# BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

XXX Cottage
XXX Road
A Small Village
Kent
MEX XXX

On behalf of

Client

Inspection: January 2024
Report: January 2024

By

Kirk-Brown Limited
Chartered Building Surveyors
Chequers Cottage
Lower Road
West Farleigh
Kent
ME15 0PE

## Contents

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## *1.1. Scope of Instructions*

This is a general building survey report on the property and not a Schedule of Condition, which would list every minor defect. It is a report intended to give a general opinion as to the condition of the property, XXX Cottage, to enable you to plan for future maintenance.

Most clients find it useful to read the 3.2 Surveyors' Overall Opinion of the report first to gain a general 'overview' of the most significant matters. It is, however, essential that the whole report is read and considered in detail. Prior to a legal commitment to purchase, you should conclude all of the further investigations we have recommended and have these and all the repairs priced so that you are fully aware of the financial commitment you will be entering into when purchasing XXX Cottage.

This report has been prepared solely for the benefit of the named Client. No liability is accepted to any third party.

No formal enquiries have been made to the Statutory Authorities or investigations made to verify information as to the tenure and the existence of rights of way or easements.

Where work has been carried out to the property in the past, we cannot confirm that this has been done in accordance with manufacturers' recommendations, British/European Standards and Codes of Practice, Agreement Certificates or statutory regulations.

This report is for the private and confidential use of Client, or 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 Kirk-Brown Limited.

***Property Address***

XXX Cottage
XXX Road
A Small Village
Kent
MEX XXX

***Clients Name***

Client

***Date of Survey***

January 2024

***Weather***

When I inspected the property, the weather was cool and showery, following a period of predominately cool and stormy weather.

### *1.2. Limits of Inspection*

Comment cannot be given on areas that are covered, concealed or not otherwise readily visible. There may be detectable signs of concealed defects, in which case recommendations are made in the report. In the absence of any such evidence, it must be assumed in producing this report that such areas are free from defects. If greater assurance is required on these matters, it will be necessary to carry out exposure works. Unless these are carried out prior to a legal commitment to purchase, there is a risk that additional defects and consequent repair costs will be discovered at a later date.

The inspection of the services was limited to those areas which were visible. No comment can be made as to the condition of any services which were not visible. It should be appreciated that some service pipes and cables are covered, and access panels cannot be opened without disturbing decorations; therefore, a full inspection was not possible. Some pipes and cables are provided below the flooring, making inspection impracticable. In such circumstances, the identification of leakages, if any, may not be possible.

Services have not been tested, but where appropriate, specific advice has been made as to the advisability of having the services inspected by a specialist contractor.

This report has been prepared with due regard to the age and type of the building and reflects the condition of the various parts of the property at the time of the inspection. It is possible that defects could arise between the date of the survey and the date upon which you take occupation. It must be accepted that this report can only comment on what is visible and reasonably accessible to the Surveyor at the time of inspection.

It should be appreciated that infestations or defects may be present or may arise if those already discovered remain untreated in a proper manner.

For the purposes of this report, only significant defects and deficiencies readily apparent from a visual inspection are reported. Services can only be fully assessed by testing. Building standards are continually being upgraded, and older properties become increasingly out of date due to the passage of time, leading to a requirement for improved efficiency. Consequently, there is the potential for higher running costs compared to newly built properties.

We have not exposed the foundations of the property. Without exposing all the foundations to the property, you must accept the risk of unseen defects. However, unless noted in this report, we have not noted any above-ground defects that relate to defective foundations or signs of defective foundations.

We have not carried out any geological surveys or site investigations and cannot confirm the nature or characteristics of the soil with regard to fill or possible contamination. Normal legal searches should confirm the past use of the property and grounds, and if instructed, we will advise further.

Consequently, we are unable to comment fully upon the condition of these concealed areas, and therefore, you must accept the risk of unseen defects should you wish to proceed without further investigation.

### *1.3. Information relied upon in this Report.*

The property was fully furnished, with fitted floor coverings present at the time of the inspection. No floor finishes were lifted to inspect the floor structure or the condition of the floor slab. Therefore, only a general comment can be made as to the condition, and complete assurance cannot be given that there are no concealed defects. We understand that the property is Freehold and benefits from full and unrestricted access rights from the adopted highway.

### *1.4. Condition Rating*

Defects are rated using the following rating system, with the worst condition rating first and then followed by the condition of the other parts. The condition ratings are described as follows.

- Defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced or investigated urgently.

- Defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered either serious or urgent. The property must be maintained in a normal way.

- No repair is currently needed. The property must be maintained in a normal way.

- Not inspected (see “Important note” below).

**Important note:** We carry out only a visual inspection. This means that we do not take up carpets, floor coverings or floorboards, move furniture or remove the contents of cupboards. Also, we do not remove secured panels or undo electrical fittings.

### *1.5. Terms and Conditions Sent Date*

Terms of Engagement were issued via email on xx January 2024.

### *1.6. Related Party Disclosure*

We confirm that we have had no prior involvement with the property other than surveying the property for the purchaser on xx January 2024. We consider, therefore, that we do not have any conflict of interest in providing the advice which you have requested.

## 2 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY

### *2.1 Type and Age*

According to Heritage England, the property was originally one large house built during the 16th Century and clad during the 19th Century and subsequently subdivided into a pair of cottages prior to 1948 when current planning laws were put in place. A more detailed record of the property may be available at Maidstone's library at Springfield, which holds tithe maps and other associated documents.

The property has a Grade II Listed Status and falls within the A Small Village and The Small Village Conservation Area.

The property is located in a small village containing a mixture of houses of differing types, ages and styles and is within a reasonable distance of shops, schools, and other social amenities.

### *2.2 Accommodation*

The accommodation of the main property consists of the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| **Ground floor:** | Entrance hallway, reception room, shower room, kitchen and stairs leading to the first floor. |
| **First floor**: | Two bedrooms and a ship ladder staircase leading to the second floor. |
| **Second floor:** | One bedroom, one storage room and attic space. |
| **External:** | An enclosed garden, off-street parking for a single vehicle and a detached garage. |

### *2.3 Tenure*

It has been assumed that the property is being sold on a Freehold basis with vacant possession on completion of the sale.

### *2.4 Orientation and Exposure*

The front of the property faces predominately east, with the front door being in the front elevation as viewed from XXX Road. All directions and room locations in this report are given, assuming that the reader is facing the front of the property from XXX Road.

