BUILDING SURVEY

Property Address: The Pest House
Claygate Road
Laddingford
Kent
ME18 6BB

Inspection Date: 1st May 2014

Client Name and Address: Wealden Homes
Wealden Court
Church Street
Teston
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Kent
ME18 5AG

Dated: 3rd May 2014

Ashenden Graham Chartered Surveyors
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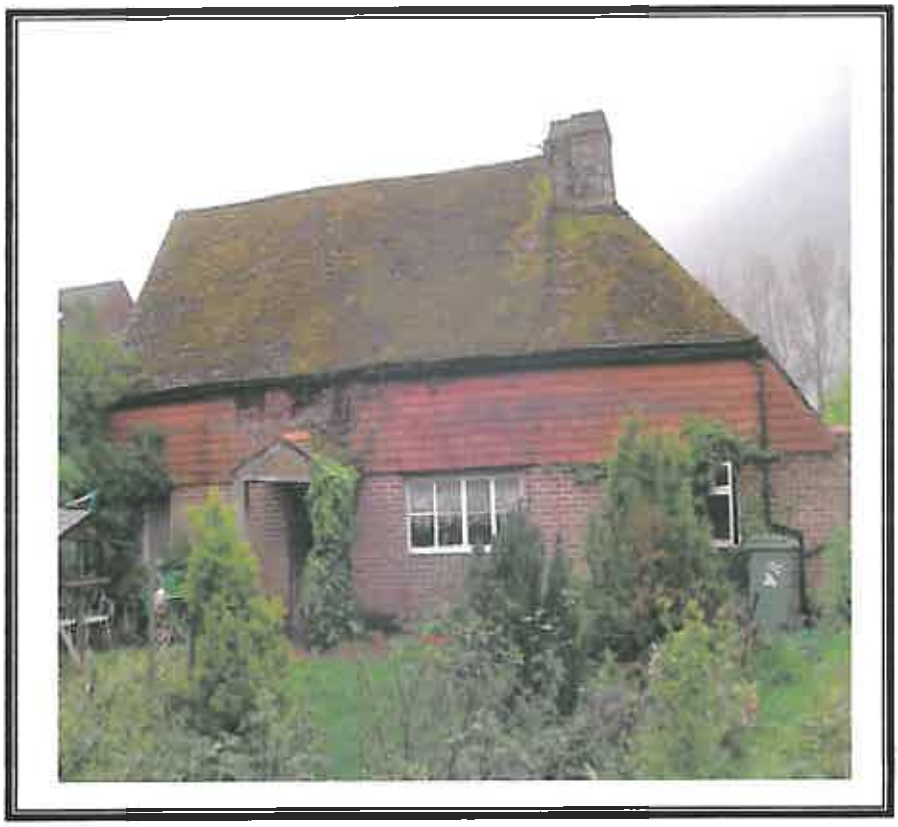
Established since
1995

The Pest House Claygate Road Laddingford Kent



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INTRODUCTION

1.01 In accordance with your telephoned and subsequent e-mailed instructions of the 23rd April 2014, we have carried out an inspection of the above property for the purpose of reporting to you generally on the structure of the premises.

1.02 We inspected the property on Thursday 1st May 2014.

1.03 The weather was overcast, mild and wet.

1.04 The property was occupied (tenanted), fully furnished and many of the floors had fitted carpets or other such floor coverings, which severely limited our inspection.

1.05 We must therefore state at the outset of this report, that our inspection was carried out under difficult conditions and as such has imposed obvious reporting limitations.

1.06 It should be noted that further investigations of the structure may be recommended in this report in connection with dampness, dry rot or faulty wiring for example.

1.07 If such recommendations are made, it will be necessary to be made aware of the extent and cost of major repairing works by instructing a specialist to investigate the structure further, **prior to legal commitment to purchase**.

LIMITATIONS

2.01 We have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which were covered, unexposed or inaccessible and are therefore unable to report that such parts of the property are free from rot, beetle damage and other defects.

2.02 We would also draw your attention to the limitations mentioned in the body of the report and wish to point out that this report is intended for the purpose for which it refers.

2.03 In accordance with our usual practice we must state that this report is for the use only of the party to whom it is addressed and that no responsibility is accepted to any third party for the whole or part of its contents.

2.04 Furthermore, the report may not be reproduced either in whole or in part without the express written consent of Ashenden Graham Chartered Surveyors.

THE PROPERTY

DESCRIPTION 3.0

3.01 The property comprises a Grade II Listed and extended detached house, originally constructed it is understood during the 16th Century, having a 20th Century rear addition.

3.02 The property fronts a commercial/industrial site in a predominantly rural environment, which offers limited local facilities, but is within reasonable proximity of all urban amenities in Maidstone.

TENURE 4.0

4.01 We understand this is a freehold property and that full vacant possession will be available on completion.

ACCOMMODATION 5.0

5.01 The accommodation which is arranged on two floors comprises:

First floor: Two Bedrooms.

