

BUILDING SURVEY

Name of client:

Mr and Mrs J Oliver

Address of property to be inspected:

**4 The Grove
Highgate
London
N6 6JU**



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1.0 Instructions

We refer to your instructions requesting a Building Survey Report on the property known as 4 The Grove, Highgate. In accordance with the Standard Survey Limitations which were emailed to you on 22 June 2015 and are annexed to this report, we have now had the opportunity to make our inspection and have pleasure in reporting as follows.

2.0 Scope of survey

The purpose of the inspection was to identify any defects or other issues which might affect your decision on the purchase of the property. Our report will therefore not refer to minor defects and blemishes which are not considered to be significant for the purposes of this exercise.

The house and attached annexe were occupied and furnished at the time of our inspection and we could not therefore move heavy furniture or remove floor coverings, etc. Externally, the buildings were inspected from ground level and accessible roof areas only, with the aid of binoculars where necessary.

We have assumed that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the building and that the inspection of those parts which cannot be seen would not reveal any material deficiencies or defects.

As agreed, we did not arrange for any specialist inspections or tests of the mechanical and electrical services. The drainage systems were inspected by raising manhole covers where possible, without the benefit of a CCTV survey or water pressure test.

We are required by our Insurers to state that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

We must stress that we have not carried out any investigation to determine whether high alumina cement was used during the construction of the building inspected and we are therefore unable to report that the property is free from risk in this respect. Neither have we made any investigations concerning the presence of radon gas in the area nor whether the land has been affected by landfill operations or contamination.

We must also stress that we have not carried out any investigation to determine whether asbestos was used in the construction. We are therefore unable to report that the property is free from risk in this respect.

This report is made solely for the person to whom it is addressed and no liability can be accepted to any third parties for the whole or part of its contents.

3.0 Date of inspection and weather

Our inspection was carried out on 24 June 2015 in fine weather conditions.

4.0 Brief description of the property

The property is a large, terraced house built circa 1688 on lower ground, ground and two upper storeys with a later three storey side extension which now forms the annexe to the main house. Many years ago, a narrow two storey timber framed addition was also added to the north side of the main house. The elevations are of brickwork below pitched, clay tiled roofs with projecting dormer windows to the upper storey of the main house.

We understand that the vendors' family refurbished the house when purchased about 40 years ago and some updating and further refurbishment has been carried out over the years including the refurbishment of the annexe last year. The house is now occupied by younger members of the family and their friends on an informal basis.

The extensive gardens are a feature of the property and include three storage vaults behind the retaining wall where the gardens change level. In the lower garden there is a modern, timber framed greenhouse.

The site slopes downward from road level with the retaining walls in line with the front wall of the house and then again at the change of level in the gardens. The Grove is a quiet, tree lined residential street with a small park on the opposite side although the road beyond carries a considerable volume of traffic.

Redevelopment work is currently underway on land adjacent to the lower part of the garden and we understand that this includes the reconstruction of the retaining wall along the east boundary.

The house was listed Grade II* in 1954 as being of architectural or historic interest. The description accompanying the listing refers also to the railings, wall and lamp along the frontage and, although the interior was not inspected at the time, the good original panelling and staircase are also noted.

Floor plans taken from the agent's sales brochure are included at Appendix A for reference. For the purposes of our report we will use the room names indicated on these plans, and the house is assumed to face east.

Photographs taken at the time of our inspection are attached at Appendix B.

5.0 Legal matters

The advice given in this report is prepared on the assumption that the property is freehold and offered for sale with vacant possession. It is further assumed that the property is not subject to any restrictive covenants. Further that all replies to the normal solicitor's pre contract searches and enquiries are satisfactory and the property is not subject to any notices, orders or other matters which could affect its value.

We would point out that we have not carried out either site or document research into whether the property stands on contaminated land. We would recommend that the purchaser satisfy himself by investigation with the Local Authority. We have made no enquiries concerning the boundaries or ownership of the site, surface water problems and rights of way. Neither have enquiries been made of the appropriate authorities in relation to town planning, road improvements or similar matters, as all of these are normally dealt with by your solicitor when formal searches are made prior to a legal commitment to purchase.

It is recommended that your solicitor pays particular attention to the following items:

- 5.1 Local Authority Planning, Listed Building and Building Control approvals in respect of any alterations and refurbishments carried out in recent years. As far as we are aware, such works have been minimal.
- 5.2 Guarantees, if any, in respect of timber treatment, damp proofing or similar works carried out in the past.
- 5.3 Your liability for the maintenance of the various boundaries which include, we assume, the substantial retaining wall which extends along the west boundary of adjoining property to the south.
- 5.4 Details of any agreement in respect of the rebuilding of the retaining wall along the west side of the lower garden.

You will no doubt be aware that Listing very much restricts your right to make alterations or carry out major repairs to the property without obtaining Listed Building Consent from the Local Planning Authority. The Listing is likely to include the garden walls and other features which are within the curtilage of the property. In considering any application for Listed Building Consent, the Local Authority will have regard to the higher grade of listing (II*) and alterations to

original features, including interior panelling etc, are likely to be resisted. If consent is granted for alterations or major repairs, the Local Authority will require that these are made using traditional materials and techniques to match the original construction, which can significantly increase the cost.

6.0 Summary of condition

This an attractive house of substantial, traditional construction although it has suffered in recent years from some unsympathetic work including the very heavy repointing on the front elevation and the addition of a large projecting dormer to the roof at the rear. As we would expect in a building of this age, there has been significant structural movement in the past, particularly settlement of the internal structures resulting in sloping floors and distorted door openings. However, the majority of this movement is undoubtedly historic and there is little evidence of any recent progression.

The maintenance and upgrading of the house over the past 40 years has been undertaken on a piecemeal basis and a considerable amount of work is now required to bring the house up to the standard you would expect for a property of this value and in this location.

In planning for the future maintenance of the house the following items will need to be considered:-

- An overhaul of the tiled roof slopes although complete stripping and retiling does not appear to be required at this stage.
- The relining of the front, rear and central gutters, preferably using lead to replace the existing zinc, asphalt and lead materials which are in poor condition.
- The bitumen felt covering to the large dormer on the rear elevation will need to be replaced in the near future, including additional thermal insulation.

- A very thorough overhaul of the windows and external doors – this generally applies to the main part of the house as the annexe is in better condition.
- Local repairs to the timber cladding at the north end of the house where some decay was noted.
- Remedial work to eliminate some rising and penetrating dampness in various parts of the lower ground floor.
- The replacement of the electrical and mechanical installations to appropriate standards although some components could perhaps be reused, for instance the relatively new gas fired boilers.
- The refitting of the kitchen and some of the bathrooms to appropriate standards.
- Specialist removal of the asbestos lagging to some of the pipework in the front roof space and checking for asbestos materials elsewhere.
- Internal redecoration of the main house, together with some external redecoration following the overhaul of the windows and doors.
- Clearance of the blockage in the main foul drain run from the house followed by a CCTV survey to reveal any defects in the pipework.
- In the longer term, the corroded steel beams at the entrances to the three garden vaults will need to be replaced, preferably using reinforced concrete or galvanised steel lintels to provide a longer service life.

