



Lynbrook House, Stocks Lane, Bristol, BS14 7DG

FULL BUILDING SURVEY

IN RESPECT OF

**Lynbrook House
Stocks Lane
Bristol
BS14 7DG**

CLIENT

**Mr & Mrs M O'Hara
89 Whiteladies Road
Bristol
BS8 2NT**

DATE OF INSPECTION

10 October 2019

WEATHER

Overcast with intermittent rain - 4°C

MOH/mb0/19.0668

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

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INSTRUCTIONS

Our instructions which were confirmed on 1 October 2019 were to carry out an inspection of the above property and submit a report on the general condition and state of repair. For the purposes of this report, we have not carried out any tests to services and our comments under this section of the report are restricted to a superficial and visual inspection only.

Our conditions of engagement are set out at the end of this report. All directions given within this report are made as viewed from the front lawn and facing the subject property.

LIMITATIONS TO INSPECTION

Our inspection of the property was carried out from our vantage point at ground level from within the boundaries of the site and from the adjacent public highway/rights of way. In this instance, fitted carpets, floor coverings and general household items within the property prevented a detailed inspection of some internal areas.

Certain elements of the exterior were somewhat difficult to assess due to the Virginia creeper, particularly on the front right and, indeed, right hand flank wall of the main structure. Concealed elements cannot be commented upon.

Inspection of roof timbers and any underlining materials was particularly restricted bearing in mind loft accommodation with ceilings following slopes of the roof themselves. Concealed elements cannot be commented upon. This is also the case with the single storey roofs towards the rear of the property.

TENURE

The tenure details are not known and should be investigated by your legal advisers. For the purposes of this report we have assumed the tenure to be freehold or long leasehold at a nominal annual ground rent with no unusual or onerous covenants.

For the purposes of this report we assume that vacant possession will be given upon completion.

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SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

(Some buildings may not comply with the requirements for today's new buildings, and could include harmful or hazardous materials. This report will include details of such materials where their use is apparent from the visual inspection but with certain types of building it may be impossible to confirm the details of construction).

The property is a stone built farm house subject to a Grade II* listing. It is believed that the property was originally constructed circa 1603 according to the listing information.

The building is positioned in good sized level grounds, generally laid to lawn with a feature pond also present on the opposite side of the driveway. Stocks Lane in Riverview is a small hamlet with very few amenities close by. More comprehensive facilities can be found within the city centre of Bristol or, indeed, local centres such as Clifton a short drive away.

ACCOMMODATION

Ground floor:	main entrance porch, hallway, three reception rooms, two kitchens, rear lobby, bathroom/WC, right hand reception hall.
First floor:	landing, galleried study, bathroom/WC, three bedrooms (one with large wardrobe area), separate WC, separate bathroom.
Top floor:	landing, four attic rooms.
Externally:	good sized grounds generally laid to lawn with driveway access at the front. Detached oil/coal store, summerhouse, boiler store.

Aerial Photograph of Front elevation



Front/left elevation



Right hand flank wall



GENERAL CONDITION AND STATE OF REPAIR

We have not inspected parts of the property which are covered, unexposed or otherwise inaccessible and cannot confirm them to be free from defects etc.

EXTERNALLY

The exterior of this property was inspected from ground floor level only unless stated below and foundations have not been exposed for examination. Our inspection was however assisted by the use of binoculars.

Chimney Stacks

(Including associated flashings, etc.)

There are some five chimney stacks serving the property of both stone and brick construction. These were viewed from our vantage point at ground level using binoculars together with a closer inspection of certain parts using drone technology.

Rear right hand stack



Aerial Photograph of Rear left hand stack



There is evidence of distortion to stacks, perhaps the most noticeable on the front left hand stack which can be seen in adjacent photographs. This is not considered unusual for a building of this age and character although the situation must be carefully monitored. There may well be the requirement for some reconstruction should distortion persist.

Leaning left hand stack



Stonework finishes were generally reasonable although it is clear that erosion has affected parts of the mortar pointing. This is the case on all stacks and raking out and repointing is now required.

In relation to brickwork, there is evidence of fairly noticeable spalling, particularly to the rear centre stack. Pointing is also poor and repairs are recommended. Cutting out and replacement of any defective bricks together with provision of new cement mortar should be undertaken.

Poor brickwork/pointing – rear centre stack



The joint between the base of chimney stacks and the adjacent roof slopes has been finished with a combination of cement fillets and leadwork. Cement fillets are often prone to cracking and deterioration and can be a frequent source of water penetration internally. At the time of repointing stacks the fillets should be checked and repaired as necessary. It would be preferable to update with lead although one should be mindful of the Grade II* listed status as this may well restrict material types.

A number of the stacks have pots whilst others are completely open, as can be seen in adjacent photographs. Some pots have been provided with cowl covers, particularly on the rear left hand stack which should prevent bird, water or debris entry. Others which remain open will be subject to bird, water and debris entry and it would be prudent to consider the addition of pots or similar preventative measures to reduce potential problems.

Aerial Photograph Front right hand stack



Aerial Photograph Rear centre stack



The boiler flue is located on the rear single storey boiler store which also incorporates the ground floor bathroom. The flue itself appeared to be suitably positioned although functional tests were not carried out on the boiler at the time of our inspection. Slight staining is present to the flue which may well deteriorate further with age and this highlights the importance of regular servicing in relation to the boiler itself.

Boiler flue at rear



Roofs

The outer surfaces of the roofs are inspected from ground floor level only. Roof slopes or flat areas which cannot be seen have been specifically excluded although attention has been drawn to their presence.

The roof is of a multi gable pitched design clad with both clay double Roman and clay pan tiles. Matching clay ridge tiles have also been incorporated.

Aerial View of roof configuration



There is a degree of distortion to roof slopes, consistent with many properties of this age and type. Perhaps the most obvious areas are the left hand sections which give the appearance of sloping gently inwards to the central points. There was no indication of any recent deterioration and distortions are within acceptable limits. The roof slopes themselves are laid to appropriate gradients for double Roman and pan tile coverings of this type.

Tiles themselves appeared to be in reasonable condition although there are a number of individually slipped or missing tiles which can be seen in adjacent photographs. Replacement of any defective tiles will be required. At this time, a cautionary examination of any adjacent timbers should be undertaken as leaking over a period of time may have allowed the development of rot.

Aerial Photograph General view of roof – note distorted ridges



Missing tiles require replacement



Poor gable detail



Slight deterioration is present to ridge bedding. This is not excessive although will deteriorate further with age and some eventual rebedding with cement mortar will be a requirement. More obviously there are areas of poor cement detailing together with inappropriate overhangs to a number of gables which we have, again, highlighted in adjacent photographs. Making good of any defective sections to include provision of suitable overhangs should be considered.

This is a relatively complicated roof structure and incorporates some eighteen sloping valleys, two main horizontal valleys and two smaller horizontal valley sections. These are generally lined with lead and were viewed from our vantage point at ground level and also using drone technology. Valleys are notoriously prone to blockage and deterioration and can be a frequent source of water penetration internally which can cause deterioration to timbers and other materials. During the survey there was evidence of some previous leaking, particularly visible on the first floor rear landing area adjacent to the WC although this appeared to be historic. Some patch repair has been carried out to the rear valley which is adequate at the present time although we cannot rule out the possibility that some further leaking may occur. If this is, indeed, the case then one would be prudent to consider relining of any dated valleys.

Previous patch repair to valley



Typical valley detail



Regular checks on valley linings will be required with any blockage removed as soon as possible. In this instance, there is some slight debris build up in the rear and central valley areas which should be cleared out on a periodic basis to include checking of outlets to ensure that blockage is not developing.

Some debris in valley



Ancillary Roofs

The rear right hand single storey part of the building incorporating the “lower” kitchen has a mono pitched gable roof clad with clay double Roman tiles together with one or two glazed tiles. There was no indication of sag or deflection suggesting supporting timbers are of a suitable size to carry the imposed load upon them.

Single storey rear roof



Tiles themselves appeared to be in reasonable condition with no major deterioration present.

Lead flashings have been incorporated at the joint between the upper tiles and the main part of the building. No obvious leaking was noted although there was slight lifting of the flashings which should be refixed.

There is a mono pitched gable style roof over the rear ground floor bathroom/boiler store. This is clad with clay double Roman tiles and showed no major deterioration. We did note that cement fillets have been used at the junction between the upper tiles and the main part of the building. As with our comments in relation to the chimney stacks, these will have a limited life expectancy and may be prone to cracking. This should be carefully monitored with repairs undertaken if cracks develop.

Rainwater Equipment

Unless it was raining at the time of inspection it might not be possible to state whether or not the rainwater fittings are watertight or properly aligned.

Rainwater goods comprise gutters and downpipes of a variety of materials. These include metal, PVC and cement asbestos. The latter material is unlikely to have any significant health implications provided that it remains in an undamaged condition. However, given the age of the fittings, they may become brittle and prone to damage. It would perhaps be prudent to consider updating with modern metal or similar materials at the time of any refurbishment.

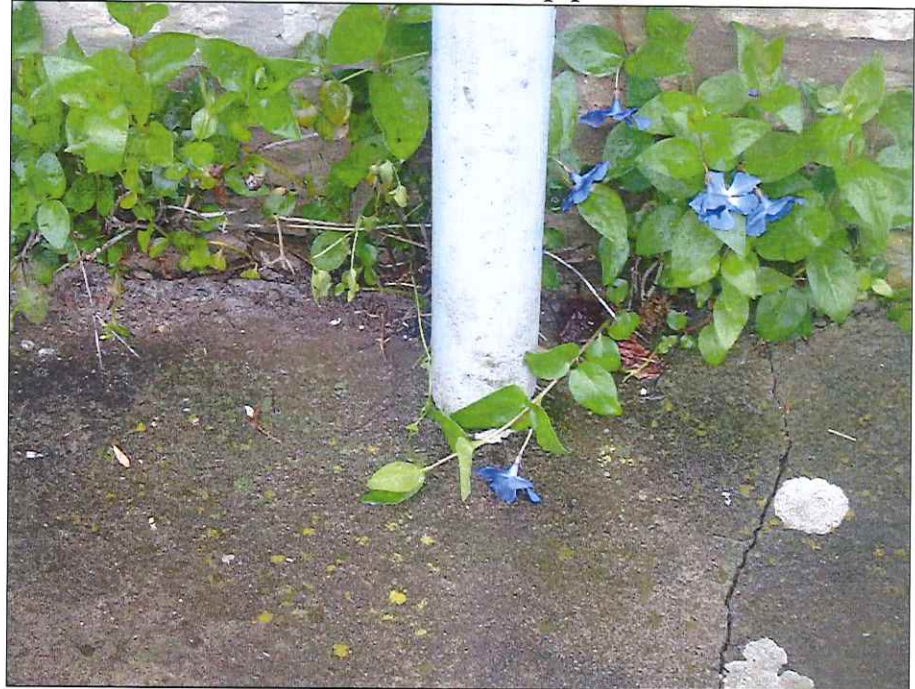
There are a number of uneven gutters and this is certainly so of the rear single storey "lower kitchen" where water ponding was clearly evident. This gutter should be taken down, cleaned out and realigned as necessary.

Uneven gutter – rear single storey kitchen roof



Where the downpipes discharge directly into the underground drainage system they may be more prone to blockage from debris entering the system at eaves level. Ideally, intermediate gulleys or grids should be incorporated where not already provided.

No gulleys at base of a number of downpipes



A number of downpipes discharge directly onto the adjacent ground. These should ideally be connected to underground drains or soakaways.

Downpipes discharging directly onto ground



There is a low level gutter arrangement at the rear which is highlighted in the adjacent photographs. This is leaking, staining stonework on the lower parts of the wall which is clearly inappropriate. Sealing at joints is required or, alternatively, replacement with a modern closer fitting gutter.

There is currently no gutter on the rear single storey part of the building incorporating the boiler store and bathroom. Suitable rainwater goods should be incorporated in this respect.

It is a requirement of felt or similar underlining below roof slopes that it be extended and dressed into guttering. This did not appear to be the case certainly on the single storey parts of the building although it is difficult to make an assessment of upper parts due to lack of access. Felt should be extended and dressed into guttering as appropriate.

Stains on lower rear wall due to leaking gutter



Main Walls

The foundations, cavity wall ties or other concealed structural elements have not been exposed for examination and therefore not all defects can be fully diagnosed. The adequacy of sub-floor ventilation is assessed only from the visible exterior surfaces)

The walls are of solid stone construction giving a particularly handsome feel to the exterior areas. As mentioned previously, Virginia Creeper was present, certainly to parts of the front and right hand flank wall which is likely to be additionally attractive when in full bloom. The creeper will give a degree of protection to the walls although may also cause localised deterioration to mortar pointing and this should therefore be carefully monitored. Periodic cutting back should be considered, particularly where it has now started to enter valley areas and potentially internal parts of the roof structure.

There is a fair amount of external cracking affecting the building together with general deterioration to the pointing. Cracks and areas of movement will be discussed in later sections of the report. In relation to the pointing, it is clear that raking out and repointing together with stitching of cracks will now be required. This should be done in conjunction with checking and replacement of timber lintels, many of which are affected by wood boring beetle infestation and early signs of rot. The compression following wood boring beetle infestation is likely to be responsible for localised movement and this is therefore an important repair.

Cracks/distortion over ground floor windows



Repointing required to many areas



Examples of deterioration to lintels can be found on most elevations with perhaps the most severe to be seen on the top floor part of the right hand elevation and parts of the front.

Wood boring beetle infestation – rear lintel ground floor



Severely infested lintel – top floor right hand flank wall



In relation to repointing, we do suggest that you consult with a specialist firm, preferably one familiar with listed buildings to ensure that appropriate lime mortar or similar is added in a way that is sympathetic to the building given its listed status.

Action: Obtain estimates for repointing and repair/replacement of defective timber lintels.

Structural Movement

The property has been affected by fairly noticeable movement and distortion over the years visible both internally and externally. Internally, there is fairly noticeable deflection to floors together with distortion over door heads. There are also uneven walls, particularly to the left hand flank wall. Externally, there are noticeable distortions above/below window heads, particularly on the front and left hand side of the building and, to a lesser extent, other elevations. Some structural repairs have been carried out in more recent times including the addition of tie bars on the left hand flank wall and also further strengthening of roof timbers with modern metal brackets. Works of this type should ideally have been carried out under the supervision of a structural engineer and you would be prudent to obtain any information regarding this matter.

Distortion to left hand window heads

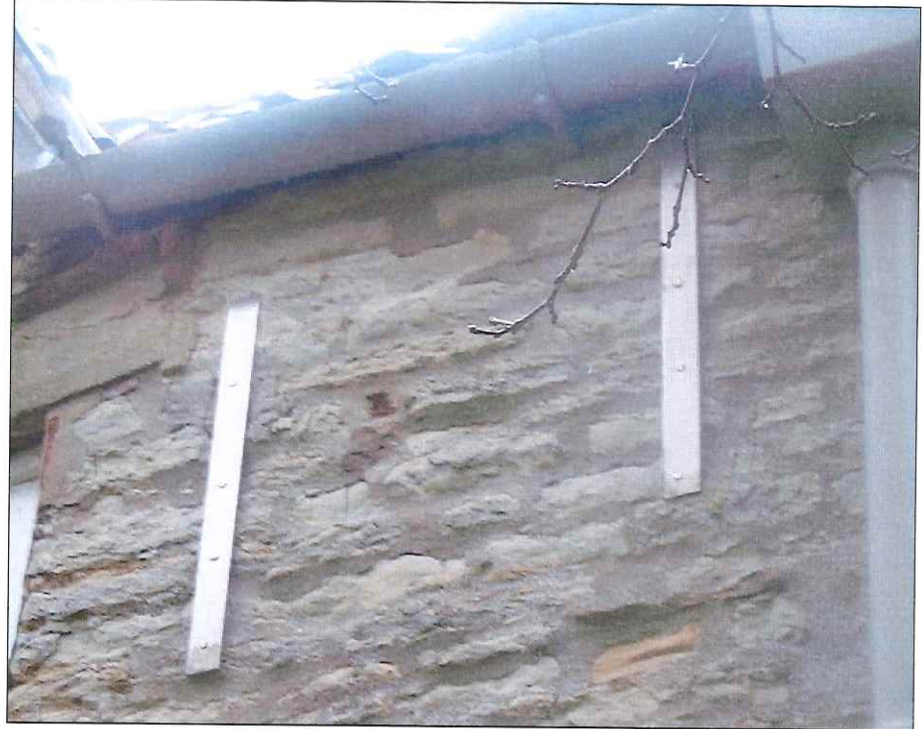


Given the poor condition of timber lintels, there is always the potential for other localised movement to occur if repairs are not affected. As mentioned in the previous section, examination of lintels must be carried out with repair/replacement undertaken. Given the listed status of the building it may be a requirement that any lintels are replaced with timber counterparts although it is possible that some more substantial concrete/metal sections could be incorporated internally as long as they are appropriately hidden from view. Further advice would be prudent regarding these works through a structural engineer.

Distortion over front windows



Tie bars – left hand flank wall



The front porch section appears to have pulled away from the main building in the past which has necessitated the requirement for some basic filling of joints. These should be raked out and filled with appropriate strapping carried out to prevent further distortion.

Buttressing has been incorporated on the right hand side of the building, presumably to prevent or reduce movement which has previously occurred to this area of the structure. There is slight cracking/open jointing between the buttress and the main building which should be filled.

Filling between porch and main structure



Action: Make provision for structural repairs, particularly in terms of renewing lintels. Consider further advice from a structural engineer in this respect.

Buttress on right hand flank wall



Damp Proof Course

There was no visible sign of a damp proof course incorporated around the base of the main walls and it is unlikely that one was originally incorporated at the time of construction.

Damp issues will be discussed in later parts of the survey and it is likely that some specialist treatment will now be required.

Certain exterior parts are higher than internal areas and this is particularly so towards the rear of the building including the “lower” kitchen. Partly subterranean areas will be susceptible to the lateral penetration of ground water in the absence of any previous specialist works such as tanking.

Action: Your legal advisers should make enquiries to establish whether any guarantees are available for any previous specialist damp treatment and transfer any benefit to yourselves. In the absence of any valid guarantees, we cannot rule out the possibility that some damp treatment may be required unexpectedly.

External Joinery

Windows serving the building are of single glazed timber sash and casement design. Doors comprise two timber panel sections at the front to include a particularly attractive fitting in the main entrance porch. There are part glazed timber doors at the rear.

Sash windows contain frames with voids and areas of hidden timberwork where latent defects may exist and regular checks on sash cords will be required for safety purposes. In this instance, a number of missing sash cords are present and this can certainly be seen in the first floor front left hand bedroom where refitting is required. Other units appeared to have been painted shut in the past or may not operate effectively due to distortion of the frames caused by localised movement which has previously been discussed.

Rot was noted to a number of windows including cills and, indeed, fittings such as sash areas on the left hand flank wall. In addition, it is clear that many of the older cills have been dressed with painted leadwork suggesting rot to lower areas. Overhaul of many of the windows will certainly be a requirement as part of external maintenance.

Rot to cills – front ground floor



Rotten joinery – left hand windows



Poor cill – top floor front



The main front entrance doors do stick and some general easing will be required, particularly in relation to the right hand section. Rot was also noted to the rear lobby/porch door which should be improved. Minor rot was also identified to the base of the frame on the front right hand door.

We did note replacement casement windows in the top floor rear left hand bedroom. These are swollen and require repair or replacement.

We reiterate that there are many areas of deterioration to timber lintel supports which clearly require further investigation and improvement.

Action: Overhaul external joinery as necessary.

External Decorations

External decoration is deteriorating which has also lead to the development of rot in certain areas as previously discussed. There will certainly be the requirement for repainting of joinery in conjunction with repairs detailed in the previous section. The cost of this should not be underestimated as a fair amount of scaffolding will be required, particularly in order to reach upper parts.

Action: Undertake redecoration in conjunction with other joinery repairs.

OUTSIDE

Garage/Outbuildings

Comment is restricted to important defects, likely to have a material effect on value. Inspection of leisure facilities, etc., is excluded)

There is a garage on the left of the site which is of stone and brick construction under a gable pitched and tiled roof. The structure itself appeared to be reasonable although there are clearly a number of items of improvement and repair necessary to the garage itself.

External view of garage



Evidence of dampness is present which has allowed a number of bricks to perish internally and this should be attended to. You are advised not to store valuable or perishable items in this area without taking appropriate measures against damp.

Wood boring beetle infestation was noted to the internal timbers which should be treated by a specialist contractor.

The entrance door is damaged and requires rehangng. Certain areas of rot were identified to the frames which should be improved together with redecoration of any exterior joinery.

Some cracks were noted to the walls, particularly the front and side sections which will require stitching together with repointing.

Internal view of garage



Rainwater goods should be fitted to the base of the roof sections.

Some repointing will be required to exterior parts.

There is an oil tank/coal store in the rear garden which is of stone and timber construction under a pitched and tiled roof. These outbuildings are in rather poor condition and will require overhaul. The roof is clearly leaking due to a number of damaged tiles and the lack of felt underlining below. Rot was also noted to some exterior timbers together with wood boring beetle infestation to internal timbers.

There are no rainwater goods and new fittings should be appropriately fitted. In addition, cracking internally should be attended to in terms of stitching and filling as necessary.

Some of the lining behind the timber wall may well contain elements of asbestos based materials although this cannot be confirmed.

The oil tank is located in one of the store areas and this is of metal construction. No obvious defects were noted during the survey.

Oil/coal store



Poor roof on oil/coal store



There is a timber summerhouse which was affected by some rot and you may wish for this to be improved in due course.

Gutters should be added to the boiler store which was previously discussed in earlier parts of the survey.

Action: Obtain estimates for overhaul of outbuildings in accordance with your own particular requirements.

The Site

(Only significant visible defects in boundary fences, walls, retaining walls, paths and drives are reported. Reference to potential hazards such as flooding and tree roots is included where these are readily apparent)

At the time of carrying out searches it is recommended that enquiries are made by your solicitor as to whether the property is affected by potential Mining/Radon/Methane Hazards and on this basis, appropriate tests should be arranged prior to proceeding further. We did not however at the time of our visual inspection note any signs of the property being affected by these defects. The National Radiological Protection Board, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon, can arrange for radon levels to be measured free of charge or contact your local council environmental health officer.

It is important to ascertain as to whether the property is within proximity of a mobile telephone mast. These can be concealed in obscure places to include within chimneys, burglar alarms and drainpipes as well as places such as church spires, petrol station canopies and tree tops. Although current advice is that there is no evidence that these masts threaten health, opposition to them is growing across the UK. Apart from a potential adverse effect upon health there could be an adverse effect upon value.

Reasonable sized grounds, generally comprising lawned areas together with a pond immediately at the front of the site. There appeared to be some two access drives at the front of the site with one apparently being a right of way for Peacock Farm immediately adjacent. Details regarding rights of way together with repair and maintenance liabilities of the drive should be clarified.

View of pond



South lawn



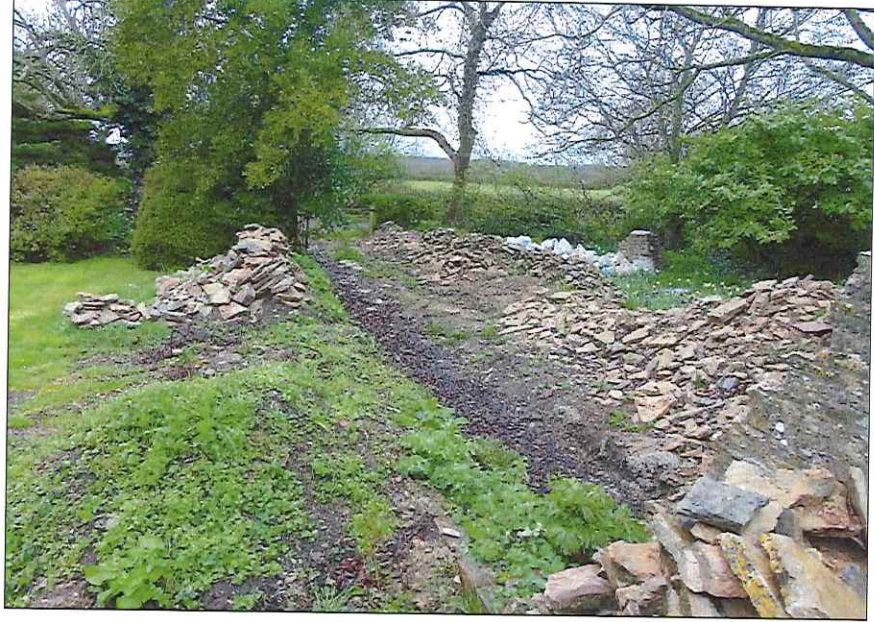
Some repointing of the front stone boundary will be required to include pillar section. There are also large cracks in the stone boundary adjacent to the garage which should be repaired.

Cracked/poor pointing – boundary adjacent garage



Reconstruction of a boundary wall in the rear garden is to be undertaken in due course although we cannot confirm that this will be completed prior to any occupation.

Stone wall to be rebuilt



Tree roots damaging rear path



There are many trees around the site which will require periodic pruning and lopping to prevent them exceeding their current size whereby damage may affect boundaries etc. One can already see some damage to paths, particularly at the rear of the site where tree roots have pushed up slabs and this should be improved. Other uneven flagstones are present in the rear courtyard which you may wish to relay.

Ownership of the various boundaries around the site should be ascertained so that you are aware of your responsibilities in this respect.

You have no doubt made your own assessment of the grounds and may wish to carry out some changes in accordance with your own particular requirements.

Drainage

(Inspection covers within the boundaries have been lifted where visible and possible {except in the cases of flats and maisonettes}. This is to facilitate a visual inspection. The drains have not been tested and it is not possible to comment on hidden areas. Where the drainage systems have not been traced, it is assumed that the drains are connected to the main sewer or an alternative and acceptable means of disposal)

Due to the limitations of our inspection a drainage test is recommended prior to proceeding further with the purchase of the property.

We understand that foul water drains to a biodigester which is positioned in the rear garden. All details appertaining to the installation of this machinery should be obtained and kept for future reference. You should also establish whether any recent works or clearing out have been undertaken.

Bio digester system in garden



Maintenance hole covers were lifted adjacent to the property and we did note some general ponding and waste build up. This suggests slightly shallow drain runs and it is therefore important that rodding through be undertaken. You would be prudent to have a CCTV test of the drains carried out, particularly bearing in mind proximity of tree roots close to the drain runs which may potentially be causing the slight blockage.

Drain runs require rodding through



Soil and ventilation pipes are present at the rear of the building and these are rather unsightly in part. Some appeared to be of older cement asbestos material and may be nearing the end of their useful life. Drainage ditches were noted adjacent to the main road. We are unaware of any flooding having affected the site although this should be raised as a specific question by your legal advisers.

Rather unsightly soil pipe arrangement



INTERNALLY

The interior of the property was inspected from ground floor level only. Furniture, wall hangings, floor coverings, insulation material and stored goods have not been moved.

Roof Spaces

It should be noted that the inspection of the roof space is confined to details of design and basic construction. Individual timbers have not been specifically examined for defects although where defects have been observed as part of the general examination, such defects are noted in this report)

Access was only possible to one roof void being at the rear of the building from a hatch on the upper staircase. A detailed examination was not possible bearing in mind timber boarding which has been incorporated below the timbers and no comment regarding supporting timbers or other materials can therefore be offered.

Rear roof void



Attic rooms have been incorporated with exposed timbers in many areas. There has been some recent strengthening/bracketing incorporated, particularly in the right hand void and, to a lesser extent, parts of the left. Works of this type may have been undertaken in conjunction with structural engineers advice and we suggest this be raised as a specific question.

Bracing on roof timbres



Modern bracing in right hand loft room



Poor ceilings are present in the attic rooms, particularly on the right and also the rear left where defective plaster should now be renewed.

Poor ceiling – right hand loft room



Poor ceiling – rear attic room



There is evidence of a previous fire in the right hand attic room.

Please note that we cannot comment on any underlining material below tiles or, indeed, insulation due to lack of access. No comment regarding these unseen parts can be provided.

Ceilings

There is always a potential for the use of asbestos sheeting in properties in terms of improvement made over the years. Care should therefore be taken at the time of undertaking any alterations and this includes where there is artex present as this does have an asbestos content and it is dangerous to release fibres from a health point of view.

Ceilings in the building are of lath and plaster construction although it is possible that one or two more modern areas of plasterboard have been incorporated, particularly to the lower kitchen and, indeed, possibly some of the bathrooms at upper levels. There are fairly noticeable uneven areas with loose plaster likely to require future replacement. In addition, we reiterate that many of the attic rooms are affected by deteriorating plaster ceilings which should be overhauled.

There are many exposed beams throughout the house giving an attractive feel to the ceiling areas. Some bolted repairs have been carried out to beams such as those in the right hand hallway and no obvious ongoing issues were noted.

Additional bracing on ceiling beams – right hand hall



There are areas of staining to ceilings which is not surprising bearing in mind the condition of the exterior parts and also the fact that some valleys have been subject to previous leaking. Other areas appeared to be affected by old leaks from sanitary fittings above and examples of this can be found in the main rear kitchen. No obvious ongoing dampness was identified.

With age, the bond between backing laths and plasterwork deteriorates and it is possible that some future shrinkage cracking will be experienced. Shrinkage cracks may also develop at the joints between plasterboards and also at the junction with adjacent walls. Occasional filling of cracks will more than likely be required as part of routine maintenance prior to decoration.

Walls and Partitions

In older type properties there is a potential for plasterwork to break down in terms of the bond between the plaster and wall itself. This particularly applies to lath and plaster construction and at the time of removal of decorations and wallpaper etc. can lead to a requirement for comprehensive replastering.

The internal faces of the main walls are of solid construction with plastered finish. Partitions are of solid construction and also areas of lath and plaster studwork.

As discussed in the **Structural Movement** section there are areas of internal settlement visible from distortion over a number of door heads. This is within acceptable limits and there was no indication of any recent or progressive deterioration.

Cracked plaster on left of first floor accommodation



There are many areas of uneven and hollow plaster throughout the property. Some replacement plaster will be required although, again, one should be mindful of the listed status and further advice will be required from the Listed Building Department of the Planning Authority in regard to suitable finishes.

Damp and poor plaster in many parts of the ground floor



Cracks were noted, particularly in the left hand part of the property including the left hand bedrooms and, indeed, the partition between the two left hand bedrooms. It is likely that some stitching in of cracks will be required in conjunction with replastering.

There are areas of poor plaster to other rooms including sections of the top floor landing with other areas throughout affected by general dampness. Replastering will be required in these areas and your attention is drawn to our comments in the **damp** section later in this report.

Action: Make provision for repair to internal plasterwork to include stitching of cracks as necessary.

Chimney Breasts, Fireplaces and Flues

(It is not possible to include the condition of flues or presence of flue liners. No assumption should be made as to the practicability of using the chimneys. It is recommended that any flues should be swept prior to occupation)

There is an attractive stone surround incorporating a solid fuel burner within the rear left hand ground floor reception room. There is also an open fire in the left hand front ground floor room together with what appeared to be a coal fire in the right hand reception room. Fittings were not tested during the survey and we suggest that any built in items such as solid fuel burners be appropriately serviced in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations.

Attractive fireplace – rear left hand reception



Other fireplace openings have been blocked and panelled over in the past including recess and shelf in the main kitchen although a number of decorative fittings were also present at first floor level.

It is unknown as to whether the fires can be used as working open units. However, in buildings of this age and type, flues are often decayed unless they have previously been relined. We understand that some relining has been carried out although we cannot confirm this to be the case in all flues.

Floors

(Only the surface of floors which are not covered have been inspected but accessible corners or any coverings were lifted where possible to identify the nature of the surface beneath)

Fitted carpets, floor coverings and general household items within the building prevented a detailed inspection of all floor finishes.

The ground floor is of part solid and part suspended timber construction. The upper floors are of suspended timber.

The solid floor showed evidence of general unevenness which is not surprising bearing in mind the general ununiformed nature of the flagstone finish. There are some loose flagstones in the right hand hallway which should be improved. We understand that some tanking and damp proof works may have been carried out to the floor below the “lower” kitchen although we cannot confirm this to be the case on other solid floors at ground level.

Uneven flagstones in right hand hall



The suspended timber floors at ground floor level will be at risk from both wet and dry rot given the levels of dampness adjacent which will be discussed in later parts of the report.

Upper floors have certainly been affected by deflection which is in keeping with the general movement/settlement having affected the property as a whole. Distortions are within acceptable limits and certainly not unusual for a building of this age and character.

There are one or two loose and damaged boards throughout the property and examples of this can certainly be seen in the small study area off the smallest first floor bedroom. Refixing of individual boards is likely to be required.

Sub floor ventilation has been incorporated for the suspended timber floors at ground floor level. A number of these have open joints with the stonework adjacent and this could potentially encourage rodent infestation. Repairs around the vents are necessary.

You have no doubt made your own assessment of the floor finishes and may wish to change these in accordance with your own particular taste.

Sub floor ventilation should be improved



Dampness

(A moisture detecting meter has been used in selected accessible positions, without moving furniture, floor coverings, fixtures and fittings, to test for dampness)

Tests were taken with a moisture meter at random points to internal wall, floor and other surfaces. There is evidence of dampness throughout the ground floor accommodation which, again, is not considered unexpected in a building of this age and type. At upper levels there are also areas of dampness, particularly areas such as the left hand flank wall which is as a result of general deterioration to pointing and joinery. Repairs are recommended to dampness to include allied exterior repairs to prevent ongoing issues.

Action: You should instruct a suitably competent damp treatment specialist (one familiar with historic buildings) to carry out an inspection of the property and provide estimates for repairs as necessary. This should also include hacking off and replacement of any damp affected plaster and renewal to a standard appropriate for a listed building of this type.

No indication of condensation defects noted at the time of our inspection. However, many properties are affected by condensation and should this occur during the normal usage of the building you should endeavour to maintain a suitable balance between background heating, permanent ventilation and insulation.

Timber Infestation

There is evidence of wood boring beetle infestation and, indeed, Death Watch beetle throughout the building which can be seen on the ground, first and top floor levels. This has also affected areas such as the older staircase and it is clear that repairs are now required.

You will note in the previous section that we have referred to fairly significant dampness throughout the property. Timbers in close contact will be at risk from both wet and dry rot. At the time of repairing damp, all adjacent timbers should be exposed, checked and made good as necessary.

Rot was also noted to areas such as the inner face of windows and examples of this can be seen adjacent to shutters and on window shelves in the rear left hand reception and the first floor rear left hand bedrooms.

Action: Instruct a suitable competent timber treatment specialist to carry out an inspection of the property and provide estimates for repair in relation to any rot, wood boring beetle infestation or other timber defects.

Worm/rot in skirting boards of rear left hand reception



Evidence of wood worm – upper staircase



Internal Joinery

Internal joinery comprises timber panel doors, timber skirting boards and door frames together with the inner faces of windows. Joinery is particularly attractive in areas including the historic main staircase which will require a degree of restoration. This has been affected by wood boring beetle infestation and specialist repairs are recommended.

Kitchen fittings are rather basic and we suspect that you will probably wish to update these as part of nay refurbishment plans.

Please note our comments in relation to windows as a number of these will require replacement sash cords and general easing to allow satisfactory operation.

Doors in the first floor WC area comprise elements of cement asbestos. This is unlikely to have any significant health implication provided that it remains in an undamaged condition. Nevertheless, we suspect that you will probably wish for said materials to be removed. This should be done so by a licenced contractor and disposed of on a designated site.

The right hand staircase appeared to be in reasonable condition although there is one missing section on the right which should be refixed.

View of “lower” kitchen



Internal Decorations

(Furnishings have not been moved to confirm the state of covered or hidden decoration, which may be damaged or faded.)

Internal decoration is marked and deteriorating in a number of areas. You have no doubt made your own assessment of the decoration and may wish to carry out some changes in accordance with your own particular requirements.

Other

There is always a potential for the use of asbestos sheeting in properties in terms of improvement made over the years. Care should therefore be taken at the time of undertaking any alterations and this includes where there is artex present as this does have an asbestos content and it is dangerous to release fibres from a health point of view. Where cement asbestos products are present to walls or ceilings they are unlikely to have any significant health implication provided that they remain in an undamaged condition. However, certain contractors may resist working on such products from a health and safety perspective.

Thermal Insulation

It is recommended that a report is obtained from a specialist company with regard to the thermal efficiency of this property as required. Enquiries should be made at the time of carrying out searches with regard to cavity constructed properties in terms of assessing as to whether cavity wall insulation is present. If this is the case, it should be ensured that there is a suitable guarantee in existence backed by an insurance indemnity or a reputable company such as ICI. Cavity foam has been known to have an adverse effect upon wall ties and furthermore, can over a period of years, disintegrate and turn to powder in certain circumstances causing irritation.

The solid walls and single glazed windows of this property will give a poor standard of thermal insulation and a fair amount of heat loss must therefore be expected.

Please note that we cannot comment on any insulation in the majority of the roof spaces due to lack of access. Wool quilted fibreglass insulation was noted in the rear roof void although this is poorly distributed at the present time and should be improved.

SERVICES

(No tests have been carried out. Only significant defects and deficiencies readily apparent from a visual inspection are reported. Compliance with regulations and adequacy of design, conditions or efficiency can only be assessed as a result of a test and, should you require any further information in this respect, it is essential that you should obtain reports from appropriate specialists before entering into a legal commitment to purchase).

Specialist advice should include information relating to non-return and anti-siphon valves where required by appropriate Regulations.

Electricity

Where applicable, you should confirm whether or not there is a certificate of completion from an NIC EIC registered electrician confirming that circuits were wired to the appropriate IEE Regulations. It should however be borne in mind that Regulations change frequently and that the wiring circuits may not comply with the latest Regulations. We cannot in any event confirm the condition or functioning of the wiring circuits in the absence of a specialist test. If there is no record of an electrical test having been carried out within the past five years, the installation should be tested to NIC EIC standards.

The property is believed to be connected to the main electrical supply and we noted MCB's incorporated in the rear lobby. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the system are rather dated and poorly fitted including significant amounts of surface laid electric cable and rather randomly positioned plug outlets.

MCB's in rear lobby



Surface laid cable to many areas



Surface laid cable in many areas



Please note that without the benefit of a specialist report we are not able to comment on the overall condition or standard of installation. If there is no record of an electrical test having been carried out within the past five years, we do recommend that the installation be tested by a suitably competent electrician (preferably NIC EIC registered) with all recommendations implemented. Thereafter, the installation should be retested every five years.

Action: Make contingency plans for updating of the wiring system.

Gas

It is recommended that enquiries are made of the local Gas Board with regard to the age and likely condition of all systems and pipework connected to this property and their recommendations followed with regard to checking and servicing systems prior to proceeding further.

There did not appear to be any gas serving the property as far as we are aware.

Plumbing and Heating

Our inspection was naturally limited to areas completely visible and we were therefore unable to inspect plumbing covered e.g. by panelling or beneath floorboards etc. We are therefore unable to comment with regard to condition and potential leaking. Naturally in older style properties, it is quite possible that obsolete lead pipework which can have an adverse effect upon health is connected, e.g. cold water feed pipework etc. With regard to central heating systems, it is recommended that the system to include all plumbing and radiators etc. is fully tested and serviced by a suitable central heating specialist e.g. Corgi Approved for gas systems, prior to proceeding further.

The plumbing where visible comprises copper pipework with PVC waste pipes and traps. We found no indication of significant leaking at the time of our survey although the majority of pipework is concealed in ducts and floors and was not accessible for inspection.

Given the concealed nature of plumbing we are not able to categorically confirm that no lead pipework exists within this building. Should this be encountered during any future repairs then consideration should be given to upgrading with modern copper or PVC pipe runs.

The stop cock and other controlling valves have not been inspected or tested for operational effectiveness. It is important that their presence be established in case of bursts or leaks.

There is an oil fired central heating system powered by a Worcester Danesmoor 20/25 boiler located in an external store. Hot water is stored in a lagged copper cylinder in the first floor bathroom. The system is partly linked to steel panel radiators.

In our opinion, the boiler is unlikely to be appropriate for a full central heating system in this building, particularly if all bathrooms are being used at the same time. It is likely that extension and updating of the system will be required, potentially incorporating a larger mains pressure water tank. If the system is to be retained then functional tests should ideally be arranged in the absence of any recent test certificates.

There are one or two electric night storage units with examples to be found in the lower kitchen. These could not be tested during the survey.

Action: Obtain estimates for improvement of the heating and hot water system in accordance with your own particular requirements.

Oil fired boiler in store shed



Sanitary Appliances

Sanitary fittings are rather mismatched and dated although there is a relatively modern white bathroom/WC suite at first floor level. Taps were turned on and WCs flushed and these appeared to be operating effectively during the survey.

Please note that all seals around sanitary fittings should be maintained intact to prevent the risk of water penetration affecting adjacent timber and plasterwork.

You have no doubt made your own assessment of the current sanitary fittings and will probably wish to update in accordance with your own particular requirements.

STATUTORY MATTERS

We are not aware of any adverse planning, highway or other statutory proposals which are likely to adversely affect the property although these matters should be confirmed by your Solicitor prior to exchange of contracts.

It is important to ascertain as to whether the property is within proximity of a mobile telephone mast. These can be concealed in obscure places to include within chimneys, burglar alarms and drainpipes as well as places such as church spires, petrol station canopies and tree tops. Although current advice is that there is no evidence that these masts threaten health, opposition to them is growing across the UK. Apart from a potential adverse effect upon health there could be an adverse effect upon value.

The National Radiological Protection Board has identified the area in which the property is situated as one which, in more than one percent of dwellings, the levels of Radon gas entering the property may be such that remedial action is recommended. We cannot comment on Radon gas within this property and you may wish for tests to be arranged through The National Radiological Protection Board.

Ownership of the various boundaries around the site should be ascertained so that you are aware of your responsibilities in this respect.

Your legal advisers should make specific enquiries regarding any previous issues/treatment with Japanese knotweed on the site.

Details regarding rights of way across the driveway should be clarified by your legal advisers.

The property is believed to be subject to a Grade II * listing. It is important that this be borne in mind when undertaking any refurbishment. Changes should be carried out with expressed Listed Building Consent.

SUMMARY

A large period manor house situated in reasonable sized grounds in the hamlet of Socks Lane a short drive from Riverview in Bristol. It offers good sized and flexible living accommodation which is clearly in need of refurbishment and general improvement in accordance with your own particular taste.

Ideally, you would be prudent to obtain estimates for refurbishment prior to exchange of contracts so that you are aware of your financial commitments in this respect.

Provided that the recommendations in the report are carried out to a good standard we can see no particular reason why there should be any special difficulty upon resale given normal market conditions.

FULL BUILDING SURVEY

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

This report is presented on the basis of the following conditions: -

1. We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure and services which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible. We are, therefore, unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defects. It should be appreciated that there are parts of all structures which cannot be inspected fully and whilst a careful survey was made, our inspection will be limited in those properties that are occupied, fully furnished or have close fitting carpeting or covering to floors.
2. The Report will not purport to express an opinion about or to advise upon the condition of uninspected parts and should not be taken as making any implied representation or statement about such parts.
3. That it was not possible to inspect the interiors of the chimney flues.
4. This report is for your use and whilst it may be shown to other professional advisers acting for your, the contents are not to be disclosed to, nor made use of, by any third party without our express prior written consent. Without such consent, we cannot accept responsibility to any third party.
5. When carrying out an inspection of a flat, the inspection will include the interior of the subject flat, all communal areas and services where accessible, together with external grounds, boundaries, outbuildings, etc. We exclude the interiors of other flats within the property unless they are relevant to the subject flat.
6. No tests to services have been undertaken and our observations are based on a superficial and visual inspection only. The Surveyor will not be responsible for arranging specialist tests of drains, gas supply, plumbing, electrical wiring, and switch gear, domestic hot water or central heating systems.
7. In making this report, the following assumptions will be made: -
 - (a) That no high alumina cement or calcium chloride additive or other detrimental material was used in the construction of the property.
 - (b) It should be noted that there are high levels of potentially dangerous 'Radon' gas isolated parts of the South West. We are not able to undertake tests and suggest that specialist advice is therefore obtained as required.
 - (c) That the property is not subject to any usual or especially onerous restrictions, encumbrance or outgoings.
 - (d) That the property and its value are unaffected by any matter which should be revealed by a local search and replies to the usual enquiries or by any statutory notice.

8. Any recommended repair estimates or investigations advised within the report should be undertaken prior to exchange of contracts.
9. It is not possible to carry out a detailed examination of all sections of sites in relation to Japanese knotweed. If this is an important part of the purchase specialist advice should be obtained from a competent Knotweed company.
10. Complaints Handling Procedure. A copy of the firm's complaints handling procedure is available on request.

MAINTENANCE

It is essential to maintain a building in good repair in order to protect one's investment and to alleviate serious defects becoming established. On this basis periodic inspections should take place and for your assistance we detail below the following items: -

EXTERNALLY

Chimney Stacks

Carry out regular inspections of flashings to chimney stacks to ensure that they are not lifting as this will cause damp penetration. A high level of care should take place if chimney pots are handled as they are made of clay, heavy and often brittle.

Roof

Repairs to the roof itself should be carried out by specialist firms of contractors. It is recommended that the roof space is examined at least once a year in respect of timbers as well as the plumbing contained therein. Diligent attention is required where a centre valley configuration exists and particular attention should be paid to cracked and dislodged tiles/slates as well as hip and ridge tiles. It should be ensured that there is adequate ventilation into roof void areas as any ingress of water could result in dry rot becoming established.

Rainwater Equipment

Inspect and clear rainwater gutters at least once a year to remove leaves and debris. Ensure that joints are sound and well secured to brackets and regularly redecorate metal goods.

External Joinery

Timbers subject to wet rot can be far more serious than is often thought. It is essential, therefore, to replace and repair defective joinery and to carry out regular redecoration. It is generally accepted that late summer is the best time to redecorate when woodwork is at its driest. Ideally all paintwork should be burnt off, treated and sealed and primed prior to redecoration.

Brickwork

Pointing between brickwork should be checked and if cracked, repaired. Any defective bricks should be renewed with suitable second-hand matching bricks. Defective external finishes such as render should be made good in order to ensure that the building stays waterproof.

A particular problem which is now becoming apparent is wall tie failure. Particularly in houses that are over 50 years old. Unfortunately, in reports prepared in respect of properties of a cavity construction, it is not possible to comment upon the condition of wall ties, although we would be pleased to put you in touch with a specialist firm. Failure often takes the form of increasing gaps along the horizontal mortar lines and this should be particularly monitored.

It is import to periodically walk around the house to ensure that air bricks are clear of blockage and that the external levels are well below the damp proof course.

Drains

Lift inspection chambers at least twice a year and ensure that there is no blockage.

INTERNALLY

Dampness

Inspect for any signs of damp staining which is usually due to the following items: -

- a) External penetration.
- b) Internal leaks.
- c) Condensation.

Dampness can lead to fungal attack and deterioration to both the integrity of the structure and decorations. If there is evidence of dampness, initially trace it to the source and rectify it immediately. Damp penetration can lead to decay to unexposed timbers and can cause dry rot. It is usual that free estimates can be obtained by specialist firms of damp proofing experts and if it is considered that the matter is serious, a firm of this type should be contacted immediately.

Timber Infestation

Usually the most serious form of infestation is dry rot. It thrives in damp, unventilated and humid conditions where fungus will breed. This fungus removes the moisture out of the timber and forces it to lose all its inherent strength. It can spread within a building, through plasterwork and walls in a very short period of time and repair work is normally extremely expensive and can run into many thousands of pounds. It is not uncommon for a serious attack of dry rot to become established in weeks rather than months.

There is an increasing degree of woodworm infestation, especially in view of recent mild winters and available timbers should be checked on a regular basis, e.g. under stairs and roof void, etc. Treatment with the benefit of a long guarantee can be undertaken by a specialist firm of eradicators and again normally a free inspection can be obtained.

Floors

When floorboards become loose, it is recommended that they are resecured in order to prevent accidents and so as not to result in undue wear to carpets and other floor coverings.

Services

All services should be regularly inspected in the interest of safety and it is essential that annual servicing takes place to central heating boilers in order to ensure that the system is operating as efficiently as possible as this will cut fuel bills.

OSBORNE IRISH ASSOCIATES
Chartered Surveyors

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M O'HARA, BSc FRICS

House Diagram