Ground floor: One Bedroom, Two Reception Rooms, Kitchen, Bathroom/W.C.

5.02 Where describing the accommodation and defects found within the structure, we would like to point out that this is described as if one is facing the front elevation.

5.03 For further ease of identification of defects, you might like to note that the property faces roughly north.

EXTERNAL

THE ROOF 6.0

6.01 The main roof structure is of traditional pitched and hipped timber framed design with cat slide, incorporating a plain concrete tiled covering with matching half-round ridge and bonnet hip tiles.

6.02 There is a pitched and felt covered single storey rear extension, which has been turnerised (weatherproofed) at some past in the past.

6.03 Our inspection of the roof coverings was achieved mainly through the use of binoculars from ground level, which revealed the following points/defects:

We must firstly state that our inspection of the front roof pitch was made extremely difficult due to dense moss growth, and as a consequence, the overall condition of the tiles to this part of the building cannot be confirmed.

It is however essential that the moss growth is removed, and you should expect some deterioration to the surface of the tiles due to moisture ingress/possible frost action.

The rear roof section revealed one or two broken tiles, a number are also working loose, and slight undulation was evident, which is typical of structures of this age and construction. The tiles are also supporting moss growth, which once again will need to be removed.

The abutment detailing adjacent to the chimney stack is poor and will need to be re-detailed. and the mortar bed along the left verges is in need of repair work.

The covering to the catslide section generally remains in reasonable order, but a course at eaves level have dropped and are working loose and a broken tile was also identified. The tiles are also supporting moss growth.

The exposed rafter feet and plates, found to the open eaves, revealed some customary weathering, light timber decay and timber infestation, but timbers can be readily repaired if required using an Epoxy resin.

Further timber decay was evident to the exposed rafter ends to the cat slide roof as evidenced through failing fascia boards. The extent of the deterioration is not considered excessive or structurally significant, but further repairs should be undertaken, once again using an Epoxy resin or scarfing-in new timber work.

The pitched and felt covered single storey rear extension, which has been turnerised (weatherproofed) at some past in the past, is at present, restricting moisture ingress. However, the edgings are deteriorating and failing, and dense vegetation growth needs to be removed. It is clear that this covering will require replacement within the very short term.

FOUNDATIONS AND WALLS 7.0

7.01 Without excavating, it is not possible to report fully upon the condition of the foundations. However, we found no evidence of recent movement that would lead us to be suspicious of the foundations generally.

7.02 For your information, reference to geological survey maps of the area, indicates the sub-soil to comprise Weald clay.

7.03 As you are no doubt aware clay is noted for its elasticity and dimensional changes in extreme weather conditions, for example hot dry periods. This can lead to distress in a structure in the form of heave and subsidence.

7.04 Whilst we could find no evidence of such movement during the course of our inspection, future movement cannot be discounted bearing in mind the dry weather conditions which are now being predicted as the norm for this country.

7.05 In view of this, it is essential that any buildings insurance makes adequate provision for heave and subsidence.

7.06 The main load bearing walls/frame are constructed in a two-bay oak box frame with brick facing and part plain concrete tiled cladding.

7.07 The single storey rear extension would appear to be constructed in solid brick/bockwork with part textured and rendered elevations.

7.05 The main walls/frame where accessible were thoroughly inspected and the following points/defects were noted:

There are signs to suggest isolated differential settlement to the flank elevation of the cat slide indicated by stepped cracking following the line of pointing below the window sill.

Further horizontal and vertical cracking generally following the line of pointing was also evident above the window due, almost exclusively, to a badly rusting/failing cast iron lintel.

It is likely that this part of the cat slide, in and around the window opening, will need partial rebuilding, and all cracking should be repaired in order to reduce the risk of damp penetration. The missing course of brickwork noted behind the failing fascia boards will also need to be replaced.

There has been some slight loss of verticality to the facing brick of the front elevation, but this is not considered excessive, and there were no visible or obvious indications of ongoing structural movement.

There has also been some slight over-turning to the facing brick to the rear elevation, along with horizontal hairline cracking following the line of the pointing. Once again, there are no clear or obvious indications of recent or ongoing structural distress, but the pointing will need to be repaired in order to reduce the risk of damp penetration.

Evidence of poor detailing to the rear of the structure at its junction with the rear extension was also evident, indicted by a noticeable gap between the cladding and brickwork and some re-pointing/re-detailing in order to reduce the risk of damp penetration will be required.

The tile cladding, found to the upper elevations, for the most part remains in reasonable order, but a number of tiles are working loose and will require re-fixing, and there is poor detailing round the rear window at first floor level where bird ingress is occurring. It is likely that the tiles in this area will need to be stripped and re-detailed.

We should point out at this juncture that our inspection of the left-hand flank elevation (east) was made particularly difficult due to restricted access and overhanging trees/vegetation growth. There were however no visible or obvious indications of significant deficiencies to this elevation.

