DowlingDodd
Chartered Surveyors

BUILDING SURVEY

Property Address:

Example Composite Cottage
Made Up Road
Truro
Cornwall
TR1 2SQ

Report Prepared By:

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RICS

1 INTRODUCTION

Client Name and Address:	Mr and Mrs H Buyer The Old Home Moving From Lane Truro Cornwall TR1 2SQ
Date of Inspection:	3 January 2017
Date of Report:	5 January 2017

Weather:

During the course of my inspection the weather was fine, dry, bright and warm.

Scope of Instructions:

This is a report on the construction and condition of the above mid terraced two storey cottage following my survey carried out in accordance with your instructions and as confirmed in our letter to you of the 1 June 2014, together with terms and conditions, copies of which are annexed to this Report.

This report is for the private and confidential use of our clients, Mr and Mrs H Buyer for whom the report is undertaken and should not be reproduced in whole or part or relied upon by third parties for any use without the express written authority of DowlingDodd Chartered Surveyors.

I confirm there is no conflict of interest arising from my undertaking this Building Survey Report.

I would, of course, expect you to show copies of this Report to your legal and financial advisers.

Limitations of Inspection:

The cottage is currently occupied and fully furnished with closely fitted carpets and floor coverings laid throughout. The Vendor was present for a short time although during most of my Survey I was unaccompanied.

My inspection covered all those parts of the building that could be seen either from ground level internally and externally.

I used binoculars to examine roof slopes and I used ladders to gain access to the rear valleys, roof sections and roof spaces. A damp test meter was used internally.

Many parts of a building such as foundations and sub-floor areas are concealed during the course of construction and these are not disturbed. It follows that for practical reasons I have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure that were covered, unexposed or inaccessible and I am therefore unable to report that any such part of the building is free from defect.

Where a property is occupied and fully furnished and has floors coverings, this clearly limits the inspection possible particularly of floor surfaces. Tests were taken at random with a moisture meter through some floor areas and fitted carpets that could not be lifted. If you are able to arrange for furnishings to be moved and all floors exposed at a later time I will be more than happy to make a return inspection of such areas.

As far as services are concerned, my inspection was limited to a superficial one and in the absence of any specific tests, no warranty can be given as to their condition, design or efficiency.

The suitability of the main supply and acceptability of installations connected to them is something on which the water and electricity authorities have the final word.

Underground pipework serving the drainage system where buried obviously cannot be inspected and commented upon.

I have used digital photographs to illustrate my comments in the report and in some cases these photographs have been digitally enhanced for clarity and some of the pictures are taken using a wide angled lens, which may cause some distortion of images.

In the report I may refer to approximate time scales for repair work. For your guidance and for avoidance of doubt, my definition of these terms is as follows:

Short Term	**Within one/two years**
Medium Term	**Two to five years**
Long Term	**Five to ten years +**

In drafting this report my comments have been limited to more material matters and in particular I have not listed individual items such as a slightly loose door or window fittings or minor decorative blemishes which have no structural significance.

2 DESCRIPTION

Type and Age:

Example Cottage is a building which probably has origins back at least to the 19th Century and at one stage, I understand, formed part of the Basset Estate; the Bassets being the major landholder in the area.

For ease of reference, I am going to describe the main entrance as having a westerly aspect.

The original parts of the building comprised what is now the small sitting room/snug and part of the dining room and rooms above. These areas form what was originally a relatively modest cottage.

The kitchen and breakfast room to the north may have been built at around the same time, although probably as attached outbuildings.

The property then appears to have been extended in the early part of the 20th Century, although whether these extensions were carried out at the same time, I have been unable to establish. These comprise what are now the entrance hall and main lounge with rooms above, and also the extension to the dining room and bedroom above.

The present owners, I believe, acquired the property in the early 1990's and in 1994, demolished the south-western reception room and room above and completely re-built this part of the building.

The reason for this, I understand, was that the concrete blocks from which this part of the building was constructed, were starting to crumble and deteriorate. Around this time, they also re-slated most of the roof slopes and replaced some guttering and external joinery.

Most recently in the last 4/5 years, as a result of a Concrete Screening Test Report revealing defects in the early concrete parts of the building, appropriate remedial repair work was carried out by way of removing and replacing defective concrete as I will explain later.

In the past, the property has been used as a small farm. Although most of the land has now been sold off separately, a range of old farm buildings remain along the northern side of the house.

Council Tax Band:

For Council Tax purposes the property is placed in Band 'F'. The Billing Authority is Cornwall; Reference No: 12259549532000.

Accommodation:

Ground Floor:

Porch, lounge, kitchen/dining room.

First Floor:

Landing, three bedrooms, bathroom and WC.

External:

In total, the ground including the small paddock to the rear, I estimate extends to just less than 1 acre.

The site slopes in a southerly direction with a parking area on the northern side and gardens to the south, west and east.

There is a two storey stone built barn, a newly constructed garage, an old outside WC and a timber shed within the paddock.

Roads:

The access road is made and adopted by the Local Authority.

Tenure:

Freehold, this should be confirmed by your conveyancer.

3 LOCATION

Location:

The cottage lies about a mile inland from the North Cornish Coast in a rural area, although there is a working farm immediately to the north.

There are no residential amenities in the immediate area, although Camborne, the nearest main town, is within some 3 miles distance or so and easy access is afforded onto the main A30 trunk road at the Camborne West interchange some 2 miles or so distance, Truro, the county town and administrative centre of Cornwall is approximately 12 miles away.

Godrevy lies to the west, one of the prime surfing beaches in Cornwall and many spectacular cliff top walks are also to be enjoyed nearby.

4 EXTERNAL CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

Chimneys:

To the south-eastern side of the building is a quite substantial rendered chimney stack although the top five courses are of pointed brickwork.

It has one clay pot without a cowl and lead flashings appear to be provided at the base of the chimney to create a weatherproof seal where it breaks through the roof slope.

I recommend that a rain cap be fitted to the chimney pot to stop any rainwater running down into the flue.

The pointing to the brickwork is becoming a little worn and weathered and indeed on the south eastern side you can clearly see where one or two bricks are beginning to perish.

The render is also a little cracked and in fact a section of render on the north eastern side has fallen away. The render itself has been carried down to the surface of the tiles and therefore it is hard to judge the extent of leadwork.

Where render is carried down to the surface of the tiles in this manner it does increase the risk of water tracking up between the tiles and the render as a result of capillary action.

I recommend that some re-pointing now be carried out to the chimney and if individual bricks are found to be perished beyond repair, they should be replaced. A rain cap as I have said should be fitted and I also recommend that you consider having the render renewed, forming a proper bell cast at the base of the chimney over the leadwork. This should help ensure the chimney remains as waterproof as possible to reduce the risk of dampness becoming a problem later.

You should note, however, that specialist access equipment will be needed and this could add to the cost.

Roofs:

The roof coverings have, in the main, all been renewed in the early 1990s. The area over the utility and rear entrance, however, was not replaced.

All of the roof slopes are clad with natural slate which is one of the most durable roofing materials and is made of thin layers of rock bonded together.

The longevity of a natural slate roof depends on a number of factors, including the quality of the slates that were used, the skill in which they were cut and laid and the exposure of the building to the elements.

The slates themselves are held in place by nails through pre-drilled holes in their top edge and fixed onto timber battens laid across the roof surface. The first course of slates are laid and then the courses are built up towards the ridge or hip lines, ensuring there is a proper lap to create a weatherproof surface. The hip and ridges are then finished off with clay tiles bedded in sand and cement mortar and the verges around the edge of the roofs are also pointed with sand and cement.

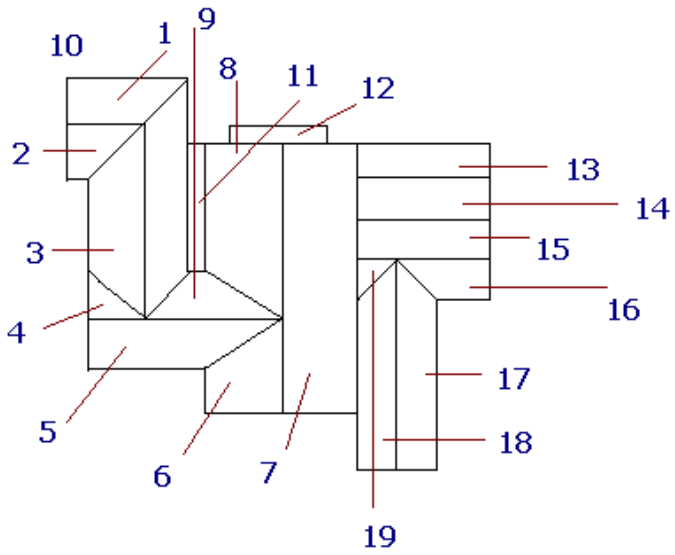
Prior to the roof being slated, the carcass of the roof was covered over with a layer of roofing felt. This serves a number of purposes. Firstly, it helps equalise air pressure externally and internally, consequently reducing the risk of slates lifting in strong winds. Its other function is to act as a second line of defence in the event of any water being blown under the slates.

Water is channelled down the roofing felt which should then be lapped into the gutters and taken away through the rainwater system.

What frequently happens after 15 or 20 years is that where the roofing felt is exposed and lapped into the gutters, it tends to perish. This means that in the event of water blowing back under the slates, instead of running into the gutters, it can drip behind fascia boards and lead to rot and decay and penetrate the top of the walls and eventually leading to dampness within the building.

This detail cannot be seen from ground level, but I would suggest that the roofing felt is now starting to perish and in the immediate term, the bottom layer of roofing felt will need to be renewed.

I shall describe the individual roof slopes below and for ease of reference and in addition to photographs, the annotated sketch plan identifies individual slopes.



1) This is the west facing roof slope over the re-built section of the building. The slope is true, straight and uniform with no indication of deflection or distortion. Hip and ridge tiles are reasonably well bedded with proper hip irons provided at the bottom of the hip to stop tiles slipping. No evidence of slippage or significant damage was noted to the slates. The southern verge is pointed with sand and cement on top of the slate which is attached to the barge board; the sand and cement is adequately adhered at the present moment.

2) This is the east facing roof slope over the newly built section. Again, the roof slope was true, straight and uniform with no evidence of significant slippage or damage noted to the slates. Verges are adequately pointed with sand and cement and the valley at the junction of 2 and 3 is formed with lead with three lengths of lead sheeting to take up expansion or contraction that may occur and reduce the likelihood of lead splitting. The valley was clear and free of debris.

3) This is the south facing roof slope. The surface of the roof was true, straight and uniform with no sign of any slippage or significant damage to the slates and the ridge tiles adequately bedded.

4) The west facing roof slope was true, straight and uniform; no significant slippage of slates was noted. Verges are pointed with sand and cement and are in satisfactory repair. The lead valley between slopes 3 and 4 is in satisfactory condition and clear of debris, and joints are provided to take up expansion and contraction of the leadwork.

5) Again, this slope is true, straight and uniform with no evidence of any significant damage or slippage to the slates. Verges are pointed with sand and cement and in satisfactory condition. There is a slight rise in ridge tile corresponding with the original roof line.

6) As with other slopes, this slope is covered with natural slate. The slope is true, straight and uniform and the ridge tiles are true and straight and adequately bedded. The verges are pointed with sand and cement and are in satisfactory condition. There was no sign of slippage or deflection to the slates or roof surface. The valley was clear of debris and joints are provided to the leadwork to take up expansion and contraction.

7) North facing roof slope. Again, I found this slope to be true, straight and uniform with no evidence of deflection or distortion or any significant damage to the slates. The pointed verges are in satisfactory repair.

8) No vantage point could be gained from ground level where this roof slope could be viewed. The condition of the slates, therefore, could not be judged. The verges have been pointed in sand and cement and are in satisfactory repair. If you wish to confirm the condition of this roof slope, then you will need to arrange for access equipment to be made available. I would then be happy to return and inspect.

9) West-facing roof slope clad with natural slate; no sign of significant slippage. The valley abutment with roof slope 8 could not be viewed. The valley abutment with roof slope 10 appears satisfactory with joints provided to the lead and visible sections of the valley were clear of debris.

10) North-facing roof slope over the re-built section. Again, this roof slope I found to be true, straight and uniform and the hip and ridge tiles were adequately bedded; there was no evidence of any significant slippage or damage to the slates.

11) This is a small section of flat bituminous felt roof, although unfortunately no vantage points could be gained at ground level whereby it could be inspected. If access equipment is made available, I would be happy to re-visit.

    Flat roofs are made of three layers of mineralised felt laid onto timber decking, the joints being sealed with hot tar. The surface of the roof should be covered either with reflective chippings or a reflective paint surface to prevent rapid expansion and contraction occurring which can result in the felt splitting.

    Flat roofs do have a limited life expectancy and can fail without notice although internally there was no evidence of leaks. In the medium term at least, it is likely that replacement will be needed and you should budget for this.

12) This is a small pitched slate roof over entrance the area. Proper lead flashings are formed at the abutment with the western wall of the building to create a weatherproof seal although there is some slight evidence of cracking to the bell cast and patch repairs will be needed.

This roof is supported by a galvanised steel bracket fixed to the western wall of the building.

13) West facing roof slope over the breakfast area clad with natural slate with clay roof tiles and lead details formed to its northern end where it abuts the flank wall of the main building. Damage to slates on the north-western corner will need to be repaired and the felt, where lapped into the gutters, is starting to perish.

14) This roof surface is in satisfactory condition with no sign of any slippage or damage to the slates and lead flashings are formed at the abutment of the northern wall. Some general deflection, however, was noted to the roof surface where it follows the line of original timbers but this is within acceptable tolerances.

The valley gutter between slopes 14 and 15 is formed with bituminous felt run under the slates. There is some evidence of wear to the surface of the felt but internally there are no signs of any leaks. The valley is becoming quite congested towards the southern end and will need to be cleared. Being of bituminous felt, it is not going to have the same life expectancy as lead and replacement will be needed from time to time.

15) This is the west facing roof slope over kitchen incorporating a Velux window. The slates are in satisfactory condition with no sign of any significant slippage. Leadwork found at abutment with the chimney breast is in satisfactory repair. Again, some slight deflection was noted to the surface of the roof where it follows the original roofline.

16) East facing roof slope over kitchen. This slope is clad with natural slate and is reasonably uniform with no sign of slippage or damage to the slates.

17) North facing natural slate roof over utility area. This is an older slate roof which was not re-covered at the same time as the other slopes. There are one or two cracked, broken and slipped slates and some weathering was noted to the ridge tiles.

The valley abutment with roof slope 16 is formed with lead. Joints are provided to take up expansion although pointing to the sides of the valley is starting to wear and come loose; re-pointing required.

The valley is becoming quite choked and congested, particularly at the bottom edge. This area will need to be cleared of debris otherwise damp penetration will occur.

18) An older slate roof over the utility area; south facing. There are one or two cracked, broken and slipped slates, however, the roof slope is generally uniform.

19) This is an older natural slate roof in satisfactory repair with a valley at the abutment with roof slope 18. The valley is formed with lead and is generally in satisfactory condition; however, it is becoming congested and choked towards its bottom edge. There is then a further valley gutter between roof slope 18 and the wall of the building and this is lined with lead. Again, this valley needs to be cleared and the boards removed so that water can discharge freely. Internally, at the moment, there are no signs of any leaks.

The principal roof slopes, I consider, are in serviceable repair and should continue to function adequately for many years yet to come. Normal maintenance will, however, be needed from time to time. Any slates which become dislodged, split or damaged will obviously need to be replaced and repaired. Ridge tiles and verges are likely to need re-pointing in time and lead valleys will need to be kept clear of debris.

As I said earlier, the bottom layer of roofing felt will need renewal.

The flat felt roof could not be seen from ground level but I would anticipate replacement sooner rather than later.

The older slate roofs, I consider, are serviceable and should continue to be subject to routine maintenance and repair. The felt-lined valley on the northern side will, however, perish and fail in time. In the short term, this valley needs to be cleared, but in the longer term replacement will probably be required.

Rainwater Goods:

On the north-eastern side of the original building there are plastic gutters and these discharge into a metal hopper and metal downpipe and ultimately lead onto the ground.

Some realignment of the gutters is needed and the metal elements are obviously going to require frequent maintenance and decoration.

The north-eastern roof to the extension also has plastic gutters and these flow in a south-easterly direction connecting into the same hopper and downpipe.

On the south-western side of the building, there are plastic gutters to the roof over the original building and to the extension. These both discharge via plastic downpipes onto the ground. Water from these downpipes then runs around the side of the building.

The gutters to the porch and shower room are also of plastic and these, again, discharge onto the path. Rainwater running along this path is routed via a plastic pipe under the hedge and out onto the pathway.

The gutters and downpipes are functioning correctly at the moment but you will need to keep them clear of leaves and debris at all times, particularly during the autumn and winter months to prevent over-spillage occurring.

Ideally, downpipes should always lead into trapped gullies and then into a system of soakaways. It is not unusual, however, in a rural setting such as this to find downpipes discharging directly onto the ground.

As long as the ground is fleeted away from the building so that water does not lie up against the walls saturating the ground and increasing the risk of dampness, this arrangement I consider is acceptable in this instance.

Plastic gutters do need maintenance from time to time. You will find that eventually the rubber seals to the joints will perish, leaks will occur and these will need to be replaced in the course of your routine maintenance plan.

Walls:

The walls to the original part of the building measure up to 800mm in thickness and have a render finish. They are principally, I consider, of cob although there are areas of stonework such as the western wall of the ground floor bedroom; photographs taken during the modernisation works showed exposed stonework in this area.

Whether the remaining walls are entirely of cob or, as it was very common in this area, are of cob built off a stone plinth could only be confirmed by removing plaster and render finishes.

Many old cottages of this type are built, therefore, with a 'plinth' of stonework off the ground sometimes to first floor level.

The stone walls are built of two courses of stonework in parallel with a central cavity arrangement in between. This cavity is then filled with smaller stones and rubble and larger stones are then set at regular intervals across the entire thickness of the wall to bond the two sides together. The walls will then have been built up in this manner bedded on a lime or clay-based mortar.

Cob is one of the oldest known building materials and is made up of clay-based soil which is mixed with straw or animal hair to bind it together and the cob is then piled up on itself to form the walls and trimmed as it dries. Cob can be clearly seen to the northern gable within the roof void as I will describe later.

Dealing firstly with the eastern elevation, the walls here measure some 800mm in thickness. There are three openings at ground floor level and three at first floor level and the walls have a rough cast sand and cement render finish with slate sills.

This elevation was true, straight and uniform; there is no sign of any significant bulging or movement which would give cause for concern.

There are, however, one or two areas where the render is hollow and has lost its key.

This sand and cement render finish to the eastern elevation and, indeed, to the remaining stone and cob elevations is not original. A traditional finish with properties of this age and type would have been for lime-based renders to have been used.

In many cases, however, this type of building has been re-rendered using sand and cement.

It is now widely accepted that traditional materials really should be used for old buildings, particularly in terms of renders and mortars.

There are a number of practical reasons for this. Firstly, sand and cement mortars are much less flexible than lime-based mortars and therefore more prone to cracking. They are also less porous than lime-based mortars and as a result, despite the fact that in many respects they can retard laterally penetrating dampness, any moisture which does penetrate behind the render cannot readily escape and the walls are therefore more susceptible to dampness in the longer term.

Lime-based mortars are more flexible and less prone to cracking and they are also more porous which although they do allow moisture to penetrate more readily, any moisture which does penetrate can much more readily evaporate.

It is also quite difficult in the longer term to ensure that sand and cement mortars retain their key and hollowness is invariably found, as in this case.

I am not advocating the need to remove the render and re-plaster with a lime render but in the longer term it is worth considering.

The southern elevation to the original building at ground floor level, as measured between the hall and the lounge, is of some 600mm in thickness but at first floor level it measures some 300mm in thickness and where it stands above the roof of the extension has a render finish.

The southern wall of the ground floor bedroom measures some 350mm in thickness and has a render finish.

This wall, therefore, is clearly of two different forms of construction at least. The area between the lounge and the hallway is of stone or cob; however, the first floor section and the southern wall of the ground floor bedroom are, I consider, of blockwork.

The render finishes are reasonably uniform and there is no sign of any serious movement. There is some slight cracking, however, that has occurred above the bedroom window and the photographs which were shown me indicate that there was, in fact, a door in the position of the window originally and you can see where cracking has occurred where the doorway has been blocked up.

There is further slight cracking to the underside of the verge. This I do not consider is of any great significance but I suggest that the render crack be raked out and filled when you redecorate.

Again, the old photographs show evidence of blockwork around what is now the doorway leading from the hallway into the lounge.

When I carried out my inspection of the roof void, evidence of concrete blockwork to this southern gable was clearly apparent and it looks also that the roof pitch may have been lifted here slightly as below the exposed blockwork in the roof space is an area of rendered blockwork.

It is clear from the photographs that were shown to me that this wall pre-dates the extension which is why I concluded that it was an earlier alteration.

Whether it is of solid concrete block or cavity blockwork I simply cannot tell. The disadvantage of solid blockwork over cavity concrete blockwork is that it is more prone to laterally penetrating dampness due to the lack of any effective cavity. It also does not perform as well as cavity blockwork in terms of insulation and is therefore at greater risk of condensation. Neither of these two shortcomings, however, was identified internally.

The most important and paramount matter to consider, however, is that as this wall is, I suspect, of concrete blockwork, it could well pre-date 1950.

Up until 1950, some concrete products manufactured locally could contain deleterious materials (Mundic). This is whereby the aggregate that was used to make the concrete was sourced from mine waste which contains minerals that can chemically react with the cement causing the cement to break down and the blocks to crumble.

The only way that it can be assessed whether or not pre 1950 concrete blocks contain such deleterious materials is to commission a Concrete Screening Test Report. This is whereby samples of the concrete are taken for examination by a Petrographer who will be able to indicate whether or not there is a risk of deleterious materials being present.

Before you purchase therefore, unless it can be established that these walls are not of concrete blockwork or that they were built after 1950, you must commission a Concrete Screening Test Report to comply with current RICS Guidance Notes.

The western wall of the ground floor bedroom is of some 500mm in thickness and is of stonework. Photographs shown to me by the Vendor clearly indicate this although it has now been rendered with sand and cement. Again, the walls here were true, straight and uniform and there is only minor hairline render cracking that can be raked out and filled when you redecorate. However, I would have preferred to have seen this wall rendered with a lime-based mortar.

The western elevation of the original section towards the northern end is, again, of stone or cob. This has a sand and cement render and once more I would have preferred to have seen lime-based mortars used although the wall is true, straight and uniform with no indication of any significant cracking, movement or distortion.

The northern elevation of the original building measures up to 800mm in thickness. This, again, is of stone and cob and indeed cob was clearly seen within the roof void and externally the apex has a sand and cement render finish and is true, straight and uniform.

Within the garage, however, this wall has been lined with un-plastered concrete blockwork and from within the garage roof void I could look down the cavity between the blockwork and the original wall and cob can be clearly seen.

The more recent additions which comprise the porch, lounge and bathroom are of some 300mm rendered cavity concrete blockwork. These date back to the 1980s.

Cavity concrete block walls are made by laying two courses of blockwork in parallel with a central cavity arrangement in between. This cavity serves to provide a degree of insulation and also prevents any moisture which may get through the outer leaf penetrating the main fabric of the building. The two leaves of concrete blockwork are tied together at regular intervals with metal wall ties.

The top of the concrete blockwork to the bathroom extension could be clearly seen in the cupboard leading off the landing.

The external elevations to this building were true, straight and uniform and free of any significant defects.

The lounge, again, is of some 300mm cavity concrete blockwork with a sand and cement render finish. On its eastern elevation there is some slight cracking below the eastern window and fine cracking at the junction with this extension of the original building but all of this is within acceptable tolerances and can be raked out and filled when you redecorate.

Again the southern elevation was found to be true, straight and uniform with only very limited minor hairline cracking to the render.

The western elevation, again, is true, straight and uniform with only very limited hairline render cracking of a minor nature.

The walls to the porch are also of some 300mm rendered cavity concrete blockwork and these were in satisfactory condition.

The dormer on the western side is a fairly basic timber framed structure which has been clad with manmade tiles and proper lead flashings are formed where this dormer breaks through the western roof slope forming a weatherproof seal.

Lintels:

In terms of the openings around doors and windows, their constructional detail is concealed due to plaster and render finishes. In relation to the original parts of the building, these are quite likely of timber.

They are exhibiting no evidence of non-uniformity or problems but bear in mind that where timber lintels are present, should they be exposed to long term dampness, then rot and decay could occur.

The lintels to the more modern extensions are either going to be of galvanised steel or reinforced concrete but again no evidence of problems were noted despite the fact that they are concealed by plaster and render finishes.

Damp Proof Course / Sub Floor Ventilation:

The damp proof course is normally a horizontal barrier at the base of the walls which prevents moisture from the ground rising up through the walls as a result of capillary action.

The original building would not have been built with a damp proof course and I am going to talk in more detail about dampness under a separate heading later.

The extension which should have complied with current Building Regulation requirements will, I assume, have been constructed with a damp proof course although none could be seen due to plaster and render finishes.

Ground floors are all of solid concrete construction and therefore sub-floor ventilation is not a requirement.

External Joinery:

On the south-western side of the building there are six opening windows including those to the porch. They are double glazed with timber frames and they were opened and closed and were operating correctly and no binding or sticking was noted. Nor did I find any evidence of any serious rot or decay but obviously decorations are becoming a little worn and weathered and redecoration will be needed in the short term and frequent periods of redecoration will be necessary to ensure that the timber is preserved.

The windows have trickle vents towards their top and this allows natural ventilation within the building.

On the north-eastern side, there are three timber doubled glazed windows which are side hung and painted. Again, these were all opening and closing properly and are provided with trickle vents.

The paint finish, however, is a little bit more worn and weathered on this side. In some cases, in fact, the paint has peeled revealing bare wood underneath.

No rot or decay was found but it is essential that redecoration be carried out very soon otherwise inevitably rot will arise and, as with the south-western elevation, frequent redecoration will be necessary.

The front door on the south-western side is a single glazed painted timber door to the porch. This was in satisfactory repair with no evidence of rot or decay noted but redecoration will be needed soon.

On the north-eastern side there are timber double glazed French doors leading off the dining area. Again, no evidence of rot or decay was found but redecoration will be needed soon.

I also noted that the seals to one of the double glazed units to the French doors has failed, misting is occurring between the two panes of glass and this will need to be replaced.

The fact that this seal has started to break down would suggest that others may also fail in the future.

The windows and doors to the extension, I assume, were approved by the Local Authority under the Building Control regime but this should be checked by your conveyancer.

In terms of the windows that have been replaced to the original part of the building, as I understand from the vendor these were fitted circa 2003 and your conveyancer will need to ensure that there is proper FENSA documentation in this respect and any guarantees which may exist should also be checked and assigned to you.

On the south-western side of the building, fascia boards are of UPVC although they are of timber to the porch. No sign of rot was found but again careful ongoing maintenance will be required.

There are no fascias on the north-eastern side of the building.

External Decoration:

As I mentioned above, external joinery will now certainly need to be redecorated very soon to prevent rot and decay occurring and redecoration will be needed at regular intervals to ensure that the timber is maintained.

Colour washed elevations will need to be freshened in due course, particularly on the north-eastern side where they are starting to green slightly.

Porches / Conservatory:

On the eastern side of the building there is a lean-to conservatory/porch.

This has a double glazed timber roof supported by timber rafters. There is no indication of any leaks at the present moment nor could I find any evidence of rot or decay to the timber support which is functioning correctly.

Bear in mind however that shallow pitched glazed roofs on conservatories of this type are particularly prone to leaks and one area which you will need to ensure is specially well maintained is the junction of the conservatory roof and the eastern wall of the cottage.

This detail is formed with flashings and at the present moment these are functioning correctly.

The roof has a plastic gutter and this discharges onto the ground. As with gutters to the main house maintenance will be necessary and the guttering will need to be kept clear of leaves and debris.

There are double glazed timber doors and windows that are stained. There is no evidence of any serious rot but careful maintenance and regular redecoration will be a requirement.

I did notice that one of the sealed units has failed and will need to be re-glazed.

The doors on the south are of timber. They are a little stiff, probably having swollen during the winter. These doors are single glazed only.

The conservatory is built off a low stone wall off a concrete base.

The floor is of solid concrete and I found it to be firm and level overlaid with timber

Garages and Outbuildings:

There is no garage. There are no fixed outbuildings although there is a timber shed in the back yard. This is viewed as being a temporary structure only.

The Site:

On the eastern side there is a small area of enclosed walled garden with a small area of lawn and path leading to the front door and a metal gate leads directly onto the main road and, therefore, it will always need to be used with care.

A pathway leads around the southern side of the building and the paving slabs and area of patio seem to have been recently laid with a small area of lawn.

There is then a further stone wall to the west and gravelled lane.

I am uncertain as to whether or not you have complete ownership of this lane or whether rights in favour of Third Parties exist.

Timbers gates then lead to quite an extensive area of lawned garden bounded on the southern side by a bank to a field and on the northern side by a low stone wall and hedging.

To the western end of this garden is a further area which is enclosed by hedging.

Your Conveyancer will need to confirm the location, liability for the maintenance and upkeep of all boundaries.

5 INTERNAL CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

Roof Void:

I gained access firstly to the roof void over the original part of the building by a trap hatch in one of the bedrooms.

The roof is of conventional design for a building of this age and type comprising 50mm x 100mm rafters and up to 650mm centres and these are tied with 40mm x 100mm timber ceiling joists.

The underside of the roof has not been felted, the battens are clearly visible and these measure some 25mm x 45mm onto which the tiles have been nailed.

The roof timbers are showing no signs of stress or distortion, bowing or cracking, and are functioning correctly carrying the weight of the roof down through the walls to the ground below.

The underside of the roof slope, however, has not been felted and therefore the underside of the tiles is clearly visible. No sign of any serious defects were noted but, as I mentioned previously, the lack of any roofing felt does increase the risk in the longer term of water being blown back under the tiles should they start to curl more significantly.

I found evidence of an old infestation of wood boring beetle to some timbers in the roof space. This, however, does not seem to be active and I understand from the vendors that treatments have been carried out under a guarantee.

This guarantee should be checked and assigned to you by your legal adviser.

Insulation is laid on top of the ceilings in the form of fibreglass quilt. In places it is a little haphazard. I estimate that the average covering is somewhere in the region of 200mm which falls short of the current requirements and it is suggested that this be topped up to 270mm.

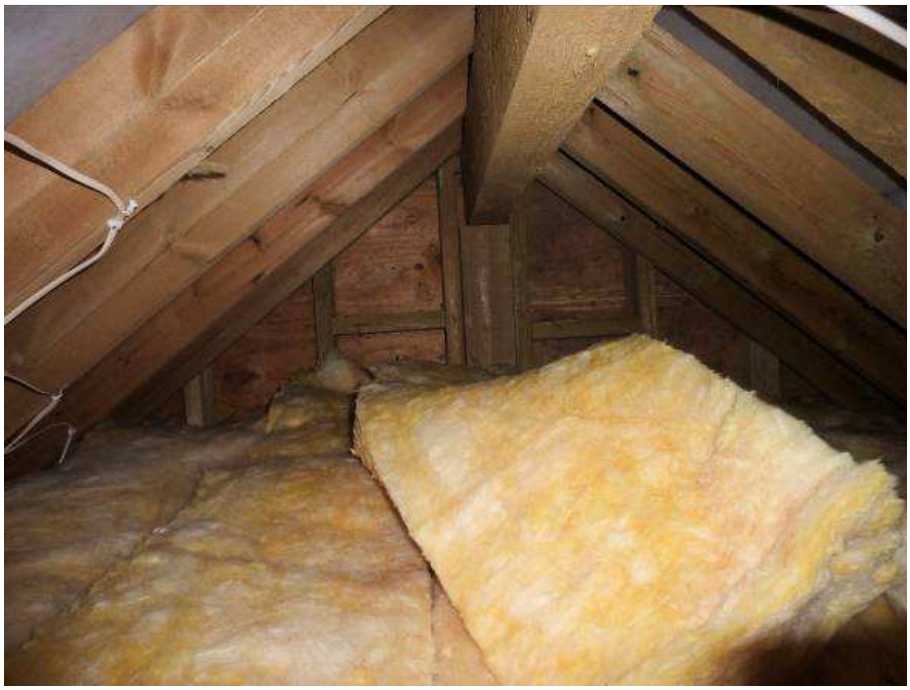
I was able to climb/crawl through to the north-western party wall and this is, I consider, of plastered cob. The wall is in reasonable condition although the very top edges have been sealed with expanded foam at some stage in the past.

The south-eastern party wall was also accessible. Again, this seems to be of cob incorporating the chimney breast. There is some slight fretting to the surface of the chimney breast and limited dampness but this is within acceptable tolerances and no more than I would have expected to find in a building of this age and type.

The cold water storage tank in this roof space needs to be better insulated to protect it from frost damage.

I was also able to gain a view of the underside of the valleys on the north-eastern side and no sign of any staining or dampness was detected to the valley boards.

I then gained accessed to the roof void over the extension via a trap hatch in the rear bedroom. This, again, is of conventional construction comprising 50mm x 145mm rafters at approximately 400mm centres with a substantial 100mm x 220mm ridge beam supported to its south-western end by timber framework and to the north-eastern end by timber posts.



The underside of this roof slope has been felted with a modern breathable type roofing felt and this provides through ventilation within the roof void.

Insulation is again laid on top of the ceilings although this, I consider, is an average of 200mm thick and really should be topped up to 270mm.

I was able to see the north-eastern timber frame gable wall and the internal face of the sheathing board and the posts supporting the ridge beam and no sign of defects were found.

Again, this roof void over the north-eastern extension, I consider, is functioning correctly and there is no sign of stress, distortion or bowing to the timbers or any evidence of beetle infestation.

Ceilings:

The ceilings have obviously been replaced at some stage in the past with plasterboard which is the most common material we come across today for making ceilings. It comprises a sandwich of plaster between two layers of paper and the boards are simply nailed or screwed to the underside of the ceiling joists.

In the porch the ceilings follow the incline plane of the roof timbers and are satisfactory.

In the lounge, there are original exposed beams which comprise the floor joists supporting the floors within the original part of the building at upper level. The vendor, however, has attached battens and plasterboard between these boards. The plasterboard has a somewhat uneven finish but I understand from the vendor that this was his intention to give a worn and old effect.

In the kitchen the ceilings are, again, of plasterboard and once more there are exposed beams in between. These were in satisfactory condition.

At first floor level the ceilings follow the horizontal incline plane of the roof timbers. In the bedrooms to the original part of the building they have a textured paint finish and there is inevitably some joint cracking which has occurred and blemishes in one or two areas which should be made good when you redecorate.

I should point out, however, that some textured paint finishes in the past have had asbestos fibres incorporated to give additional strength and therefore the health risks need to be considered.

Whilst in-situ, any risk is very limited. If this is a textured paint finish which contains asbestos fibres, then specialist advice may have to be sought in carrying out any work in these areas.

Internal Walls and Partitions:

The only partition wall at ground floor level is between the lounge and the kitchen/diner. This comprises an original 600mm outside wall of the building with a plaster finish. Whether this is a stone or cob wall simply cannot be judged due to the plaster and render finishes. However, apart from minor blemishes, the wall is in satisfactory condition.

At first floor level the internal partition walls in the original part of the building are of some 75mm timber stud and plasterboard. These are also in satisfactory condition and functioning adequately although they are relatively thin and therefore may not perform particularly well in relation to sound insulation.

There is then a 600mm original outside wall between the original building and the extension. This tapers in thickness towards the top; it has a plaster finish and apart from blemishes, is in satisfactory condition.

In the extension the partition walls are approximately 120mm in thickness and of timber studwork and plasterboard. These were in satisfactory repair with tiling provided in the bathroom.

The internal face of the main outside walls principally has a plastered finish apart from the timber frame section which is skim plaster onto plasterboard. There are no significant defects but blemishes can be made good when you redecorate.

I did note, however, that the north-western wall of the lounge returning slightly to the north-eastern wall at the bottom of the stairs has been panelled off and dry lined.

Why this is done I cannot tell but dry lining particularly in an older style building, I consider, is always to be discouraged. The reason for this is that there is always a risk that behind the dry-lining and panelling, dampness could be present and problems associated with dampness could be occurring but not come to light for some time.

Although there was no indication to suggest that there are problems behind this panelling, I recommend that you consider having this stripped off so the condition of the walls behind can be judged, any necessary remedial works carried out and the walls re-plastered.

Fireplaces, Flues and Chimney Breasts:

In the lounge there is an open stone fireplace with a slate hearth. The flue appears to have been lined at some stage in the past, possibly when the chimney was rebuilt.

The fire was not lit during my visit and therefore I am unable to confirm how well it draws but there was no evidence of any significant staining to the surround which would suggest that the fireplace may smoke.

This flue, however, must now be professionally swept before the fireplace is used.

In the kitchen there is an oil-fired Range with a pipe that breaks directly into the flue. This Range also provides hot water and runs a number of radiators.

It was not working during my inspection and should be fully serviced by a suitably qualified heating engineer who should also check that the flue is properly lined.

Around the lid to the hot plate there is a rope sealant which looks quite old and seems to be of an asbestos based material.

This is becoming loose and detached and it must now be replaced. Specialist advice will need to be sought in relation to the replacement and disposal of the old rope.

There would have been fireplaces at first floor level to the south-eastern side of the building.

In the southern bedroom you can clearly see the position of the old fireplace which has been blocked up behind the bed.

It is more than likely that there would also have been an open fireplace in the bathroom on the south-eastern wall but this has also been blocked up.

All old disused fireplaces should be opened, swept, capped and vented to avoid conditions where moisture and dampness in the flues could build up giving rise to condensation and timber decay.

Floors:

The ground floors are all of solid concrete construction. Solid concrete floors are normally formed by laying a hardcore base onto the ground which helps spread the load of the floor evenly across the ground below. This hardcore base should be compacted and on top of this a concrete floor slab is cast which should incorporate a damp proof membrane and over this a final sand and cement screed is laid ready for carpeting or tiling.

Tiles have been laid in the porch and the kitchen/dining room and these were firm and level.

In the lounge, the floor has been carpeted. I was only able to lift a small corner to the south-eastern side and this revealed a relatively modern concrete floor slab.

When I checked later through fitted carpets with my moisture meter, no indication of any dampness could be found.

Upper floors are all of suspended timber. The construction of suspended floors has changed very little over the years. Timber floor joists are set into the masonry walls of the building and then the floorboards are simply nailed or screwed onto these joists.

The upper floors are all carpeted and therefore the actual condition of the boards cannot be judged.

I would suspect that over the years, boards may have been lifted for routine services and could well be split and damaged in some cases.

You often find that the beams are notched to run pipes or cables under the floors. This means that care and caution will need to be taken if ever fixing into the floors to make sure that no pipes and cables are damaged.

There is inevitably some deflection to the suspended timber floors in the original part of the building. This can perhaps best be seen looking through to the south-eastern bedroom off the landing where it is quite obvious that the floor drops towards the middle.

This is quite common, particularly in older properties, due to the fact by modern day standards the floor joists will be undersized and spaced too far apart.

Consequently, there is some give, spring and non uniformity to the suspended timber floors in the original part of the building but no more than I would have expected to have found and within acceptable tolerances.

On the basis that the suspended timber floors are not excessively loaded, I consider they should continue to function adequately.

In the extension, the floors as I would have expected are much more firm and level as the timber floor joists would be more substantial and closer together. In the rear bedroom, the floors are carpeted and in the bathroom they are painted timber, all in satisfactory condition.

Dampness:

Before discussing dampness, it is useful to consider various likely sources of dampness, particularly in older buildings.

Rising dampness is one with which people are most familiar and this is as a result of capillary action whereby ground moisture rises up through the walls due to the lack of any effective damp proof barrier.

Penetrating dampness can come from a number of sources such as defects with chimneys, flashings, roofs, rainwater goods and external joinery.

Penetrating dampness can also come via defects with external render, pointing and plaster finishes as well as high external ground levels.

Plumbing leaks from hot and cold water systems can result in dampness, and condensation, particularly in this part of the World, is another source that needs to be considered.

I checked carefully throughout the building with the aid of a handheld moisture meter.

I identified dampness in the roof void, particularly to the south-eastern chimney but this, as I have said, is no more than I would have expected and within acceptable tolerances although careful maintenance of the chimney will be required to ensure that dampness is kept to a minimum.

At first floor level the readings I obtained were acceptable and no evidence of any excessive dampness was found.

At ground floor level, again, the readings I obtained were within acceptable limits, the only exception being slightly higher readings found in the cupboard to the side of the fireplace in the lounge.

This area is un-ventilated and there was little air circulating. There is no dampness evident to the naked eye but it was only with the aid of a meter that I obtained the slightly higher readings and I suggest that you either remove this cupboard or ensure that it is properly ventilated.

Clearly, because of the dry-lining to the north-western end of the lounge, I am unable to check the condition of the walls in this area. Whilst there is no indication of any problems, as I mentioned previously, I still feel it would be prudent to strip this lining off and provide a plaster finish to the masonry walls behind.

It seems, therefore, that some form of damp proof treatment works have probably been carried out to the original building although whether this was by way of tanking or silicone injection I am unable to confirm.

You should make enquires of the vendor as to whether there are any guarantees in relation to damp proof treatment works and if so, these need to be carefully checked and assigned to you.

In the absence of any specific guarantees, bear in mind that should dampness occur later, the cost of remedial works would have to be met by you.

The external ground level on the north-eastern side of the building to the extension is a little higher than internal ground level. Consequently, I checked very carefully in this area and no indication of dampness was found and this would suggest that appropriate precautions were taken in the design and build of the property to prevent dampness occurring here.

Although the readings I have taken as I have said were acceptable, you must bear in mind that with an older property, it is never possible to completely eradicate dampness in the long term and where dampness exists, concealed timbers such as joist ends, timber lintels and wall plates in contact with damp walls can be at risk of rot and decay.

It is essential that external elevations to the timber frame section be kept in good condition at all times as clearly should dampness occur, this could result in rot and decay to the timber frame work.

In terms of ventilation, there is an externally vented extractor fan in the kitchen which will help take warm moist air out of the building and reduce the risk of condensation occurring.

There is also an externally vented extractor fan in the bathroom but I could not tell whether this vents externally. No external vent could be seen.

This point needs to be checked and if the extractor fan leads directly into the roof space, then it should be routed externally.

Internal Joinery:

Joinery is very much compatible with the age and style of the property.

At ground floor level there is a part-glazed timber door leading from the porch into the lounge and this may not be of toughened glass and consequently, I suggest the glazing be replaced.

There are built-in cupboards and shelves to the side of the fireplace and as I mentioned above, it would be sensible to consider having this cupboard vented.

The stairs from ground to first floor are reasonably firm and level but as with most old cottages they are quite steep and will need to be negotiated with care.

There is then a part-glazed door leading into the kitchen and once more this may not be of toughened glass and therefore the glazing should be replaced.

The kitchen units themselves are hand-built by the looks of it with granite work-tops providing working space and storage and are of a reasonable standard although beginning to show some signs of wear.

There are no skirting boards at ground floor level.

At first floor level there are pine doors leading into the bedrooms and the bathroom and these open and close properly. There is an over-stair cupboard in the small front bedroom and cupboards in the recess to the side of the chimney breast in the larger front bedroom, two pine cupboards and an airing cupboard in the rear bedroom and some timber panelling in the bathroom.

There are skirting boards provided in some areas and joinery at first floor level which I consider is of a reasonable standard.

Internal Decoration:

Decorations are a little worn, faded and marked and redecoration is going to be needed in time to suit your own personal taste.

Timber Defects:

I mentioned timber defects under various headings above but it is useful to consider them as a single topic.

Firstly, there is evidence of old infestation of wood boring beetle to some of the roof timbers and unless the vendor can provide guarantees which are properly bonded, then you should have all internal timbers treated under a bonded guarantee.

External joinery will need to be redecorated very soon otherwise rot and decay will occur although at the present moment, no significant rot was found.

Again, I stress that it is important in an old property that dampness be kept at bay otherwise concealed timbers such as joist ends, timber lintels and wall plates in contact with damp walls could be at risk of rot.

Thermal Insulation:

There is fibre glass quilt laid on top of the ceilings in the roof space. However, this is less than the recommended current 270mm in thickness and I suggest that it be topped up.

Most of the windows are double glazed and this would obviously help reduce energy costs.

Although I cannot confirm, it is likely that the extension, which is a relatively new structure, will have been insulated.

You should be provided with an Energy Performance Certificate relating to this property which you can obtain from the Estate Agents. This will provide a current energy rating together with a potential energy rating that could be achieved subject to various improvements.

You will need to consider this document carefully as not all of the recommendations may in your opinion be economically viable.

Ventilation:

The main roof has been re-clad over a breathable underlining and no evidence of a condensation problem was seen. There should be no requirement for additional ventilation but it is recommended that the condition be monitored.

There are extractor fans in the extension bathroom and cloakroom but a provision of humidistat controlled extractor fans to the kitchen and en suite bathroom would be a worthwhile improvement to help guard against condensation.

In general, properties in Cornwall do suffer from condensation and good ventilation and heating is recommended.

Mould growth is often associated with condensation and other forms of dampness. It has been recognised that some moulds are toxic and can affect the health of the occupants of the property. Identification and testing of such mould is beyond the scope of this report.

6 SERVICES

Electricity:

Mains electricity is connected with a meter and consumer unit located in a cupboard in the porch. One of the consumer units is more modern, the other is an older style with miniature circuit breakers fitted.

I am unaware when the system was last checked or tested and although I could see no sign of any obvious problems, it is always recommended that electrical installations be checked upon change of ownership.

I recommend therefore that prior to purchase, you ask an electrical contractor to carry out a brief inspection and to check the system and confirm whether or not it is safe and advise you if any updating is required.

Gas:

Mains gas is not available in this location.

Water:

Mains water is connected with an internal stopcock under the kitchen sink.

The external stopcock I believe is on the pavement in front of the path that leads around the side of the adjoining building. Unfortunately, the lid was completely seized and it could not be lifted.

What is not clear is whether this is actually a shared connection with you and the adjoining property. This point needs to be checked and confirmed and if it is shared, your conveyancer should check that proper legal arrangements are in hand.

Pipework, where visible, is of copper and at the moment I could see no sign of any leaks.

Sanitary Fittings:

This comprises a white bathroom suite at first floor level with steel panel bath, wash hand basin and WC, all of which were serviceable. There is an electric shower above the bath although this has not been tested. There was no proper shower screen, only a curtain.

Heating and Hot Water:

Space heating comes from an external wall mounted oil fired boiler which I believe the vendors have had installed quite recently.

This is served by a plastic oil storage tank located within the back garden.

The boiler serves radiators as well as providing hot water and hot water is supplemented by means of a factory lagged copper cylinder with an immersion heater fitted in the airing cupboard in the back bedroom.

The system is now probably due for a service and therefore before you purchase, I recommend that you ask a qualified heating engineer to check and service the boiler or arrange for the owners to do this and then you should set in hand an annual maintenance agreement.

Drainage:

Drainage is to the mains system. The soil vent pipe is located internally and is boxed-in. There is no external outlet. I assume there is a non-return valve behind the boxing.

There is only one inspection chamber in the rear yard. This was lifted and waste was run through the system and is discharging satisfactorily with no sign of any blockages.

It looks as if the drains then run in a north-westerly direction through the property next door.

Environmental:

Radon:

Public Health England have identified the area in which the property is situated as one in which, in more than 1% of dwellings, the level of radon gas entering the property is such that remedial action is recommended.

If you require more information, this can be obtained at http://www.ukradon.org or you could contact the Public Information Access Office, Public Health England, 133-155 Waterloo Road, London, SE1 8UG, Email: enquiries@phe.gov.uk or telephone them on 0207 654 8000.

Flooding:

The Environment Agency website does not indicate that the property is at risk of flooding.

Mining:

This is an area which historically has been associated with tin and copper mining and an Archive Metalliferous Mining Search Report must be obtained.

Contamination:

I have not investigated whether the site has or may have been put to contaminate uses in the past and your legal advisor should investigate the usual sources to ascertain whether the subject property is built on land which has a history of contaminative use before you enter into any legal commitment to purchase. My report is on the assumption that the land has not been put to contaminative use and would not be placed on a register of land which may have been put to contaminative use.

Japanese Knotweed:

Japanese Knotweed is a highly invasive non-native plant which is now widespread throughout the UK and a particular problem in Cornwall. The plant has extensive root systems from which it easily regenerates and it is very easily spread, even from small sections of stem or root. The plant is very difficult and costly to eradicate once established and can cause damage to building structures, underground services such as drains and to paved areas. I have not carried out any specific site inspection or survey for Knotweed. If you require assurance on this point, it is recommended that you arrange for a close inspection of the land and site boundaries.

Security:

There is no security system fitted.

Health and Safety:

There are a number of health and safety issues that need to be considered.

- Note the comments that I have made in relation to the possible presence of asbestos based materials in the property such as to the original manmade roof tiles and textured paint finishes to some ceilings.
- Internal glazing may not be of toughened glass and therefore should be replaced
- The stairs leading from ground to first floor are fairly steep and narrow and will need to be negotiated with care.
- Electrical installations and heating boilers can be a safety risk unless they are properly serviced and maintained.
- There are smoke detectors in the lounge and at first floor level.

- In terms of a means of escape, the escape from the first floor level is via the stairs and there are doors to the front and rear of the building.

Legal Matters:

Your conveyancer needs to confirm and check the following points:

Planning and Building Matters:

The cottage is situated within a Conservation Area and certain restrictions therefore apply relating to the need to maintain the external appearance of the building by use of traditional local materials and finishes wherever possible. In practice, this is similar to a Grade II Listed Building Status and prior to carrying out any external repairs likely to alter the appearance of the property it will be necessary to obtain Conservation Area Consent.

I recommend this matter be referred to your legal advisor who should be asked to confirm during pre-contract enquiries that there are no outstanding matters or Enforcement Notices affecting the property including in respect of the following:

- The PVC rainwater fittings.
- The replacement timber sliding sash sealed glazed unit windows.
- The satellite dish at the front corner of the building.
- The removal of the chimneys.
- The previous recladding of the roof.
- The construction of the painted rendered concrete block east boundary wall.
- The trowel cement render finishes to the side and rear walls.

In 2010 Building Regulations were revised and there is now a requirement that when more than 25% of a building element is renewed, the thermal insulation to that element must be upgraded.

You should be aware that since March 2002 there has been a requirement that glazing repairs meet improved thermal insulation standards and all replacement or repair work undertaken since that date needs to be carried out by a FENSA Registered contractor or alternatively local authority building consent obtained.

Internally the property has been subject to some alteration including renewal and re-positioning of the stairs but no information is available as to whether necessary local authority Building Approval has been obtained and this should be checked by your legal advisor.

The west party wall has been rebuilt in timber stud construction when the property was sub divided. Has Building Approval been obtained?

Part of the east wall to the rear wing has been re-built in the past. The date of this is unknown and although possibly an historic alteration, this does need to be checked by your legal advisor and my earlier recommendation to confirm the nature of the wall construction and in respect of concrete testing should be noted.

Rights of Way/Easements:

I am not aware of any rights of way affecting the property.

Whilst drainage is believed to be to the main foul sewer we recommend that this be confirmed by your legal adviser during usual pre contract enquiries together with the extent of maintenance liability, both jointly or severally, in respect of all shared or private sewer runs.

As this is a semi-detached property your legal advisor should be asked to explain the extent of your rights and responsibilities in respect of the shared party wall elements, shared roof areas, rainwater fittings etc.

Boundaries:

During usual pre-contract enquiries your Legal Adviser should be asked to confirm the extent of repair liability in respect of the site boundaries.

Guarantees:

At the time of reporting no information is available as to whether there are any guarantees in respect of the property and this might be better determined by your legal advisor during pre-contract enquiries. In particular, are there any guarantees in respect of previous remedial damp or timber treatments including the treatment of wood borer infestation? If so, what do these cover?

Summary:

This Period building is of traditional construction and you should be aware that buildings of this age and type were constructed differently to modern buildings and typically the walls will be built with a relatively soft and porous locally quarried stone using earth and lime based mortars and often incorporate integral structural timbers not only as lintels to door and window openings, but also as stringers (horizontal ties). As originally built these finishes were relatively soft and porous allowing the walls to breathe and establishing equilibrium between any rising or penetrating damp and natural evaporation.

Experience has shown that impervious finishes used in the repair and maintenance of such buildings including cement based renders, pointing, plasters, modern paint not to mention waterproof tanking, can result in entrapment of moisture within the structure resulting in possible decay of encapsulated timbers. Careful consideration should therefore be given when carrying out repairs or alterations to older properties to guard against any inappropriate repairs which may store up future problems. In this respect the use of more traditional materials such as lime based putties or mortars and traditional breathable painted finishes for the repair of stone walls is recommended and whilst such finishes are not as hard wearing they do allow the underlying structure to breathe and reduce the build-up of dampness within the structure which has been found to occur where impervious finishes have been used.

Whilst the property is suffering from no inherent defect likely to affect the structural stability of the building, there are nevertheless a number of outstanding repairs which require attention if the property is to be put back into a satisfactory and readily saleable condition.

For your convenience and ease of reference, we set out below a brief summary of the principal disrepairs affecting the property. All of these matters have been dealt with more fully elsewhere in the Report which should be read in its entirety. The principal repair items are:

1) **Concrete Test** – obtain a satisfactory Concrete Screening Test Report in respect of any pre-1950 concrete elements to the building including in the cellar and to the rear wing. This would be a prerequisite to any mortgage advance secured on the property.

2) **Roof Repairs** – arrange for a competent roofing contractor to carry out a close visual inspection of the roof including the hidden valley slopes and linings to the valley area and to advise on all necessary repairs e.g. replacement of broken slates, re-fixing of slipped or loose hip tiles and confirmation that the central valley area and skylight remain in a serviceable and weatherproof condition.

3) **Wood Borer Infestation** – unless there are valid guarantees relating to previous treatment of wood borer infestation it is recommended that you obtain a report from a timber specialist contractor and arrange for treatment of all structural timbers within the property against recurrence of infestation, all work to be covered by long-term bonded guarantee.

4) **Dampness** – arrange for a competent damp and timber specialist contractor to provide quotations for eradication of dampness and related remedial treatments to ground floor wall surfaces particularly in the kitchen wing and also to advise on remedial waterproof tanking works to the cellar for which you would need to budget if you wish to bring this into a fully serviceable condition.

5) **Electrical System** – arrange for a suitably qualified local electrician to confirm the overall condition and efficiency of the electrical system and to advise on any necessary upgrading work.

6) **Ventilation** – allow for provision of humidistat controlled extractor fans to the bathroom and kitchen and for provision of improved ventilation to the roof spaces to help guard against condensation.

7) **Cellar** – the cellar is affected by widespread dampness which is not at all uncommon and can be lived with unless you wish to use the area for storage in which case remedial damp proofing works will be necessary (see comments above).

   There is a concrete block party dividing wall in the cellar separating from the cellar to the neighbouring cottage but this wall is incomplete at the front of the cellar where there is a gap through into the neighbour's cellar and there is also slight gapping at the top of the wall. Infilling of these gaps for improved security and fire separation is recommended.

8) **External Joinery** – whilst the external joinery is mostly serviceable pockets of decay were noted to some window sub-frames, the lower sliding sashes have all seized and there are pockets of rot to the kitchen door. In proceeding to purchase the property it is recommended that you allow for overhaul/repair of external joinery via a competent carpenter.

In addition to the above a number of other items were noted which do not merit urgent attention but will need to be taken into account when budgeting for future repair and maintenance liabilities. These include:

1) **Thermal Insulation** – allow for provision of improved insulation to the front and rear roof spaces. This will require formation of a ceiling hatch into the front roof space.

2) **Ventilation** – see recommendations above for provision of improved ventilation to roof spaces and humidistat controlled extractor fans.

3) **Kitchen Floor** – the thermoplastic tiles to the kitchen floor may incorporate small quantities of asbestos and any future repair or removal should be carried out in a controlled manner and material disposed of by licensed contractor. The tiles could be protected by laying a suitable floor covering over them. However, removal by a building contractor would need to be carried out in a controlled manner and could be costly and disruptive.

4) **Entrance Steps** – the concrete and slate entrance steps are worn and uneven and can be slippery when wet. Improvement/repair is recommended.

5) **External WC/Store** – allow for overhaul/repair to put these in a serviceable and weatherproof condition.

6) **Rear Cornish Hedge** – the Cornish hedge facing to the bank in the rear garden undulates and may soon require attention.

These additional items need not be considered urgent but will nevertheless involve significant future expense and you should budget accordingly.

It will be seen from my comments in this report that whilst the overall property is suffering from no inherent defects likely to affect the structural stability of the building, there are nevertheless several outstanding matters and disrepairs which will require early attention if the property is to be put into a satisfactory and readily saleable condition.

Briefly, the outstanding repairs have come about as a result of general age deterioration combined with some superficial neglect and whilst individually they are considered to be neither particularly unusual nor excessive in a property of this age and character, they will nevertheless collectively involve some not inconsiderable expense and before legally committing yourself to the purchase, I recommend that you obtain written reports and quotations from competent contractors and specialists. Normally it is best to obtain two or three competitive quotations which can then be compared.

Once you are in receipt of this additional information, I would be pleased to confirm whether it would cause me to alter the advice or recommendations made in this Report should you so wish.

In conclusion, assuming that responses to your Legal Advisers pre-contract enquiries prove satisfactory and that you are willing to accept the significant cost and inconvenience of dealing with the outstanding repairs and deficiencies reported in a satisfactory manner during any planned or routine maintenance programme, I can see no reason why, from a structural point of view, you should not proceed with your proposed purchase assuming of course the property meets with your requirements in all other respects.

I trust that in this Report I provide the advice and information you require, but if I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

7 SIGNATURE OF SURVEYOR

Julian Crosby FRICS
DowlingDodd
Chartered Surveyors

JC/tm/sample