7.0 Detailed building surveyor's report

7.1 Chimney stacks

The house has three main chimney stacks, one on the south party wall and two further chimneys on the north side of the main house (photos 1-3). There is also a short, lower chimney beside the main north west stack. The chimneys are of brickwork construction with traditional clay pots and the junctions with the roof slopes are weathered with lead flashings or mortar fillets. Many of the chimney pots have been capped with lead or tile fittings and one of the pots, assumed to

serve the drawing room fireplace, is fitted with a modern weather cap with bird guarding.

The chimneys are all in fair condition and we understand that the north west chimney was rebuilt a few years ago. The flashings and mortar fillets appear to be sound although mortar fillets are less reliable than lead.

The majority of the flues within the various chimneys are now redundant and any chimney pots which remain open should be fitted with ventilated caps to reduce the entry of rainwater. Flues which are used for coal or woodburning should be swept annually as a matter of routine maintenance. None of the flues were tested at the time of our visit.

7.2 Roofs

The roof over the original part of the house is arranged in a double pitch with a central valley discharging at the north end. The outer roof slopes are clad with handmade, plain clay tiles but modern concrete plain tiles have been used to retille the inner slopes (photos 4, 5 and 7). Concrete tiles have a long service life but are somewhat out of keeping on a listed building. The tiling was relaid, probably 40 or 50 years ago, and there is an underlining of reinforced bitumen felt to provide a secondary line of defence against water penetration. The tiling is generally in good condition although a minor overhaul of the clay tiling is required to replace a few broken or delaminating tiles, together with the occasional cracked ridge tile. We also noted that the mortar fillet which weathers the abutment between the rear roof slope with the south party wall has pulled away from the brickwork slightly and this should be renewed or, preferably, replaced with a lead flashing.

The original dormer windows in the front and rear roof slopes are clad with lead which is of considerable age and has been patched in the past. Nevertheless, some service life remains subject to a few minor repairs to fixings etc.

At the rear, a large dormer construction has been added in recent times with hung clay tiles to the sides and bitumen felt to the flat roof (photo 6). Bitumen felt is a relatively short life material and is showing signs of deterioration. The edge detailing is poor with no drip to throw the water clear of the fascia boards. In the near future a new covering to this dormer will be required and the decayed fascia boards will have to be replaced at the same time. Thermal insulation to this roof is likely to be minimal and, when the covering is replaced, the opportunity should be taken to upgrade the installation to current standards.

The central valley has been relined with zinc which would have replaced the original lead (photo 7). The zinc has been laid in a continuous sheet with welded joints and is now quite badly buckled from thermal movement and also beginning to develop pin holes near the access door from the front loft. Although the zinc could be repaired and remain weathertight for a few more years, we would recommend that it is replaced in the near future, preferably using lead. However, if lead is used, the valley boarding will need to be relaid to allow for the stepped joints at intervals which are required in leadwork to allow for thermal movement. If properly detailed, lead has an almost indefinite service life.

Access to the front and rear lofts is provided by trap doors above the second floor landing. A modern, sliding aluminium ladder is fitted to the front hatch but we would recommend that the very rickety timber ladder fitted to the rear is replaced. The roof structures are typical of the period with heavy trusses at each end and in the centre which support purlins and rafters. The trusses are of softwood but the rafters are a mixture of oak and softwood, jointed at the top in the traditional way without the use of a ridge board. As we would expect in a building of this age, some deflection has occurred over the years and it is apparent that the rear roof has spread slightly allowing a noticeable bulge to develop at eaves level. However, in recent years additional ties and struts have been added and we believe these are adequate to prevent further movement (photos 12 and 13). Our inspection of the roof timbers was somewhat limited by stored effects, particularly in the rear loft. Boarding has been laid over the joists for storage purposes, some very old together with modern chipboard. Most of the

roof timbers show signs of woodboring insect infestations but, where exposed, we found no evidence of any recent activity. Given the age of the building, the damage from woodborers is not particularly severe and sufficient strength remains in the timbers.

The second floor ceilings have a thin layer of glass fibre quilt for thermal insulation and this should be upgraded where possible to current standards to reduce heat loss. As far as we could see, there is no insulating quilt between the rafters where these form the sloping ceilings below.

As with many old houses, mice are no doubt a problem from time to time and we noted trays of bait in both lofts.

The lower roof over the annexe is also clad with plain clay tiles and these are in good condition with only one broken tile currently needing to be replaced on the front slope (photo 11). The lead flashings at abutments also appear to be sound. At the south end, some of the ridge tiles have recently been relaid or repointed and the finish is poor although no immediate attention appears to be required. There is no access to the roof space above the annexe except for a small space at the front, accessed via a hatch above the staircase. The roof here is clearly later than the main roof with sawn softwood rafters below close softwood boarding. Again, the tiles have been relaid in the past over a layer of bitumen felt. From the exterior, there is nothing to suggest that the roof structure is in any way defective but we could not check the amount of thermal insulation provided, if any, above the bedroom on the second floor.

There are two, separate roofs over the small timber framed extension on the north side of the main house, comprising a lean-to, clay tiled area and a flat roof at a higher level covered with zinc (photo 8). From the roof valley above, a limited inspection of these roofs could be undertaken and the zinc appears to be in fair condition. However, there are a number of broken tiles to be replaced on the lean-to roof.

The roof over the boiler room is a lean-to construction with bitumen felt covering, incorporating a simple rooflight with wired glazing. The mineral surfaced bitumen felt is in fair condition but the abutments have been sealed with a self-adhesive foil which can only be considered as a temporary measure. Although satisfactory at present, the foil should eventually be replaced with lead. The rafters below the decking to this roof appear to be sound.

The narrow extension to the ground floor of the annexe appears to have a concrete roof finished with a mortar screed over slates. We assume that the slate forms the waterproof layer although this could not be verified. There is minor damage where the slate protrudes at the edge but, nevertheless, the roof appears to be sound with no evidence of any dampness below. If water penetration is a problem in the future, the screed could be overlaid with lead.

7.3 Rainwater goods

The majority of the rainwater goods comprise deep, lead lined gutters which are concealed behind the cornices at eaves level along the front and rear elevations. Although these gutters do not appear to be leaking at present, the linings are in poor condition and due for replacement. The front gutter has been relined in the past in asphalt, possibly over the original lead, but the asphalt is now badly split in many places and should be replaced (photo 9). The lead lining to the rear gutter is also in poor condition with many previous patch repairs (photo 10). The problem with these gutters is that there is insufficient allowance for thermal movement which causes cracks to develop across the linings in a relatively short space of time. Fortunately, neoprene joints have been developed for use with lead in recent years and this allows traditional gutters to be relined without forming additional stepped joints, which would not be practicable. The linings to both gutters should therefore be stripped and replaced in lead with neoprene joints at intervals of no more than 1.5m. Leaks from the gutters in the past are quite likely to have damaged the boarding below and some replacements must be anticipated.