We will comment further on the timber frame under Section 15 Ceilings, Walls and Partitions.

The sub standard single storey rear extension whilst remaining structurally sound is showing distinct signs of wear and tear, and the render coat is cracking/failing and loosing key, which is likely to require re-rendering. Dense vegetation will need to be removed.

DAMP PROOF COURSE AND SUB-FLOOR VENTILATION 8.0

8.01 During the course of our inspection, every attempt was made to locate the damp proof course. The following points/defects were noted:

We are able to report that we found evidence of a bituminous felt damp proof course to the main building, which generally remains intact and for the most part at an adequate distance above ground level. However, ground levels are considered too high along the cat slide elevation, which forms the concrete driveway to the industrial site, and do indeed exceed internal floor levels by as much as 225mm.

External ground levels were also noted to be high along the front elevation, and ideally a distance of 150mm/6" should be maintained between external levels and the damp proof course in order to reduce the risk of damp penetration.

Ironically, although the concrete drive leading to the commercial/industrial site exceeds internal ground levels, this may have aided structural efficiency to this part of the cat slide. Neverthless, external ground levels will need to be reduced or a French drain produced in order to reduce the risk of damp penetration, which is almost certainly occurring in the kitchen behind the units.

As far as we could tell there is no sub-floor ventilation in this building but we will comment further in this regard Under Section 17 The Floors.

CHIMNEY STACKS AND FLASHINGS 9.0

9.01.1 The property is provided with a single side stack to the main building, being formed in brick and supporting a television aerial with further single stack in brick with satellite dish found to the rear extension.

9.02 Our inspection of the chimney stacks was achieved from ground level using binoculars and the following points/defects were noted:

There are indications that the stack has migrated inwards, indicated by a slight loss of verticality. This discrepancy in verticality is not considered excessive and has not lead to any visible or obvious indications of structural failure to the chimney stack.

The stack itself revealed evidence of weathering and open pointing, which will need to be raked out and re-pointed in order to reduce the risk of damp penetration.

The tiled and cement fillets at the base of the chimney stack are cracking and failing and re-detailing is now required.

It is clear that the top section of the stack has been rebuilt in previous years and it is more than likely that this will have pre-dated Listing.

The extension stack remains in reasonable order revealing nothing other than some customary weathering to brickwork, and there were no obvious signs of serious defect. At present the lead apron flashing remains intact

GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES 10.0

10.01 The property is provided with half round section UPVC gutters and downpipes, which discharge underground and into open trapped gullies, and thence we assume to soakaways.

10.02 The rainwater goods were mainly viewed through binoculars from ground level and the following points/defects were noted:

The rainwater gutters are over turning along the front elevation of the main building and cat slide, due in the latter respect to fascia boards which have completely failed through timber decay. The rainwater gutters to the rear of the building are also missing.

There is now a clear need to attend to the rainwater fittings for obvious reasons, but more so to the cat slide, where surface water is now cascading down the face of the brickwork, which ill undoubtedly result in internal damp penetration and possible timber decay.

The rainwater fittings to the rear extension revealed no sign of obvious leakage but do require the removal of dense vegetation growth.

EXTERNAL JOINERY, DOORS, WINDOWS AND FRAMES 11.0

11.01 The front door comprises a panelled timber fitment with fixed light, with tiled porch canopy on timber posts.

11.02 There are timber framed and ledges doors to the rear extension with fixed light.

11.03 The windows comprise fixed, top and side-hung single glazed timber casements with metal fixed light to the cat slide roof.

11.04 The following points/defects were noted:

The front door remains in a serviceable state of repair, revealing nothing other than some slight weathering and old common furniture beetle, but the introduction of mastic sealant around the doorframes would be considered a useful addition.

The tiled canopy has subsided due to timber decay at the bottom of the supporting posts, exacerbated by the presence of dense ivy growth, the tiled

covering is failing and the timber plates have been affected by timber infestation.

It is also likely that there is an asbestos containing material to the ceiling section, which is more than likely formed in asbestos cement. It is clear that the porch canopy requires rebuilding and the asbestos containing material can be disposed of under controlled conditions for the removal of an asbestos containing material at the same time.

The ledged doors to the extension are in a poor state of repair due to extensive timber decay and replacement rather than repair would be considered more economic. The side light is also failing through extensive decay.

The windows throughout the property were noted to be open jointed and weathered, and are supporting extensive timber decay, and once again, replacement rather than repair is likely to be more cost effective.

We should point out at this juncture that our inspection of the first floor front window could not be undertaken in any detail due to a layer of dense, but dead ivy growth, the remnants of which should be removed.

The fixed light to the cat slide is deteriorating and would benefit from being replaced with a modern equivalent, taking into account of course the fact that this is a Listed Building. In fact this applies to the replacement of all windows in this structure with the exception of the rear extension, which is unlikely to be Listed by association.

