front right roof slope appear to have been well installed but again some improvements may be needed when the moss covering is removed and the tiles are fully exposed.

A small number of ridge tiles are dislodged and should be lifted, rebedded and repointed.

The bedding mortar to the right gable end is also deteriorating and will need replacing.

The verge over the lower link flat roof is covered with a PVC panel. This is very poor and it has become detached at the lower section which could allow water penetration into the construction. The felt is also poorly detailed in this area and we refer to our later remarks in this section. We advise that this verge should be improved.

There is a fibrous cement sheet verge under cloak and this may contain asbestos. Only contractors with experience of working with this material should be used.

We were asked to pay particular attention and to measure the angle of the shallower front roof slopes. To this end the pitch of the front roof slope to the right bedroom wing is approximately 18 degrees whilst the pitch to the sitting room is approximately 17 degrees. Our research shows that the minimum pitch for this type of tile is 22 degrees

whilst for the smooth tiles over the kitchen the minimum pitch is 17.5 degrees. Accordingly, and irrespective of the condition of the roof coverings they will fail and need to be stripped off and replaced with modern smooth tiles in the near term.

The flashings at roof abutments are formed in lead and appear in satisfactory order with no evidence of damp penetration internally.

The lead lined valley gutters are satisfactory with no significant defects or damp penetration evident.

The roof has been lined with felt to act as a secondary barrier to rain.

The roof lining where visible, is in satisfactory condition. However, our limited view by removing the leaf guards in the sections of the rear gutter would indicate that a roof trim has been undertaken in recent years. This involves removing the bottom few courses of tiles, repairing the felt and then fitting plastic formers before re-battening and fitting the tiles. This then allows any wind driven rain to rundown the top of the felt and discharge into the guttering system. It is quite possible that not all the edges of the roof have been repaired/improved in this way and accordingly, we recommend that the leaf guards are removed and that the edges of the felt are inspected and repaired if found necessary. As said before in Section 5, we recommend that the front right corner of the roof coverings is stripped back, inspected and repaired if necessary.

The trusses are poorly braced by modern standards and end trusses are not properly secured to the walls which makes the roof more susceptible to movement during high winds. The trusses should be inspected and improved. This is with the exception of the front kitchen roof which appears to be adequately braced.

The roof contains one Velux roof light which is in satisfactory condition where visible.

The link roof is covered in traditional mineral felt. As said before, this is constructed over two levels. The lower roof was in fair condition but the felt is lapped up the walls with no cover flashings installed. This can cause the felt to split through movement due to normal changes in air temperature. We advise that when the roof is next recovered, that a detail is formed whereby the roof can move independently of the walls. In the short term, a cover flashing should be installed and the detailing around the verge board improved as previously discussed.

The flashings at the flat roof abutment and the wall of the study were in fair condition however, the detailing in the corner at the junction of the kitchen roof and glazing over the steps of the link is very poor. This has been improved using self-adhesive flashing (flash band) which is a temporary form of repair. We have been told by the vendor that there has been a problem with water penetration in this area but that this was resolved by the replacement of the window and tray in the study. We are pleased to advise that there was no sign of any water penetration at the date and time of inspection but we do advise that this area needs improvement.

The upper flat roof was also inspected and this revealed some bubbling/delaminating of the felt coverings around the edges. The edge of this roof will need to be stripped off and the felt replaced.

It should be noted that, compared with traditional coverings such as tiles and slates, most felt roofs have a typical life of 10-15 years. They are also prone to sudden failure and leakage. Periodic re-covering will therefore be necessary. When this is undertaken, the

supporting structure may also need some attention.

ACTION:- You should obtain quotations for the replacement of the main roof coverings. Please also see Section 13.

CHIMNEYS

The property has one chimney stack which is built in rendered masonry.

There is also a steel flue above the roofline which serves the wood burning stove in the main sitting room.

The stack appears in fair structural order but some repairs are needed.

There are cracks throughout the render coat and this should be stripped back to the masonry and re-rendered. When these works are carried out, we advise that the flashings are also inspected and improved. A bell mouth detail should also be formed over the top of the cover flashings to reduce the risk of water penetration and improve the durability of the flashings.