On the front elevation, the main gutter continues around the chimney stack at the north east corner of the house which discharges into a lead downpipe. This downpipe also takes the pipe serving the main central valley. The gutter around the chimney stack is of timber construction with lead lining but we could not inspect its condition; at this stage we recommend you allow for a new lead lining. The lead downpipe appears sound. At the rear, we assume that the downpipe is run internally as there is no external pipe from the main gutter which runs across the entire elevation.

The rainwater goods at the front of the annexe and also to the flat roof over the side extension are of modern PVC material and these appear sound. The gutters and downpipes to the boiler room and the tiled roof over the north extension are of cast iron and, although of some age, these appear to be sound and can be retained subject to normal maintenance.

7.4 External walls

The external walls are of solid brickwork varying in thickness between 1½ bricks at first floor level increasing to 2 and 2½ bricks in thickness at lower levels. Solid brickwork is also used for the walls of the annexe although the wall forming the passage at ground level is only a half brick in thickness and the rear extension to the ground floor is one brick in thickness. The brickwork is laid in traditional Flemish bond apart from the half brick wall in the annexe which is modern and laid in stretcher bond (photos 14, 15 and 16).

Prior to the 20th century, solid walls were standard construction and, although generally satisfactory in structural terms, these walls do not offer the improved weather resistance and thermal insulation of modern cavity construction. However, the thermal insulation value of a half brick wall is minimal although, in this case, the wall is protected from the weather as it forms the passageway beneath the annexe.

We were not able to determine the size and depth of the foundations to the house but some uneven settlement has clearly occurred in the past and, by modern standards, the foundations would no doubt be considered undersized. The worst of the settlement has occurred at the north east corner of the main house where a large buttress has been constructed against the chimney stack and the adjacent brick coursing is very uneven where it has been rebuilt. Although the movement here was quite severe, it is clearly historic and there is little evidence to suggest that any movement has occurred since the walls were repointed, probably 50 years ago and long after the buttress was constructed. An old fracture is visible behind the lead rainwater pipe and this should be repaired in due course, but not as a matter of urgency (photo 17).

On the rear elevation, there is a noticeable bulge in the wall of the main house at eaves level caused by roof spread in the past. Again, this does not appear to be progressive and additional ties have been fitted to the roof structure to restrain further movement. An old 'S' shaped tie plate can be seen on the north facing gable and this also appears to be satisfactory in preventing any further movement in this location.

The front elevation of the main house was repointed many years ago using what appears to be a cement based mix finished well proud of the brickwork and scored along the centre of each joint (photo 17). Although the pointing is sound, it very much detracts from the appearance of the brickwork and the use of a relatively impervious pointing mix increases the likelihood of frost damage to the brickwork. At present, this does not appear to be a problem but, ideally, the existing pointing would be very carefully raked out and replaced in a lime based mix finished flush with the faces of the bricks. If repointing is to be considered, the details of the mix and finish will need to be agreed with the local Conservation Officer and Listed Building Consent would be required. Elsewhere, the pointing to the brickwork is old but not badly weathered and no immediate attention is required.

The small, timber framed extension to the north end of the ground and first floors is clad with painted softwood weatherboarding. The extension is supported at ground level off beams and posts and the structure appears to be sound. However, there is some localised decay in the weatherboarding which will need to be replaced before the extension is next repainted.

The party walls in buildings of this period are likely to be at least one brick in thickness at the upper levels increasing at lower levels, as with the external walls. This is normally a sufficient thickness to provide an adequate degree of sound insulation between houses. We found no evidence of any significant movement in the party walls but, above roof level on the south side, some localised repointing of the brickwork is required, and this could be undertaken when the roof is overhauled.

Within the rear loft, the brickwork of the north facing gable was seen to be heavily eroded and some repointing and general making good will be required in the longer term.

7.5 Internal walls and partitions

The internal partitions are mainly of timber framed construction, mostly original but with some modern partitioning where bathrooms etc have been formed. The timber framing is generally clad with lath and plaster on the second floor, with some plasterboard to modern partitions and where the original lath and plaster has been replaced. On the ground and first floors the walls are mainly finished with timber panelling. On the lower ground floor the main cross wall is of solid construction but there are also old timber framed partitions, together with a length of modern blockwork between the utility room and the wine cellar. In the annexe, the partitions are generally timber framed with a lath and plaster cladding.

As we would expect in a building of this age, the partitions in the main part of the house show considerable distortion caused by settlement and general deflection

in the timber structures over the centuries. The distortions are quite severe, with door heads noticeably out of level, but there is little evidence to suggest that any of this movement is progressive. The only area of any concern is the main east/west partition in the centre of the first floor where there is a fracture at the junction with the front wall. Although this is probably not recent, it should nevertheless be made good and checked periodically for signs of further movement, in which case further investigation may be required. There is also a vertical shrinkage fracture in the block wall forming the wine store on the lower ground floor but such fractures are typically found in modern blockwork and are not structurally significant. The partitions in the annexe are in good condition with no significant distortion.

7.6 Floors

In the main part of the house, the lower ground floors are finished with large quarry tiles which are in fair condition. In the wine store there is an old screeded finish which is somewhat uneven. The floor in the strong room is of concrete below duck boarding and a small drainage sump has been formed below this floor in recent years, fitted with a submersible pump. We understand that this followed an episode of flooding many years ago but we were told there has been no problem with flooding since.

The upper floors are of traditional timber joist and board construction and these generally slope from the effects of settlement and deflection over the years. The majority of the bedroom floors were concealed by fitted carpets at the time of our visit but where small areas of the boarding were uncovered it was seen to be old and, as we would expect, shrunk across the grain leaving gaps along the joints. Where the boarding is exposed on the ground and first floors the gaps between the boards have been filled with mastic, apparently to avoid the possibility of cigarette ends falling between the boards and starting a fire. Although effective in this respect, the mastic does detract from the appearance of the boarding. When the carpets are replaced, a general overhaul of the boarding will be required and hardboard overlays may need to be considered. These upper floors are generally

quite springy underfoot as, by modern standards, the joists will be over spanned and care needs to be taken to avoid overloading. The floor in the larger ensuite bathroom on the first floor has been levelled up in recent years and finished with vinyl flooring which is in good condition.

In the annexe, the ground floor is finished with hardwood boarding over solid construction; the boarding is in good condition and we found no evidence of any settlement or other defect in the structure. The upper floors are of suspended timber construction with plywood below the carpet on the first floor but exposed with painted softwood boarding on the second floor. These floors are level and sound underfoot, generally in better condition than those in the main part of the house.

7.7 Dampness and timber defects

A house of this age would not have been constructed with damp proof courses at ground level, nor tanking to areas below ground. However, modern damp proof courses are visible in some of the walls of the annexe, although these are at or slightly below ground level and therefore not fully effective.

On the lower ground floor, the walls in the main part of the house appear to have been damp proofed by means of a hard render but this has not been completely effective and we obtained high readings on a moisture meter along the north wall of the kitchen. We suspect the walls behind the kitchen units will also be damp. As we would expect, high positive readings were also obtained on the exposed brickwork within the wine store. In the study, the plasterboard lining to the north wall is damp at low level indicating that there is a problem with dampness behind. The walls in the strong room are rendered over an impervious backing of some kind which appears to have been reasonably effective. Localised higher than normal readings were also obtained along the west external wall of the lower ground floor at skirting level.