The fascia boards have failed, especially along the cat slide through extensive timber decay, which will need to be replaced, and further decay is affecting the fascia boards to the extension to include, and to a lesser degree, a small section of shiplap boarding to the extension. Corner planking is also supporting some evidence of decay and a general overhaul is required.

EXTERNAL DECORATIONS 12.0

12.01 The external decorations are showing distinct signs of wear and tear and are clearly overdue for redecoration, which it is recommended is put in hand as soon as is practicable in order to prevent further deterioration.

INTERNAL

THE ROOF SPACE 13.0

13.01 We can confirm that we were able to gain access to the main roof structure by means of a hinged trap found to the first floor landing.

13.02 The roof structure where visible comprises a traditionally constructed close couple roof with common rafters and hangar and an underlying layer of roofing felt.

13.04 The following points/defects were noted:

We can confirm that the roof work where visible revealed no sign of obvious defects and there were no indications of loss of structural integrity or efficiency.

The common rafters have however been affected by common furniture beetle, and what appears to be death watch beetle and partial replacement may be required.

We must point out at this juncture that a large amount of stored personal effects severely restricted the inspection of the roof space and the area over the cat slide, and as a consequence, a full and detailed inspection of this area could not be carried out.

It is however clear that there are several floor levels within this part of the building, which would have been created over the centuries, possible to provide some form of habitable accommodation.

The roofing felt where visible appears serviceable. However, the area most likely to perish is immediately adjacent to the eaves and this could not be fully inspected.

THERMAL INSULATION 14.0

14.01 The visible roof space has been provided with glass fibre insulation quilt laid between the ceiling joists.

14.02 The quilt does not comply with current Codes of Practice and this should ideally be increased in thickness to a minimum depth of 270/300mm.

14.03 No other measures would appear to have been taken to effectively reduce heat losses from the building.

14.04 The Energy Performance of Buildings Directive came into force in January 2006, and has been implemented through changes to Part L of the Building Regulations.

14.05 As a direct result, energy savings measures are required on both domestic and non-domestic buildings, with current energy efficiency standards needing to be raised by twenty five percent.

14.06 Energy efficiency improvements will not only be required on extensions to buildings, but also to the building being extended.

14.07 From 1st August 2007, all homeowners of property with four or more bedrooms are required to pay for an Energy Performance Certificate, which will be required as a condition of any sale.

14.08 Further information can be obtained in the Building Regulations section of www.communities.gov.uk/homeinformationpacks

CEILINGS, WALLS AND PARTITIONS 15.0

15.01 The ceilings throughout the property would appear to be a mixture of materials including plywood, hardboard, possibly asbestos cement and plasterboard, being provided with a textured and polystyrene tiled finish at the time of inspection.

15.02 The walls comprise a 2-bay oak box frame, which has been painted, and which includes tie beams, top and intermediate plates, jowl posts and up-bracing with part solid and lightweight infilling panels.

15.03 There is evidence of dry lining throughout the building, likely to be in the form of mixed materials, including plywood, hardboard, asbestos cement boarding and possibly lath and plaster work, being generally lined and emulsioned and part tiled.

15.04 The partitions are of both solid and lightweight construction with infill panels of materials consistent with the wall surfaces generally.

15.05 The following points/defects were noted:

Our inspection of the ceiling surfaces generally revealed some customary unevenness and looseness of the infilling material, and replacement as part of refurbishment should be expected.

The ceilings have in part been provided with a textured finish. Such coatings applied prior to 1985 can incorporate an asbestos content. Due care and attention should be taken when working with such material. However, as long as the surface of the texture remains intact and undisturbed there is unlikely to be any significant health risk.

The polystyrene tiles noted within the building do however constitute a fire hazard and these should be removed. It is also likely that the underlying surfaces will need to be repaired once the tiles have been removed.

The wall surfaces revealed some customary marking and surface discolouration along with some unevenness to the infilling panels, generally due to the use of lath and plasterwork.

The infill panels have also been provided with a variety of materials, which is likely to comprise asbestos cement and our previous comments regarding potential health hazards must be accepted.

We must point out that a number of elevations within the building have been dry lined and it is therefore impossible to comment on the condition of the underlying masonry or indeed timber frame.

You should be made aware that dry lining may hide dampness or defects that would otherwise be visible and it is therefore essential that moisture does not penetrate the internal face of the building by maintaining the integrity of the pointing and tile cladding.

The timber frame, which is in the form of a 2-bay box frame, revealed no sign of significant defects and there were no visible indications of buckling, racking or sheering and the overall structural integrity of the frame can be confirmed.

The partitions remain satisfactory and perform their function adequately and no recent movement was noted. It is however clear that partition settlement has occurred in the building, indicated by the door heads being out of true. This is of no cause for concern and is quite typical in properties of this age and construction.

We have made mention throughout this section of materials that may contain asbestos. This is quite common in properties of this age where repairs or improvements have been carried out over the centuries, and this type of material, in terms of cladding/dry lining or indeed texturing, is common.

There are of course health risks associated with the use of asbestos and through the inhalation of asbestos fibres, and should you proceed with the purchase of the structure then we would recommend an asbestos survey by a licensed specialist contractor **before proceeding to exchange of contracts**. All work should comply with Statutory Regulations under the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.

We should like to draw to your attention some reporting limitations bearing in mind the amount of stored personal effects found within this building, in particular to bedroom 2 on the first floor, the ground floor bedroom, and the living room extension where large amounts of stored personal effects severely restricted our inspection.

FIREPLACES, FLUES AND CHIMNEY BREASTS 16.0

16.01 There are what appear to be stone built/clad fireplaces throughout the ground floor, in part provided with a cast iron wood burning stove found to the extension living room.

16.02 There is a sealed fireplace opening within the sitting room, to the main building, and apparently a further and sealed fireplace opening behind the bed head within the principal bedroom.

16.02 The following points/defects were noted:

We must firstly advise that we were unable to inspect the flues throughout the building and are therefore unable to confirm the condition of these areas or that same remain free of defect.

If it is your intention to use any of the existing fireplace openings for the burning of solid fuel or other appliances, then we strongly recommend that you seek specialist advice prior to use.

It is possible that either lining, reconstructing or raising the height of the chimneys may be required to ensure efficient operation and compliance with current regulations.

If you are in any doubt in this regard then we would recommend that you contact either a member of the Solid Fuel Advisory Service or National Association of Chimney Sweeps prior to use.

It is also likely that the original flue linings, if any, in a property of this age have perished and will require renewal.

Our inspection of the visible elements relating to the fireplaces and fireplace openings revealed no signs of significant defect, although a section of masonry has blown beneath the sitting room hearth within the original building.

In accordance with our Standard Terms of Engagement no test was carried out on the wood burning stove and it must be considered likely, bearing in mind its age, that this will need to be replaced.

THE FLOORS 17.0

17.01 The floors throughout the property are a combination of suspended timber and solid construction, being mostly close carpet covered and provided with a vinyl finish at the time of inspection.

17.02 Our inspection of the floors was severely restricted as a consequence of the floor coverings, and also as a result of the fully occupied status of the property, and we would therefore refer you to Section 1 of our Report and also our Standard Terms of Engagement which are appended to this Report.

17.03 However, we can confirm that as far as possible the floors were thoroughly inspected where accessible and the following points/defects were noted:

We must firstly state that no inspection what so ever could be made within the second bedroom at first floor level, as this is currently being used for storage purposes and prevented any physical access to this room.

The remaining floors, whilst supporting a large amount of stored personal effects, revealed some spring and some noticeable deflection, principally towards the rear left-hand corner within bedroom 2 in sympathy with past movement within the building.

This discrepancy in floor levels is not considered excessive for a building of this age and construction, but re-levelling the floor would be considered uneconomic and likely to be impracticable, and could impact on the overall dynamics of the building if this course of action was adopted.

The remaining floors throughout the first floor accommodation were noted to be generally without significant deficiencies, and there were no indications of excessive spring or deflection in these areas.

The suspended timber ground floors were also extremely difficult to inspect due to a large amount of stored personal effects, but failure was identified within the bedroom, the kitchen adjacent to the door opening, along with the beginnings of failure within the sitting room of the main building.

We believe this is the result of poor detailing to the sub-floor voids, where floor joists have more than likely been laid directly onto bare earth with no method of damp proofing, resulting in timber decay.

It must be considered likely that the floors will need to be replaced, but the extent of deterioration and decay within the floor voids will need to be established in order to determine the likely costs in carrying out remedial repair work/replacement, and a further inspection is therefore recommended by a suitably qualified building contractor **before proceeding to exchange of contracts**.

The remaining solid floors throughout the rear extension were found to be uneven under foot traffic through floor consolidation and re-levelling/replacement should be expected if indeed this structure is to remain in place. Once again the presence of stored personal items severely restricted the inspection.

INTERNAL JOINERY, DOORS, STAIRS AND FITMENTS 18.0

18.01 The internal joinery is generally worn throughout being consistent with age and occupation.

18.02 The internal doors comprise ledged and flush timber fitments which were noted to be worn and partly damaged and generally ill fitting. The door head leading to the main bedroom is exceptionally low due to the position of the tie beam.

18.03 The timber staircases revealed treads of uneven width, lack of handrails and loose balusters. It is clear that the staircase does not comply with Building Regulations and steps to comply will be required.

18.04 The kitchen is provided with dated base and wall units, which are now overdue for replacement.

INTERNAL DECORATIONS 19.0

19.01 The internal decorations are generally poor and are now overdue for redecoration.

DAMPNESS 20.0

20.01 During the course of our inspection, a detailed examination of the main walls was carried out with the aid of a moisture meter to determine whether the property was affected by dampness.

