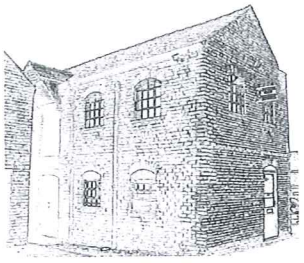
J S WILKS FRICS
CHARTERED SURVEYOR
6 OLD SADDLER'S YARD
UTTOXETER STAFFS ST14 7RT
T/F 01889 565071 M 07970 840566



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BUILDING SURVEY
FAR ROWNALL FARM THORNEYEDGE ROAD
BAGNALL STOKE ON TRENT

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Messrs Fisher German LLP
2 Rutherford Court
Staffordshire Technology Park
STAFFORD
ST18 0AR

BUILDING SURVEY

Far Rownall Farm Thorneyedge Road Bagnall Stoke on Trent

1- Instructions & Limitations:

1.1 Scope of instructions:

This report is for the private and confidential use of the clients for whom the report is undertaken and should not be reproduced in whole or part or relied upon by third parties for any use without the express written authority of the surveyor. Written instructions confirmed on 30th September 2009.

1.2 Property address:

Far Rownall Farm Thorneyedge Road Bagnall Stoke on Trent.

1.3 Client's name and address:

Messrs Fisher German LLP 2 Rutherford Court Staffordshire Technology Park Stafford ST18 0AR.

1.4 Date of survey:

Wednesday 7th October 2009.

1.5 Weather:

The weather at the time of inspection was dry after a showery day, but following an otherwise very dry period.

1.6 Limitations of inspection:

The property was not occupied or furnished at the time of inspection. Rubble restricted examination of floor surfaces internally and tree and plant growth to the front and side restricted views of the walling.

Woodwork or other parts of the structure that are unexposed, covered or inaccessible have not been inspected and therefore unless the contrary is stated I am unable to state whether any such part is free from defects

1.7 Information relied upon in this report:

The owner was not present.

2- Description:

2.1 Type:

Detached house.

2.2 General design:

The main building is to a 'T' shaped design with a projection at the rear.

2.3 Basic construction:

The main walls are of solid brickwork construction. The roof is tiled.

2.4- Approximate age extensions and alterations:

The building dates from the mid 1800's.

2.5- Statutory listing or conservation area status:

The property is not 'listed' or in a Conservation Area.

2.6- Current use:

The property is vacant. It is assumed to have a current use as a dwelling.

2.7-Accommodation:

GROUND FLOOR- Entrance hall with stairs off. Lounge with fireplace. Dining room with range. Kitchen.

FIRST FLOOR- Landing. Bedroom 1 (double). Bedroom 2 (double). Bedroom 3 (double).

OUTSIDE- Garden to front. Yard to side.

2.8- Location:

The property faces west. It is in a rural area to the east of Stoke on Trent.

The property is at an altitude of about 244 metres above sea level.

Flooding is not a problem in the area.

According to the Geological Survey of Great Britain, the geology here is Edale Shale overlying the eastern part of the North Staffordshire coalfield. The sub-soil is often clay which usually provides a sound base for building as long as appropriate precautions are taken regarding the proximity of trees.

The Health Protection Agency ('HPA') has identified the area in which the property is situated as one in which, in 1-3% of the dwellings; the level of radon gas entering the property is such that remedial action is recommended.

It is not possible in the course of inspection to determine whether radon gas is present in any given building as the gas is odourless and colourless. Tests can be carried out to asses the level of radon in a building. At a small charge test instruments and results are available by post from the HPA and other approved laboratories. The minimum testing period is 3 months. The HPA strongly advise against using shorter-term testing instruments as they can give misleading results.

If tests have not been carried out, they are recommended. It has been the experience of the HPA that it is not expensive, in proportion to the value of the property, to carry out any recommended remedial measures.

There is a high voltage overhead electricity line about 54 metres to the west. This will be a source of electro-magnetic fields. Levels can be checked by meter if this is of concern.

3- Overall opinion:

This is a brief summary of the property for guidance through the report. The intention being to keep the later advice in context so as not to submerge you in detail immediately. This should help you read the report and understand the detailed comments whilst maintaining a balanced view overall. It should not be taken in isolation without reading the whole report. Please ask if you need any further advice regarding this section. This section also refers to the valuation included at Appendix 1 at the end of the report and may also refer to items in section 3.2 relating to 'areas of concern'

3.1- Overall opinion:

The building is in very poor condition and will need extensive works to reach an acceptable standard. Whilst there is no indication of serious foundation movement, the above ground structure generally needs urgent repairs to avoid further deterioration.

3.2- Areas of concern:

The main areas of concern are the condition of the roof, the external walling and dampness.

3.3- Summary of repairs:

This section lists the main works discussed in the report. These are not necessarily costly items but are drawn out now for ease of reference. The numbers in brackets refer to the relevant section of the report.

The main items needing repair can be summarised as-

- Re-roofing, (4.1).
- Repairs to walls, (5.1).
- Repairs to floors and internal finishes, (6 & 7).
- Rectification of dampness, (7.5).
- Replacement of doors and windows, (8).
- Replacement of services, (10).

3.4- Significant maintenance issues:

A property of this age will have continuing maintenance liabilities in order to maintain the fabric in an acceptable condition.

4- Roofs:

Roof surfaces have been inspected as far as possible from ground level. Where this has not been possible comment is made accordingly. Where necessary, binoculars are used for a closer examination.

4.1- Main Roof:

The main roof is to a pitched design with the ridge parallel to the frontage and a rearwards projection at right angles. It has a plain Staffordshire blue clay tiled covering.

Examination of external surfaces from ground level revealed slipped and missing tiles in various places. The roof has various sags evident. The ridge is poor. The verges, the joints between the roof and gable walls, are also poor.

Views were available of the main roof space from the holes at ceiling level upstairs. This revealed that the structure is formed with timber rafters on each slope supported in turn by timber purlins which run beneath at right angles and are carried by the gable walls and internal walls. Timbers have settled in places and support to the front above one window is poor. The structure will need repair and strengthening.

The roof is as originally built and therefore the gap between the tiles and the tile battens is made good with mortar torching. Much has now come away. The roof needs to be stripped and relaid with felt between the rafters and tile battens. At the same time, the repairs needed to the timbers can be undertaken.

4.2- Subsidiary roofs:

The roof to the front part of the hall was tiled to match. It has collapsed completely together with the supporting brickwork. This needs rebuilding.

4.3- Valleys & Parapets:

Valleys are generally of 2 types, at the same slope as the mains roof, or nearly horizontal. The latter type may need regular cleaning to prevent blockages.

The tiled valleys between the main roof slopes are in fair condition. The valley tiles here can be re-used when the roof is tripped and relaid. There are no parapets.

4.4- Gutters & Rainwater Pipes:

Unless it was raining at the time of inspection it may not be possible to state if the system is watertight.

Gutters and downpipes are in poor condition and many sections are missing. Some original timber sections remain but a completely new system is now required.

5- Walls:

Wall surfaces are examined as far as possible. It should be appreciated that often no comment can be made on the method of construction of foundations, particularly on older property. Those built prior to about 1920 may well have only brick foundations at a shallow level and may be susceptible to moisture changes in the soil. Those built since about 1975 should have foundations at least 1 metre deep if on clay soil, which should be adequate assuming the soil is stable and trees are not a problem.

5.1- Main Walls:

The main walls are of solid brickwork construction 225mm thick. The external surfaces are partly rendered.

Examination of external wall surfaces did not reveal any evidence of recent or serious foundation movement in the main structure. However, the front part of the hall, which is in effect a single storey front extension, has been seriously affected by foundation movement. This section has partly collapsed and will need complete rebuilding.

Rendering and pointing is in poor condition. This will need repair generally, either by completely removing the render, cleaning the brickwork and repointing or by general replacement of the render.

Brickwork over openings is supported by brick arches. Those to the front wall are in poor condition and that to the right hand upstairs window has collapsed. This has caused considerable damage here and an area of walling extending to about 5 square metres will need rebuilding including the walling between the upstairs and downstairs openings.

5.2- Chimneys & Flashings:

There are 3 brick chimney stacks. They are in poor condition and need rebuilding.

5.3- Damp-Proof Course:

A damp-proof course (or 'dpc') is a horizontal layer within a wall which prevents the passage of moisture. It can be formed with a variety of materials and should be positioned at least 150mm above ground level.

No dpc was seen.

6- Floors:

Fitted floor coverings often prevent a detailed examination of floor surfaces. Unless comment is made to the contrary it is assumed that floor surfaces are in reasonable condition.

6.1- Ground Floors & Sub-Floor Ventilation:

The downstairs floors are partly boarded and partly solid. All are in poor condition and will need replacement.

6.2- Upper Floors:

Upstairs floors are all boarded. The joists are over-spanned and quite bouncy when tested. Replacement of the boarding and strengthening of the joists is required.

7- Internally:

7.1- Ceilings:

Lath and plaster ceilings found in older properties can fail quite suddenly without warning. Properties built since the late 1930's generally have plasterboard ceilings which will not fail unless damp or damaged.

The ceilings are all in very poor condition and need replacement generally.

7.2- Wall Plaster & Partitions:

Wall plaster in older property is often hollow in places. It will remain intact if left undisturbed but the use of wallpaper strippers can result in large sections coming away. Once part is removed, adjacent sections often loosen and need attention.

Wall plaster is in very poor condition and needs replacement throughout. A suitable lime based plaster is advised in order to avoid dampness issues.

Partitions are of masonry downstairs. They are fair. Those upstairs are also masonry and again are fair.

7.3- Internal Joinery and Fittings:

Internal joinery is in poor condition and will need replacement generally.

7.4- Fireplaces & Chimney Breasts:

It is often not possible to state whether flue liners are fitted. Most houses built since the 1960's should have liners from new. If gas fires are to be used, then a plumber on the Gas Safe Register must check the flue for leakage. Any chimney to be used should be swept before use.

The fireplaces are in poor condition.

The chimney breasts above are damp generally. This is due to moisture seeping down through the brickwork from the chimney above and/or past the flashing between the roof and the stack. In theory, a dpc should have been fitted in the chimney stack, but this was often not provided. It is therefore important to ensure that pointing is in good condition and that the pots are properly bedded and capped if not to be used.

Some residual dampness may remain even after these works are completed water can soak down through the bricks if no dpc is fitted and salts from the flue gases can migrate through the wall and attract dampness from the air in the room. Replastering incorporating a salt retardant may then be required if the problems persist.

7.5- Dampness:

Electric damp meters can only give accurate readings of moisture in timber. High readings in walls must be interpreted in conjunction with other evidence. They are not always indicative of a failed dpc or serious dampness problem.

Readings were taken throughout with a dampness meter.

The walls and floors are all affected by dampness. A chemical injection dpc is advised and attention to pointing, rendering and roofing will help reduce damp penetration.

In a property of this age it must be appreciated that complete elimination of dampness is often very difficult. Solid brick walls are designed to work on the 'overcoat' principle whereby they absorb moisture during heavy rain and then allow it to evaporate during drier spells. Inevitably, some will penetrate through to the inner surface at times. Older lime plasters and porous decoration was better able to withstand this when compared to modern plasters and moisture sensitive decorations. Often, a completely dry surface can only be achieved using a full 'dry lining' with plasterboard on battens effectively separating the inner surface from the walling. The best compromise usually results in wall surfaces being visually acceptable and avoiding any danger of rot in timbers. This may still result in walls showing as 'damp' on an electric moisture meter, but careful balancing of heating and ventilation will often be sufficient to minimise problems once any major defects have been resolved.

7.6- Internal Timber Defects:

No comment can be made on hidden timbers. In older property scattered woodworm is quite common. It is not usually serious and rarely thrives in a centrally heated atmosphere.

Timbers have been affected by rot and woodworm in various places. Replacement and/or treatment of affected timbers will be required.

7.7- Decoration:

Decoration is in poor condition throughout.

8- External Joinery & Decoration:

Openings windows have been checked where possible.

The doors and windows are of painted timber. All are in very poor condition and complete replacement will be needed.

Decoration is poor.

9- Insulation:

There is no insulation in the roof spaces. Walls and floors are not insulated, Windows are single glazed.

You should bear in mind that Part L1B of the Building Regulations introduced in 2006 may require Building Regulations approval where works are undertaken to replace more than 25% of the surface area of a building element. This can include plaster to outside walls, roofs, walls and floors. The regulations may require the provision of insulation when carrying out the works.

10- Services:

Services are checked for normal operation as far as possible but no specific tests have been carried out unless you requested these when confirming instructions.

10.1- Electricity:

Mains electricity connected.

The property needs completely rewiring.

10.2- Gas:

No mains gas connected or available.

10.3- Water:

Mains water connected.

10.4- Hot Water and Central Heating:

None.

10.5- Sanitary fittings:

None.

10.6- Soil Pipes:

None.

10.7- Drainage:

No provision.

Surface water flows could not be traced.

11- Health and safety matters:

The building is in very poor condition and poses considerable Health and Safety issues at present. There are holes in floors, walls and the roof. Access should be limited to persons aware of the dangers and in suitable protective clothing.

12- Legal and other matters:

The following matters should be drawn to the attention of your Legal Adviser. Also included here are comments on statutory matters such as roads, footpaths, planning and building regulations.

You should enquire whether any radon check has been carried out. If not, consideration should be given to monitoring the level of radon gas. The HPA or Environmental Health Department of the local council should be able to assist.

Signed.....J S Wilks FRICS

Report dated 13th October 2009

Appendix 1 – Photographs & Plan

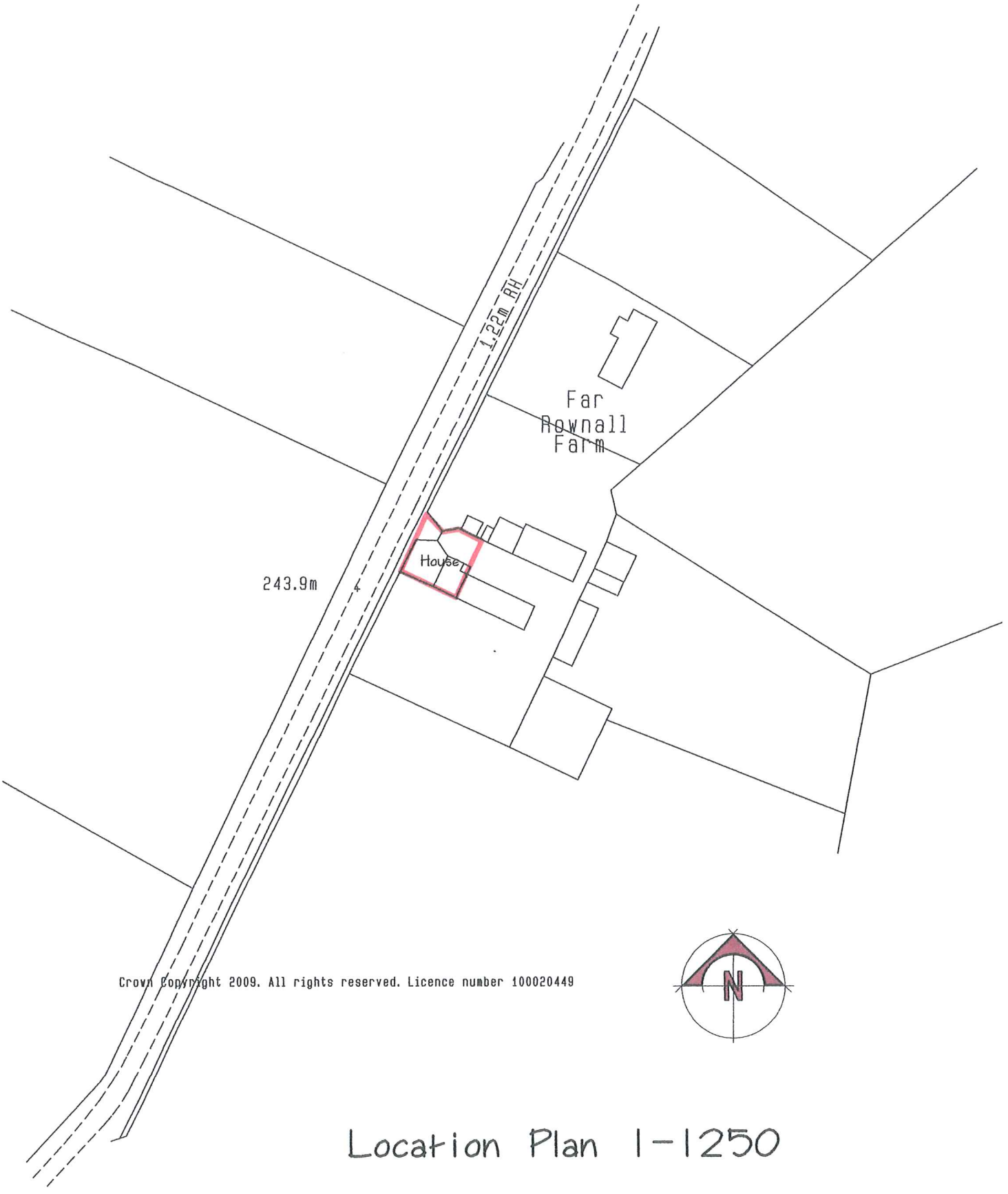
Photographs are taken of the main elevations of the property.

Additional photographs may also be supplied of specific parts of the buildings where this is considered to be helpful in understanding the Report.

A plan showing the location of the property to 1-1250 scale.

Side (N)





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Location Plan 1-1250

Appendix 2- Conditions of Engagement

CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT FOR BUILDING SURVEYS

1. Introduction

a). This document sets out the contractual terms upon which the Surveyor will advise the Client by means of a written report as to his or her opinion of the visible condition and state of repair of the Property.

b). The individual carrying out the inspection and providing advice will be a chartered surveyor.

c). The Surveyor will use all of the care and skill to be reasonably expected of an appropriately experienced chartered surveyor.

2. Content of the Report

In accordance with these terms the Surveyor will report upon:

a). the main aspects of the Property including assessing the site/location, the design, structural framework, fabric and services;

b). the grounds, boundaries and environmental aspects considered to affect the Property;

c). any requirements for further investigation arising from the inspection.

3. Delivery of the Report

a). The Report is to be delivered by the date agreed or at such later date as is reasonable in the circumstances.

b). The Surveyor will send the Report to the Client's address (or other agreed address) by first class post for the sole use of the Client. The Client agrees to keep the Report confidential disclosing its contents only to the Client's professional advisors. In particular (but without limit) the Client must not disclose the whole or any part of the Report to any person (other than a professional advisor) who may intend to rely upon it for the purpose of any transaction.

4. Payment of fees

The Client will pay the Agreed Fee, any Additional Fees, any VAT and any agreed disbursements by the Payment Date.

5. Assumptions

Unless otherwise expressly agreed the Surveyor while preparing the Report will assume that:

a). the property (if for sale) is offered with vacant possession;

b). the Property is connected to mains services with appropriate rights on a basis that is known and acceptable to the Client; and

c). access to the Property is as of right upon terms known and acceptable to the Client.

6. Scope of the inspection

a). Generally

i. The Surveyor will consider his or her advice carefully but is not required to advise on any matter the significance of which in relation to the Property is not apparent at the time of inspection from the inspection itself.

ii. The Surveyor will inspect diligently but is not required to undertake any action which would risk damage to the Property or injury to him- or herself.

iii. The Surveyor will not undertake any structural or other calculations.

b). Accessibility

i. The Surveyor will inspect as much of the internal and external surface area of the building as is practicable but will not inspect those areas which are covered, unexposed or not reasonably accessible from within the site, or adjacent public areas.

ii. The Surveyor is not required to move any obstruction to inspection including, but not limited to, furniture and floor coverings.

c). Floors

The Surveyor will lift accessible sample loose floorboards and trap doors, if any, which are not covered by heavy furniture, ply or hardboard, fitted carpets or other fixed floor coverings. The Surveyor will not attempt to cut or lift fixed floorboards without express permission of the owner.

d). Fixed covers or housings

The surveyor will not attempt to remove securely fixed covers or housings without the express permission of the owner.

e). Roofs

The Surveyor will inspect the roof spaces if there are available hatches which are not more than three metres above the adjacent floor or ground. Where no reasonable access is available, the roof spaces will not be inspected. Similarly, outer surfaces of the roof or adjacent areas will be inspected using binoculars, but will be excluded if they cannot be seen.

f). Boundaries, grounds and outbuildings

The inspection will include boundaries, grounds and permanent outbuildings but will not include constructions or equipment with a specific leisure purpose including, without limit, swimming pools or tennis courts.

g). Services

The Surveyor will carry out a visual inspection of the service installations where accessible. Drainage inspection covers will be lifted where they are accessible and it is safe and practicable to do so.

No tests of the service installations will be carried out unless previously agreed, although general overall comments will be made where possible and practicable. The Surveyor will report if it is considered that tests are advisable.

h). Areas not inspected

The Surveyor will identify any areas which would normally be inspected but which he or she was unable to inspect.

i). Flats or maisonettes

Unless otherwise agreed, the Surveyor will inspect only the subject flat and garage (if any), the related internal and external common parts and the structure of the building or particular block in which the subject flat is situated. Other flats will not be inspected. The Surveyor will state in the Report the limits of access and/or visibility in relation to the common parts and structure. The Surveyor will state whether he or she has seen a copy of the lease and, if not, the assumptions as to repairing obligations on which he or she is working.

j). Environmental and other issues

i. Particular noise and disturbance affecting the Property will only be noted if it is significant at the time of the inspection or if specific investigation has been agreed between the Surveyor and the Client and confirmed in writing.

ii. The Surveyor will report on any obvious health and safety hazards to the extent that they are apparent from elements of the Property considered as part of the inspection.

7. Hazardous materials

a). Unless otherwise expressly stated in the Report, the Surveyor will assume that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used in the construction of the Property. However, the Surveyor will advise in the Report if, in his or her view, there is likelihood that deleterious material has been used in the construction and specific enquiries should be made or tests should be carried out by a specialist.

b). Subject to clause 6b the Surveyor, based upon a limited visual inspection, will note and advise upon the presence of lead water supply pipes and asbestos.

c). The Surveyor will advise in the Report if the Property is in an area where, based on information published by the National Radiological Protection Board, there is a risk of radon. In such cases the Surveyor will advise that tests should be carried out to establish the radon level.

d). The Surveyor will advise if there are transformer stations or overhead power lines which might give rise to an electro-magnetic field, either over the subject Property or visible immediately adjacent to the Property. The Surveyor is not required to assess any possible effect on health or to report on any underground cables.

8. Ground conditions

The Surveyor will not be required to comment upon the possible existence of noxious substances, landfill or mineral extraction, or other forms of contamination.

9. Consents, approvals and searches

a) The Surveyor will be entitled to assume that the Property is not subject to any unusual or onerous restrictions, obligations or covenants which apply to the Property or affect the reasonable enjoyment of the Property.

b) The Surveyor will be entitled to assume that all planning, Building Regulations and other consents required in relation to the Property have been obtained. The Surveyor will not verify whether such consents have been obtained. Any enquiries should be made by the Client or the Client's legal advisers. Drawings and specifications will not be inspected by the Surveyor unless otherwise previously agreed.

c) The Surveyor will be entitled to assume that the Property is unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a Local Search and replies to the usual enquiries, or by a Statutory Notice, and that neither the Property, nor its condition, its use or its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

10. Insurance rebuilding cost assessment

The Surveyor will provide an insurance rebuilding cost assessment only if this is agreed at the time of taking instructions. Building insurance cost assessments will be calculated using the current edition of the BCIS *Guide to House Rebuilding Costs*.

11. Additional services

The Surveyor will provide, for an additional fee, such additional services as may be specified in the Specific Terms or are agreed between the Surveyor and the Client and confirmed by the surveyor in writing.

12. Miscellaneous

a). In the event of a conflict between these General Terms and the Specific Terms, the Specific Terms prevail.

b). Unless expressly provided, no term in the agreement between the Surveyor and the Client is enforceable under the *Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act* 1999 by any person other than the Surveyor or the Client.

c). Where the Client has instructed the Surveyor to make investigations which cause damage to the Property on the basis that the Client has obtained the owner's consent, the Client will indemnify the Surveyor against any loss or cost arising.

d). **Dispute Resolution** In the event that the Client has a complaint regarding the standard of service he or she has received, a formal complaints handling procedure will be followed. A copy of the Surveyor's complaints handling procedure is available upon request. Using the Surveyor's complaints handling procedure will not affect the Client's legal rights.

e). The Client may only rely upon the Surveyor's advice and Report for purposes described in the Particulars or communicated to the Surveyor in writing prior to the agreement of the Fee and if the client wishes to rely upon such advice and Report for any other purpose he or she may only do so with the written consent of the Surveyor.

(JSW Building Survey revision 7/4/09)