The quarry tiling to the main rooms on the lower ground floor is reasonably effective in controlling dampness although we found that the timber sole plates to the exposed partitioning between the kitchen and the study is damp, indicating that the timber is not effectively isolated from the damp subfloor.

Further investigation will be required but, at this stage, we recommend that you allow for further remedial work to eliminate the rising and penetrating dampness which could either take the form of proprietary waterproof rendering or, perhaps, the installation of a drained cavity system to the external walls, discharging any water into the sump which already exists in the strong room.

The walls above ground floor level are generally free from signs of rising or penetrating dampness although the timber panelling will, of course, disguise all but the most severe dampness. The only area of immediate concern is in the larger bedroom on the first floor where the panelling on the front wall appears to have suffered from water penetration in the past in the top left hand corner. This may have been caused by water penetrating from the gutter above and further investigation is required. With timber panelling there is always the potential for rot to develop if water penetration occurs. The damp, unventilated spaces behind the panelling create ideal conditions for dry rot to thrive and this can spread over large areas behind the panelling before any damage is visible.

Within the annexe, readings on a moisture meter were all within acceptable limits.

The majority of the structural timbers are concealed by floor and ceiling finishes but, as we would expect in a building of this age, the visible roof timbers and floorboards etc have been damaged by woodboring insects in the past. We found no obvious signs of recent activity although we understand that no comprehensive timber treatment has been carried out within the past 40 years. It is therefore quite likely that active infestations will be found in the structural and other timbers when the house is refurbished and, at this stage, we recommend you allow for precautionary timber treatment throughout the house.

7.8 Plasterwork and other finishes (photos 18-26)

In the main house, the ceilings on the second floor are a mix of the original lath and plaster and later plasterboard replacements. The original ceilings are uneven and patched in places, particularly below an earlier leak in the central valley gutter. There is also signs of minor water penetration beside one of the front facing dormer windows. Some making good to these ceilings will be required when the rooms are next redecorated. On the first floor, the lath and plaster ceilings are finished with lining paper and these are again generally uneven with previous patch repairs evident. On the ground floor, the ceilings are generally in better condition and appear to have been replaced in plasterboard throughout with plain, perimeter coricing. In the drawing room, there are some minor damp stains on the ceiling which we assume are from a plumbing leak or water spillage in the bathroom above.

The ceilings on the lower ground floor are a mix of lath and plaster, plasterboard and what appears to be fibreboard. A section of the ceiling in the study is loose and needs to be refixed and the lath and plaster ceiling in the wine store is quite fragile and has been patched in the past. Fibreboard has also been used to line the ceiling in the strong room.

In the annexe, the second floor ceiling appears to be the original lath and plaster which shows some old cracking but is still reasonably sound. At lower levels the ceilings appear to have been replaced using modern plasterboard and these are in good condition.

On the ground and first floors in the main house, the walls are generally finished with timber panelling, some stripped and some painted. Panelling of this type was designed for paint finish and, although the appearance of the stripped panelling is pleasant, there are many patch repairs and the joinery is not of a particularly high quality. The overall condition is fair although the occasional panel has been replaced using plywood. As noted earlier, there is an area of

panelling which needs to be checked on the front wall at first floor level which may be affected by rot. On the second floor, some making good will be required to the lath and plaster wall linings when these rooms are redecorated but the overall condition is fair for a house of this age. As noted earlier, quite extensive replacement of plaster and linings is likely to be needed throughout the lower ground floor to eliminate the rising and penetrating dampness.

The plastered wall finishes within the annexe are generally in better condition since the recent refurbishment.

7.9 Windows, doors and other joinery

The windows are the traditional, double hung sliding sash type in painted softwood with single glazing. The general condition is poor with many of the opening sashes, including all those on the ground floor, stuck with paint and impossible to open. Many of the external cills have been covered with lead which is usually a sign that the timber below is badly weathered or decayed. On the second floor, some of the sashes have been replaced in recent years but even these are generally ill-fitting. A very comprehensive overhaul of the windows will be required and this would be best entrusted to one of the specialist companies who have developed effective methods for refurbishing and draught proofing traditional windows. Single glazed windows will have very limited thermal insulation but, of course, double glazing would never be permitted in a Grade II* listed building. The stripped pine internal shutters to the ground and first floor windows are mostly in working order.

The sliding sash windows in the annexe are generally in better condition and the second floor windows have internal secondary glazing in timber frames. However, some of the upper sashes need easing and there are three cracked window panes to be replaced on the second floor. On the ground floor, the rear window is a modern timber framed casement with double glazing and this is in good order.

At the front entrance to the house there is a tall, eight panel timber door, possibly original, hung on large strap hinges. The door is in fair condition and fitted with two locks but there is some decay in the lower ends of the external door case. The small hood above the door is supported on corbelled brackets but the original covering has been replaced with strips of self-adhesive foil. This can only be considered as a short term repair and the foil should be replaced with lead.

There is an old boarded door at the north entrance to the lower ground floor and this has been fitted with a flush, embossed panel across the back. The door is fitted with strap hinges and a variety of old locks and bolts which do not provide a very high standard of security. On the rear elevation, two of the original window openings to the lower ground floor have been fitted with side hung glazed sashes with internal folding security grilles. These were not tested although appear to be sound. However, the cills are set at ground level and will be prone to decay. At the entrance to the annexe there is a modern six panel door which is in good condition and fitted with two locks. At the head of the steps from the drawing room down to the garden there is a part glazed timber panelled door which shows signs of filling beneath the external paintwork. The bolts to this door do not provide a good standard of security.

The internal doors within the main part of the house are generally the original panelled type, mostly stripped of paint and fitted with rim or mortise locks. These doors are generally quite fragile with open joints and cracks etc and some loose or defective ironmongery. Many are a poor fit to their frames due to the distortion which has occurred over the years and a thorough overhaul will be required when the house is refurbished. The lower rail to one of the second floor doors has been entirely cut away and this door will have to be suitably repaired. In the annexe, the timber panel doors are generally in better condition.

The main staircase is believed to be original and is of timber construction with turned spindles supporting heavy, moulded handrails. As we would expect in a house of this age, the staircase is generally distorted and creaks underfoot but the fitted carpets and plastered soffits prevented any detailed examination of the

treads and risers. We believe the staircase to be in fair condition but no doubt some minor work will be required to treads and risers when the carpets are lifted. The timber staircase in the annexe is modern and in good condition.

The main kitchen was refitted in the 1970s and the timber units are well worn and now due for replacement. The kitchen in the cottage has recently been refitted with units of reasonable quality below oak laminate worktops, all in good condition.

The built-in wardrobes, cupboards and shelving etc are of basic quality throughout the house although generally serviceable.

7.10 Sanitary fittings

The sanitary fittings are mostly of some age and quite dated although still serviceable. However, the fittings in the larger ensuite bathroom on the first floor are of more recent installation, as are those in the recently refurbished annexe.

7.11 Fireplaces

In the main house there are open fireplaces in the drawing room, dining room and entrance hall on the ground floor and also in the rear bedroom on the first floor. In the annexe, there is a small fireplace on the second floor.

The only fireplace currently in use is in the drawing room which has a simple pine surround and is fitted with a gas fired, coal effect grate. There is a similar fireplace in the hall but the throat has been blocked with hardboard and there is no gas supply. In the dining room there is a fireplace surround of marble but, again, the throat has been blocked with hardboard. There is a good quality carved pine surround to the fireplace on the first floor in the main house but here the throat appears to have been blocked with what may be an asbestos insulation board which should be removed by a specialist if asbestos proves to be present. The fireplace in the annexe has a tiled surround and has also been blocked off.

7.12 Decorations

The external joinery and woodwork will need to be redecorated following the repairs to the windows and cladding.

The interior decorations generally present a tired appearance and there will be marks left by pictures and furniture when the house is vacated. The annexe is in better decorative order but we recommend you allow for redecorating the main part of the house throughout.

7.13 Services

As agreed, we did not arrange for specialist inspections or tests of the mechanical and electrical installations but from our own inspection would offer the following comments.

7.13.1 Electrical installation

The house has a three phase, 415 volt electrical supply which is divided to serve three meters in the main part of the house and a fourth meter in the annexe. From the mains intake position in the wine store, there is also a sub main to the greenhouse and gardens. We assume that it will be possible to dispense with two of the meters in the main house although it might be useful to keep the meter in the annexe.

We were informed that the house was electrically rewired about three years ago but we believe that, in fact, only the annexe was completely rewired as many of the switches and sockets in the main house are clearly 30 or 40 years old. However, the main distribution boards are modern, with miniature circuit breakers and these may well have been replaced recently. However, the boards are not labelled to indicate the installation and recommended retest dates, as they should be.

By current standards, the electrical installation in the main part of the house is very basic with some wiring and fitting surface mounted (photo 27). Lighting is a mixture of low voltage tracks and pendant fittings. The provision of 13 amp power points is not particularly generous and there are only a few 3 amp lighting points at skirting level.

The house has a reasonable number of mains powered smoke detectors covering the circulation areas and the second floor bedrooms, to give early warning of any developing fire.

Extract ventilation is generally poor with only the annexe having extract ventilation in the bathroom and kitchen. When the house is refurbished, extract ventilation will therefore need to be installed for the main kitchen and in the bathrooms and WCs.

At this stage, and subject to further advice from a qualified electrician, we recommend that you budget for completely rewiring the main part of the house to current standards but we believe the installation in the annexe is generally satisfactory.

7.13.2 Cold water installation

The incoming water main up to the first of the storage tanks in the loft is the original lead piping which is now considered to be a health hazard and, due to its age, prone to fracture (photo 28). A new supply pipe will therefore be required from the company's main in the street and a meter will be fitted at the same time. The size of the main should be increased so that the plumbing systems can be converted to mains pressure, avoiding the need for storage. The advantages of direct feed are improved water quality and pressure. However, if on further investigation the flow and/or pressure from the company's main is inadequate, then a buffer

tank at lower ground floor level will need to be provided feeding a pumping set to pressurise the supplies throughout the house.

Plumbing is carried out in a mixture of modern copper and earlier galvanised tube together with some lead piping. This is not considered to be good practice as corrosion can occur from the electrolytic action between dissimilar metals. We therefore recommend that you allow for replumbing the main house although we believe the majority of the plumbing in the annexe is modern and can probably be retained.

While in the front roof space, we noted that a large galvanised pipe is still insulated with asbestos which is in poor condition and will have certainly released fibres into the loft (photo 29). Specialist testing will be required to confirm that the material is asbestos based, in which case it will have to be removed under controlled conditions by a licensed contractor, who will also decontaminate the surrounding area. The pipe in question continues down through the house, without lagging where visible, but further checks should be made to ensure that none of the concealed pipework is also lagged with asbestos. At the same time, the asbestos board noted in the fireplace on the first floor should also be checked.

Cold water is currently stored in four plastic tanks, two in each of the main roof spaces. The tanks are not properly covered or lagged but, in any event, we have already recommended that they should be dispensed with.

7.13.3 Hot water and central heating installations

Hot water for domestic use and central heating is provided by a pair of Keston boilers which, we understand, were installed about two years ago (photo 30). The boilers are of the modern, condensing type and should have a remaining service life of at least ten years subject to normal

maintenance. The primary circuits from these boilers are pressurised with expansion vessels, avoiding the need for separate header tanks.

The boilers serve a pair of hot water cylinders and, although these are of adequate size, they are of some age, one being factory insulated and the other having a separate lagging jacket (photo 31). Both are fitted with electric immersion heaters for standby use. Assuming that the house is converted to mains pressure, the existing cylinders will need to be replaced with new unvented (mains pressure) hot water cylinders which will be insulated and fitted with the necessary safety controls at the factory. The existing plumbing arrangements result in long delays for hot water at the taps and, when the house is re-plumbed, a secondary hot water circuit should be installed to overcome this problem.

The central heating installations were probably installed 40 years ago except for the more modern installation in the annexe. The systems comprise pressed steel radiators and copper pipe runs and the radiators are fitted with thermostatic valves for individual control. By modern standards, the system in the main house is quite basic with no means of controlling each floor separately. In the context of a full refurbishment and the other plumbing works which are recommended, we suggest you consider replacing the central heating system in the main house to modern standards.

7.13.4 Gas installation

The property is connected to mains gas supply with one meter in the utility room and the second meter in the boiler room. We understand that the meter in the boiler room formerly served the annexe but is now redundant and could be removed. The meter in the utility room serves the range cooker in the kitchen, the boilers and the gas fire in the drawing room.

We noted that the supply pipe from the meter is buried beneath the kitchen floor which is not good practice and we would recommend that the pipe is re-run so that it is accessible for maintenance.

7.14 Drainage

Foul, waste and rainwater are believed to discharge into a common drainage system eventually connected to the public sewer below The Grove.

We could locate only one access manhole in the paving outside the boiler room. The manhole is of considerable depth and fitted with a heavy, cast iron cover. The drains are laid in glazed earthenware pipework, typical of the Victorian period with 150mm diameter to the main channel and 100mm branch drains. At the time of inspection, the main channel was partially blocked and this will need to be cleared by rodding or water jetting (photo 32). The condition of the drains should then be checked by means of a CCTV survey to reveal any collapses or other defects. Fortunately, most drainage defects can now be repaired by in-situ sleeving which avoids the need for excavation. In this case, any excavation would be very costly as the drains below the boiler room and front drive etc are at a very considerable depth below ground level.

8.0 Grounds and outbuildings

The boundaries of the property are generally defined with tall walls of brickwork, some of quite recent construction and all in fair condition. However, the north wall to the lower part of the garden is older and this has a rendered finish showing some large horizontal cracks which will need repair in the longer term.

At the front of the house there are metal railings over brick walls which return to the house on the south side. These are also in fair condition but the timber entrance gate is decayed along the top rail and will have to be repaired or replaced. There is also some decay along the lower edge of the timber gate fitted at the top of the steps down to the boiler room.

The brick retaining wall to the lower part of the garden, which extends southwards to form the boundary of the adjacent property, has been buttressed in the past and the parapets have recently been rebuilt. The brickwork and the buttresses now appear to be sound with no evidence of any recent movement (photo 33).

The south boundary wall to the lower part of the garden was, we understand, damaged by building work on the adjoining site and this has been repaired with an additional wall constructed on the far side. As noted earlier, we understand that the adjoining owner is rebuilding the retaining wall along the west side of the lower garden by agreement with the owners of No.4.

The three vaults below the upper part of the garden are constructed with arched brickwork which is in fair condition for its age. However, at the entrances to the central and southern vaults there are a series of steel beams some of which are supported on modern brick piers. The earlier beams are heavily corroded and the more recent replacements, fitted about ten years ago, are also beginning to corrode (photo 34). Further replacements must therefore be anticipated in the future and these should be galvanised to resist corrosion. As we would expect, these vaults are very damp and there is direct leakage into the north vault when it rains.

The north vault is fitted with a basin which is supplied by lead pipework beneath the garden. The water supply is still live but the condition of the pipework must be suspect, given its age.

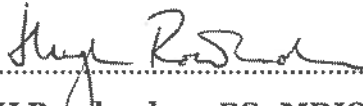
The brick and stone paving around the house is pleasantly old and worn but still serviceable.

In the lower part of the garden there is a large greenhouse, perhaps 20 or 30 years old, constructed with brick walls below timber framing. The greenhouse is in fair condition but the timber framework is due for recoating with preservative

Re: 4 The Grove, Highgate, London. N6 6JU

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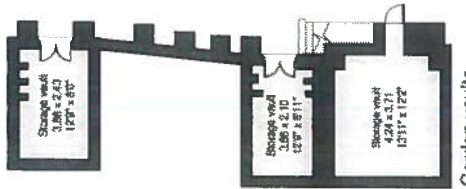
stain and, at the same time, minor repairs will be required to small areas of decay in the cills.



E H Rowlandson BSc MRICS
For and on behalf of Private Property Projects

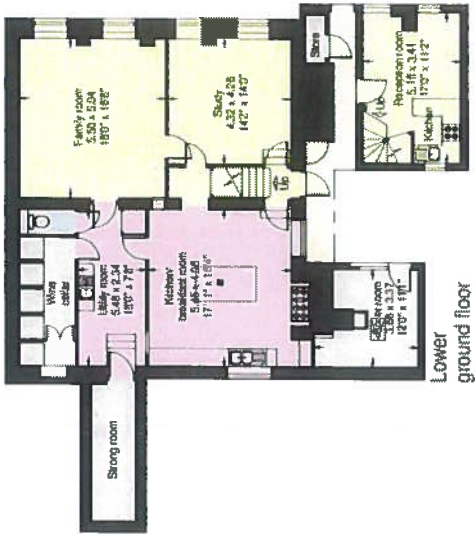
Appendix A

Floor plan

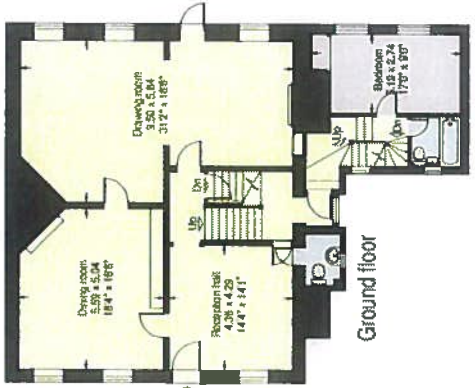


Garden vaults

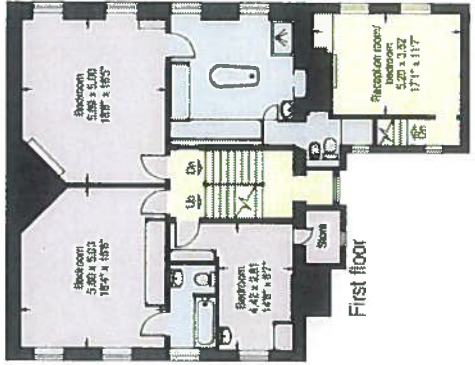
APPROX. SCALE
0 1 2 3 4
0 1 2 3 4 5



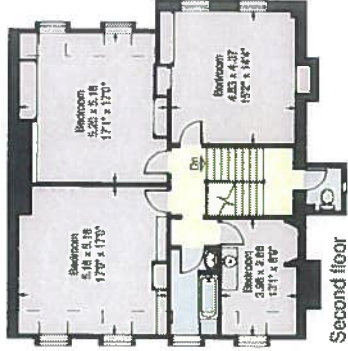
Lower ground floor



Ground floor



First floor



Second floor

The Grove, Highgate

Grange in Rural Area (Appr. 1998)
House and grounds 528,4 sq.mts. (5199 sq. ft.)
Not including: 1.5 ha (3.75 acres) (10,000 sq. ft.)
Upper level 10,000 sq.mts. (100,000 sq. ft.)
Garden 10,000 sq.mts. (100,000 sq. ft.)
Approximate Site Area 5,407 sq.mts.
For consultation purposes only - not to scale
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Appendix B

Photographs



Photo 1 – South chimney



Photo 2 – North west chimney



Photo 3 – North east chimney



Photo 4 – Main roof – front slope



Photo 5 – Main roof – rear slope



Photo 6 – Flat roof over rear dormer



Photo 7 – Central valley to main roof



Photo 8 – Zinc flat and tiled lean-to roofs over north extension



Photo 9 – Front gutter – splits in asphalt lining



Photo 10 – Rear gutter – patched lead lining



Photo 11 – Roof over annexe



Photo 12 – New ties across rear pitch of main roof



Photo 13 – New strutting to rafters of front roof pitch



Photo 14 – Front elevation



Photo 15 – Front elevation (north extension and annexe)



Photo 16 – Rear elevation



Photo 17 – Close up of repointing on front elevation (old fracture also visible by lead rainwater pipe)



Photo 18 – Second floor bedroom in main house



Photo 19 – First floor bedroom in main house



Photo 20 – Drawing room



Photo 21 – Entrance hall



Photo 22 – Dining room



Photo 23 – Staircase

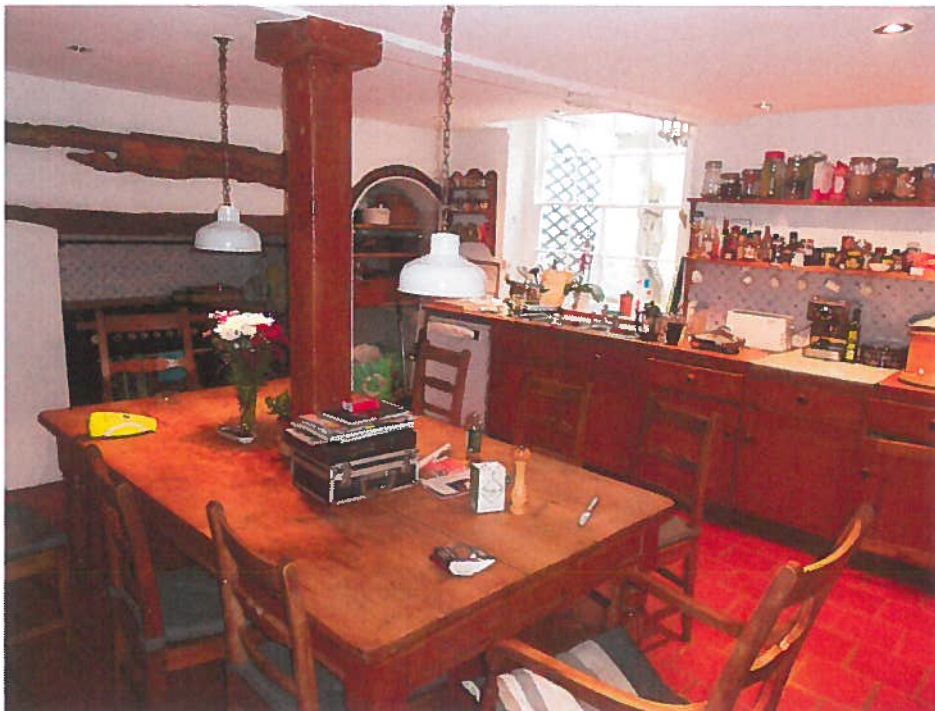


Photo 24 – Kitchen



Photo 25 – Annexe – second floor



Photo 26 – Annexe – kitchen

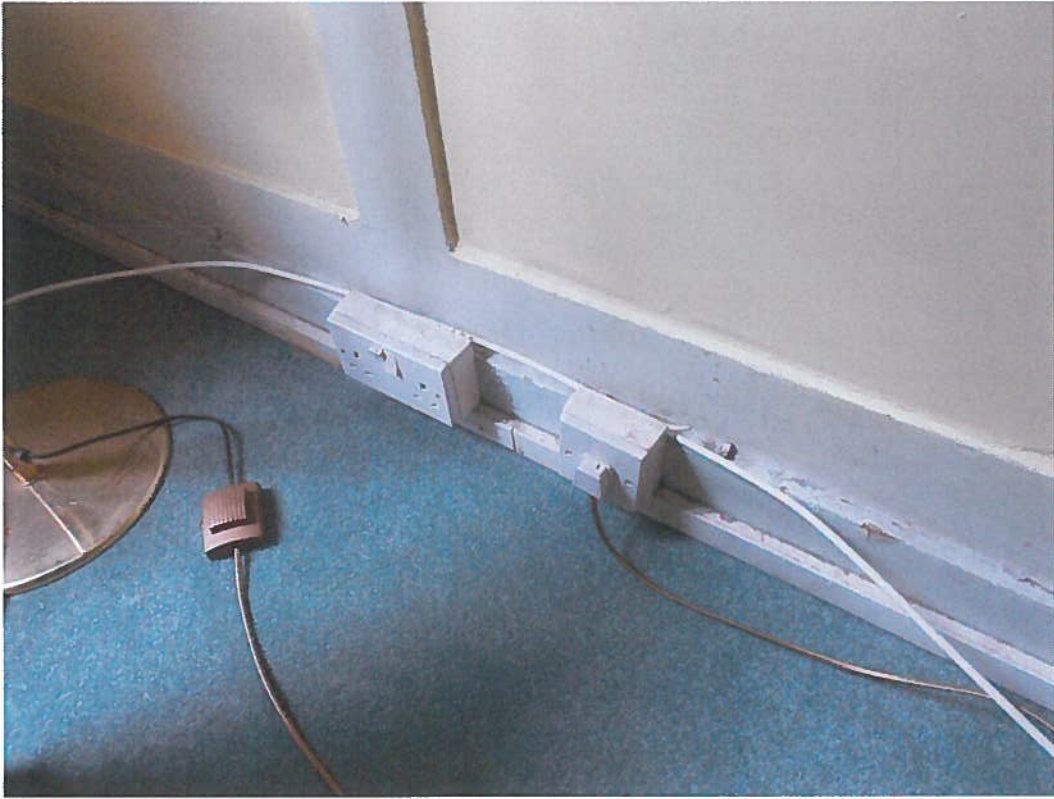


Photo 27 – Surface mounted sockets and wiring



Photo 28 – Lead and iron piping in roof space



Photo 29 – Asbestos lagging in front roof space



Photo 30 - Boilers



Photo 31 – Hot water cylinders



Photo 32 – Blocked channel in manhole



Photo 33 – Retaining wall to upper garden



Photo 34 – Steel beams and brick piers in garden vault

Appendix C

Standard Survey Limitations

STANDARD SURVEY LIMITATIONS

INTRODUCTION

The Survey will be carried out with the care, skill and diligence reasonably expected of a competent Chartered Building Surveyor and will comprise a thorough visual examination of all reasonably accessible parts. The purpose of the inspection and report is to advise the Client of the Surveyor's opinion of the condition and standard of construction of the building at the date of inspection and to report on any major faults and defects found.

Should you require investigations beyond the scope of inspection set out below, we will be pleased to arrange this, subject to the Vendor's written consent and acceptance by the Client of the additional costs involved.

The surveyor will carry out such work as is reasonable in his professional judgment, bearing in mind the limitations of the inspection. The report will not purport to express an opinion about or to advise upon the condition on un-inspected parts and should not be taken as making any implied representations or statements about such parts.

Our inspection will be undertaken and the report prepared in accordance with standard Private Property Projects Terms of Business, limitations and assumptions detailed below.

LIMITATIONS

- A. The surveyor will inspect as much of the surface area as is practicable and will lift loose floorboards and trap doors where reasonably accessible, but will be under no obligation to raise fixed floorboards or to inspect those areas of the property that are covered, unexposed or are not readily accessible.
- B. Inspection will exclude any roof space where there is no reasonably accessible roof hatch, and the outer surfaces of any roof that cannot be readily seen. Flat roofs over 3m (10ft) above ground level will not be inspected unless there is reasonable access from other parts of the building.
- C. The surveyor will not arrange for the testing of services, (including a drain test), unless specifically instructed to do so.

Compliance of services with regulations, adequacy of design and efficiency can only be determined following a specialist's assessment and test. Should you require further advise in this respect, you must obtain reports from appropriate specialists before entering into a legal commitment to purchase.