20.02 The following points/defects were noted:

We must firstly point out that our inspection of the internal elevations was made particularly difficult due to a large amount of dry lining, but nevertheless, excessive moisture content was noted within the extension, indicated by black spot mould growth discolouration to the decorations, which we would attribute to moisture penetration through the defective render coat.

It is more than likely that dampness will be present behind the kitchen units due to the height of ground levels along the cat slide section, and wetting of the brickwork due to failed rainwater fittings, and dampness within the sub-floor voids will almost certainly be contributing to the loss of structural integrity in the suspended timber floors, where sub-floor ventilation is lacking.

In historic buildings of this type, dampness was encouraged to disperse through natural evaporation through the use of lime mortar in pointing and porous material such as lime washes both internally and externally.

Unfortunately, over the years of non-porous materials reduces the ability of buildings of this type to "breathe" and as a consequence dampness can only be eradicated through modern methods of damp proofing, which should always be considered as a last resort.

It must be considered likely that some remedial damp proofing will be required within this structure, and a further report from a specialist firm, ideally being a Member of the Property Care Association is strongly recommended **before proceeding to exchange of contracts**.

TIMBER DEFECTS 21.0

21.01 The exposed beams and timbers within the property have at some time been affected by common furniture beetle, and what appears to be death watch beetle to some of the common rafters within the roof space.

21.02 The infestation has generally only lead to surface deterioration of timbers, but some of the common rafters within the roof space have been noticeably affected by an infestation, and it is possible that some replacement may be required.

21.03 There are signs to suggest that there is a current infestation of the common furniture beetle within the building and the death watch beetle, which may have been the result of imported timbers, but nevertheless, a further report from a specialist firm, ideally being a Member of the Property Care Association, is recommended **before proceeding to exchange of contracts**. This can be co-ordinated with the inspection for damp as indicated above.

21.04 You might like to note that timber infestation is not always readily apparent in a property and the effects of an infestation can go unnoticed for a number of years, depending upon the type and lifecycle of that particular infestation.

21.05 In a property of this type, an attack would be expected within the roof space, understairs cupboard, floorboards, including the underside of floorboards.

21.06 It therefore follows that the extent of any attack can only be determined by a full and detailed inspection, which is not always possible due to the fully occupied status of the property.

21.07 We must therefore advise that because of the obvious limitations of an inspection of this type, it is impossible for us to state that timber infestation is not occurring in other parts of the property.

21.08 You should be made aware that damage from the common furniture beetle develops very slowly and is only occasionally of structural significance, whereas death watch beetle will often contribute to extensive structural failure, and eradication is essential.

SERVICES

22.01 We understand that mains electricity and water are provided, but did not test any of these systems or services in line with our Standard Terms of Engagement, a copy of which is included as an appendix to this Report.

22.02 **Electricity**

Mains electricity is provided with the meter and consumer unit found to the cupboard in the extension living room.

The installation varies considerably in age and condition, and there are concerns over the safety of the installation.

In view of this, and the fact that the Institute of Electrical Engineers recommends safety tests for domestic dwellings every 5-10 years or upon change of ownership, we would strongly recommend a test of the installation by qualified ECA contractor who should be Part P competent **before proceeding to exchange of contracts**.

It must be considered likely that the installation will require complete re-wiring to comply with BS 7671.

All electrical work in dwellings has to comply with Part P of the Building Regulations and be carried out by persons who are competent to do the work.

All work that involves adding a new circuit to a dwelling will need to be either notified to Building Control, who will then inspect the work, or carried out by a competent person who is registered with Part P Self-Certification Scheme.

Persons registered with Part P Self-Certification Schemes will need to be fully qualified electrical contractors with the ability to thoroughly check a circuit for safety and will be able to issue Building Regulations Certificates of compliance.

Further information can be obtained in the Building Regulations Section of www.communities.gov.uk

22.03 **Gas**

There is no gas supply to the property.

22.04 **Water & Plumbing**

We understand the property is connected to mains water (metered) with the stopcock found to the extension by the side door.

The plumbing is formed in copper.

Our inspection of the plumbing system where visible displayed no signs of obvious leakage, although large sections were in fact hidden from view.

The water pressure where tested was found to be adequate to the cold water supply, but somewhat light to the hot water system as expected bearing in mind this comes from a ground floor combination tank.

22.05 Sanitary Fittings

We will refrain from passing a detailed description of the sanitary ware, suffice to say this is basic and in need of immediate upgrading.

22.06 Hot Water & Central Heating

Hot water in the property is provided by means of a foam insulated copper combination tank fitted with a 3-Kw immersion heater found to the extension living room cupboard.

There is no space heating in this building.

The position of the hot water cylinder made an inspection somewhat difficult but visible sections revealed no signs of obvious leakage.

It is clear that the building is long overdue for a modern system for both domestic hot water and space heating.

22.07 **Drainage**

The property is connected to a private sewage treatment plant in the form of a Klargester located to the rear of the site.

There are a series of inspection chambers with lightweight steel and cast iron covers leading to the treatment plant.

We must firstly advise that the cast iron cover to the rear was too heavy to raise, and as a consequence, the chamber could not be inspected and its condition cannot be confirmed. Furthermore the lightweight steel covers were noted to be ill fitting and have been damaged through vehicular traffic. It therefore follows that we are unable to confirm the condition or efficiency of the drainage system.

There is a cast iron soil vent pipe to the rear of the extension, which is rusting badly but generally covered with dense vegetation growth restricting the inspection.

We are unable to confirm whether the sewage treatment plant has been regularly serviced, and this should be verified by your legal advisers during pre-contract enquiries.

Systems of this type are expensive to install and maintain, and a lack of servicing will clearly affect the overall efficiency of the system with associated and significant cost implications. In view of this, it would be advisable to commission and independent report on the system **before proceeding to exchange of contracts.**

GARAGES AND OUTBUILDINGS

23.01 None.

GARDENS AND BOUNDARIES

24.01 The property occupies a small plot with front garden only, laid largely to an overgrown lawn with mature weeping willow to the immediate front of the site, approximately 23 meters from the main building. It is a well established fact that soil shrinkage caused by the removal of water by live trees can result in foundation subsidence, and soil swelling caused by the recovery of moisture following tree removal can result in foundation heave.

24.02 There are no indications that the willow has contributed to any foundation movement to this building, and reference to the Building Research Establishment Digest 298 relating to the risk of damage by different tree species, would indicate that the willow, which should reach a mature height of 15 meters, is sufficiently distant from the property not to have an adverse effect on the foundations.

24.03 Nevertheless, regular pruning, crown reduction or pollarding may be required, and a programme for future maintenance would benefit from being drawn up by a suitably qualified arborealist. It is also recommended that the overhanging trees and vegetation growth surrounding the building are cut back to a manageable distance, and this is particularly pertinent to the east elevation of the structure.

24.04 The visible boundary fencing remains in serviceable condition but routine maintenance should be expected.

MISCELLANEOUS

25.01 This is a Grade II Listed building, and as such, requires Listed Building Consent for works of improvement and/or repair prior to any works being carried out.

25.02 You should be made aware that under Section 9 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, it is a criminal offence to demolish a Listed Building or alter or extend such a building in any way that would adversely affect its character without consent, the penalties for which can be heavy.

25.03 If you require any advice then in the first instance it would be prudent to contact the Conservation Officer of the Local Authority or alternative English Heritage or The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings.

25.04 It is not known whether a Risk Assessment regarding flooding has been carried out but, bearing in mind December 2013 was the wettest on record since 1776, it is important that attention is paid to the possibility of flooding within the area, bearing in mind a number of small rivers and water courses that exist, combined with the low water table.

25.05 The Environment Agency flood maps and NAFRA (National Flood Risk Assessment) flood risk information, indicates that there is unlikely to be any ground water flooding in the area but there is a low to medium risk of surface water flooding (pluvial) and a low risk of river flooding (fluvial).

25.06 Nevertheless you are strongly advised to make your own enquiries regarding the possibility of potential flooding in the area **before proceeding to exchange of contracts**.

LEGAL MATTERS

26.01 Your Legal Adviser should be asked to verify existing guarantees/contracts and their validity in respect of the following:

* Damp proofing and timber treatment.

26.02 Your Legal Adviser should also be asked to verify the legal position and advise upon the implications of the following:

Any adverse easements, servitudes or wayleaves affecting the property. There are no obvious indications but this needs to be clarified.

The responsibility for maintenance and repair of boundary walls and fences prior to any works being carried out.

Maintenance of private drainage system.

Listed Building and Conservation Areas Status and Association Obligations.

SUMMARY

27.01 We can confirm that we could find no reasons during the course of our inspection why you should not proceed with the purchase of this property, subject to the various comments made within the Report and further investigations suggested.

27.02 The defects noted throughout the Report are typical of a property of this age and character and are not in themselves considered sufficiently serious to deter you from proceeding with the purchase.

27.03 This is a Listed and extended detached house, which fronts a commercial/industrial site on the outskirts of Laddingford.

27.04 The property appears to remain basically structurally sound, although there are some minor signs of structural distress within the building, which is only to be anticipated, but there are no clear or definite indications of recent or ongoing movement.

27.05 There is however, a likely need for partial re-building/re-structuring around the side catlside window due to failure of the cast-iron lintel strap, which has corroded and expanded causing distress to the surrounding brickwork.

27.06 The property has been allowed to fall into significant disrepair due to a lack of investment and routine maintenance, and is clearly in need of considerable expenditure in terms of improvement and modernisation.

27.07 The exterior fabric of the structure is in need of repair work to include some minor attention to the roof covering, further attention to the chimney stack and replacement of defective and missing rainwater fittings.

27.08 There is a need for some re-pointing to the main walls, at least partial re-detailing to the tile cladding and reduction of external ground levels, which are currently exceeding internal floors.

27.09 The casement windows and doors are in need of upgrading to current standards and external redecoration is long overdue.

27.10 The rear extension is generally in a poor state of repair, and replacement with a sympathetically designed alternative will enhance the overall visual appeal of structural and architectural homogenisation, and at the same time, engage with 21st century building technology and the green benefits associated with it.

27.11 Internally, the property is long overdue for upgrading to current standards, requiring rewiring, the introduction of a modern system for domestic hot water and central heating, and the replacement of the kitchen and sanitary ware.

27.12 There are issues relating to dampness and timber infestation, along with failure of the ground floor timber floors through timber decay.

27.13 There are also likely to be issues regarding the use of asbestos containing materials within the building, something that will need to be dealt with and, very much like an onion, layers will need to be taken back ideally to the timber frame so that the structure can be fully and comprehensively repaired/improved and modernised.

27.14 During this process, it must be considered likely that a number of latent defects will come to light with associated cost implications.

27.15 When employing contractors to work on the building it is essential that they are fully conversant and experiences with structures of this type.

27.16 If it is your intention to carry out improvements or works that would alter the character of the building then it will be necessary to obtain Listed Building Consent before such works are carried out. Failure to do so is likely to incur penalties.

27.17 If you require further information regarding the structure, or indeed assistance in terms of materials used in repair work, then the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) or English Heritage may be able to be of assistance.

27.18 In terms of a maintenance programme it is essential that the building in the first instance remains wind and watertight and it is therefore recommended that upon purchase the following matters are attended to:

i) Roof covering.

ii) Chimney stack.

iii) Cladding.

iv) Rainwater fittings.

v) External joinery.

vi) External ground levels.

This should ensure that the building is kept free of water penetration, something that can be a most destructive element in buildings of this age and construction. Failure to deal with the above elements could impact significantly on the building, and lead to further and significant defects, which would have obvious cost implications.

A number of specialist reports have been recommended, which you are advised to put in hand **before proceeding to exchange of contracts** and these are listed below:

i) Timber and damp.

ii) Flooring.

iii) Electrical.

iv) Asbestos.

v) Drainage.

27.19 The preparation of detailed costs for building works lies outside the scope of this report and as a consequence, it is essential that you fully appreciate the need for detailed estimates from suitably qualified trade's people.

27.20 You are advised however, that if you should decide to legally commit yourself to the purchase without obtaining all information/costings relating to the following work, you will have to accept the risk that adverse factors might come to light in the future.

27.21 For your information, the following is a list of main areas of concern which specifically excludes those minor items of repair already outlined within the report and which requires the following course of action:-

External

1. Arrange for piece meal replacement of loose, broken and missing tiles to the main roof slopes. Repair mortar bed to verges and remove dense moss growth. (Section 6).
2. Repair/replace exposed rafter feet/plates affected by timber decay/timber infestation as necessary. (Section 6).
3. Re-detail roof abutments. (Section 6).
4. Budget for rebuilding around the cat slide window and re-point all areas of open and defective pointing as required. (Section 7).
5. Re-secure tiles to tile cladding as necessary and budget for at least partial re-detailing to rear. (Section 7).
6. Reduce external ground levels as required. (Section 8).
7. Re-point side chimney stack and re-detail failing cement fillets. (Section 8).
8. Replace missing rainwater fittings and properly secure failing/overturning rainwater gutters. (Section 10).
9. Thoroughly overhaul/replace all weathered/defective external joinery. (Section 11).

Internal:

10. Improve roof insulation to current standards. (Section 14).
11. Replace defective ceilings and remove polystyrene tiles. Replace any materials containing asbestos. (Section 15).
12. Replace as necessary defective/failing infill panels to timber frame and replace any materials containing asbestos. (Section 15).
13. Budget for replacement of timber ground floors. (Section 17).
14. Overhaul all internal joinery and replace kitchen. (Section 18).
15. Upgrade stairwell to comply with current Building Regulations. (Section 18).

16. Arrange for a comprehensive timber and damp report and budget for remedial damp proofing and timber treatment. (Sections 20 and 21).
17. Arrange for an electrical report and budget for re-wiring. (Section 22).
18. Provide a modern system for domestic hot water and space heating. (Section 22).
19. Replace sanitary fittings. (Section 22).
20. Replace damaged inspection covers to drainage system. (Section 22).

It is assumed that the sub-standard rear addition is to be demolished and a modern extension provided, subject to Planning Permission, and Listed Buildings consent.

Finally, if we can be of any further assistance or you wish to discuss any items contained herein then please do not hesitate to contact us.

John M Graham BSc. FRICS
RICS Registered Valuer
Ashenden Graham Chartered Surveyors