## 3 SURVEYOR'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### *3.1 Surveyors Overall Opinion*

It is important that this report should be considered in its entirety before proceeding. If there are any points in the report which require clarification or on which you require further advice, please do not hesitate to contact us. Whilst we do not attempt here to reiterate all of the points contained in the main body of the report, the following synopsis of the more significant matters may be of some assistance.

The chimney is out of plumb and should be taken down and rebuilt, and dampness was present in the ground floor walls together with numerous items of day to day maintenance required.

### *3.2 Summary of Repairs and Improvements*

Where costs are stated in this report, they are offered in good faith for budget guidance only. They have not been prepared with the benefit of a specification, approximate quantities or builder's quotations and do not include professional fees or VAT. In addition, the building industry is suffering from labour and material shortages together with general high inflation, which is adding considerable volatility to the market. The following cost is offered for your preliminary guidance only.

| Item | Description | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Erection, maintenance, hire, rental and removal of scaffolding for the duration of the works. | |
| 2 | Removal and rebuilding of the chimney. | |
| 3 | Replacement tiles and rebedding of the ridge and hip bonnets. | |
| 4 | Reserving of the rainwater gutter and a new drainage connection. | |
| 5 | Damp repairs and installation of an electro-osmotic system damp-proofing system | |
| 6 | External decorations to the walls, timber frame and joinery. | |
| 7 | Lining of the ground floor walls with insulation-backed plasterboard. | |
| 8 | Replacement windows. | |
| 9 | Increased insulation above the sloping ceilings | |
| 10 | Increased loft insulation, including pipework and the wall to the first-floor bedrooms, | |
| 11 | Replacement kitchen fixtures and fittings. | |
| 12 | Repairs to the ship ladder. | |
| 13 | Replacement shower room sanitary ware, tiling, fixtures and fittings. | |
| 14 | Electrical testing and minor upgrades. | |
| 15 | Servicing of the boiler. | |

| Item | Description | Cost |
|---|---|---|
| 16 | Replacement garage roof | |
| 17 | External decorations to the garage. | |
| | **Total** | |

For preliminary guidance, we suggest a budget of at least £00,000.00, excluding professional fees, VAT, and any improvement works planned.

### *3.3 Further Investigations*

You are advised to instruct your Legal Advisor to make enquiries regarding the following:

- The property has unrestricted rights of access to and from the public highway.
- Seek confirmation of who is responsible for the various boundaries.
- Seek confirmation that the property is connected to the public sewer.
- Seek confirmation that Listed Building Consent has been obtained for the installation of replacement windows.

## 4 CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION

### *4.1 The Constructional Principles*

A pitched roof is usually a simple inclined beam structure with a timber frame. The structure supports loads imposed on the roof from the weight of the materials and external elements such as wind and snow. These loads are transferred to the support point on the load-bearing walls. The structural integrity relies on the timbers acting together as a single unit, and no individual member should be removed without the advice of a structural engineer or building surveyor.

The property is of timber-framed construction with a mixture of painted and rendered infill panels and finished internally with a mixture of plaster, hardboard and softwood cladding and plasterboard under a pitched roof clad with plain clay tiles. The property has a mixture of timber-framed single and double-glazed windows, timber-framed doors and roofline joinery.

Depending upon the orientation of the elevations, different parts of the building can be more prone to external factors. For example, warm and wet winds typically come from the west and southwest, which are likely to create the potential for weathering and penetrating dampness and rot. North and north-eastern elevations tend to be colder and relatively dry, although they can be more prone to the weathering effect from frost damage or condensation. Moss build-up on roofs, which can wash off into gutters, is also likely to be more pronounced on north and north-eastern elevations. South and south-westerly elevations are generally more exposed to high temperatures during the day, and weathering, such as expansion or cracking in masonry or paint finishes, is a possibility.

### *4.2 Chimney*

The property features a brick chimney located on the catslide roof to the front elevation incorporating a pair of flues, with one capped with a terracotta pot and the second sealed off and an airbrick installed in the right-hand facing elevation. The chimney has a significant lean towards the rear (west) and the left (south elevation) caused by the condition of the pointing. The basic rule of thumb for the plumbness of a chimney is 10mm per 1,000mm of height, and while actual measurements were taken visually, the chimney exceeds this parameter. It is therefore recommended that the chimney be reduced in height down to the height of the shoulder (subject to the brickwork being sound) and rebuilt using the original bricks set in lime-based mortar. The opportunity should be taken to incorporate a lead horizontal damp-proof course to prevent moisture from migrating down through the brickwork into the property.

The opportunity should also be taken to remove the lead flashings weathering the junction between the chimney and the adjoining roof coverings to allow an inspection of the roof timbers to be carried out. In addition, a section of breathable roof felt, commonly referred to as Tyvek, should be placed beneath the tiles and dressed over the lead flashings.

A flexible stainless-steel flue liner should also be installed to serve the wood-burning stove. If the flue has already been lined, it may be possible to reuse the existing liner.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.3 Main Roof*

The main body of the property features a pitched roof clad with hand-made Kent peg tiles secured with timber dowels (pegs) with corresponding clay ridge tiles. The roof over the front entrance, the shower room and the rear elevation of the lounge each form a catslide roof, with the eaves being at head height. There was neither indication of significant sagging to the main roof structure nor any signs of movement or water penetration, but one broken tile was noted beneath the front elevation of the chimney which requires urgent replacement. In addition, approximately 50 frost-damaged were noted and should be replaced at the same time.

The ridge tiles appear to be firmly fixed in place, but mortar securing the hip bonnets over the main reception room was missing in part, with other areas showing signs of deterioration. In addition, the mortar securing the verge tiles to the rear attic room dormer was also in a poor state of repair. The hip bonnets and verge tiles should be lifted and rebedded in a lime-based mortar when undertaking the repairs to the chimney.

The front slope of the roof has a light covering of moss, which should be removed to prevent loose sections from becoming dislodged in the event of heavy rain and potentially blocking the gutters.

Only a limited view of the catslide roof over to the rear of the property was obtained, but no obvious slipped, damaged or missing tiles were noted.

The exact boundary along the roof with the adjoining property was difficult to determine, but it assumed that the first-floor dormer window and the lead-lined valley gutter to the rear slope of the roof were the responsibility of the adjoining owners. This should be confirmed through your legal adviser.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.4 Rainwater Fittings*

The property features painted cast-iron guttering with matching and downpipes, which discharge into the below-ground drainage system. While no leaks were visible, dampness is suspected of being present in the right-hand elevation of the entrance porch caused by rainwater either missing or overflowing from the sloping section of the downpipe above. It is recommended that the fall of the gutter above the first-floor window be reversed and a downpipe installed to the right-hand side of the kitchen window and connected to the below-ground drainage system.

The decorations to the rainwater goods were starting to deteriorate and should be removed, rubbed down and redecorated with one undercoat and two top coats of oil-based paint within the next six months.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.5 External Walls*

According to the British Geological Survey, the subsoil in this district is predominately clay with mud and sandstone layers and is deemed suitable for low-rise buildings, as witnessed by the general development in the immediate vicinity. Clay is prone to shrinkage during periods of prolonged dry weather known and expansion during periods of wet weather known as heave; however, no evidence of movement was present within the property, and it has been assumed that the foundations have been designed to accommodate the known soil conditions.

The walls of the property are of solid masonry construction with a mixture of painted brickwork and painted rendered masonry with exposed sections of the timber frame. The exposed sections of the timber frame were free from visible signs of decay, and there was no evidence of any mortar or similar inappropriate repairs. The decorations were showing signs of deterioration and should be redecorated with microporous paint within the next six months.

There was no evidence of cracking, and the brick courses appeared to be evenly laid with no evidence of eroded brickwork or pointing. The paintwork to the right-hand elevation of the front entrance hallway was in a poor state of repair, resulting from rainwater discharging down the wall from the guttering above. The loose paint should be scrapped back, and the wall allowed to dry for several months before being redecorated with two coats of microporous masonry paint.

The render was free from any cracks or signs of delamination and was generally in satisfactory condition but should be redecorated with two coats of masonry paint when redecorating the remainder of the property.

The property predates the requirement for houses to be fitted with damp proof courses (DPC), and it is likely that the house lacks any form of DPC. The ground level was higher than the internal floor level along the left-hand elevation, and dampness was present along the entire lounge wall. It is recommended that the ground level be reduced to 150mm below the level of the internal floor. An electro-osmotic system damp proofing system should be installed, comprising a series of electric pins (anodes) installed into

the wall and connected to an electrical transformer, which provides a small electrical current into the wall, thereby preventing moisture from rising through the masonry.

Internally, the left-hand elevation of the main reception room has been lined with plasterboard and finished with a skim coat of plaster up to the underside of the internal window boards and finished with traditional plaster above. Dampness was present in both the plasterboard and the plaster; however, no salts or signs of deterioration were present in the decorations. Should the paint start to blister and or peel and salts start to form on the inside face of the walls, both the plaster and the plasterboard should be removed, and the wall allowed to dry before being lined with insulation-backed plasterboard finished with a skim coat of plaster.

No evidence of DPC was present in the external walls of the kitchen, entrance hallway and shower room, and it is recommended that an electro-osmotic system damp-proofing system be installed in these areas. Internally, the entrance hallway has been lined with decorative hardboard, while the shower room has been lined with timber panelling and ceramic tiling. All three linings prevent accurate moisture readings from being taken; however, it is suspected that dampness will be present. It is therefore recommended that the hardboard and timber linings be removed and the walls allowed to dry before being lined with insulation-backed plasterboard and finished with a skim coat of plaster.

The tiling to the shower room was “live”, with several tiles having become loose behind the toilet cistern and around the window. The tiling should be hacked off and replaced; however, as finding matching tiles will be difficult, provision should be made to retile the entire bathroom, which will necessitate the removal of the sanitary ware. Due to the disruption this will cause, consideration should be given ling the walls with insulation-backed plasterboard as described above.

Condition Rating: 2

### *4.6 External Joinery and Decoration*

The main reception room, the left-hand first-floor bedroom and the ground-floor shower room have been fitted with modern replacement timber-framed double-glazed windows with multipoint locking mechanisms and were found to be in good condition with free and easy operation. The kitchen, entrance hallway, the right-hand first-floor bedroom, and the attic bedroom have been fitted with older, single-glazed side-hung casement windows secured with cockspur handles. Decay was starting to develop in the attic room dormer window, and the opening casement was difficult to operate and was binding on the frame. Consideration should be given to replacing all of the single-glazed windows with high-performance double-glazed timber-framed replacements within the next two to three years.

The opening casement to the right-hand first-floor bedroom binds on the cast-iron gutters, which should be raised, or the window design should be changed when replacing the windows.

The installation of any replacement windows will require Listed Building Consent from Swale Borough Council. The installation of the existing double-glazed windows should be accompanied by Listed Building Consent, together with a FENSA certificate, copies of which should be obtained through your legal advisor.

The main entrance door is a hardwood plank door set in a hardwood frame secured with a rim latch (Yale type lock) and a pair of internal bolts, while the kitchen has a hardwood framed stable door secured with a rim latch and a pair of internal bolts, which provide good levels of security and a matching timber framed and part glazed side screen.

The decorations to the older windows and doors have started to deteriorate, and the external paintwork should be rubbed down and redecorated with one undercoat and two topcoats of full gloss paint within the next twelve months and then every five to seven years thereafter, depending upon the quality of the materials used. There is a risk that decay may be present behind the paintwork, and this should be cut out and filled with a two-part epoxy resin-based filler.

The main body of the property features open rafter feet, while the rear dormer has timber soffits and fascias, which were found to be in satisfactory condition but will require redecoration within the next twelve months to prevent deterioration of the timbers and then every five to seven years thereafter, depending upon the quality of the materials used. There is a risk that some decay may be present behind the gutters, which will need to be removed to facilitate the redecoration works, and these areas should be cut and replaced as required.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.7 Roof spaces*

The main roof structure is of traditional timber construction with evenly spaced rafters spanning from the eaves to the ridge. The majority of the roof space was divided into a small attic room with a dormer window and an enclosed storeroom with an access panel leading into the roof space at the right-hand end of the property. The majority of the roof timbers in the loft space were concealed behind a mixture of plywood boarding and sarking felt, which have been fitted to the underside of the rafters. The sarking felt has been installed in an ad hoc fashion but was free from any rips or tears.

The roof structure in the attic room and storeroom was comprised of exposed timber rafters with lath and plaster sloping ceilings between them. The plaster was generally in satisfactory condition with no missing or adversely “live” areas (areas having lost their adhesion to the timber laths). A small area of damp plaster was present beneath the dormer window, which should be removed and the source of the water traced.

No evidence of adverse bowing was present in the roof structure, and no signs of wood-boring insect attack were visible in the exposed sections of timber.

The level of insulation within the roof spaces is likely to be minimal, and consideration should be given to removing the plaster set between the rafters and placing a layer of 50 to 75mm thick layer of rigid foam insulation between the timbers with a layer of insulation-backed plasterboard to the front. It is important that a 50mm air gap be maintained between the upper face of the insulation and the underside of the tiles to

prevent the build-up of condensation. The end wall between the storeroom and the attic should also be lined with rigid foam insulation to prevent warm air from escaping into the loft. Additional rigid foam insulation should be placed beneath the floorboards within the loft space to reduce heat loss through the first-floor bedroom ceiling.

Alternatively, rigid foam insulation can be placed beneath the floorboards to the attic rooms and loft space, but this will limit their use, and the opening leading from the first floor should be sealed with an insulated loft hatch.

The roof space over the front entrance hallway was accessed via an uninsulated loft hatch in the hallway. There was no evidence of sagging, bowing or split timbers in the roof space, and the underside of the roof features a timber sarking underfelt, which is in good condition. Moisture readings were taken with a damp meter with no evidence of dampness recorded and no evidence of wood-boring insect infestations present.

The roof space features approximately 50mm of insulation, which is low by today's standards, and consideration should be given to increasing this to 300mm of mineral fibre insulation. If it is intended to partially board out the loft for storage, rigid foam-based insulation, commonly referred to as Celotex or Kingspan, should be used below the decking. This will provide similar levels of thermal insulation as compared to the increased depth of mineral fibre insulation, but is more expensive.

Both loft spaces were free from signs of bats, birds, flying insects and squirrels.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.8 Ceilings*

The ceilings have been inspected from floor level only, and no opening up has been undertaken.

The ceilings are made of a mixture of older plaster supported on thin wooden strips (called "lath and plaster"), and modern plasterboard finished with a mixture of smooth with exposed floor and ceiling joists to the majority of the rooms. The shower room has a smooth plastered ceiling with concealed ceiling joists.

The ceilings were in good overall condition, with the majority of the rooms being free from any water staining and dampness. Water staining to the sloping section of the ceiling above the fireplace in the first-floor left-hand bedroom, which is attributed to an issue with the lead flashing weathering the junction between the roof and the chimney, as noted in Section *4.2 Chimney.* Once the cause of the moisture has been identified and resolved, the plaster should be allowed to dry out and be decorated with an application of stainblock undercoat when undertaking the next round of internal decorations.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.9 Internal Walls and Partitions*

The internal walls and partitions are a mixture of a timber frame set on a brick plinth with masonry infill panels, fair-faced brickwork and timber stud partitions clad with lath and plaster on both sides and decorated with a mixture of ceramic wall tiles, timber and hardboard cladding and emulsion paint.

Dampness was present in the party wall at the base of the stairs leading from the main reception room, resulting in damage to the plaster and the decorations. It is recommended that the damaged areas of plaster are hacked off, the brickwork plinth left undecorated, and the plasterboard replaced with a layer of moisture-resistant plasterboard finished with a skim coat of lime-based render. The area should then be decorated with a mineral-based emulsion paint.

Additional areas of dampness were present in the plastered plinth to the base of the wall between the kitchen and the main reception room. Consideration should be given to installing an electro-osmotic system damp-proofing system to all the ground floor masonry partitions as a precautionary measure.

As the second-floor attic accommodation must be accessed through the right-hand bedroom, the left-hand room should not strictly be used as a bedroom as the property lacks a protected staircase, which provides a safe means of escape.

The wall between the right-hand bedroom and the roof space over the main entrance hallway contains a timber plank door, which offers little thermal resistance, and consideration should be given to lining the entire length of the wall within the roof space with a 100mm thick layer of rigid foam insulation.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.10 Floors*

The floorboards were not seen in certain rooms as the floors were mainly covered with carpets and sheet vinyl flooring, which have been fixed and fully fitted. The property features a ground bearing to the reception room, entrance hallway and shower room, which is likely to be of solid concrete construction and suspended timber to the kitchen and to the floors at the first and second floor levels. There was no evidence of unevenness, dipping or sloping to the ground floors, and they appeared firm underfoot.

The section of floor between the two first-floor bedrooms at the head of the landing was out of level, with a slope towards the main bedroom, but was firm underfoot and was consistent with age and type of property.

Some of the floorboards were found to creak in the more heavily trafficked areas of the floor and should be resecured before laying any floor finishes.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.11 Fireplaces, chimney breast and flues*

The main reception room has a large inglenook fireplace with a timber bressumer and a cast-iron wood-burning stove (which was not tested) connected to an enamelled stove pipe. The original flue has been sealed with a steel registry plate, preventing debris from falling from the flue. The timber bressumer above the inglenook fireplace was bowed but was with acceptable tolerances.

Traces of dampness were present in the lower courses of brickwork and the brickwork hearth caused by the lack of a suitable damp proof course, but this can be managed through the normal ventilation of the room and the regular use of the stove.

The stove was free from any cracks in the casing, glass and internal refractory bricks and was in satisfactory condition.

The installation of the wood-burning stove should be accompanied by a HETAS Installation Certificate, a copy of which should be obtained through your legal advisor.

The chimney should be swept by a registered sweep prior to using the wood-burning stove as a precautionary measure.

The fireplace in the entrance hallway has been removed, and the firebox filled with masonry and made good with plaster, while and first-floor bedroom has been removed, the firebox left open, and the flue sealed up above the mantlepiece.

It is not possible within the limits of this report to access the internal condition of the flues or flue liners, and we can give no assurances as to the practicalities of using the fireplace.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.12 Internal Joinery*

The kitchen comprises a mixture of laminated chipboard wall and base units with timber panelled door and drawer fronts under post-formed laminated worktops incorporating an inset composite sink and drainer, an electric hob and a separate electric oven, which were not tested. The fixtures and fittings were dated and heavily worn, with a number of the door and drawer fronts requiring adjustment. The worktop was starting to delaminate to the right-hand side of the sink, and overall, provision should be made to replace all of the fixtures and fittings within the next three to five years.

The internal joinery consists of timber plank and painted pine doors, door frames, skirting boards, architraves, staircase, and handrails, which are made from a mixture of natural and reconstituted timber.

The staircase is of conventional timber assembly of treads and risers and was generally even, and firm underfoot, but the various joints have shrunk, causing the stairs to creak when used. While this is not a safety hazard, the staircase should be overhauled and repaired when next replacing the floor coverings.

Access from the first floor to the attic rooms was via a ship's ladder, which was inadequately fixed at the top with a pair of metal brackets secured with screws. A timber batten should be placed on the face of the second-floor structure to support the underside of the head of the ladder.

Condition Rating: 

### *4.13 Bathroom fittings*

The main bathroom contained a close-coupled toilet, a pedestal-mounted wash-hand basin, an acrylic shower tray with an electrically heated shower and a fabric shower curtain. The en-suite bathroom to the right-hand first-floor bedroom contains a wall-hung basin with a close-coupled toilet.

As noted in Section *4.5 External Walls*, the tiling was poor in the shower room, and its replacement will require the replacement of the sanitary ware. It is recommended that the shower curtain be replaced with an enclosure incorporating a fold shower screen to better prevent water from escaping from the shower tray.

The left-hand first-floor bedroom contained an en-suite toilet containing a close-coupled toilet and a wall-hung basin, all of which were in good overall condition.

The sealants around the edges of baths, showers and wash-hand basins can leak and damage adjacent surfaces. If not repaired quickly, wood rot can soon develop. The boxing and panelling around baths and other appliances can keep these problems hidden.

Condition Rating: 

## 5 SERVICES

This is a general note regarding services as we are not specialised in this field. We, therefore, recommend that you seek specialist advice on all service matters. The items below should be regarded as helpful comments, and they are not a full and complete assessment of any problems that may exist.

### *5.1 Electrics*

Safety warning: The Electrical Safety Council recommends that you should get a registered electrician to check the property and its electrical fittings at least every ten years or on a change of occupancy. All electrical installation works undertaken after 1 March 2005 should have appropriate certification. For more advice, contact the Electrical Safety Council.

Mains electricity is provided by a quarterly meter located entrance hallway and distributed via a modern replacement consumer unit incorporating RCD and MCCB safety devices; however, the wiring is thought to be older. The installation of the consumer unit should be accompanied by an Electrical Test Certificate and a Completion Certificate from Building Control. Copies of both documents should be obtained through your legal adviser.

There is a range of switches, sockets and light fittings throughout the property, and appear to be in good and serviceable condition. The property has battery-powered smoke detectors, which should ideally be replaced with a pair of hardwired interlinked detectors.

Due to the overall age of the installation, a full electrical test and inspection of the installation should be carried out prior to the purchase of the property as a precautionary measure and with financial provisions made to carry out minor upgrades and repairs.

Condition Rating: 

### *5.2 Gas*

Safety warning: All gas appliances and equipment should regularly be inspected, tested, maintained and serviced by a registered “competent person” and in line with the manufacturer’s instructions. This is important to make sure that the equipment is working correctly, to limit the risk of fire and carbon monoxide poisoning and to prevent carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases from leaking into the air. For more advice, contact the Gas Safe Register for gas installations.

The quarterly meter is located in the entrance hallway and distributed via copper pipework where visible. The visible pipework was found to be in good overall condition and suitably clipped to the walls and free from evidence of mechanical damage or corrosion.

Condition Rating: 

### *5.3 Water Supply and Plumbing*

Every property with a mains water supply requires both an internal and external stopcock for the proper control of the incoming water supply. It is important to know the position of the stopcock so that the water can be turned off in an emergency and when carrying out alterations to the plumbing system. They should be regularly checked to ensure that they open and close correctly.

The external stopcock will be situated in the road, and the internal stopcock is situated under the ground floor shower room. The pipework was in good overall condition with no evidence of serious corrosion or leaks. The property had good pressure with adequate volume at each of the appropriate outlets.

The home is situated in a hard water area, and limescale would prematurely damage water fittings both fixed and portable. Consideration, therefore, should be given to installing a water softener or limescale inhibitor.

Condition Rating: 

### *5.4 Space and Water Heating*

Space heating is provided by a gas-fired wall-mounted condensing combination boiler located in the entrance hallway with an efficiency rating of 90% and is controlled by a separate electronic programmer. The boiler is a current model with spare parts readily available and is believed to have been recently installed, and should be accompanied by a Gas Safe Certificate, a copy of which should be obtained through your legal adviser.

The boiler was operational at the time of the inspection and, judging by its rated output, should be capable of meeting the heating demands of the property.

Heating is provided via copper pipework to steel radiators on the walls which lacked any thermostatic radiator valves. The visible pipework, radiators and valves all appeared to be in good overall condition, with no significant signs of leakage or corrosion noted.

The shower room was fitted with an electrically heated chrome-plated towel rail, which was off at the time of the inspection.

The boiler lacked any service records, and it is recommended that the boiler be serviced prior to the completion of the sale as a precautionary measure.

The gas-fired boiler provides instantaneous hot water directly to each of the appropriate outlets without the need for a storage tank. Hot water was found to be available at each of the appropriate outlets at an adequate pressure, temperature, and volume.

The copper pipework within the roof space over the entrance hallway was uninsulated and should be fitted with preformed insulation sleeves to improve the overall efficiency of the system.

Condition Rating: 

### *5.5 Drainage*

The property features external waste pipes and a cast-iron soil and vent pipe, and it is believed that the property is connected to a drainage system that links up with the main sewer. The rainwater collected from the roof areas also appears to be directed into a drainage system.

The paintwork on the soil and vent pipes has started to deteriorate and should be rubbed down and repainted with one undercoat and two topcoats of oil-based paint within the next twelve months.

There was no above-ground sign of blockages or any other significant defects at the time of the inspection. The garden contains a pair of cast-iron inspection covers, which were lifted, and the drains were found to be free of obstructions, with no standing water or evidence of any recent tide marks, and the chambers and benching were in good overall condition.

The garden also contains a brick-built soakaway which has been infilled with soil and is believed to be disused, but this should be confirmed through your legal adviser.

Connection to the mains drainage system should be established, and your legal adviser should verify the maintenance and repair responsibilities with respect to any shared services.

Condition Rating: 

# 6 EXTERNALS

## *6.1 Grounds*

The property has an enclosed garden set out with an area of paving adjacent to the house, with the remainder of the garden set out with a mixture of lawn and raised planting. The paving was free from any loose, broken, or proud pavers or paving slabs. However, the flowerbeds were high in relation to the level of the floors, and it is recommended that the earth be pulled back from the wall to form a new level approximately 150mm below the level of the internal floor.

The garden was bordered with a mixture of close board timber fence panels set between concrete posts and timber picket fencing set between timber posts, all of which were in good overall condition.

The garden contains a mature ash tree, which was at a safe distance from the house but should be maintained at its current size and height. Confirmation should be sought that the tree is not subject to a Tree Preservation Order before carrying out any pollarding.

The area to the front of the garage has an open gravelled driveway with sufficient space to park a single vehicle and was free from any significant dips, signs of wear or oil stains.

No evidence of Japanese Knotweed was present in either the neighbouring or subject properties.

Condition Rating: 

## *6.2 Garage*

The property has a detached garage with painted concrete blockwork walls, under a pitched roof clad with asbestos-cement corrugated sheeting with rigid plastic sections weathering the ridge, timber cladding to the front and rear gables and steel framed windows with timber framed doors. The asbestos-cement roofing was split and cracked in a number of places, and provision should be made for its replacement within the next two to three years with profiled metal sheeting. The removal of the asbestos-cement roofing should be undertaken by a specialist licenced contractor.

The blockwork was free from any adverse cracking or signs of leaning, and no evidence of damaged or missing pointing was present. The cladding was free from signs of decay but should be redecorated with two coats of wood stain within the next twelve months and repeated every five to even years thereafter, depending on the quality of materials used.

The base of the vehicular and pedestrian doors were showing signs of decay. The affected areas should be cut back, and a horizontal section of timber placed along the bottom of the doors installed within the next twelve months. Both the doors and the windows should be redecorated within the next twelve months.

No internal access was gained into the garage due to the lack of keys being available at the time of the inspection.

Condition Rating: 

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER ISSUES

### *7.1 Noise and Disturbance*

The property is not affected by unreasonable levels of noise disturbance from passing traffic, aircraft or trains.

### *7.2 Other Health and Safety Concerns*

An analysis of the Ordnance Survey Map published between 1870 and the current day, in conjunction with currently published surveys, indicates that the area does not have a history of past industrial use.

The Environment Agency notes that the property is not within 100m of an area potentially affected by flooding from rivers or reservoirs, but the property is an area that has a high risk of surface water flooding. High risk means that each year, this area has a chance of flooding greater than 3.3% each year. Flooding from surface water is difficult to predict as rainfall location and volume are difficult to forecast. In addition, local features can greatly affect the chance and severity of flooding.

### *7.3 Risks to people*

The property is an area affected by Radon gas but is at the lower end of the scale, and this poses little risk to health.

Between 3 and 5% of the properties within the 1 sq km grid the property is located in are above the Radon Action Level, and it is recommended that a more detailed environmental report is commissioned. If you have concerns regarding Radon within the property, testing packs are available from Public Health England at www.ukradon.org//services/orderdomestic at a cost of £52.80, including VAT. The test is carried out over a three-month period, after which the kits are returned to the laboratory for analysis. If the levels are high, consideration should be given to applying a liquid-applied radon barrier on the concrete floor as a precautionary measure.

### *7.4 Environmental Considerations*

The property is not situated in an area that is affected by coal mining and or close to any landfill or waste handling sites, but there is a medium risk of foundation damage from subsidence hazards due to the clay soils.

### *7.5 Planning and Building Control Matters*

You should ask your legal adviser to confirm whether the installation boiler and the installation of the replacement windows have received building regulation approval (including the issuing of a final completion certificate) from the relevant authority and advise on the implications.

It is assumed that the property benefits from planning consent and Listed Building Consent for the installation of the replacement windows. If it is proposed to alter or extend the property, it is recommended that you discuss your proposals with your local planning and building control officers at the Local Borough Council.

The property is believed to be in a conservation area and has a Grade II Listed Status.

### *7.6 Other matters*

We understand that the property is Freehold and benefits from full access rights to and from the adopted highway. You should ask your legal adviser to confirm this.

### *7.7 Risk to the property*

The chimney is out of plumb and should be taken down and rebuilt, and dampness was present in the ground floor walls.

No evidence of active wood rot or wood-boring insects were identified.

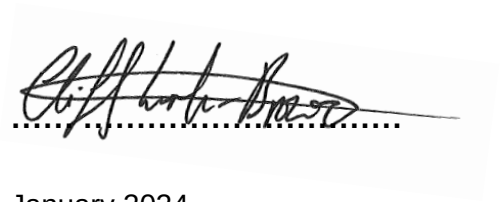
### *7.8 Energy Rating and Associated Matters*

The property has an Energy Performance Rating of F (29). Properties are given a rating from A (most efficient) to G (least efficient).

No additional energy-related works appear to have been undertaken since the EPC assessment date. Consideration should be given to installing rigid foam insulation between the rafters to the attic rooms, lining the external walls to the ground floor with isulation-backed plasterboard and the replacement of the double-glazed windows to improve the overall energy efficiency of the property.

## 8 SURVEYORS DECLARATION

I confirm that I have inspected this property and prepared this report.

**C Kirk-Brown MRICS** 

| | |
|---|---|
| **Date:** | January 2024 |
| **Surveyors RICS Number:** | 1122651 |
| **Qualifications:** | MRICS |
| **Company:** | Kirk-Brown Limited |
| **Address:** | Chequers Cottage,<br>Lower Road<br>West Farleigh,<br>Kent ME15 0PE |
| **Telephone:** | 01622 817769 |
| **Website:** | WWW.Kirk-brown-ltd.co.uk |
| **Client's Name:** | Client |

## 9 PHOTOGRAPHS

Front elevation. (Intensionally blurred)

Poor pointing to the chimney.

Broken tiles to the front slope of the roof.

Peeling paint to the right-hand elevation of the front entrance hallway.

General view of the roof space.

General view of the roof space.

Dampness above the left-hand bedroom fireplace.

Dampness to the base of the stairs.

Inadequately supported ship's ladder.

Uninsulated pipework in the loft over the entrance hallway.

General view of the below-ground drainage system.

General view of the below-ground drainage system.

Disused soakaway.

## 10 RESIDENTIAL BUILDING SURVEYS – MODEL CONDITIONS OF ENGAGEMENT

The service The RICS Building Survey Service includes:

- a thorough inspection of the property (see 'The inspection');
- a detailed report based on the inspection (see 'The report');

**The Surveyor who provides the RICS Building Survey Service aims to give you professional advice to:**

- help you make a reasoned and informed decision when purchasing the property or when planning for repairs, maintenance or upgrading the property.
- Provide detailed advice on condition;
- Describe the identifiable risk of potential or hidden defects.
- Where practicable and agreed, provide an estimate of costs for identified repairs and
- Make recommendations as to any further actions or advice which needs to be obtained before committing to purchase

Any extra services provided that are not covered by the terms and conditions of this service must be covered by a separate contract.

**The inspection**

The Surveyor carefully and thoroughly inspects the inside and outside of the main building and all permanent outbuildings, recording the construction and defects (both major and minor) that are evident. This inspection is intended to cover as much of the property as physically accessible. Where this is not possible, an explanation is provided within the relevant in the relevant section of the report.

The Surveyor does not force or open up the fabric without occupier/owner consent or if there is a risk of causing personal injury or damage. This includes taking up fitted carpets, fitted floor coverings or floorboards, moving heavy furniture, removing the contents of cupboards, roof spaces, etc., removing secured panels and/or hatches or undoing electrical fittings.

If necessary, the Surveyor carries out parts of the inspection when standing at ground level from an adjoining public property where accessible. This means the extent of the inspection will depend on a range of individual circumstances at the time of inspection, and the Surveyor judges each case on an individual basis.

The Surveyor uses equipment such as a damp meter, binoculars, and torch and uses a ladder for flat roofs and for hatches no more than 3m above level ground (outside) or floor surfaces (inside) if it is safe to do so.

The Surveyor also carries out a desktop study and makes oral enquiries for information about matters affecting the property.

**Services to the property**

Services are generally hidden within the construction of the property. This means that only the visible parts of the available services can be inspected, and the Surveyor does not carry out specialist tests other than through their normal operation in everyday use. The visual inspection cannot assess the efficiency or safety of electrical, gas or other energy sources. It also does not investigate the plumbing, heating or drainage installations (or whether they meet current regulations) or the internal condition of any chimney, boiler or other flues.

**Outside the property**

The Surveyor inspects the condition of boundary walls, fences, permanent outbuildings and areas in common (shared) use. To inspect these areas, the Surveyor walks around the grounds and any neighbouring public property where access can be obtained. Where there are restrictions to access (e.g., creeper plant, these are reported), advice is given on any potential underlying risks that may require further investigation.

Buildings with swimming pools and sports facilities are treated as permanent outbuildings and, therefore, are inspected, but the Surveyor does not report on the leisure facilities, such as the pool itself and its equipment internally and externally, landscaping and other facilities (for example, tennis courts and temporary outbuildings).

**Flats**

When inspecting flats, the Surveyor assesses the general condition of outside surfaces of the building, as well as its access and communal areas (for example, shared hallways and staircases) and roof spaces, but only if they are accessible from within the property or communal areas. The Surveyor also inspects (within the identifiable boundary of the flat) drains, lifts, fire alarms and security systems, although the Surveyor does not carry out any specialist tests other than their normal operation in everyday use.

**Dangerous materials, contamination and environmental issues**

The Surveyor makes enquiries about contamination or other environmental dangers. If the Surveyor suspects a problem, he or she recommends a further investigation.

The Surveyor may assume that no harmful or dangerous materials have been used in the construction and does not have a duty to justify making this assumption. However, if the inspection shows that these materials have been used, the Surveyor must report this and ask for further instructions.

The Surveyor does not carry out an asbestos inspection and does not act as an asbestos inspector when inspecting properties that may fall within the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012. With flats, the Surveyor assumes that there is a ‘duty holder (as defined in the regulations) and that in place are an asbestos register and an effective management plan that does not present a significant risk to health or need any immediate payment. The Surveyor does not consult the dutyholder.

**The report**

The Surveyor produces a report of the results of the inspection for you to use but cannot accept any liability if it is used by anyone else. If you decide not to act on the advice in the report, you do this at your own risk. The report is aimed at providing you with a detailed understanding of the condition of the property to allow you to make an informed decision on serious or urgent repairs and maintenance of a wide range of issues reported.

**Condition Rating**

The Surveyor gives condition ratings to the main parts (the 'elements') of the main building, garage and some outside elements. The condition ratings are described as follows:

Condition rating 3 – defects that are serious and/or need to be repaired, replaced or investigated urgently.

Condition rating 2 – defects that need repairing or replacing but are not considered to be either serious or urgent. The property must be maintained in the normal way.

Condition rating 1 – no repair is currently needed. The property must be maintained in the normal way.

NI – not inspected.

The Surveyor notes in the report if it was not possible to check any parts of the property that the inspection would normally cover. If the Surveyor is concerned about these parts, the report tells you about any further investigations that are needed.

**Issues for legal advisers**

The Surveyor does not act as 'the legal adviser' and does not comment on any legal documents. If, during the inspection, the Surveyor identifies issues that your legal advisers may need to investigate further, the Surveyor may refer to these in the report (for example, check whether there is a warranty covering replacement windows).

This report has been prepared by a surveyor ('the Employee') on behalf of a firm or company of surveyors ('the Employer'). The statements and opinions expressed in this report are expressed on behalf of the Employer, who accepts full responsibility for these.

Without prejudice and separately to the above, the Employee will have no personal liability in respect of any statements and opinions contained in this report, which shall at all times remain the sole responsibility of the Employer to the exclusion of the Employee.

In the case of sole practitioners, the Surveyor may sign the report in his or her own name unless the Surveyor operates as a sole trader limited liability company.

To the extent that any part of this notification is a restriction of liability within the meaning of the Unfair Contract Terms Act 1977, it does not apply to death or personal injury resulting from negligence.

If the property is Leasehold, the Surveyor gives you general advice and details of questions you should ask your legal advisers.

## Risks

This section summarises defects and issues that present a risk to the building or grounds or a safety risk to people. These may have been reported and condition rated against more than one part of the property or maybe of a more general nature, having existed for some time and which cannot reasonably be changed.

If the property is Leasehold, the Surveyor gives you general advice and details of questions you should ask your legal advisers.

## Standard terms of engagement

1. The service – the Surveyor provides the standard RICS Building Survey Service ('the service') described in the 'Description of the RICS Building Survey Service', unless you and the Surveyor agree in writing before the inspection that the Surveyor will provide extra services. Any extra service will require separate terms of engagement to be entered into with the Surveyor. Examples of extra services include:
   - Plan drawing.
   - Schedules of works.
   - supervision of work.
   - re-inspection.
   - Detailed specific issue reports.
   - Market valuation and reinstatement cost and
   - negotiation.
2. The Surveyor – the service is to be provided by an AssocRICS, MRICS or FRICS member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors who has the skills, knowledge and experience to survey and report on the property.
3. Before the inspection – this period forms an important part of the relationship between you and the Surveyor. The Surveyor will use reasonable endeavours to contact you regarding your particular concerns regarding the property and explain (where necessary) the extent and/or limitations of the inspection and report. The Surveyor also carries out a desktop study to understand the property better.
4. Terms of payment – you agree to pay the Surveyor's fee and any other charges agreed in writing.
5. Cancelling this contract – nothing in this clause 5 shall operate to exclude, limit or otherwise affect your rights to cancel under the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 or the Consumer Rights Act 2015, or under any such other legislation as may from time to time be applicable. Entirely without prejudice to any other rights that you may have under any applicable legislation, you are entitled to cancel this contract in writing by giving notice to the Surveyor's office at any time before the day of the inspection and, in any event, within fourteen days of entering into this contract. Please note that where you have specifically requested that the Surveyor provides services to you within fourteen days of entering into the contract, you will be responsible for fees and charges incurred by the Surveyor up until the date of cancellation.
6. Liability – the report is provided for your use, and the Surveyor cannot accept responsibility if it is used or relied upon by anyone else.

**Complaints handling procedure**

The Surveyor will have a complaints handling procedure and will give you a copy if you ask.  Note: These terms form part of the contract between you and the Surveyor.

**Restriction on Disclosure**

The Report is for the sole use of the named Client and is confidential to the Client and his professional advisers.  Any other persons rely on the Report at their own risk.

## 11 MAINTENANCE NOTES

The following notes are intended to help you inspect and maintain your property on a regular basis. The advice is not intended to be fully comprehensive nor to include every building type. If in doubt, seek our further advice.

**Roofs – Pitched**

Roof slopes should be overhauled, and any slates or tiles that are cracked or slipped replaced. Ridge and hip tiles should be firmly bedded in mortar.

Cement pointing at the roof edges must be repaired if cracked or loose, and metal flashings must be regularly checked.

Within the roof space, check for wood-boring beetle infestation, rot and decay, rodent activity and leaks. Provide insulation to a depth of around 200mm. Do not insulate tight up to eaves or below the water tanks, and make sure that the electrical cables are not covered.

**Roofs – Flat**

These have a limited lifespan. Make sure that any chippings on the roof surface remain evenly laid. If cracked or bubbled areas are noticed, these should be repaired, and roof edges must be properly sealed.

Regularly monitor ceilings under flat roofs for moisture stains.

**Parapet/Valley**

Gutters should run to the downpipe heads at even slopes and be free from splits and Guttering cracks. Clean out gutters and valleys, regularly remove weeds, leaves and other debris and ensure that joints are watertight.

**Rainwater Gutters and downpipes**

Clean out guttering regularly and monitor the effectiveness of joints.

**Chimneys**

Chimneys should be kept in good order, ensuring that pots and cowlings are securely cemented to the top of the stack. Mortar joints and rendering should be maintained in good condition, and any cracking repaired at once.

**External Joinery**

Periodically inspect window frames, doors, fascia boards, etc. and repair any areas affected by wet rot. Regular painting and maintenance of glazing putty helps prevent rot from occurring.

Cracked panes of glass are dangerous and should be replaced. Replace any broken sashcords and window catches. Regularly lubricate hinges and make sure all opening sections move freely but can be adequately secured.

**Walls & Damp-Proof Course**

Keep the brickwork and mortar joints in good order, particularly on solid walls where poor maintenance can lead to damp penetration. Any loose, hollow or cracked render should be hacked off and replaced.

If you are concerned about any cracks, bulging, distortion or other signs of movement, please seek our further advice.

Ground levels should be maintained at least 150mm (6 inches) below the damp-proof course and internal floor levels.

Cut back wall creepers regularly, as certain types destroy the mortar joints between the bricks and encourage dampness.

**Floors**

Take care not to overload timber floors. If any unevenness, distortion, cracking or dampness should become apparent, please seek our further advice.

Airbricks providing sub-floor ventilation should be adequate in number and/or size and clear of blockage and vegetation.

**Internal Finishes**

Try to keep the ceilings, walls and woodwork in good decoration condition. If any staining becomes apparent, the cause should be investigated.

Staining and cracked ceilings may indicate a need for replacement.

**Plumbing & Sanitary Ware**

Never restrict access to stopcocks.

Repair any damaged or leaking plumbing pipework immediately and periodically clear out the traps to baths, sinks and washbasins. Regularly monitor the condition and effectiveness of seals around baths and shower fittings.

Clean out water tanks, maintain ball valves and overflow pipes and keep tanks and pipes properly insulated and covered.

**Electricity**

Do not make any alterations to the electrical wiring without qualified advice. Amateur repairs, adaptations and additions can be dangerous.

If no recent electrical test has been obtained, then commission a qualified NICEIC electrician's report to ensure the safety of the installation.

- As a precaution, all wiring and fittings should be checked if:-
- The installation is over ten years old and has not been inspected for more than five years.
- If fuses or circuit breakers operate without apparent reason.
- A shock is received from a socket or light fitting.
- If any DIY wiring has been undertaken.
- If any sockets or light fittings get hot in use or show signs of discolouration.
- If any of the cabling, sockets or light fittings are insecure

**Heating & Hot Water**

Modern gas appliances are generally safe and reliable as long as they are correctly installed, regularly checked and maintained by experts. Ensure that your appliances are installed and serviced by British Gas Services or a registered gas engineer (GAS SAFE).

Gas appliances require an adequate supply of fresh air and an unobstructed chimney or flue to operate safely. Too little air can lead to dangerous quantities of carbon monoxide being emitted. This can also happen if the chimney or flue is obstructed. Air vents should never be blocked or obstructed.

Carbon monoxide is a gas that can be produced by appliances that have not been properly installed or maintained. You cannot see it, taste it or smell it, but it is highly poisonous and can be deadly. An appliance burning fossil fuel such as gas, coal or oil can potentially produce carbon monoxide if it is not correctly installed, serviced or checked. A carbon monoxide detector kite marked and tested to BS7860 can provide a clear warning in the event of carbon monoxide build-up.

A faulty or dangerous appliance might not give any obvious indication that anything is wrong, but there are several tell-tale signs that can indicate an appliance is faulty and possibly at risk of emitting carbon monoxide. Signs of a possible faulty appliance include:-

- Stains, soot or discolouring around the gas fire, water heater or boiler.
- A yellow or orange rather than a blue flame.
- A strange smell when the appliance is on.

If any of these symptoms become apparent, particularly when in the home and using a heating and hot water appliance, stop using the appliance immediately and contact the British Gas Transco Gas Emergency Service, who will attend free of charge and advise if follow-up work is required.

Any open fireplaces in use should be swept on an annual basis.

**Drainage**

Periodically lift the manhole covers and have the drains cleaned out if necessary. Keep manhole covers airtight and in good condition. Monitor the effectiveness of gullies and keep them clear of leaves and other debris.

Keep trees and shrubs away from drainage runs, as roots can break drainage pipes, resulting in damage to the foundations.

Drainage systems of properties not connected to the main sewer need regular emptying and maintenance.

**The Site**

The growth of all trees and shrubs should be kept in check, particularly where shrinkable clay subsoils are known to be prevalent. Prevent climbing shrub growth, particularly around eaves.

Boundary and retaining walls should be checked for stability and spalled, and weathered areas should be cut out and replaced.

## 12 TYPICAL CONSTRUCTION TERMS