- D. Except where the contrary is stated, parts of the structure and of the woodwork, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible, will not be inspected.
 - E. Certain faults or defects may only be apparent intermittently. For example, leaking chimney stacks or overflowing gutters may only be apparent in heavy or driving rain. Our report can only identify those defects, which are apparent in the conditions existing at the time of inspection.
 - F. Our inspection of the exterior will be limited to those parts which can be seen from ground level within the boundaries of the property, and from any adjoining public areas, highways etc.
-

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- G. Removal of fitted carpets, floor coverings and furniture will not be undertaken; the presence of such items will limit inspection.
 - H. We will not form any trial holes to inspect foundations or below ground structures and, therefore will not offer any warranties as to their adequacy other than where defects in such elements have caused visible and obvious defects in the building superstructure.
 - I. We will describe the general condition of the grounds and boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the main building but will not comment as to the condition of grounds or boundaries elsewhere on the site.
 - J. We recommend that you make sure that the building's insurance policy contains adequate provision against, inter alia, subsidence, landslip and heave.
 - K. We will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines which might give rise to an electromagnetic field either over the subject property or immediately adjacent. An assessment of any possible health risk as a result of electromagnetic fields is outside our expertise but we may recommend that you obtain further advice. We will not be able to report on the proximity or existence of any underground cables.
 - L. No investigation or enquiry will be made into any possible contamination of the site or nearby land or property. However, where we have local knowledge that contamination may be a potential problem, we will comment as appropriate.
 - M. We 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.
 - N. The inspection will not include checks to establish whether the construction meets the criteria of Building Regulations, the NHBC or other statutes and standards. Such checks can be undertaken by prior arrangement for an additional fee.
 - O. We will assume that all Listed Building, Conservation Area, Planning, Building Regulations, Bye Laws and other consents required have been obtained for new buildings, alterations or extensions, etc. No checks will be made to verify whether such consents have been obtained.
 - P. Drawings and Specifications for the construction of a building or extension or for the execution of any alterations/ repairs will not be examined unless by prior specific arrangement.
 - Q. No enquiries will be made into such matters as boundary maintenance, tenure, covenants, rights of way, easements, guarantees, road improvement schemes, etc. Enquiries into such matters should be made to your legal advisors.
 - R. A brief inspection and general comment will be made of exposed cables, plumbing and the inside of drainage inspection chambers where the covers are readily visible and accessible and can be lifted intact without undue difficulty. Modern drainage access points are often fitted with covers fixed down with screws; screw fixed covers will not be raised.
 - S. A definitive assessment of the condition adequacy and capacity of any services can only be made after specialist tests and these do not form part of the survey. Such tests can be arranged for an additional fee, and if we consider tests should be undertaken we will advise accordingly.
-

- T. Burglar alarm and fire alarm systems, water softeners, bottled gas installations etc. are specialist fields and are outside the scope of the report.
- U. Services which have been disconnected or turned off will not be reconnected or turned on without the prior consent of the owner and the attendance at the property of a plumber, electrician, central heating engineer, etc. as appropriate.
- V. No inspection or assessment will be made of telecom, internet, satellite, television, radio, mobile phone, etc. installations or reception.

ASSUMPTIONS

In making the Report, the following assumptions will be made:

- A. That no high alumina cement concrete or calcium chloride additive or other deleterious material was used in the construction of the property. It should be noted that high alumina cement should not have been used after 1975 and that calcium chloride additives were effectively banned in 1977.
- B. That the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions encumbrances or outgoings and that good title can be shown.
- C. That the property and its value are unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the Usual Enquiries, or by any Statutory Notice, and that neither the property nor its intended use is or will be unlawful.
- D. That inspection of those parts which have not been inspected would neither reveal material defects, nor cause the surveyor to alter the report materially.

OUTBUILDINGS AND GARDENS

Permanent outbuildings will be inspected less critically than the main building and will be reported on in more general terms and only major defects will be identified. Leisure installations such as tennis courts, swimming pools etc. will not be inspected.

No attempt will be made to identify the extent of ownership or liability for maintenance of party walls and boundary features.

The grounds and boundaries in the immediate vicinity of the dwelling will be inspected and reported upon in general terms. No inspection will be made of grounds and boundaries remote from the dwelling.

FLATS AND MAISONETTES

Unless otherwise agreed we will inspect only the subject Flat and Garage, if any, internally and externally in detail. A less critical inspection will be made of the internal common parts leading to the subject Flat, the exterior of the structure of the block in which the subject Flat is situated, and the external common areas immediately surrounding the block. Other blocks, Flats, Building's internal common parts and external common areas will not be inspected.

The roof void and/or the surface of any flat roof of the block will be inspected only where it is immediately above the subject Flat and has access directly from it. In all other cases no inspection will be made of any roof void or flat roof surface unless specific prior agreement has been reached with the Client and unless prior arrangements have been made and consents obtained for access.

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If the client has not supplied a copy of the lease we will state any assumptions that we have made as to repairing obligations. If a copy of the lease has been supplied we will comment on the repairing covenants only to the extent that they affect the repair and dilapidation responsibilities of the prospective Tenant.

Drainage systems serving Flats are frequently shared and often relatively complex. In the case of Flats and Maisonettes therefore no attempt will be made to inspect sub-surface drainage systems, trace drain runs, lift manhole covers, etc.

Clients should note that, particularly in the case of large blocks of flats, the purpose of the inspection is to give guidance on the general standard of construction and repair, not to list minor matters, which would normally be attended to in the course of routine maintenance.

DISCLOSURE

The Survey Report will be for the private and confidential use of the named Client and his professional advisors only and may not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by any third party for any use whatsoever without the express written authority of Private Property Projects.

VERBAL ADVICE

We will, if specifically requested, give preliminary verbal advice after inspection but prior to the Client's receipt of the written report. However, any such verbal advice should not be construed as a representation or warranty and should not be acted upon. The client should allow sufficient time to read, understand and consider the written report and any recommended supplementary reports prior to committing himself to purchase and exchange of contracts.

VALUATION

The Report will not include a Valuation. A Valuation can be provided if required, but this will be subject to other Conditions of Engagement and will attract an additional fee.

BUDGET COSTS

Any budget costs given for works will be provided as a guideline only and will not comprise an offer to have works carried out for that sum. If you wish to know the cost of undertaking any work recommended in the survey report you must obtain contractor's quotations.

INSURANCE

The report will not automatically include advice on reinstatement costs for insurance purposes. Such advice can be provided by prior arrangement. An additional fee may be payable.

LATENT DEFECTS

In accordance with the requirements of our insurers, we will reproduce their "latent defects" clause verbatim.

We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

We must stress that we have not carried out any investigation to determine whether high alumina cement was used during the construction of the building inspected and we are therefore unable to report that the property is free from risk in this respect. Neither have we made any investigations concerning the presence of Radon gas in the area nor whether or not the land has been affected by landfill operations or contamination of land.

We must also stress that we have not carried out any investigation to determine whether asbestos was used in areas of the construction. We are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from risk in this respect.

This report is made solely for the person to whom it is addressed and no liability can be accepted to any third parties for the whole or part of its contents.

CONTAMINATION, INCLUDING ASBESTOS

This property and its value may be affected by contamination, including by the presence of asbestos. Identification of contamination is highly specialist work, for which Private Property Projects are not qualified or accredited.

Our report/valuation is therefore based on the assumption that no contamination exists and that, before you place any reliance upon it for any purpose, you will:

1. Commission an expert or experts to determine whether any contamination is present on the property or may be threatened from an adjoining property.
2. Seek advice on the cost of any remedial action to overcome any contamination.
3. Advise us of that cost in order that we may revise our advice/valuation to take account of that contamination.

CONFIRMATION

I have read and understood the above, and appreciate the extent and limitations of the inspection and report. I confirm my instructions to undertake a Condition Survey on the basis indicated.

SIGNED:

DATE: