

BUILDING SURVEY

On

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**Over Wallop
Near Stockbridge
Hampshire**

Made: 16th August 2005

INTRODUCTION

This report was put in hand on instructions received from ## prior to his proposed purchase of the freehold interest.

For reference purposes, the front of the property is taken to face approximately south west over the road.

At the time of the inspection the weather conditions were dry and sunny with some cloud.

The property was occupied and furnished with floor coverings and stored items throughout.

SITUATION AND DESCRIPTION

The property is a detached period Listed Grade II building with accommodation on two principal floors plus an attic. The main elevations are of period brickwork, part of which is colourwashed and rendered. Internally, there is evidence of a timber-frame structure, probably dating from the early 17th Century. The main three-storey front structure was remodelled and clad in solid brick masonry, probably some 300 years ago. In 1831, the rear two-storey wing was added. This introduced a second gable pitched slate roof and central gutter valley in lead. Off the east corner of this is a former forge outbuilding now re-modelled with a slate gabled roof and colourwashed solid brick walls. It may be early Victorian.

The house is on the lane frontage through the village with the Wallop Brook directly opposite. It is low lying in the valley about five miles south west of Stockbridge.

ACCOMMODATION

Ground Floor:

Front Porch.

Hall with radiator and under stairs cupboard.

Dining room (west corner) with radiators, fireplace and door to

Kitchen (north corner) with sink and base units, tall storage cupboarding, oil-fired boiler for domestic hot water and central heating [not tested], radiator. Door to

Back hall with radiator, coat cupboard and door to front hall and external door to glazed rear porch.

Drawing room (formerly two rooms) with radiators, fireplace having Jetmaster style fire box, built-in bookshelf/base cupboard, French doors to garden.

First floor:

Landing with radiator and linen cupboard.

Shower room having washbasin, WC, shower cubicle with electric water heater [not tested], radiator and electric fan heater [not tested].

Four principal bedrooms each with radiator and cupboarding, one with cylinder cupboard having lagged tank with auxiliary electric immersion [not tested] and one with concealed washbasin.

Bathroom having vanity basin, WC, bath, radiator and extractor ventilation.

Second Floor:

Landing.

Attic bedroom with radiator.

Attic store room with water tankage.

Outside

Glazed back porch leading to outbuilding having entrance lobby, cloakroom, washbasin and WC.

L-shaped utility/garden room having plumbing for washing machine, deep-glazed sink and French doors to garden.

Full front garden with gravel drive access on north west side through to rear. Principal garden on south east with thatched cob wall from the street.

Rear garden with concrete yard to assorted outbuildings, mainly of timber-frame construction under corrugated sheet roof coverings with some later block wall construction including open barn used as carport with log store and implement store, granary on stone staddles, principal frame barn (used for garaging) with garden/implement store off, having hayloft.

Additional ground to the rear rising from the bottom of the valley with mature trees. In all, said to be over one acre (not measured).

OBSERVATIONS

It is understood the present owners have been in occupation for 39 years. They had a chemical treatment of woodworm by Rentokil soon after they arrived. The dating of other work has been past surmised from information shared with the present owners.

INTERIOR

Second Floor

In the ceiling of the tank/box room part of the original lath and plaster has been cut away in the past and temporarily is covered with polythene. This was dislodged to give a partial view of the apex roof void. A proper hatch might be formed.

Where the rafters meet, a traditional dowel peg joint is present at the apex. There is no ridgeboard (which was later constructed on principal). The timbers appear reasonably clean. The underside of the slates cannot be seen due a reinforced felt lining. There is a probability that pre-treated battens and galvanised nail fixings were adopted. The age of past re-roofing was not confirmed.

A horizontal quilt of fibreglass, probably originally 100 mm thick has now compacted. This is set horizontally over the upper ceiling and is partially visible in the eaves void suggesting that it was introduced from the exterior.

This would have been when the roof covering was stripped off, which is good practice. While latest insulation standards require more than twice this quilt thickness, the detail is

considered satisfactory. There may be a possibility in the future of introducing a greater thickness of quilt above the apex ceiling.

Modern practice would achieve cross roof void airflow below felt lining above insulation. This is so that any condensation or similar is cleared. It may be impractical to achieve this because of the style of the construction. It may be possible to cross vent the apex void with airbricks to opposite gable ends.

The traditional lath and plaster ceiling detail in the tank/box room shows elements of damage and loss of key. This includes a panel next to the roof tanks which may have been disturbed in the past to chemically treat the timbers before the lower hatch access on the north east side was made. Stored items restricted access. It would appear there is a further low hatch on the south west side. Quilt insulation can be seen through here.

Every care should be taken in repairing lath and plaster to use compatible materials. In some situations it is preferable to apply traditional distemper or lime wash. Although an emulsion may have been applied in the past, there is a risk that this will loose key and flake away.

Structurally, spanning from the north west gable through to the south east, major purlin beams are present part way down the rafter slopes to give intermediate support. These are traditionally let into the principal rafters forming the major trusses spanning parallel to the gable ends on either side of the stair well in a traditional manner. Many of the timbers are exposed. Because of the length of the purlins, wind-braces are present below them to strut them back to the intermediate wall supports. This traditional rustic construction appears to be in reasonably good condition for the age and style. Inevitably there are signs of flight holes from woodworm but no activity was identified. Past chemical treatment is understood to have been undertaken.

There is always a risk that the timbers may become adversely affected by damp penetration and where the purlins in the attic bedroom are let into the south east wall, there are signs of past damp. Part of this relates to the external chimney from the drawing room. Careful opening up will be needed to check the bearing points. In any event, the plasters here have lost key and are soot-contaminated. They now contain hygroscopic salts from the soot, which will attract condensation moisture. This will need to be sealed.

The steepness of the original roof pitch suggests that the house would have been thatched, including the south east and north

west hip ends where the skillings are set steep. This is different to the exterior which has gabled walls. This past modification of the timbering would have been when the thatch was removed. The inner modified timber detail is unseen.

There is no point of access to the south east end of the apex roof void. It would appear that a panel of plasterboard has been made up to the ceiling close to this south east end, possibly where a second opening in the ceiling was introduced, although this is by no means certain. Generally, the landing and attic bedroom ceilings have been better maintained with decoration, although they will need some further attention. The unseen timbers of the skilling slopes may have been chemically treated by lances from the apex roof void.

The external gable end walls are finished in render. This is likely to be disguising infill single skin masonry replacing earlier wattle and daub to the traditional timber-frame below the original barn hip, with later similar masonry above. While the elevations are not in a true vertical plane, they are likely to have suffered marginal distortion only soon after construction. No ongoing weakness is present. External chimneybreast structures subsequently have been built which act as a style of buttress. A degree of loss of key to the inner plaster is present, notably by the drawing room chimney flue. This may have been part damaged by damp entry and soot staining from the old flue. Current repair is needed. Subject to personal requirements, there may some benefit in obtaining consent to introduce an independent plasterboard dry lining with insulation behind.

Below the long skillings in the principal rooms, traditional lath and plaster studwork is present. These are non-load bearing eaves original walls. Although stored items restricted the assessment, there is no obvious sign of particular recent distress. On the north east side of the tank/box room, the hairline cracking in the lower skilling and eaves wall indicates marginal deflection. There is also some water staining probably associated with old plumbing or a roof leak prior to re-slating. Again, additional preparation will be needed.

The eaves walls are carried off the conventional timber floors. The landing floor level is one step below the two rooms off it with a major beam forming part of the truss construction clearly visible. These structurally tie across the building, for triangulation. On these two beams, metal strap hoops can be seen to have been secured to create the trimming for the staircase access which may be a later adaptation.

Inevitably, the old hardwood boards are pieced. They are set to relatively shallow joists, apparently spanning to a principal spine beam (directly below the ridgeline). This will be discussed further on the floor below. The run-off in the floor of the tank/box room may in part relate to the additional load imposed by the water tankage. It would have been better for this to have been sited above the load bearing beam rather than onto the shallow floor joists. Since it is reasonable to assume that as part of modernisation and upgrading, modification to the plumbing is to be carried out, further consideration to change this might be made.

It is reasonable to assume that past chemical treatment of the timbers is performing satisfactorily. While some attention to the surface exposed boards is needed to create a better finish, no active beetle infestation was seen on the bare timbers visible. Some care will be needed to piece these. In some situations, it may be easier to introduce a thin plywood overlay or similar if carpeting is to be adopted.

The tank/box room has a small fixed glazing in the north west gable. This is partly covered externally by the chimney structure. The thin glass attracts condensation mildew and while polythene has been secured across it as a form of crude secondary glazing, this is now perished. Given the height of the glazing, it should technically be safety glass. The window frame opening could be seen to have been significantly wider. If it is intended to use this room for habitable accommodation, additional light and ventilation would be needed. While this may be difficult to achieve, a Conservation roof light cut into the north east roof slope above the purlin may receive consent. Equally, two others might be introduced to the landing and attic bedroom.

This bedroom has a small south east window of a mullioned frame softwood casement and frame type. While this is relatively modern, it has been subject to a degree of wet rot decay to the outer sill (probably due to lack of decorative maintenance). The sill needs to be cut out and replaced. Hardwood might be adopted here. Again technically, safety glass should be fitted together with a restraint fixing to prevent the casement being fully opened. This attic floor level is not suitable for unsupervised children

The low radiator in this room is of a traditional pressed-steel type with simple copper flow and return pipework. Subject to personal requirements, a thermostatic valve control could be fitted. The surface area of the radiator may be marginally undersize for the volume to be heated. There is no other heating at this level.

Currently, the fibreglass expansion header tank which provides water pressure to this radiator is only marginally above it, set on a polythene water tank. This is not ideal. In terms of plumbing modifications, if a low-pressure system is to be adopted, the expansion header tank should ideally be set at a higher level on a suitable support platform. It is not covered. Water evaporation can therefore arise from it. Insulation is not needed because it is within the insulated accommodation zone.

The polythene cold-water storage tank has had a lid fitted but this is now cut away. Water evaporation can arise from here. The adjacent plumbing is a relatively complex adaptation of old iron with later copper and plastics. While it may perform adequately in the short term, it should be recognised that the zinc galvanised protection on the original iron plumbing pipes will now be deteriorating unseen through electrolysis due to the presence of copper. These pipes are effectively obsolete and would need to be replaced as part of a programme of other works.

The two period doors into the rooms are of a traditional boarded and braced type with timber latches. They are set in the partitions which act as the door frames. Inevitably, some shrinkage gaps are present, but for the style they are satisfactory. They close appropriately in a manner suggesting that the cross frame wall has not been subject to thrust distress or spread. Some attention to the hinge and latch fixings will be needed.

The staircase to the first floor incorporates kite winders at the base. The hardwood treads are set to conventional string detail with painted softwood newel posts and handrail. While the latter is lower than advised, the detail overall is satisfactory. Inevitably, there is some wear to the treads and slight weakness, particularly to the lower kite winders. There is no access below the latter. In time it may be necessary to add additional chock or screw fixings from below. With a three-storey building it is advised that a modern mains multi-position smoke detector with battery back-up should be introduced linking with an alarm. Later comment is to be made.

Rear Wing Loft Void

Within the shelved linen cupboard, off the first floor landing an adapted panel door hatch is present. Fibreglass quilting has been added to the back of this.

The rear wing roof construction has a conventional ridge board carrying the internal and external timber members forming the rafters that have major purlin beams part way down the slopes.

These timbers are carried from the brick south east and north west gable ends with a set of traditional four king-post trusses. The latter span from the original back wall of the house through to the later back wall, again parallel to the gable ends in the traditional manner. This is all from 1832 (dated externally). Metal strap fixings have been anchored between the king-posts and the beams at ceiling level. Some historic deflection could be identified and bolted alongside these beams later softwood timbers have been introduced.

There is a probability that when the outer roof covering was stripped off and re-laid, some degree of additional fixings were necessary between the rafters and the ridge boards. There is a slight irregularity in the plane of the outer roof slopes associated with historic movement, but no particular distress was apparent. The king-post trusses incorporate principal rafters below the purlins. While this is all in relatively crude hune softwood timber, it appears to be appropriately detailed.

The ceiling joists span between the beams. Again, the detail is not fully visible due to quilt insulation which is approximately 100 mm thick. Supplementary 150 mm quilt could be introduced in addition. There are some areas where extra quilting was present, probably associated with pipe runs from the roof tanks.

As already indicated, there is a felt lining below the slate outer roof covering. This is reasonably lapped. Minor daylight is visible under the eave. This may allow some airflow, however, by modern practice standard there is no specific provision for cross-venting the roof space. It should be possible to introduce at least a pair of 225 mm square airbricks into each gable end sufficient to assist this. Supplementary venting might be cut in with special venting slates to the inner roof slope.

From this roof void, the back of the earlier timbering can be partly seen. A section of the lath and plaster has no vertical quilt insulation to the eaves of the attic bedroom and the landing lath and plaster skilling is also uninsulated. Additional material should be made up including over the first floor horizontal ceilings beyond the valley.

A relatively wide softwood timber board is present below the central gutter valley, apparently running to either end. Surprisingly, not each pair of rafters has horizontal noggings to support this boarding. The detail was not fully visible but it appears to be satisfactorily carried. There are signs of past damp entry but no obvious decay.

Hot bitumen tar can be seen above the valley as though it has been stripped out and replaced in mineral felt rather than lead. The latter would be more traditional and have a greater lifespan. Further comments are to be made externally. There was no sign of obvious leaking but this may arise, notably in snow melt conditions.

Again the timbering is reasonably clean, indicating past chemical treatment. Inevitably some water marking is visible which is thought to pre-date stripping and re-roofing. A number of the old timbers are likely to have been second-hand, particularly the north east slope purlins. These show lapped peg joints and other sockets.

The lime bedded clay brickwork forming the two gable ends is reasonably finished. Inevitably, there is some minor wear to the pointing but this is not significant. At the north west end, an internal chimney structure is present serving the boiler from the kitchen. Soot contamination could be seen here. It is probable that the boiler was used for many years before a protective flue liner was introduced. Later comment is to be made externally. The soot contamination will contain hygroscopic salts, which attract condensation. The chimney may have been built without a tray that is a physical damp proof course, which was a later practice. Again external comments are to be made.

If a low-pressure plumbing system is required, there may be some advantage in considering siting insulated water tanks in this roof void to a special platform made up spanning between the truss beams, possibly at the height of purlins. [This would free up the second attic room.] A better access hatch arrangement might be considered with this. Equally, a top hinged skylight might be introduced in the south west slope such that the central gutter valley could be easily accessed for future maintenance.

It was noted that some of the pipework passing through this roof void is uninsulated. This includes the new polythene section to serve the shower.

First Floor

The east corner bedroom of the rear wing has a later plasterboard ceiling with paper lining. This was never skimmed. While the surface presentation is adequate, it could be improved upon. The wardrobe cupboard of this bedroom is in the earlier structure and has a lath and plaster ceiling consistent with that of the south corner bedroom. Age loss of key may develop in time.

Here there is a major stained beam parallel to the frontage, which is the spine beam of the floor construction previously referred to. An element of plasterboard repair has been necessary on either side of this beam. It may well have been overtacked through the original lath and plaster. Some minor making good with re-decoration will be needed, although the presentation is satisfactory.

Adjacent to the internal north west stairwell wall of the south corner bedroom, a stripped timber is present which represents the underside of the principal rafter forming the major truss over. A similar beam is present under the other side of the stair well that is the partition with the west corner bedroom.

The spine beam in the latter room is enclosed in a later softwood boxing. Paper lining is present to the lath and plaster here, although again some plasterboard has been made up in the adjacent bathroom (which has no external window). The ceiling is bowed, in part this may relate to the loading of the water tank above. While decorations have been made good with paper lining, one section may have perished due to a past leak. Further making good will prove necessary in due course.

The south west window of the landing has a slightly raised ceiling. This is beyond the point of the lower attic landing floor previously referred to. The older lath and plaster ceiling finishes are disguised and paper lining reasonably presented. Reference to metal hanger straps to the beam at the head of the staircase forming the trimmer opening has been made from above. While there is slight undulation here, there is no distress.

Both the north corner and adjacent family bathroom ceilings have been replaced with plasterboard in the past. It is understood this pre-dates the present owners. Equally, some modification was carried out to introduce the present plasterboard-faced timber-frame partitions separating the bathroom from the two bedrooms and forming the linen cupboard off the landing. These partitions are set off the floors. While the arrangement appears satisfactory, it should be recognised that they do not incorporate any acoustic insulation, which is a later practice. It is considered likely that the door head sizes vary because of the re-used original doors. There is a probability that the bathroom window in the centre of the north east elevation may have been cut in later.

This wing has conventional 225 mm (traditional 9") external brick walls. There is a major chimney structure projecting in on the north west side of the north corner bedroom (alongside the cylinder cupboard).

Some plaster renewal will inevitably have been carried out over the years, partly to disguise heat loss crazing and soot contamination. The surface presentation is satisfactory.

In the east bedroom, the south east wall is finished in a plasterboard dry lining internally. The window opening is also a slightly different scale to that expected. It is possible that a chimney breast has been removed from this elevation (although there is no particular evidence of this in the gable end above). Solid 225 mm walls can be vulnerable to driving rain penetration. Painting the external brickwork may have been considered beneficial to reduce the impact of this. Nevertheless, periodic damp entry may develop.

The closet off this east bedroom south east wall is also board dry lined. Externally, the hopper discharge from the central gutter valley has a fault, which would allow damp to track into the masonry.

The original house has little evidence of the original period timber-frame. There is one post on the landing adjacent to the door recess leading to the bathroom. This may have been a traditional jowl post to carry the principal trussed rafter, although it has subsequently been adapted.

There is some irregularity in the plaster finishes of the three external walls of the original building. Beyond the north west wall, a major chimney structure is present which in part may have accounted for the mechanical ventilation adopted to the bathroom rather than the provision of a window. Later comment is to be made.

On the internal wall here, paper lining is present across earlier lath and plaster. This is likely to be the original back wall, possibly with single skin brick infill. In the bedroom behind at ceiling level, a form of modern softwood cladding to a boxing is present, which may be a part of the support to the roof construction over. Adjacent to the back of the door there is a form of enclosure to the back of the post exposed on the landing side. There is a possibility that other vertical structural posts of the original frame wall may be disguised in the partition on the south west side of the east corner bedroom. This is faced in traditional lath and plaster with paper lining and although there is some minor hollowness, the presentation is fair.

On the landing, a wider opening in the frame wall has been formed with a Georgian decorative door lining and architrave detail. Part of this shows signs of a former hinging mechanism.

There is a possibility that this is an adaptation of a pair of doors pre-dating the formation of the bathroom. No particular distress was noted, although the opening is marginally wider than might have been expected.

Furniture and fitted carpets restricted the assessment of the flooring. For the most part, the old timber board floors are reasonably firm, although not level. Again, they will be a combination of joist and beams. Some extra loading has been imposed by the more modern partitions and sanitary fittings. In recent times, modern best practice is to introduce double joists and other strengthening. No current modification appears to be necessary.

Inevitably, the old boards have been raised to alter services and some additional screw fixing of these to the joists should be expected.

In the stairwell, the joist depth can be seen to be only some 100 mm. Given the span of the floor joists, this is less than expected, although the loading is relatively light. Nevertheless, some slight distortion in the staircase to the attic has arisen because of this. No current modification is needed, but it is important not to weaken the joists with notching and similar.

The south corner bedroom has wide hardwood boards. Additional timbering has been planted to the skirtings indicating an imperfect joint with the wall finish, but they are firm. There is always a possibility that some unseen damage to the joist ends where they are set into the solid walls may have developed, but the past chemical treatment of the timbers should minimise the effects of this.

The front windows are conventional multi-pane early Georgian style sashes with slender lamb's tongue glazing bars. The decorations have been well maintained. While replacement sash cords have been fitted in the past, these are now wearing, but no immediate attention is needed. Due to the paint build-up the sash windows tend to be stiff to open and some are fully paint bound. With burning off and easing, a slightly better closure should be achievable. The sash window nearest the south corner shows distinct run-off in the frame towards the south corner and this is clearly historic movement, which does not show on the internal plaster finishes. The window sashes have been adjusted to account for this, probably in the early part of the last Century, as there are no signs of more recent distress.

The south east window to the east corner bedroom is a casement and frame one without a mullion. There is always a risk that water penetration can develop. The head of the window has been protected externally with a form of small weather head. This window is satisfactory, although it has no top bolts, which might be added in addition to the stay bar fixings.

The north east facing mullioned frame windows may be semi-load bearing. The single glazings are relatively thin and some adjustment to the casements has been carried out. For the style, the arrangement is satisfactory. As already indicated, the two bedroom windows are thought to be of the original period with the bathroom window between added in a matching style, while the glazing to the north bedroom is cracked.

Traditional timber four-panel doors remain with wide frames and beading architraves. While much of this is of an original Georgian period, some later timbering of a moulded profile was also used, notably to the west bedroom and adjacent bathroom. Old doors were re-hung here using latch hinges. Some of the door heads are low.

When the later partitions were introduced to form the rear shower room, no attempt was made to adopt moulded profile architraving. Some of the doors have warped slightly, although probably before being re-used. Nevertheless, further adjustment is needed, notably to the shower room door. In part this relates to slight distortion of the partitions where they are carried off the floors. An earlier boarded and braced door remains to the cupboard off the east corner bedroom. While the period hinging shows some wear, the presentation is fair.

Later cupboarding has been added, notably in the north corner and east corner rooms. These are of light timber and plywood. Good storage is achieved. It should be recognised that because of the Listed building status, technically, consent is needed to alter existing finishes. This could be interpreted as including moving modern cupboarding. Further consultation with the Planning Conservation Officer of Test Valley Borough Council should be considered in due course.

Modern regulations require mechanical ventilation to all bathrooms. Despite the recent installation of a shower, this has not been addressed. In some respects, it is probably easier to add a ceiling-mounted extractor with ducted ventilation out through the eave. Technically, this should be on a delay-timer with the light switch. The current (windowless) bathroom has a major extractor in the flank wall with an independent pull cord only.

The sanitary ware here is dated. There is a colour variation between the enamel sink vanity bowl, the acrylic bath and the porcelain WC cistern. Later taps have been fitted. The plumbing and waste drainage are disguised in a boxing. While the arrangement is serviceable, future re-fitting may be considered necessary. As far as can be seen, the plumbing pipes are in copper.

The north east facing bathroom has a recently had the bath replaced for a shower tray and screen enclosure with an electric instantaneous water heater shower direct off the mains. A water-resistant board cladding has been added for this with mastic sealant. The detail appeared satisfactory. The earlier sanitary ware is of a good quality. The basin taps may have been replaced. While copper feeds are present to the fittings, they are linked off an earlier galvanised iron pipe run system, which is part disguised in boxing. Previous comments in the roof void should be noted. There is a timber boxing in the east corner by the basin where these pipes drop from the roof void over.

In the north bedroom adjacent to the chimneybreast (serving the oil-fired boiler), a combination of iron and copper pipework can be seen (part disguised by a painting). The pre-insulated cylinder is of a reasonably good capacity, however the heat exchange efficiency will be severely restricted because of the calcium build-up now present within it. This relates to the local hard water. The electric immersion has not been tested. There is no modern heat thermostat sensor on the cylinder, which is normally required to operate in conjunction with a modern time-clock programmer and motorised valves. The system may prove to be relatively inefficient to operate. Further expenditure should be anticipated, in the near future with the replacement of the obsolete iron pipes, as previously advised.

Painted pressed-steel radiators of an older style are present throughout. Some of the copper pipework is disguised in skirting boxings and others in the inter-floor. By painting radiators the heat exchange efficiency is reduced. In some rooms, second radiators have been fitted to supplement the slightly smaller ones. Because of the irregularity of some of the earlier walls, timber batten mountings have had to be adopted. Generally, the presentation is fair for the age and style, but the heating is likely to be inefficient. Future upgrading should be considered.

The carpeted straight flight of timber stairs to the ground floor has a traditional softwood handrail and balustrade detail with spindles below as well as slender turned newel posts. This is in traditional detail, probably dating from the 1832 rear extension.

While it is difficult to confirm where the original staircase rose, this may have been at the rear of the single-storey wing below a cat-slide roof extension off on the north west side.

The underside of the stairs is enclosed with plywood and boxing to the base. There is a probability that the riser treads were drilled in order to spray treat the timbers against woodworm (disguised by the carpeting). There is slight irregularity in the bottom tread but it is firm.

Ground Floor

Later plasterboard ceilings have been made up through the kitchen, back wall and drawing room. There is slight irregularity consistent with historic movement which is longstanding. In the kitchen and hall, two of the original stained beams are left exposed. These have a traditional chamfer and stop detail. They span from the internal wall through to the external north east wall where one is set above the kitchen window lintel. This was common practice. Slight deflection may have occurred historically here. Similarly, in the drawing room the boxed beam spans through to a second boxed beam parallel to the frontage, approximately in line with the position of the old back wall of the main forward structure. Headroom is marginally restricted here. The run-off in the beams suggests that slight dip has developed historically where the beam parallel to the frontage runs into the internal wall (backing onto the coat cupboard) although it is difficult to assess. Part of the frame timber post here may have been affected by decay in the past. There is also a water stain close to the end of the beam which is now dry (visible from the drawing room face). This may relate to old leakage from the central gutter valley disguised behind the boxed lining on the landing (at the arch opening).

The forward section drawing room has a further softwood board enclosure to a beam parallel to the frontage. This is spanning from the chimneybreast on the south east side with the internal wall. Again it is reasonably true but shows minor historic distortion. The lath and plaster ceiling on either side is reasonably presented, paper lined.

It is understood that the drawing room was formerly two rooms. An exposed timber beam is present between the two major structural downstand beams in the position of a former cross wall. The traditional sockets and dowel peg fittings here can be identified in the beam, although the posts have all been removed, except one adjacent to the south east wall. The original studs were closer together than would commonly have been adopted.

There is a possibility that this was part of the earlier frame building that was retained when the main structure had replacement masonry walls formed.

Although it is difficult to assess, the outer wall construction is clearly thicker than on the floor above. At 340 mm this may be a brick and a half thick. The extra wall thickness achieves both stability and additional bearing for the floor construction over.

External comment is to be made with regard to historic distortion around the south corner. This can be identified on the south west window of the drawing room. Internally, the plasters show no distress. However, above the chimneybreast on the south east side, hair crazing can be identified. This is not considered likely to be part of the old movement (the angle of the crack is not consistent with movement in the south corner), it is probably merely differential movement below the point loading of the beam.

The fireplace here has an adapted brick finish with a timber beam over. It is not a traditional lintel and it may well replace a former self-supporting brick arch that possibly failed. The brickwork is also likely to be of different ages. Towards the south corner, more slender brick and lime mortar bedding is probably older than the opposite corner where the soft second-hand bricks are bedded in a cement mortar. Equally, the second-hand bricks used to form the mounting for the Jetmaster style convector firebox now fitted are cement mortar with grit. These are narrower bricks. The chimney flue is clearly in regular use and will need to be swept. There is always a risk that the old render protection often introduced with a brick chimney has deteriorated over the years. Depending on how regularly the fireplace is to be used, a class one flue liner system may need to be introduced. Further advice from a specialist should be considered.

The rear wing extension has similar thicker walls. There is every likelihood that the opening for the south east French doors from the drawing room is later. Again, plasterboard dry lining has been introduced. However, in the small adjacent window reveal, it is clear that driving rain penetration adversely affects the brick masonry here and plasters in the reveal. Similarly, the damp is able to track in around the east corner and major salt contamination on modern plasters is visible. The original solid brick walls would not have been built with a physical damp proof course at this age. While there is evidence elsewhere of chemical injection damp proofing, this has clearly not been fully successful. Often it relies more on the waterproof additive in a render-based plaster.

Comments with regard to the external concrete path level being higher than expected should be noted. The outer glazed canopy to some degree gives weather protection to the solid north east wall through here. Later observations are to be made.

In the back wall, a hard render plaster has been used to this walling which appropriately holds back the moisture. On the internal single skin wall of the drawing room on the hall side, up to 17% Wood Moisture Equivalent (WME) damp readings were found. This is not of immediate concern, although it may vary seasonally. Damp decay in timber can develop from 19% WME. Unfortunately, adjacent to the softwood skirting on the external north east wall of the drawing room, 34% WME was identified and this extends higher in the wall than normally found. It is probable that the render plaster has been adopted, but because of the inadequacy of the chemical injection damp proofing in the external high concrete path level, the water has been forced higher in the wall. A similar defect may well be disguised on the south east wall by plasterboard dry lining. This extends up to the timber post exposed and is further indicated by 34% WME in the adjacent plasters on either side of the drawing room fireplace. Surprisingly, this reduces from the south corner, although 40% WME was found in part of the south west wall. Some salt contamination could also be identified.

Because the internal walls are not built with a physical damp proof course, similar readings were found, although generally these were slightly lower in the hall (behind the grandfather clock). The paper lining is lifting and 40% WME was found both at a low level and high level. This tends to suggest damp is tracking into the wall, possibly from the porch. There is a possibility that the timber lintel at the door opening may have become adversely affected. The wall thickness at this point however, is thinner than elsewhere.

Similarly, on the south west wall of the dining room, 28% WME was found above the light switch level, close to the porch although not further along the wall at this height. Nevertheless, up to 38% WME was detected along the length of this wall and around onto the north west side. Some walls were not fully accessed due to furnishings and radiators. Sometimes damp develops because of the presence of soot with hygroscopic salts close to the chimney structures. As already indicated, there is an external chimney beyond the north west wall to this dining room. While the surface presentation is satisfactory, the timber mantel surround may be affected by decay in the longer term. Again, the recess has been adapted with exposed brickwork of a second-hand type laid in modern cement mortar.

Behind this the original metal bar lintel can be identified. A smaller convector fireplace is present which is less frequently used, although again the flue should be swept. Technically, this should have a non-combustible collar and while brickwork is present in front of it, it does not extend out far enough to meet regulations.

There is a probability that the original timber frame wall on the north east side of this room (the kitchen beyond) was replaced in single skin brickwork at the time that the rear wing extension was built. Again 28% WME was found at various places along this wall. Similar damp is present in the earlier internal solid wall back to the front hall, although this may be an earlier construction incorporating timber frame with brick infill panelling. Decorations have been well maintained and there is a possibility that the base of the unseen timbers buried in this wall may be adversely affected by decay.

The principal rear wing structure has solid internal walls, probably of single skin brick construction. Again, some form of past chemical damp proofing may well have been carried out since the original walls are unlikely to have been built with a damp proof course. Often damp arises where salts are drawn up with damp. Some degree of re-plastering should be expected.

Part of the north west wall can be seen to have been adapted with later concrete lintels both to the back door and adjacent window shared between the drawing room and back hall. It is possible that the internal wall between the back hall and drawing room has been re-positioned historically. This may relate to the old well.

Before exchange of contracts it is recommended that further investigation is carried out by a specialist to consider the introduction of modern damp proofing and plastering. This will involve some disturbance and the need to replace skirtings. It is good practice to paint the back of timber before this is fixed.

When the property was built, it is likely to have had bare earth floors supporting timber boarding. Over the years, replacement solid concrete floors have been introduced throughout. There is a level change between the front and rear, although there are indications that these later floors have a form of physical damp proof membrane, the detail has not been confirmed. In some situations it is difficult to lap this to the walls, which can contribute to localised damp. Sometimes it is necessary to introduce a seal coat between the walls and floor.

The level change is most obvious in the drawing room and at the step between the kitchen and dining room. Between the two halls, the floor appears to be level. At the sealed door from the front hall to the drawing room, it is possible that a shallow step is disguised. Where the edge of the carpet was turned back in the drawing room, old thermal plastic tiles were identified as present. Sometimes these are bedded on bitumen to form a style of damp proof barrier. While this tiling does not need to be disturbed, it should be recognised that it is of an age where asbestos is likely to have been present. Since it is encapsulated, no action is needed. However, care should be taken not to disturb it. If it is to be stripped out, it would need to be disposed of to a licensed site.

The window styles vary. The original front Georgian windows have some paint build-up and will require easing to operate. Although some adjustment may have been carried out to the distorted south west drawing room window, the upper sash could be better closed. The adjacent boxing has shutters which are operational, but again, would operate better if some burning off were put in hand. Similar timber shuttering is present to the dining room. Here there is an unusual lower window seat with panel behind. This leaves the outer masonry wall thinner. The presentation is satisfactory for the style. Decay from behind may develop in time if the timber is not protected from the damp walls.

Between the two there is a traditional six-panel door. The top two panels are now glazed. It was locked. The frame is stout and possibly structural. There are signs of built-in draught strip, although this may now be perishing.

The rear window patterns are varied. Reference to the later opening for the French doors on the south east side of the drawing room has been made. These are modern softwood with a hardwood threshold. Again, they were locked. The single glazings tend to attract condensation mildew marking which is an indication of poor balance in the heating.

Adjacent there is a modern softwood multi-pane window and frame made up in a style probably mimicking an earlier window. The old timber window board remains. It has probably been re-set with the dry lining, as part is now extended in softwood. Again security locks are present. Because of the damp trapped in the solid wall and plasters, the frame of this window may deteriorate in time.

The rear windows are similar to those on the floor above. As already indicated, the one shared between the drawing room and hall has a later lintel.

It appears to be in an original position but past weakness may have developed given the old well position reportedly below here. The adjacent similar kitchen window has been adapted with the introduction of an extractor fan. Again one of the glazings is cracked. A replacement casement has been fitted on later hinging secured externally. Some adjustment will be needed, although it is fair for the type.

The door into the back hall is a traditional six-panel one with moulded detail. The bottom row of this may have been affected by wet rot decay judging by the planted timber now present. A better detail could have been made here. Draught strip has been added to the stout frame which is probably semi-load bearing, although the later concrete lintel now supplements this. There are clear indications of wet rot decay in the base of the frame associated with the damp in the adjacent walls. The timber hardwood threshold also has signs of both woodworm flight holes (which are inactive) and slight softening. Ideally, a form of polythene damp proof membrane or equivalent should be set below this to protect it which might be introduced when scarf repairs are carried out to the side of the frame member.

Other internal joinery is of different ages. Again, some of the doors have restricted headroom. The drawing room door from the front hall has been sealed across with a modern bookcase and base cupboards behind. The other joinery detailing is similar to that on the floor above. Panel-effect run is present to the under stairs cupboard giving a cut down door with an old rim lock. While this now has magnetic furniture, it is in need of further adjustment. The adjacent coat-hanging cupboard has a relatively crude boarded and braced door which is functional. Alongside this, the internal six-panel door between the two halls incorporates glazing in the top section. This may have been re-sited from elsewhere. It has been adjusted to take account of the minor distortion in the frame.

From the back hall, traditional boarded and braced doors are present. Again the frames are substantial and may well act as a form of lintel bearer. They have been reasonably adjusted. The headroom into the drawing room is low whereas the kitchen is near full-height.

On the north west side of the kitchen, there is a major recess with the oil-fired boiler. The fireplace here has a timber mantelshelf, which may be modern, although in a traditional style. To either side, panelled door fronts are present to the shelved cupboarding, which provides useful deep storage. This has board dry linings disguising access to the wall surfaces.

Laminate-faced plywood carcass units of a reasonably good quality are present with matching style worktops and an inset stainless steel sink. These are all showing signs of wear through use, but are serviceable.

It is understood that the Worcester Danesmoor oil-fired boiler was fitted about three years ago although it is dated 1999. This fixed-flue appliance has an enamel stovepipe leading into the chimney flue. It is assumed that the metal Class I liner extends full-height to protect the brick masonry. The adjacent plumbing is in copper. Because this is a fixed-flue appliance it may need permanent ventilation for combustion. Some of the pipework is likely to be disguised behind the board clad lining of the adjacent cupboarding, although some is surface mounted.

The earlier copper pipe plumbing system to painted pressed-steel radiators relies on drop feeds from the floor above in order to avoid the solid floor detailing. Again, the radiators are considered to have a reasonable surface area for the volumes to be heated, although the front hall radiator may be marginally undersize given the heat loss through the stair well. In the back hall, the radiator has a drain off cog below it.

Surprisingly, the incoming water main is in the north corner of the drawing room close to the window. The pipe rises (disguised by the curtain). It is an iron pipe linking off copper with a stop tap through the floor. However, a replacement polythene water main appears to have been correctly introduced into the house. Commonly, old pipes rust underground.

Boxed above the dining room door is the electricity meter and adjacent fuse. While the latter incorporates a circuit breaker, the fuses are of an earlier tri-fuse wiring has been upgraded in the past over the years, but would now be regarded as falling short of best practice standard. Individual circuit breaker fuses would normally be expected. Further advice from a qualified electrical contractor is recommended.

The Outbuilding

This refurbished structure has a simple foil-backed plasterboard ceiling detail with tape fixings. Much of this is now lifting. There is a hatch in the entrance lobby. There is no insulation to this. Similarly, there is no quilt insulation. Depending upon the proposed use of this space, a horizontal quilt should be laid throughout.

The modern hand-cut roof timbering is relatively lightweight with some diagonal bracing below the rafters. There is a conventional light ridge spanning between the timber-frame gable ends.

The underside of the slates and back of the clad gable end walls has reinforced felt lining in the traditional manner. If additional insulation is to be introduced, technically cross-ventilation should also be made up.

Passing through the roof space, some plumbing pipes have modern lagging. Part of this is damaged by vermin which is only to be expected in a rural position.

The external brick bare face painted walls are in a reasonably true plane. Various alternate openings are present with mainly concrete lintels. Some of the walls are reconstructed using a bituminous felt damp proof course, although for the most part there is no DPC present. Inevitably, some staining on the decorations and salt marking has arisen.

The solid floor has a vinyl overlay. It is reported that a polythene damp proof membrane was introduced when this was laid. Stored items restricted access, but the presentation appears to be fair. Off this floor, non-load bearing plasterboard faced timber-frame stud partitioning creates the lobby and separate WC. The plasterboard dry lining has been taken across the external wall.

The windows are of single-glazed mainly multi-pane style. Some of the modern softwood is showing early signs of deterioration, notably the entrance lobby south west window. There is an air gap above the centre pivoting earlier south east window. Some minor adjustment is needed to the outward hinging French doors. Because the cloakroom window is fixed, mechanical ventilation has been introduced into the roof space. A duct should be set off this to an external vent.

A framed boarded and braced entrance door is weather protected by the outer glazed screen. Also below here is insulated pipework extending from the original house. It is lagged within the main house both to the cold and hot feeds. These are to surface taps above the deep Belfast sink. This is set on brick piers. Alongside, there is a trap PVC waste for the washing machine.

Again, the electrical installation has a fuse board of an older style. This will need upgrading for circuit breakers.

The modern sanitary ware is serviceable. It tends to collect condensation and again there is some chalk marking from the local hard water. The pipes are mainly boxed.

The water level in the WC cistern is very close to the overflow and the ballcock should be adjusted.

EXTERIOR

Roof

The slate covered original roof has two ridges parallel to the frontage with a central gutter valley between. The latter has not been seen. Ideally, arrangements for long ladder access to view this should be made before exchange of contracts. While there is older lead work at either end of the point of discharge, there is a possibility that this is not in good condition. Comment on the use of felt repair internally has been made. This may have a life of less than twelve years. More normally a tiered fall detail with lead would be adopted. This could last more than three times felt. A new lead gutter valley detail may be needed. Snow melt conditions are the most telling for such a valley detail.

Inevitably, the slated roof slopes show some undulation consistent with the previous style of construction. The steep set slope to the front relates to the previous thatched use. The ridge tiles have been mortar bedded in the conventional way. Similar comments apply to the ridge tiles at the rear where the pitch is more conventional for slate.

It should be recognised that periodic slipping of slates can develop with storm damage. The natural slates are relatively large and may prove difficult to match in the future. The undulation in the rear slope is consistent with the weakness in the internal roof trusses, which have subsequently been strengthened. No action appears to be necessary.

Chimney Stacks

North Single Flue

This tall brick chimney serves the boiler. It is taller than might have been expected and may have been reconstructed higher. A metal terminal suggests that a correct flue liner has been introduced in the past. Pointing to the brickwork has been reasonably maintained. There is no indication of a tray that is a physical damp proof course but this would not be expected in this age of construction. The abutment flashing to the main slate roof is in dressed lead, which is showing minor signs of surface wear but is neatly formed.

West Two Flue

This chimney serves the dining room. A metal mesh has been introduced across the top of it, presumably to keep birds from nesting. There are no pots. The old brickwork shows some degree of weathering but is still in fair condition. Elements of future re-pointing may become necessary. Because this is a soft clay brick with lime mortar bedding it is preferable to use a Conservation grade lime mortar for any future repairs.

The abutment junction is made up in a cement fillet. This is showing signs of age wear and cracking. It is likely to need renewal in the near future and a stepped dressed lead abutment flashing might be preferable.

South East Single Flue

This external chimney structure serves the drawing room fireplace. Again, the brickwork has had some degree of past re-pointing. While this has not been ideally matched, the presentation is fair. Again, there is no obvious tray, but because the structure is outside the main roof the detail is fair. Again, mesh is present to the head of the chimney pot, although this is now rusting and may need replacing soon.

The cement abutment fillet on the junction of the north west face to the slate roof may be a point of periodic damp ingress judging by the staining identified internally. Again it would be preferable to introduce an appropriate cover flashing in lead, possibly with a soaker detail.

Elevations

South West (Front)

At the south corner, there is a gate with a timber lintel let into the brick masonry. While this old timber shows some deterioration, the arrangement is adequate. Future repair may become necessary. The tile capping to the wall shows minor imperfections and a lime bedded mortar abutment might need to be made up here to improve the weather junction and potentially protect the timber lintel below.

The face brickwork is of traditional narrow Flemish bond detail with a lime bedded mortar. The ground level is appropriately below the internal floor level. The foundation depth cannot be confirmed; this may be relatively shallow. On the opposite side of the lane is the Wallop Brook. The local sub-strata is principally of chalk, which is a stable base material but it is likely some degree of deposits are at the base of the valley.

This may be alluvial gravel and possibly peat, giving rise to localised weakness in the ground conditions. The mature trees on the opposite side of the brook may have root growth which is a sufficient distance away not to be of immediate concern. Adjacent to the front boundary however, there is a tree stump which may have had extensive root growth. Since the tree has been removed, any danger of this is likely to have been eliminated. The major creeper across the front elevation is growing close to the west corner. Again the root growth is alongside the footing but no obvious adverse effect was noted.

Historic distortion in the mortar courses can be identified below the drawing room window. It is clear this has been stable for some considerable length of time. The rendered lintel over, as well as the first floor window, shows similar distortion. The historic distress is not considered to be consequential.

A degree of localised re-pointing has been carried out. Part of this has been undertaken in traditional conservation lime mortar. However, a horizontal course of mortar three bricks or so above the ground has been re-pointed in a harder cement mortar. There is a possibility that this was part of an earlier electro-osmotic copper strip continuous band damp proof system. This may no longer be effective, particularly if the copper strip has become damaged. At one point, there are also signs of filled drill holes associated with chemical injection, which again is not fully performing.

A few of the bricks are starting to loose face through spalling that is frost damage. In part this relates to the soft clay bricks and other wear damage associated with leaking gutters. Several aspects of the internal downpipe previously identified are thought to relate to an inadequacy of the performance of the guttering.

The flat roof porch canopy does not appear to have an ideal fall. The older timber is part-cantilevered out from the elevation. The posts have clearly had to be scarf repaired on several occasions in the past. In some respects, it may be preferable to reduce the packers at the head of the posts in order for the fall of the lead roof to be away from the main elevation and then adapt this with a form of secret lead gutter. Further repairs including to the door lining, which incorporates concealed panelling should be expected in due course.

The traditional sash windows have projecting sills. The sash boxes are on the outer face consistent with early Georgian architectural practice. Some degree of filler is present and past scarf repairs can be identified.

In due course, further attention will be needed with re-decoration including replacing perished putties, although no immediate action appears to be necessary.

At eaves level, the joinery has not been recently decorated. This incorporates a horizontal soffit board above the window heads with a form of round cornice scroll. The latter may be in render or possibly brickwork with two courses of bricks below painted in. It is an unusual detailing which may need to be repeated.

The creeper at the west corner is growing into the eave. It should be cut back and controlled away from here as well as from the windowsills across the frontage.

One of the common practices to reduce rising damp in walls without a physical damp proof course is to introduce perforated pipes, that is field drains, in pea shingle trenching alongside the base of the elevation. However, for this to be functional, an appropriate outflow and soakaway will be needed. While the brook on the opposite side of the road is currently dry, it is known that this fills up in the winter. The natural Water Table may therefore rise to the height that a perforated pipe drainage system alongside the wall would not function ideally.

North West (Flank)

Projecting from this side of the property is the old large brick chimney serving the dining room. This can be seen to be built independent of the rendered upper gable end wall where the internal glazed window has previously been referred to. There is some degree of soot contamination in the brickwork partly disguised by paintwork. However, it would appear that the non-micro porous paint was probably applied to hold back the stain which has not been successful. Further discolouration may develop.

Although it is difficult to assess, the projecting brick course in the upper part of the chimney is probably just below a metal band. It is relatively common for such strapping to be secured back to earlier structures where chimneys were added externally. The decorations appear to protect the metalwork from corrosion, although this may be identified in the future with age wear.

Running into the west corner from a pole on the neighbour's property off to the west, is the incoming power supply. The routing of this is disguised on the south west elevation through into the front door porch.

The small profile iron downpipe at the west corner discharges to a grille gully. While this appears to be satisfactory, the size of the iron pipe is relatively slender given the volume of water that may arise from the gutter. There is a possibility that the back of the ironwork has also split in places because it is less easy to access and decorate it. Further attention should be anticipated, partly to reduce the risk of internal damp.

The ground level on this side of the property rises towards the north corner. Shrub and creeper growth also harbour damp. While ideally the ground should be lowered, it was noted that there is a form of render plinth at the base of the colour-washed brickwork. Against this it is suggested that slates might be bedded vertically to minimise the extent to which damp can track in. It is possible that the black painted base plinth also disguises drill holes associated with past chemical injection damp proof course.

The colourwash decorations are mainly to brickwork. However, the gable end of the original house together with a panel of render immediately behind the projecting chimneybreast is present. The latter may have been introduced in order to minimise damp tracking in from the central gutter valley behind the hopper and downpipe here. It is important to maintain this.

The extractor vent for the bathroom could be identified. There would be sufficient room, subject to Listed Building consent, for a window to be introduced here. Alongside, there is a PVC soil and vent pipe for the first floor bathroom. Most Listed buildings would not allow this material to be used. The work may have been carried out before the Listed Building status was adopted. External ironwork is usually specified. Because of the height of the drainage, a horizontal waste run has been taken disguised by the shrub detail around to the north corner.

Projecting through the elevation two high-level overflow pipes for the roof tankage are present. Some making good will be needed here.

The need for apex roof void ventilation has been discussed. There may just be sufficient room either side of the chimney to achieve this in the front roof void as well as to the rear roof void.

Non-painted bricks with the date stamp 1832 and a series of initials have been left in the gable end of the extension. There is an unusual curved corner detail to the north. The gable end and roof over sail this with former cantilevered timber bearing.

Part of the timber boxing is showing signs of wet rot decay here. Further investigation will be needed. A structural repair should be expected.

A large volume of water will discharge from the central gutter valley to the iron hopper and downpipes. These are of a reasonable size. They are stepped over the plastic soil pipe and taken to a gully off the elevation. This may be run to the stream rather than a soakaway. Care should be taken to ensure that it performs properly in wet conditions.

At a low level, clipped to the surface from the north corner is the oil-feed pipe to the back of the boiler. This is buried under the ground. It cannot be confirmed that proper sheath protection was introduced.

North East (Rear)

Projecting from this side of the property is the glazed canopy. This has a lead cover flashing arrangement against the colour-washed brick elevation. Some sections of the lead are pieced. The painting may disguise age wear and splitting, notably around the vent pipe for the drainage. Damp entry may develop here.

Light alloy glazing bars support the pieced glass down to a relatively slender timber lintel beam between a series of 225 mm brick piers. These are set off relatively modern brick based walling with a concrete coping. Vegetation growth disguises part of the detail. One of the glazings is cracked. Safety glass was not adopted. Some future improvement may be considered necessary. Under the alloy glazing bars timbers are present, part of which show signs of wet rot decay, notably towards the door of the outbuilding. Repair is currently advised.

As already outlined, the concrete path is above the internal floor level. This is contributing to damp in the back of the drawing room. It is suggested that a channel approximately 100 mm wide is cut away from the back elevation and the ground lowered. Normally this would need to be 150 mm below DPC level. This would be impractical adjacent to the back door, although a grille could be introduced here. However, the cast iron soil pipe arrangement is very close to the finished ground level and a crack in the concrete slab where it is diagonally across the manhole chamber can be seen.

The PVC soil pipe running around from the north west side passes above the kitchen gully and settles into the side of the iron soil pipe. Also saddled into here is the plastic waste from the north bedroom wash basin.

Similarly, the kitchen sink waste is saddled in to the plastic pipe. The falls appear satisfactory but cannot be confirmed. There is a lower level plastic waste which is thought to be out of use. The channel below the kitchen window takes surface water run-off and appears to be piped off to the north corner, possibly to the surface water drainage rather than the foul waste drainage.

There is a relatively crude softwood boxing below the kitchen window concealing the gas bottle supply to the cooker. If this is retained, a better weatherproof lid is advised.

The softwood joinery has no sill overhangs. There is a greater risk of wet rot decay developing in the bottom rails. Some of the casements can be seen to have weakened and later metal plating has been introduced to strengthen this. It is relatively poorly finished.

In the colour-washed first floor brickwork the position of the upper windows can be seen to have been varied. As already indicated, these mullion frames are load bearing and there does not appear to be independent lintels to the brickwork over.

The lower lintels include concrete disguised by render to the back door and drawing room/back hall with an earlier original self-supporting wide brick splay arch to the kitchen. The latter has dropped marginally on its east side and a nominal hairline crack through the brick mortar radiating up from the north side up to the window opening over can be identified. It is possible this may vary seasonally. Again, the window frame mullions will act as mid-span load bearing support.

The eaves overhang again has a soffit without a fascia. This is common for the period. It may be possible to introduce some supplementary ventilation in the roof space with disc vents in the soffit, although this is not particularly in keeping with the age and style of the property. Part of the boarding at the east corner is affected by wet rot decay and a scarf repair will be needed here soon.

There is slight undulation to the soffit line consistent with minor movement identified internally in the timbering of the roof.

Below the drawing room window there is a small rodding eye. This is apparently over the edge of what is the original wall. It has not been fully investigated. Although the wall appears to be built across the top of this, there is no sign of distress.

Attached Outbuilding

The gable slate roof is set to a good pitch. Where it abuts the east corner, a small lead gutter valley has been formed and the presentation is fair. The gable end walls are finished in stained softwood timbering. These might be treated with preservative stain.

Ivy and creeper growth against the elevation requires cutting back and controlling, particularly away from the guttering. The eaves have a fascia without an over-sail or soffit. It will therefore be difficult to add cross-ventilation from these. However, a pair of grille vents could be introduced into each of the gable end walls.

The older brick outer walling has had some degree of past re-pointing. Some of this has been undertaken in cement mortar which is not particularly compatible with the original soft clay bricks, however, the presentation is fair. Relatively crude concrete lintels are visible.

The south east gable end window is to filler brickwork below. The sill has had to be planted on it to disguise wet rot decay. Further scarf repair will be needed here, partly associated with lack of maintenance of glazing putties. This is advised. On the south west return the French door threshold should be oiled to protect it. The ground level drops towards the house but is closer to the internal floor level than would normally be recommended. Ideally, 150 mm gap should be achieved.

About 10 metres off the south east elevation is a mature sycamore tree. The canopy does not quite reach the building. Because of the height of the local water table it is unlikely that root growth damage will develop from here.

South East (Flank)

Projecting from the side of the original building is the single flue tall chimney serving the drawing room. Again, this has plain clay tiled shoulders. The decorated brickwork may disguise some degree of soot contamination.

Where the bricks abut the main re-built painted brick masonry elevation, the brick bond is reasonably matched at a low-level suggesting that it may be of the same age. However, further up it would appear the chimney is independent. It is certainly separate from the timber frame gable end wall of the attic accommodation. The junction between these two may have recently been made good with re-decoration, since there are signs of mortar filling.

The upper part is finished in render to a vertical gable. This disguises the original barn hip of the thatched profile identified internally.

The upper window has a correct projecting sill. However, wet rot decay has been identified from the interior and a scarf repair is needed.

The adjacent single skin brick infill panelling to the timber frame shows some degree of perishing to the brickwork disguised by the colourwash decoration. For the style the presentation is satisfactory.

The ground level at the back of the chimney and around the south corner is higher than the internal floor level. There is a water butt in this position with a relatively crude overflow. Nevertheless, flooding from this may contribute to the internal damp identified. As previously outlined, it would be preferable to lower the ground level. This has already been carried to introduce the paved patio outside the French doors off the drawing room.

Recent decorations on the French door and screen include filler over wet rot. Significant repairs are needed here and there may be some economy in replacing this. Similarly, the adjacent small multi-pane casement window has softening to the bottom rail which should be repaired.

Below here, the ground level is again high against the elevation. Ideally, it should be lowered and a channel cut in or alternatively, vertical slates or similar bedded here.

On the north east return of the chimney structure at a low level a small airbrick is present. This may have been introduced in order to assist the draw of the fireplace. It may need to be cleaned out.

Paintwork, Gutters and Downpipes

The external decorations have been renewed recently. However, elements of preparation were not ideal. Also, sections of the eaves, notably to the front and rear, have been omitted together with part of the outbuilding. Staining to the gable ends and teak oil protection to the hardwood thresholds is now advised.

The central gutter valley has not been assessed. Long ladder access to view this is recommended. It is possible that repair will prove to be necessary.

At the south east end, the metal hopper has become detached from the plastic vertical downpipe (the owner re-fixed this in the course of the inspection). Ideally, a shoe discharge should be introduced since the water can currently run down behind the back of the clay gully and the grille here will need periodic cleaning out. It appears to run to the soakaway adequately.

Surprisingly, plastic guttering is fitted to the outbuilding. As already indicated, a Listed Building would normally be expected to have ironwork and the creeper growth may be obstructing the performance of the downpipes on the south east gable end return. Here, the pipes discharge directly into the ground. The performance of the soakaway from here cannot be confirmed.

The old iron guttering on the front elevation has not been decorated recently. There are signs of weeping joints. Ideally, this should be accessed and overhauled, sealing the joints and decorating the inside of the gutter with bitumastic. The downpipe running to the south corner water butt appears to perform satisfactorily. However, the overflow arrangement from this butt may need upgrading. The pipe at the opposite west corner is considered small. Again, the surface water drain appears to run freely, but this should be monitored.

Other comment has been made with regard to the downpipe arrangement linking to the channel below the kitchen window. Again, the ironwork has not been decorated recently. A plastic gutter has now been fitted across the back off iron brackets which have been replaced from the original, although the latter remain.

Similarly, plastic guttering is fitted to the glazed lean-to. The downpipe at the north corner appears to discharge onto a relatively crude piped system back to the kitchen channel gully. This should be improved. Localised leaking in any surface water drainage can cause erosion to the sub strata below the footings.

Services

Mains water and electricity are connected to the property. Heating is from an oil-fired boiler to water-filled radiators. Drainage is to a private tank system. No tests have been applied.

Some comment has already been made with regard to the electrical installation. It is recommended that further advice is obtained before exchange of contracts with an estimate. Partial re-wiring and upgrading may prove to be necessary.

The incoming water supply pipe has been renewed into the house. This arrives along side the old well and externally a small cover was left above this (next to the outer wall). The underground pipe was unseen.

The low-pressure plumbing system is now dated. It combines iron, copper and polythene. The roof tanks should be better covered. Ideally, they would be re-positioned to a better support platform position. The pre-insulated copper hot water cylinder is suffering with calcium build-up. It is likely this will need replacing soon as part of other upgrading to plumbing. The obsolete ironwork should also be removed. An inline scale inhibitor should be introduced as a minimum. If a water softener is chosen, it should be recognised that any outside tap or kitchen sink tap (for drinking water) should be direct off the mains unsoftened.

Some comment has already been made with regard to the external plastic waste drainage. The earlier iron soil pipe has been adapted to receive this. There is also a traditional lead and iron hopper waste under the glazed roof canopy of the rear porch. While the latter would now be regarded as obsolete, the detail is fair. The shallow drains may limit the potential for lowering the ground level under the glazed lean-to.

The drains apparently follow off in a near southerly direction from a manhole chamber in vegetation below the glazed lean-to. The traditional salt glazed drains and channel here are free flowing.

Outside the cloakroom window there is a modern round concrete cover to a small rodding eye chamber. The routing of the utility room sink connection to here has not been confirmed. The plastic drain in the manhole here has some degree of liquid effluent backing up.

In the shrubbery to the lawn beyond the south east elevation is the private drain system. It is close by the ivy covered former outside closet, under the sycamore tree. There are two heavy-duty cast iron covers. The first is over the solids chamber. This has a reasonable anaerobic bacterial crust, however, the effluent level is higher than might have been expected. It is assumed to be the first settlement chamber of the septic tank. It should be recognised that private drainage tanks require an anaerobic bacterial crust to be maintained. The use of biological detergents and bleach can adversely affect this. Care should be taken to use environmentally friendly products only.

The second cover is cracked. This is over liquid effluent, although this is at a higher level than expected.

It is reported that the tank has a soakaway drain in the adjacent ground (the former owners of this property). About 10 years ago the present owner apparently re-dug this, however, the soakaway is not performing sufficiently well for the tank to function. Given that there are only two people in regular occupation, minimal emptying of the tank has probably been sufficient. In the winter months however, it is likely to be affected by backing-up to a greater degree. A new soakaway is likely to be needed for this tank to perform adequately. It is possible that part of the fault relates to the water table. As this rises the tank may flood. A new sealed system might be needed with a pumped outflow to a soakaway on the higher ground. Further advice may be needed.

Comment on the older style central heating has been made. While the boiler has been replaced relatively recently, the heating does not extend into the attached outbuilding. Some of the radiators may be found to be relatively inefficient. By raising the height of the expansion header tank, heating on the upper floor would be more effectively achieved.

Sheath protection of the oil pipe feed into the house has not been specifically seen. The metal oil storage tank is within the main barn structure set off piers. It is showing early signs of corrosion deterioration. It is essential for this to be painted up. Modern practice would be to introduce a bund wall that is an enclosure to the tank such that should a leak develop, the oil does not escape and cause pollution of the adjacent watercourse and water table.

Outbuildings

Small Barn

Abutting the north west boundary, the small barn outbuilding closest to the house is used as an open carport. Its south west and north west walls have been reconstructed in crude blockwork with some brickwork. Surprisingly, there are no stiffening piers. The base of the walling here shows signs of a relatively crude cast concrete slab. This may well have been added to replace the timber frame construction. The latter has clearly distorted and been lost to decay.

The old frame structure is relatively poor having been affected by damp entry. It may well have been thatch. The old lath battens remain. Irregular hewn rafters and purlins are present and this is relatively weak. However, the external roof covering is now of corrugated iron which is lightweight and not causing particular distress. Creeper growth may cause deterioration in time and should be removed.

The old timbers may have been affected by beetle infestation in the past, but are thought to have been chemically treated. A series of post supports are present to carry a number of cross beams, several of these are structural. The integrity of the original frame has been partly lost and the whole building is leaning towards the south east. A form of metal strap fixing has been introduced to tie back the building, but it is in a condition where deterioration may develop soon. It is likely that part of the damage relates to the lack of guttering. Back splashing on the base of the iron sheeting and timber boarding can track in behind and affect the frame.

Significant expenditure will be needed to keep this main structure in reasonable condition. Part of the inner floor has already been concreted, although part of the earlier flint bedded floor to earth is also visible. It may be possible to obtain consent to replace this, possibly with a new framed double garage type structure. Because the property is in the curtilage of a Listed Building, there is a probability that the Conservation Officer would wish to see this building renovated and repaired. This may involve partial re-construction.

The Granary

The granary adjoining has a corrugated sheet roof of a fibrous cement type and may well contain asbestos. This is starting to degrade with moss growth. Future disposal should be anticipated to a licensed tip.

Again, no guttering is fitted and additional wear on the board cladding is starting to be apparent. This however, is supported on a timber frame above the ground with conventional stone staddles. It is in a condition where renovation will be needed to keep it in reasonable condition.

Shelves and openings inside this structure indicate that it has been used for pigeons in the past.

Internally, the old timber shows signs of relatively heavy beetle infestation. Chemical treatment is recommended immediately to limit further deterioration. An estimate is advised. Sometimes, in repairing the external frame there is a benefit in introducing plywood sheeting. This can give the frame stability.

There is an internal hayloft-style half landing. The flooring here is relatively weak. There is no staircase. The upper roof timbering is a modern lightweight design for the roof covering that it currently has.

In considering the future use of this structure, there may be some benefit in designing a roof timber without the cross collar truss. Further advice would need to be taken given the status of this structure.

The Main Barn

Again this has a principal corrugated iron roof with a steep pitch, probably replacing thatch. It has a conventional cat-slide slope on the south east side. This traditional period aisle barn is five bays. It incorporates conventional post and truss construction of irregular size timbers. Some degree of historic weakening in the foundations can be identified in the lower wall below the south east slope. A new internal concrete floor slab has been made up, in doing so some re-support to the original frame walls may well have been achieved. The external distortion is disguised by packing out of the timbers.

Again, heavy infestation of beetles is present, although it appears that this structure has been spray treated in the past. No particular activity was noted, but stored items restricted the assessment. Sometimes re-treatment is found necessary.

At the north east end, the floor level has not been concreted. The bare earth here allows a degree of moisture to rise. This is starting to affect the base walls which are of rendered brickwork.

Some daylight could be seen through the corrugated iron roof sheets. This is associated with corrosion. There are also pitched valleys on the north west slope where the corrugated sheet roof of the gabled projection extension over the implement store with hayloft over runs in. This wing has relatively crudely formed old brick and block walls with one panel of early chalk cob. Again, foundation supports vary, with some shuttered concrete. Although this part of the building shows no particular distress, it was noted that the roof construction of modern lightweight timber bearers with bolted collar triangulation. The north west gable end is softwood board clad studwork.

A degree of distortion in the blockwork on the north west side can be seen at the corner of this added wing abutting the original north corner of the barn structure. The displacement is relatively severe. The ground level on the north east side is high, which is contributing to damp entry at the base of the old frame wall and a large volume of surface water collects, which would probably account for the erosion here. It has not been addressed for some considerable time.

Early action to keep surface water drainage away from this area will be needed to prevent the structure deteriorating further. Current repair is needed.

It is understood that this barn is a Grade II Listed Building in its own right. While it represents a liability to be maintained, further enquiry might be made with regard to converting this to a separate dwelling. On the north west side there is a gated access off Orange Lane, which runs up the hill and therefore an established right of access to the upper ground might be exploited in planning terms to develop this barn as a separate dwelling subject to personal requirements.

The Curtilage

The ground rises away towards the north east. The old timber low disused gates form the vehicular access at the west corner immediately alongside Orange Lane. The sight lines are slightly restricted by the brick front boundary and piers. The latter support an iron railing and pedestrian gate opposite the front door. Decorative maintenance is required to prevent the ironwork corroding. The brickwork is still fair.

Further along this south east boundary, a traditional cob wall is present. This has a deep flint footing and an appropriate straw thatched ridge. The latter is secured with hazel spars. It is fully netted. There is a probability this was renewed within the last 5 years. It may have a lifespan of about 12-15 years. Its gables grow overhang to protect the chalk cob on the wall. Some spent repairs have been undertaken. Although the majority of the finish is in lime, this is starting to flake. Care should be taken to maintain it and the application of a traditional lime-wash might be considered.

The cob wall turns to a splay dividing the front garden from the side garden. The flint work is exposed at the base and the lime pointing here is worn and will need future attention. Generally the render has been colour-washed. It cannot be confirmed that this is a lime render, although there is every likelihood that this is the case. The tile capping is in fair condition but some maintenance is needed, particularly at the junction to the corner of the house as already discussed. Below this, the timber gate is locked. It is an old one which may require future adjustment.

The private garden on the south east side has a beech hedge screening it from the adjacent retained farm buildings. This will require some further trimming. The exact position of the boundary is unclear. There is a post and wire fence at one point and a section of timber panel fence as though the beech hedge were set just within the boundary.

Comment on the disused outbuilding below the sycamore tree has been made. Ivy growth over this restricts the assessment.

Further up this at the east boundary, at least one mature tree has been lost. Part of the adjacent fence is mesh with some barbed wire. Further attention is needed here.

On the upper ground, a number of trees give shade, although these are generally close to the boundary. It is possible that some of these are covered by a Preservation Order.

The uncultivated paddock above the garden on the north east side is separated by an angle iron and barbed wire fence with some later timber posts with mesh fencing. Further attention should be expected here to maintain this boundary. At one point, there is a relatively steep scarp below it, possibly where chalk has been dug out in the past. There is also a concrete slab base, probably from an earlier outbuilding.

Close to the north corner there are a pair of mature sycamore trees, these are partly growing out of the scarp bank because of erosion. Weakness may develop in the long term. Advice from an arboriculturist should be taken as husbandry would appear to be necessary.

From the north corner, the north west boundary runs down Orange Lane with older fence panels disguised by ivy growth. These are generally deteriorating. As already indicated, there is a pair of double gates currently padlocked, which would give vehicular access. Adjacent to this, part of the boundary has been made up in later blockwork, which again is disguised by ivy growth, but appears fair. This may run down behind the granary. Here, a section of ivy over concrete and brickwork can be seen. Part of this runs on to form the back of the small barn carport.

Trimmed screen hedging is planted inside the boundary between the gravel drive and the north west boundary. Again there is an old brick wall behind here in part disguised by ivy growth.

At one point alongside the drive a timber board cover is present to what appears to be a surface water drainage collection arrangement. There is a possibility this runs down and links through to the brook on the opposite side of the road.

Sycamore and ivy growth over forms a screen hedge towards the west corner over a relatively crudely finished wall which incorporates some flint and brickwork.

The detail is not easily seen. Given the weakness in the ground conditions close to the bottom of the valley, this wall may need future repair.

Set back from the drive mouth is a timber five-bar gate off timber posts. While it has dropped, it is still serviceable. Preservative stain treatment would be recommended to maintain this.

The concrete apron courtyard in front of the barn and outbuildings is showing signs of frost damage. It is cracking and breaking up. There is a relatively crude metal cover over a surface water drain. The run of the ground is down towards the house. As a consequence in the shingle drive, a modern metal grille surface water channel has been introduced to minimise the risk of water running down into the back door. This appears to link to an earlier surface water drain arrangement which may well link up to the timber covered chamber off the north west elevation previously referred to. It will be important to keep this in good order.

Tenure

This is understood to be freehold with vacant possession on completion.

GENERAL REMARKS AND SUMMARY

This period Listed Building has been subject to modernisation improvement in the past, some of which is now dated. Some degree of expenditure is necessary. It would appear that past chemical treatment of the timbers has been carried out. Documentary evidence to confirm this might be obtained, even if it is out of guarantee. Similarly, some damp proofing work with re-plastering may well have been undertaken. This however, does not appear to be performing well. Part of the damp deterioration would appear to relate to un-maintained guttering. While the external decorations have been renewed recently to the joinery and part of the walls, the ironwork was omitted. It is important to decorate the inside of gutters and re-make joints where they weep. Because it is a Listed Building, ironwork is normally required. Plastic should not have been used.

Before exchange of contracts it is considered essential to arrange for long ladder access to view the central gutter valley. There is a possibility that this has been replaced in the past with felt rather than lead. This would have a shorter lifespan and may require attention in the relatively near future.

Expenditure to the electrical installation is clearly necessary and advice from a qualified contractor should be obtained, again ideally before exchange of contracts.

The boiler has been replaced. It links to an earlier form of central heating. This may be found to be adequate, although some improvement to the water tank arrangements is recommended.

The plumbing installation may be found to be relatively inefficient. The hot water cylinder will need replacing. Subject to personal requirements, some degree of re-fitting could be considered. While the existing bathroom on the north west side has correct extractor ventilation, there is no window. In some respects, it might be worth considering reinstating the west room, removing this bathroom and re-siting it, subject to personal requirements, in a manner that would bring it closer to the drainage.

The shallow drains are free flowing alongside the house but are starting to back-up from the old septic tank. The detail of the latter has not been fully seen, but it appears to be reasonably formed. The outflow drain however, is not performing ideally. While it is reported that about 10 years ago a new soakaway was dug from this, it does not appear to be adequate to take the liquid effluent discharge. When the water table rises, as will be the case in the autumn, the backing-up may become worse. Further expenditure should be allowed for. Sometimes it is necessary to introduce a sealed septic tank at a lower level (below the water table) and introduce a pumped outflow to surface water drainage at a higher level.

Within the property there are some elements of dampness. Part of this might be corrected by the provision of better attention to maintain guttering and downpipes. A better discharge from the water butt at the south corner is advised. Here the ground level ideally should also be lowered. In other places it may be more practical to introduce slate bedded vertically against the elevation. The original walls have no physical damp proof course. While some past specialist damp proofing may have been undertaken, the majority of the performance of this relies on render plasters. Elements of salt-contaminated plaster will need to be cut out and replaced.

The south east elevation is particularly vulnerable to driving rain penetration. In part this is because it is exposed. The colour-washed decorations applied to it may not be of a micro-porous type, such that any penetrating damp is able to be released, that is 'breathe out'.

In re-covering the roof, additional insulation appears to have been introduced to the top floor accommodation. Some further repairs to plasters will be needed through here. While the level of insulation falls short of latest standards, only accessible roof voids are practical to improve insulation within. This should include the attached outbuilding. A simple glass lean-to external canopy leading to this structure has some damaged glazings and at least one section of decay. The glass however, is adequately supported to the metal bearers. Repair maintenance is required.

Ideally, cross roof void air ventilation should be introduced to the various roof spaces. This is not particularly practical to achieve at a high level in the original building. Gable end airbricks may assist.

The re-secured slates lie reasonably well but undulation is present associated with past movement in the timber frame construction supporting the roof covering. The extent of the distortion is not considered significant.

Further enquiry of the Planning Authority might be made with regard to the Listed aisle barn. This timber frame structure, together with the other outbuildings, are considered to be of historic and agricultural importance. Nevertheless, there may be a possibility of obtaining consent for their refurbishment and potential conversion. This might exploit the existing vehicular access off Orange Lane.

Some early attention to ensure surface water disposal from the upper north east side is required to minimise the future wear damage on this main barn outbuilding.

The main points of the foregoing report can be summarised as follows:

1. Make arrangements for long ladder access to view the unseen central gutter valley.
2. Obtain documentary evidence with regard to past chemical treatment of timbers and damp proofing (even if these are out of date).
3. Overhaul the gutters and downpipes, sealing leaking joints.
4. Consider obtaining a specialist report with regard to damp proofing work.
5. Lower the external ground level wherever practicable.

6. Consider introducing vertical slate as a damp proof barrier in places.
7. Allow for external joinery repairs, notably the attic windowsill and drawing room French doors.
8. Expect major re-plastering at ground level, where damp salts are present.
9. Complete the external decorations principally at upper eaves level.
10. Cut back and control shrub and creeper growth to limit the potential harbouring of dampness.
11. Obtain a report estimate from an electrical contractor, ideally before exchange of contracts, anticipating some upgrade.
12. Consider obtaining further advice from a qualified heating engineer with regard to the plumbing and heating provision, including replacing the hot water cylinder.
13. Consider fitting an inline scale inhibitor.
14. Confirm the extent to which the replacement water main was taken out to the public supply underground.
15. Anticipate replacing obsolete iron plumbing pipes as discussed.
16. Subject to personal requirements, consider re-fitting the kitchen and bathrooms.
17. Achieve mechanical ventilation to the shower room.
18. Increase insulation to roof spaces, notably the outbuilding.
19. Achieve cross roof void airflow as discussed.
20. Sweep through chimney flues.
21. Allow for easing and adjusting doors and windows, notably the latter with some sash cord renewals.
22. Replace cracked glazings.
23. Carry out expenditure on plaster finishes with re-decoration.

24. Anticipate providing better lead cover flashings to the two external gable chimney stacks.
25. Make further enquiries with regard to the septic tank and any soakaway provision, allowing some expenditure.
26. Cleanse the drainage runs.
27. Ensure surface water drainage is kept separate from foul drains and maintain the independent runs on the north west side.
28. Similarly, allow for expenditure to the surface water drainage run-off from the higher ground to the north east, notably behind the barn.
29. Consider the provision of guttering to outbuildings with suitable disposal of surface water drainage.
30. Undertake a phased approach to overhaul and maintain the outbuildings to minimise further deterioration, allowing for some structural strengthening, subject to further negotiation with Planning Conservation.
31. Allow for general expenditure to maintain the garden and boundaries.

In providing this summary of the report it should be recognised that this is not a fully itemised list of all matters contained in the main body of the report.

The inspection was as comprehensive as was practicable bearing in mind the property was occupied and furnished. While some floor coverings were turned back no floorboards were raised. It is physically impossible to examine every part of each timber and those parts of the property that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible, including the wall ties as discussed.

No assessment has been made of High Alumina Cement, concrete or calcium chloride additives, blue asbestos or other toxic substances or materials or other deleterious material that may be present in the construction. Some old paints contain lead.

This report is for the use of the party to whom it is addressed and no responsibility is accepted to any third party for the whole or any part of its content.

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