At the top of the stack there is a gas flue. According to the vendor, this did serve the central heating boiler that was positioned in the kitchen. This is now redundant and the flue should be properly capped off and ventilated.

The steel flue appears quite new and was in satisfactory condition. The flashings around the flue were also satisfactory and there was no sign of any damp penetration internally.

GUTTERS & DOWNPIPES

The property is served by plastic gutters and downpipes.

These appear generally in satisfactory condition. However, some localised repairs and improvements are needed.

The guttering needs cleaning through to reduce the risk of rainwater penetrating internally.

As said before, the leaf guard should be removed and cleaned. The guttering system should also be cleaned and flushed through. As said before, we advise that the edge of the roofing felt is fully inspected when it is exposed during these works and that any repairs/improvements are carried out at this time.

The discharge from a number of downpipes are fairly indirect over the drains and we recommend that 45 degree ends are fitted where necessary.

The rear right downpipe is connected into two water butts. This arrangement appears reasonably satisfactory but we do advise that an overflow should be installed to the water butts that can be configured to discharge into an open drain that is close by.

The downpipe from the left side discharges onto the ground and this may cause localised flooding and damp problems. The downpipe should be connected directly into the underground rainwater drainage system.

Gutters and downpipes carry many hundreds of litres of water during wet weather. Their joints and end stops are particularly prone to failure as are the outfalls which can be easily blocked by leaves and other debris. All rainwater fittings should therefore be

regularly checked for defects in order to prevent leakages and spillages which could lead to damp internally.

MAIN WALLS

The walls which are approximately 280mm thick, have a masonry inner leaf and an outer skin of rendered masonry with the two leaves being separated by an air gap. There are blocked up windows to the left and front of the building. According to the vendor, these are in-filled with timber framework which is lined with plasterboard internally and clad externally either with PVC lapboarding or rendered weatherboard. We have also been told that these sections have been insulated as would be recommended.

As said before, the walls to the link extension are formed in a single skin of rendered blockwork and as such will be particularly prone to heat loss and condensation. We advise that these walls should be upgraded by the installation of a vapour barrier and thermal board.

The render finishes are in acceptable condition for the age of the property.

The window cills are formed in PVC. We are pleased to advise that these were in reasonable condition and have an adequate projection away from the walls.

You should note the following :-

The cavity walls of this property are formed in two leaves which are usually held together with metal wall ties. The metal ties used in properties built before the early 1980s were prone to corrosion which, if significant, could lead to structural movement. However, no signs of wall tie failure were found and when considering the property's construction and the local environment, we consider the risk of such failure to be small. No further action is necessary at this stage although it is advisable to have the walls periodically checked, every 5 - 10 years by a registered cavity wall tie replacement company, or a chartered building surveyor.

We have been told by the vendor that the property was constructed in 1968 and was extended to the rear approximately 10 years ago. It is important that these dates are confirmed to ensure that the property was constructed outside of the mundic block period. In the absence of these confirmations, then we would advise that the property is tested for mundic in accordance with current published guidelines.

WINDOWS, EXTERNAL JOINERY & DECORATIONS

These are made of plastic and are double glazed. The link windows and door are however aluminium framed and single glazed.

Generally, these are in fair order for the age of the property with no significant defects apparent.

The large areas of glazing in this property may constitute a significant safety hazard. The glass is also close to floor level and thus there is an increased risk of injury.

The property is fitted with a mixture of plastic and aluminium external doors. The aluminium patio doors operated satisfactorily. It was also noted that there is a dead bolt installed to improve security as these type of sliding mechanisms can easily be lifted off the rails to gain access to the property. This arrangement is satisfactory.

Kitemarks were noted to the large areas of glazing within the patio and other doors which

would indicate that they are formed in safety glass and we have assumed that this is the case.

The double glazing has been in for some time and edge seals may well be reaching the end of their serviceable life. As these start to fail, misting of the double glazing occurs and thermal insulation is reduced. You should plan for replacing the glazing in the near future. To this end, we noted some deterioration to a sealed double glazed unit within the small bedroom and some staining to the disruptive glazing within the en-suite bathroom and shower room. It is likely that these units will need to be replaced in the near term.

As said before, the link windows and door are single glazed and there was no sign of any British Safety Kitemarks. Our view would also indicate that this is 4mm tinted glass. This could be a significant hazard and we advise that the glazing is upgraded. As said before, this could be done with stepped sealed double glazed units fitted within existing casements which would both improve the thermal efficiency of the building and safety of its visitors and occupants.

The PVC fascias, verge and soffit boards all appeared in satisfactory condition. However, bearing in mind that the original fascia timbers may have been overclad with the plastic sections, some hidden decay may be discovered in roof timbers upon closer inspection when annual maintenance is carried out. Additional repairs/replacements may well be needed.

External decorations are predominantly formed in low maintenance PVC and we are pleased to advise that these were in satisfactory condition. However, they should be regularly cleaned to avoid staining and discolouration.

The external walls which are masonry painted were in fair condition. However, it was noted that this is bubbling up on the right side. This can trap moisture into the construction and we recommend that the decorative finishes are scraped back to the masonry and that this wall is redecorated. Other areas may also need attention. It was also noted that this appears to have happened before as there are indications that areas have been scraped off previously and redecorated in this way. Improvements are needed.

ACTION:- You should instruct a reputable glazier to upgrade glazing within the link building. Please also see Section 13.

OTHER

There are no other significant external matters that require comment.

9. THE INTERIOR

ROOF SPACE

The roof space over the bedroom wing was entered through a hatch in the inner hall ceiling. The roof space over the reception wing was entered through a hatch in the kitchen ceiling.

We refer to our remarks in Section 5, 6 and 8.

CEILINGS

The property has plasterboard ceilings. These have painted finishes.

These are in serviceable structural order with no serious defects evident. However, there are a number of shrinkage/differential movement cracks present. These are superficial in nature and only filling and decoration is required.

INTERNAL WALLS & PARTITIONS

The property has a combination of solid masonry and plasterboard lined timber framed internal walls. Some of the inside faces of the outside walls have been dry lined with plasterboard. These have mainly paper-lined finishes.

The walls are in good structural order with no evidence of any significant disrepair.

The plaster finishes are generally in satisfactory condition. However, there are a number of superficial shrinkage cracks which require filling and decoration.

The original rear wall has been removed when the kitchen extension was constructed. There was no sign of any defect or shortcoming but this work would have required building regulation approval and we refer to Section 12.

CHIMNEY BREASTS, FLUES & FIREPLACES

The property has one fireplace. This is a wall mounted wood burning stove. The stove was installed by the current owners and HETAS engineer's installation certificates may be available; we refer to our remarks in Section 12.

The original chimney breast is disused and now concealed in the corner of the kitchen. The disused flue should be exposed and ventilated to prevent condensation from occurring.

FLOORS

The ground floor is of solid concrete construction and presumed to comprise a damp-proof membrane which has been surfaced with a screed. The kitchen floor is likely to incorporate insulation.

We are pleased to advise that the floors were reasonably level with no sign of significant heave or settlement. However, we have been told that some old pipework remains underneath the solid floors and repairs will be difficult and disruptive should leakages occur.

As said before, there was some dampness within the boiler cupboard and it is also likely to occur in the steps between the upper and lower levels within the link building. We are pleased to advise however, that there was no dampness within the steps at the date and time of inspection. That said, some dampness was recorded to the plinth that is visible within the boiler cupboard and some damp-proofing works may be needed in this area.

Where visible, floor finishes are in serviceable condition.

JOINERY

The internal joinery is in satisfactory condition, although some minor making good will be needed prior to redecoration.

The internal doors have suffered some wear and tear. They do not fit perfectly but otherwise they appear to be satisfactory for their purpose. There were visible Kitemarks on the doors into the sitting room and this would indicate that the glazing is formed in safety glass.

The fitted cupboards and wardrobes are of fair quality and considered to be adequate for their purpose. As said before, some dampness was recorded within the boiler cupboard and this area will not be suitable for the storage or perishable items.

The kitchen is equipped with an adequate range of modern worktop and storage facilities, which should suffice, subject to personal taste.

The kitchen fittings include built-in cooking appliances. No comments can be given as to the condition or safety of these appliances.

The stairs between the upper and lower levels within the link building were in satisfactory condition. The hand railing was also satisfactory. We do refer to our earlier remarks in Section 8 in respect of the glazing on the side not being formed in safety glass and this could be a significant hazard in this area.

DECORATIONS

Internal decorations are generally clean and in presentable order.

Some filling and patching may be necessary when owner's furnishings and fittings are removed.

OTHER

The property has a burglar alarm. An automatic cut-out device should be in place. We cannot comment upon the satisfactory operation of any of the alarms that are installed. For safety and security reasons you must ensure that all alarms are operating properly before occupation. Your legal adviser should also check with current owners for any service records and we refer to our comments in Section 12.

Most properties of this age and type are likely to contain some asbestos based materials in one form or another. However, the presence of asbestos would not normally constitute a health hazard unless the material which contains the asbestos is disturbed, drilled or damaged. When maintenance work, building improvements or alterations are undertaken, you should therefore be mindful of the possibility of asbestos and the need for a licensed contractor to remove and dispose of any asbestos found.

10. THE SERVICES

The main service installations within this property have been the subject of a purely visual inspection only and have not been formally traced or tested by us in any way. The information provided within this part of the report is purely for your initial advice and consideration only. Should you wish formal service tests to be undertaken we would be pleased to arrange this on your behalf and upon receipt of your formal instructions. However we do make the following initial observations at this time.

ELECTRICITY

The meter and consumer unit can be found at high level within the kitchen.

Some of the cabling is underneath the insulation in the roof space and this could result in overheating and deterioration. The cabling therefore must be relocated above the insulation layer. The downlighters are also covered with insulation. We recommend that heat covers are installed in accordance with manufacturer's guidelines.

We understand from vendor that the system was rewired recently. Your legal adviser should confirm this with the current owners and we refer you to our comments in Section 12.

The electrical supply is supplemented by solar collectors on the roof. Your legal adviser should check with current owners for the existence and validity of any contracts and guarantees in respect of this installation and if the panels are wholly owned or rented by the current owner of the property.

When considering the lack of any recent testing it would be prudent to have the system checked and tested before exchange of contracts by an approved electrical engineer registered with either the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting, (NICEIC), (www.niceic.com/) or with the Electrical Contractors Association, (ECA), (www.eca.co.uk/).

ACTION:- You should instruct a competent registered person to test the electrical installation and provide quotations for any necessary upgrading work. Please also see Section 13.

GAS

Natural gas is connected and the meter is located in an outside meter box.

When considering the lack of a recent test the system should checked before occupation and use.

ACTION:- You should instruct a competent registered person to test the gas supply and distribution system in this property. Please also see Section 13.

WATER (including Sanitary Fittings)

The property is connected to the mains. The outside stopcock is in the drive by the vehicular access gate. A water meter has been fitted.

We have been told by the vendor that the underground water supply pipework is formed in steel. This has failed in the past and will be prone to failure in the future. We understand that suitable insurance policies are available from South West Water and ideally this should be confirmed and a suitable policy taken out prior to exchange of contracts. We advise that the underground pipework will eventually need to be replaced.

The internal stopcock could not be found and current owners should advise you on its location for maintenance purposes.

There is no water storage facility as the property is served direct from the mains. If the supply is interrupted or broken, then no water will be available for cooking, washing etc.

The water supply pipework appeared in satisfactory order. We have not carried out any tests on the system and therefore we cannot comment on the operation or serviceability of any of its components.

The Sanitary Fittings:

There are a range of modern sanitary fittings in this property.

These are in fair order with no obvious visible defects. We have not carried out any tests on the fittings and therefore we cannot comment on their operation or serviceability. However, the seal around the bath is deteriorating and should be replaced.

Shower trays often leak and seals should be checked and renewed regularly.

HEATING

Central heating and hot water is provided by the gas fired boiler which is located in a cupboard in the link building. The system appears quite modern and was in visually satisfactory condition.

The system was not operating at the time of inspection and we therefore cannot comment on its effectiveness.

The pipework and radiators appeared in satisfactory condition where visible. You are advised that TRVs were not checked but these can be temperamental.

As mentioned before, hot water is provided by the central heating boiler and is then stored within a cylinder in a cupboard in the link building.

The cylinder is covered by an insulation jacket which restricted our inspection. However, it appears in satisfactory condition where visible with no obvious signs of leakage or other major defect.

The system appeared in acceptable condition with no obvious significant defects. We have not carried out any tests on the hot water provision and therefore cannot comment on its efficiency.

Hot water is also provided by shower unit in the bath and shower room. The electric showers should be checked before use.

We are not aware of any service agreement for the central heating boiler and your legal adviser should check the service records with the present owners. We refer you to our advice in Section 12. If no servicing has been carried out within the last 12 months then this should be undertaken prior to occupation and use.

ACTION: You should arrange for the central heating system to be inspected if servicing has not been carried out within the last 12 months. Please also see Section 13.

DRAINAGE

Rainwater Drainage:

Without extensive exposure work we cannot confirm the type or layout of the underground rainwater drainage system.

The rainwater downpipe to the left discharges onto the ground which could increase the risk of damp penetration. The downpipe should be connected into the underground system where possible.

Standing water was noted on the drive. We recommend that ACO drains are fitted across the base of the drive and that these are connected into the underground rainwater drainage system.

Foul Drainage:

The property is believed to be connected to the main sewer. Your legal adviser should make the usual checks in respect of the drainage system and we refer you to our recommendations in Section 12.

Where access could be obtained, the underground drains were found to be clear and free from any serious blockage. The underground pipe runs appear to have minimal falls which could result in more frequent blockages. Improving this arrangement would be an expensive and disruptive operation and in our opinion, would not be cost effective at the present time. Maintenance costs are likely to be higher than normal. Nevertheless, some repairs are needed to the chambers to reduce the possibility of blockages in the future.

A “Look See” CCTV scan was undertaken. This confirmed that the underground pipework is formed in a system of sectional salt glazed pipework. The pipework was in generally satisfactory condition but there is some misalignment and washed out joints present. It may be a wise precaution to have this pipework lined directly behind and to the right of the property. The CCTV scan was only undertaken to the area of the dropdown where there is a cover by the ponds in the lower garden. Whilst there was no sign of any blockage at the time of inspection, some defects may be present in the lower sections of pipework.

As said before, the soil vent pipe that is positioned to the rear of the property is fitted with an air admittance valve. It is quite possible that this is defective and we recommend that it is replaced. Alternatively, the soil pipe could be extended to vent at least 900mm above the roofline.

We have assumed that there is an internal air admittance valve fitted within the en-suite bathroom.

OTHER

There are no other matters that require comment.

11. SITE & OUTBUILDINGS

The garage to the rear of the property is built in blockwork with a felt covered roof.

The walls are formed in a single course of concrete blockwork. It was noted that there are no supporting piers and improvements may be required. We are pleased to advise however, that there were no visible cracks or other distortions to the masonry that would indicate any current significant defect.

The flat roof covering was visually in satisfactory condition. However, we noted that it is leaking in the rear corner which is evidenced by damp to supporting joists. Some repairs/improvements to the roof coverings are required to prevent further deterioration.

The garage flat and felted roof will have a typical life of between 10-15 years. It will be prone to sudden failure and leakage. Periodic re-covering and repair will therefore be necessary. When this is undertaken, the supporting structure may also need some attention.

The electrical services appear not to have been tested recently and, should be checked and tested thoroughly before occupation and use.

The timber shed that is positioned directly behind the garage was locked at the time of inspection. However, it appeared in good condition with no significant defect apparent.

The aluminium framed greenhouse positioned to the rear of the property was also seen to be in satisfactory condition. Kitemarks on the glazing would indicate that these are formed in safety glass.

The siting of the upper pond/water feature may be hazardous and you should consider providing some protection to stop young children and animals from falling in. The lower pond is fenced off but we advise that the fencing is quite low and could be climbed by young children and some improvements are recommended.

There are a number of very large trees within the boundaries of this property. The trees should be regularly maintained but are likely to have Tree Preservation Orders in place. We recommend that legal advisers make further enquiries about this. We also advise that an Arboriculturalist is instructed to inspect and advise on current and future maintenance cycles.

As said before, drainage to the surface driveway needs attention.

The paths around the property are uneven and should be taken up and relayed.

The patios to the front of the property were in satisfactory condition.

The steps to the left side were also in satisfactory condition but should be used with care.

The rendered retaining walls to the rear of the property were in good condition. It was noted that there are weep holes at the base of the walls which would indicate that ground drainage is satisfactory.

The stone walls to the front of the property were also seen to be reasonably plumb or lent backwards into the bank and this is satisfactory; no works are considered necessary.

12. COMMENTS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISER

TENURE

Your legal adviser should confirm the following:-

The property is freehold and free from any encumbrances.

That the solar panels are owned and not on a lease.

REGULATIONS

Your legal adviser should check whether local authority notifications and approvals for the kitchen extension, cavity wall insulation treatment, solar collectors on the roof and installation of the log fire have been obtained and that all statutory inspections have been made and appropriate completion certificates issued. If regulations have been breached or work carried out without the necessary approvals and inspections, then extensive and costly alteration works may well be needed to ensure compliance.

Your legal adviser should check and advise on the consequences of the property being located within a conservation area as a number of special planning controls may apply.

GUARANTEES

Your legal adviser should check for the existence, validity and transferability of guarantees and certificates for the cavity insulation treatment, the electrical system, the gas installation and appliances and solar collectors on the roof which should be assigned to you as a new owner of the property. The extent of any work should also be confirmed.

Your legal adviser should also establish in the pre-contract enquiries the existence and validity of any service agreements or engineer's certificates for the central heating system, burglar alarm and solar collectors with this property. The date of original installation, the name of the service company and when testing/servicing was last carried out, should also be determined.

OTHER

Your legal adviser should make further enquiries and advise you on the following:-

Your obligations and costs for the upkeep and repair of the access road to the property.

If the main sewer has been adopted by the local authority.

The ownership and obligations for maintenance and extent and position of the property's boundaries.

The likelihood that the property is located near to, or over, a landfill site and what precautions, if any, have been taken either at the time, or subsequent to original construction to ameliorate any possible effects.

The availability of radon information from the present owner and/or the possibility of negotiating a radon bond, should this be thought necessary.

Whether the property will be affected by mining works or has benefited from remedial works in the past as a result of mining excavations. We strongly recommend that a mining report is obtained for the property.

ACTION: You should immediately pass a copy of this report to your legal advisers with the request that, in addition to the necessary standard searches and enquiries, they check and confirm each and every one of the items and assumptions referred to above.

Please let us know if any of this information is found to be inaccurate as this might change the advice given in this report.

13. SUMMARY OF CONDITION & RECOMMENDATIONS

If, after reading and considering this report, you wish to conclude a contract for purchase of the property, you are advised to send a copy of the report as soon as possible to your legal advisers. Please draw their attention to the whole of Section 12.

URGENT REPAIRS

We recommend that you should treat the following matters – all discussed earlier in the report – as urgent repairs, to be remedied as soon as possible after purchase:-

ACTION:- You should instruct a reputable glazier to upgrade glazing within the link building.

MATTERS REQUIRING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

We recommend that you obtain further specialist advice on the following prior to entering into a legal agreement:-

ACTION:- You should instruct a reputable damp-proofing contractor to investigate the cause of dampness within the corner of the bedroom and link building and provide quotations for any necessary works.

ACTION:- You should obtain quotations for the replacement of the main roof coverings.

ACTION:- You should instruct a competent registered person to test the electrical installation and provide quotations for any necessary upgrading work.

ACTION:- You should instruct a competent registered person to test the gas supply and distribution system in this property.

ACTION: You should arrange for the central heating system to be inspected if servicing has not been carried out within the last 12 months.

You are most strongly advised to obtain competitive quotations from reputable contractors before you exchange contracts. As soon as you receive the quotations and report for the work specified above, and also the responses from your legal advisers, we will be pleased to advise you whether or not they would cause us to change the advice or valuation which we give in this report.

We must advise you, however, that if you should decide to exchange contracts without obtaining this information, you would have to accept the risk that adverse factors might come to light in the future.

MAINTENANCE ISSUES

You will note that we have referred to a number of other defects within our report, all of which will require attention either now or in the foreseeable future. It is recommended that you obtain estimates and reports, as appropriate, prior to exchange of contracts in order that you can budget for future expenditure.

The following repairs are brought to your attention to be dealt with in due course:-

5. Dampness, Condensation & Ventilation:

Instruct a reputable competent registered person to refit or replace bathroom and shower room extractor fans to comply with current recommendations of Building Regulations.

Improve ventilation within the main roof space.

6. Insulation:

Complete the insulation layer throughout the roof spaces.

Insulate Velux roof light tunnel.

Upgrade insulation and ventilation within the flat roof over the study and link building when they are next recovered to comply with current recommendations of Building Regulations.

Insulate single skin walls including a vapour barrier.

As said before, we advise that the cavity to the front right corner is opened up and that the cavity fill is removed at the lower level. It is common practice in these cases to install PVC brushes like those fitted within the guttering system to keep the insulation layer off of the ground to prevent bridging. This is unlikely to be the case within these walls.

8. The Exterior – Roofs:

Clean and inspect roof coverings.

Repoint ridge tiles as necessary.

Repoint verge tiles as necessary.

The verge detailing to the rear left should be improved.

Carry out a roof edge overhaul if necessary after a full inspection has been undertaken.

Fit cover flashings over flat roof abutments over the link flat roof.

Improve flashing detail in the rear left corner of the lower link flat roof.

Repair upper flat roof where it has bubbled up.

8. The Exterior – Chimneys:

Hack off render and re-render.

Cap and ventilate disused flue.

8. The Exterior – Gutters & Downpipes:

Remove leaf guards. Clean and flush through gutter and downpipe system.

Clean leaf guards before reinstalling.

Fit angle pieces on the base of downpipes where necessary.

Connect downpipes into the underground drainage system where necessary.

Fit overflow to water butts.

8. The Exterior – Windows, External Joinery & Decorations:

Upgrade glazing to the link building with safety glass. Ideally these should be stepped sealed double glazed units.

Anticipate replacement of the double glazed unit within the small bedroom and double glazed units within the bath and shower room.

Anticipate ongoing replacement of sealed double glazed units.

Scrape off bubbled paint to walls and redecorate.

9. The Interior – Chimney Breasts, Flues & Fireplaces:

Sweep and check flue before use.

Open up and ventilate disused chimney breast.

10. The Services – Electricity:

Fit heat covers over downlighters in accordance with manufacturers guidelines.

10. The Services – Gas:

Label exposed gas supply pipework within the roof void.

10. The Services – Drainage:

Fit ACO drains across the lower sections of the drive.

Consider lining underground foul pipework to the rear and right side of the property.

Carry out repairs to inspection chambers as necessary.

Replace air admittance valve or extend soil pipe over the roofline.

11. Site & Outbuildings:

Repair garage roof.

Instruct an Arboriculturalist to inspect and advise on husbandry of the large trees within the boundaries of this property.

Other than the normal maintenance work required for a property of this age and type, there are no other significant matters to report.

14. VALUATION

In accordance with our Terms and Conditions of Engagement the Market Valuation is not included. This is an additional service which has not been requested.

15. BUILDINGS INSURANCE REINSTATEMENT COST

We would recommend a reinstatement cost assessment for buildings insurance purposes, based on present day reinstatement costs in its present form, with due allowance for demolition, site clearance and professional fees, excluding VAT (except on fees) in the sum of XXX.

The estimated external area of the accommodation is approximately XXXm^2 or thereby.

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Colin Cockram, BSc (Hons), DipCSM, MRICS, DipNDEA

Name and Address of Surveyor's Organisation:
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RICS Membership Number:
1107899

Date of Report:

