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**BUILDING SURVEY REPORT**

**IN RESPECT OF:**

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**PREPARED FOR:**

.....

**DATE OF INSPECTION: 8 FEBRUARY 2017 PREPARED BY: DONALD FITT, MRICS**

**GRAHAM FITT SURVEYORS LIMITED  
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**1.00 NAME AND ADDRESS OF CLIENT**

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**2.00 ADDRESS OF PROPERTY INSPECTED**

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**3.00 DATE OF INSPECTION**

8 February 2017

**4.00 WEATHER**

The weather at the time of the inspection was mainly overcast and dry.

**5.00 INSTRUCTIONS**

Graham Fitt Surveyors Limited has been instructed by ..... to prepare a Building Survey in accordance with the Description of Building Surveying Services.

This Building Survey report has been prepared in accordance with the signed Description of Building Surveying Services. It is pointed out that this is a general building survey report on the property and not a Schedule of Condition that would list every minor defect. It is a report intended to give a general opinion as to the condition of the property and to enable you to plan for future maintenance.

Most clients find it useful to read the Surveyor's 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 exchange of contracts, 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 the property.

A copy of the report should be passed to the legal adviser with a request that the points mentioned within the report, particularly those under Legal Enquiries are researched as necessary, together with the normal searches.

This report is for the private and confidential use of the named client for whom the survey was undertaken and should not be reproduced in whole or part or relied upon by third parties with the exception of legal advisers for any use without the express written authority of Graham Fitt Surveyors. As this report has been prepared solely for the benefit of the named client, no liability can be accepted to any third party.



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## 6.00 LIMITATIONS OF INSPECTION

### General

This report reflects the condition of the various parts of the property at the time of our 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 defect. If greater assurance is required on these matters, it will be necessary to carry out exposure works. Unless these are carried out prior to exchange of contracts, there is a risk that additional defects and consequent repair costs will be discovered at a later date. Should you wish to proceed without further investigation as recommended below, you must accept the risk of unseen defects.

### Externally

The external inspection was limited to those parts that could be seen when standing within the boundaries of the property or on the public highway. The roof surfaces and associated features such as flashings and rainwater gutters were generally viewed from ground level. Unless it is raining heavily at the time of an inspection, it is not possible to state that gutter joints, roof junctions and flashings, etc. are totally watertight.

The swimming pool has not been inspected. You should arrange for specialists to inspect the pool.

### Internally

The property was occupied and furnished. The floors were all covered. Boarding restricted the inspection within the roof space. Each room has been inspected in detail. Damp meter readings have been taken where possible. Floor coverings have not been raised unless reasonably practicable at the edges. We therefore cannot comment upon the condition of sealed areas and opening up and exposure may reveal some concealed defects.

### Services

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. The inspection of the services was limited to those areas that are visible. No comment can be made as to the soundness of any services that are not visible.

It should also be appreciated that most service pipes and cables are covered and access panels cannot be opened without disturbing decorations. Therefore a full inspection was not possible. Some service pipework may be below flooring, including solid flooring, making inspection impracticable. In such circumstances the discovery of leakages, if any, may not be possible.



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## 7.00 DESCRIPTION

### Type and Age

The property is a traditionally constructed two storey detached house that is believed to have been built around 1930. A two storey extension with a double length garage has been added to the side. A porch has been added to the front.

### Outline Method of Construction

The external walls of the property are constructed from load bearing cavity brickwork. The main roof is pitched, of timber frame construction and is covered with old plain clay tiles. The side extension is constructed from solid load bearing brick walls. The roof of the extension and garage are flat and covered with mineral felt. The floors are mainly formed from suspended timber although parts are formed from solid concrete. The internal partitions are formed from solid masonry.

## ACCOMMODATION

### Inside

Ground Floor: Two reception, kitchen/breakfast room, large entrance hall.

First Floor: Five bedrooms, two bathrooms, separate toilet, landing.

### Outside

To the front of the property there is a garden. There is a reasonably good sized private enclosed rear garden. There is an integral double length garage to the side of the property. There is a toilet in the garage.

## 8.00 TENURE

We understand that the property is Freehold.

## 9.00 FLOOR AREA

The external floor area of the property is approximately 272 square metres including the garage.



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## 10.00 LOCATION

The property is situated in a cul de sac in a popular residential area that was mainly developed as housing in the inter war period. It is within walking distance of the centre of Radlett and Radlett Station, which provides good access into London. The M1 is reasonably accessible to the property.

## 11.00 ORIENTATION

The property faces approximately northwest.

## 12.00 SITE AND SURROUNDING AREAS

The property is on a slightly sloping site. The sub-soil in the locality, according to the British Geological Survey Map, is predominantly clay. Depending upon the sub-soil conditions it may well be susceptible to seasonal movement depending upon its moisture content, and the proximity of trees that can cause damage to the building foundations and underground services. Defects to underground drains can also cause damage to foundations. It is recommended that checks are made to verify that the property can be fully insured for subsidence.

We did not see the presence of Japanese Knotweed in the garden or adjoining land where able to be inspected. Nevertheless, the vendor should be asked to confirm that it has not been found close to the property.

## 13.00 SURVEYORS OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### Surveyors Overall Opinion

There is a movement crack in the rear reception bay and it is recommended that the foundations are exposed to determine the cause of the cracking and whether or not subsidence has occurred and if the foundations require underpinning.

There are severe cracks in the walls of the single storey rear section of the garage and it is apparent that this section of the garage has been poorly constructed and it is recommended that it is demolished and rebuilt. Elsewhere the property is dated and upgrading, improvements, repairs and redecoration is required throughout to bring it up to modern standards.

We would only recommend that you proceed with the purchase once the cause of the movement crack in the rear bay has been established and a quotation has been obtained for the necessary repair. It is assumed that you will wish to renegotiate the purchase price in light of the structural defects that have been identified.

It should be noted that it will be more difficult to obtain subsidence insurance as structural movement has occurred and therefore the premium will be more expensive and the excess will inevitably be high. However, should you wish to undertake large extensions and structural alterations to the property it is



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conceivable that the affected parts of the property would be removed for the proposed extensions. Nevertheless, this depends on your proposals.

It is important to ensure that Planning Permission and Building Regulation approval were obtained for the extensions/alterations.

You should appreciate when purchasing an old and dated property inevitably during the course of undertaking repairs, improvements and opening up works concealed areas will expose defects and a contingency sum must be allowed for the cost of repairing hidden defects that will be discovered.

Also, when purchasing an old property inevitably the component parts of the building will require more maintenance than more modern houses and the standards in some places will not be up to current building regulation requirements.

We draw your attention to the following areas of repairs and improvements that are recommended, although further issues are referred to in the body of the report:

#### Exterior of the Building

1. Investigate the possible subsidence of the rear bay and repair.
2. Take down the rear section of the garage and reconstruct.
3. Overhaul the tiled main roof slopes.
4. Improvements to the felt covered flat roofs.
5. Repair the chimney stack
6. External joinery repairs.
7. Repair the tiles to the porch pitched roof.

#### Interior of the Building

8. Upgrade the central heating/hot water installation.
9. Upgrade the electrical installation.
10. Provide new kitchen fittings and bathroom sanitary fittings.
11. Replacement of all the floor finishes.
12. Removal of the stair-lift and reinstatement of the balustrading.
13. Internal redecoration.





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## Site / Garden

14. Prune the trees and shrubs surrounding the property.
15. Repairs to the boundary fences.
16. Repairs to the patio brick retaining walls.

It is recommended you obtain quotations for the items listed above and other necessary repairs and maintenance as indicated in the body of the report, so that you are fully aware of the cost of the necessary works to bring the property up to a reasonably good standard.

### **14.00 FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS**

We recommend that you treat the following matters as urgent which should be undertaken and concluded before you exchange contracts. Should you wish to exchange contracts without obtaining this information, you would have to accept that adverse factors may come to light in the future.

1. Arrange for the electrical installation to be inspected by an electrician and obtain a quotation for upgrading.
2. Arrange for the central heating/hot water installation to be tested by a Gas Safe registered engineer.
3. Arrange for the underground drains to be tested.
4. Investigate the structural movement in the rear bay.
5. Arrange for an arboriculturist to inspect the trees close to the property and arrange for them to be pruned as necessary.

## **EXTERNAL CONDITION**

### **15.00 ROOFS**

#### Main Roof

The main roof is pitched and hipped and is covered with old plain clay tiles. Some of these are deteriorating and need replacing. It is recommended that you obtain quotations from reputable roofing contractors for an overhaul of the slopes, to include replacement of all damaged tiles. You should budget for complete replacement in the medium term.

To the front of the first floor extension over the garage, there is a mansard roof covered with old plain clay tiles. There is a dormer window. The tiles are starting to deteriorate and overhauling is required. There is



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an awkward junction between the mansard roof and the side pitched roof where it is possible that soakers have been provided to weather proof the junction. Improvements are likely to be required.

The small dormer window felt covered flat roof appeared to be in fair order.

### Side Extension Flat Roof

There is a felt covered flat roof to the two storey side extension and a felt covered flat roof over the single storey rear section of the garage. It appeared that the felt is fairly old and ponding is occurring which causes an acceleration of the deterioration of the mineral felt.

There are complicated junctions between the pitched and tiled roof and the mineral felt top roof. There is a small pitched and tiled section to the front of the top flat roof. Repairs are required to the tiles. Adhesive flashing has been provided at the abutment between the garage felt flat roof and the rear elevation. This is only a temporary measure for sealing the junction and improvements are required.

The felt roof coverings are deteriorating and whilst they can be patched temporarily, they will inevitably need to be replaced within the next few years. It is recommended that advice from a reputable roofer is obtained.

Felt coverings to flat roofs have limited durability and can require patch repairs at any time. Full stripping and re-felting is normally needed at 10-15 year intervals. Modern elastomeric felts are available which have better durability and resistance to splitting than traditional felt and although more expensive, should be specified when seeking estimates for re-felting. When the flat roof is next refurbished, the roof deck, insulation and ventilation to the roof structure should be checked and upgraded if necessary.

### Rear Bay Roof

There are small flat roofs to the single storey rear bay windows that are covered with old lead sheeting that appeared serviceable. Nevertheless, it has a tendency to deteriorate to the hidden underside of the lead sheeting and due to its age repairs/replacement may be required in the medium term.

## **16.00 CHIMNEY STACK**

There is a large central brick chimney stack that appeared to be in satisfactory structural condition. Repairs are required to the facing brickwork.

There is a tiled cement fillet provided at the base of the chimney stack. Such flashings are rarely fully watertight, and replacement with lead is recommended. Lead when properly dressed into position will be far more durable and watertight.

The clay chimney pots from a limited inspection appeared serviceable.





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## 17.00 RAINWATER GUTTERS AND DOWNPIPES

The property is provided with plastic rainwater gutters and downpipes that appeared to be in serviceable condition although some of the gutters are blocked and require clearing and some realignment is necessary. The front left hand side garage downpipe discharges onto the ground near a gulley and this could cause some localised ponding. Improvements are recommended.

It should be noted that plastic rainwater goods are prone to expansion and contraction resulting in leakage at joints and displacement to brackets. You should bear this in mind for future maintenance.

## 18.00 MAIN WALLS

### Construction

The external walls of the original parts of the property are constructed from load bearing cavity brickwork of approximately 225mm thickness. The side extension walls are constructed from solid brickwork of approximately 225mm thickness. It is likely that there is either reinforced concrete or timber lintels spanning the window and door openings.

### Foundation

Without undertaking exploratory investigation work we cannot confirm the nature of the foundations. However properties of this age were usually built with concrete strip foundations that are likely to be at a shallower depth than required in modern construction.

We confirm we have not undertaken any form of excavation to determine the sub-soil type nor indeed to expose the foundations. On the assumption that the sub-soil is of a shrinkable clay type and that the foundations to the building are of a traditional shallow type, we would not recommend that any trees are planted closer to the property than their anticipated mature height.

Clay sub-soils normally provide a reasonable base for building foundations but suffer the disadvantage of excessive shrinkage during hot dry summers which can bring about an irregular reduction in the volume and ability to support structures. In extreme circumstances this will lead to subsidence.

The risk of foundation damage increases significantly when trees or shrubs are planted near buildings. As a general policy it is recommended that no shrubs or trees with high water demand be planted close to any buildings.

There is cracking in the main reception rear bay which may be due to subsidence of the foundations. If you decide to proceed with the purchase of the property it is strongly recommended that the foundations are exposed to determine whether or not the cracks are due to subsidence and under-pinning is required.

It should be noted that it will more difficult to obtain insurance for subsidence damage in the future.



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## Walls

With the exception of the reception bay, there were no signs of significant cracking or current settlement and the main walls appeared reasonably true and plumb. The facing brickwork and the painted plain render was generally found to be in reasonably good order.

It was common practice in buildings of this age for there to be timber lintels above doors and windows to support the inner half of the cavity walls and to allow the outer half of the wall structure to rest on the window and door frames. Whilst there is no obvious evidence of serious problems occurring as a result of this method of construction, it would be prudent to budget for the cost of installing new lintels if and when windows are replaced.

The cavity walls of this property are formed in two leaves of masonry, which are usually held together with metal wall ties. The metal ties used in properties built before 1981 are prone to corrosion which, if significant, can lead to structural movement.

It has not been possible to inspect the ties holding together the inner and outer leaves of the cavity walls. Metal wall ties can suffer gradual corrosion with time. With some types of ties, this corrosion is sometimes accompanied by rust expansion, causing horizontal cracks to appear at intervals in the external wall surfaces. With ties of the 'butterfly wire' type, such evidence of failure may not be evident, and the absence of cracks in the mortar joints is not therefore a guarantee that the ties are in good condition. The walls must be kept in good order to prevent corrosion.

Where the windows, including those to the bay window have been replaced, we cannot confirm that adequate support has been given to the structure above. Although no signs of failure were found, additional support may be required in the future. With properties of this age, window and door frames often hold up the masonry above, unlike modern construction where supporting lintels are used. Windows installed after April 2002 require Building Regulation consent or certification under the FENSA Registration Scheme.

## Damp Proof Course

Damp proof courses are waterproof layers built into or formed within walls at low level to prevent ground dampness from rising and causing damage to internal finishes, plaster, decoration and joinery. They should be greater than 150mm above the external ground level to prevent splashing and bridging of the damp proof course causing damage.

The original external walls of the property are provided with a slate damp proof course in the thicker mortar joints. The porch is provided with a bitumen damp proof course. In places the damp proof course is too close to the external ground levels and it is recommended that the external ground levels are lowered.

## Sub Floor Ventilation

There are air bricks provided in all the elevations to ventilate the void underneath the suspended timber ground floor. The number and positions are considered adequate. Some of the vents are partially blocked,



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and it is recommended that they are cleared to ensure good sub-floor ventilation and to avoid conditions whereby dampness and decay can occur in the suspended timber ground floor structure.

### **19.00 EXTERNAL JOINERY**

The property is provided with UPVC double glazed windows and rear doors. The windows and doors appeared to be in reasonable condition. It should be noted, however, that double glazing can vary in quality, particularly in respect of the seals around the edges of the glass. These will deteriorate over time allowing moisture to penetrate between the panes of glass, resulting in misting. Whilst no such problems were found, it would be prudent to carry out regular inspections of the double glazing for such defects. The present owners should also be asked to provide details of the installation and the availability of any guarantees.

The timber panelled front door appeared to be in reasonable order. It is likely that upon a close inspection some repairs will be found to be required to the exposed ends of the rafters to the eaves and to the boarding behind the gutters.

### **20.00 PORCH**

It appears that there was originally an open porch and there are original timber corner posts and beams. The open porch has been enclosed with cavity brickwork built underneath the timber beam. A projecting front porch has been added and this is constructed from cavity brick external walls with a pitched and plain clay tiled roof.

No evidence of movement was seen in the structure and the facing brickwork appeared to be in good order.

The tiles to the roof are old and some are deteriorating and overhauling is required. The lead flashing provided at the abutment between the pitched and tiled roof and the front elevation brickwork appeared to be in fair order.

### **21.00 EXTERNAL DECORATION**

The external decorative finishes are generally in fair order. The external painted surfaces and woodwork will need regular redecoration. Typically this is on a 3-5 yearly cycle. This depends on the quality of paint or stain coatings, exposure factors, and the condition of the surfaces beneath.

## **INTERNAL CONDITION**

### **22.00 ROOF SPACE**

Access to the roof space was via a hatch in the landing and a loft ladder. The roof is of traditional timber framed construction formed from 100mm x 50mm rafters at approximately 300mm centres and timber purlins at roughly mid-span. There is a large chimney breast in the centre of the main roof that appeared to be in satisfactory structural condition. It provides support to the top of some of the rafters. Some slight



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sagging has occurred to the roof slopes however this is not unusual in a property of this age and type and the framing of the roof appeared adequate for the current loads imposed.

The roof is constructed with sarking boarding (horizontal planks of wood) laid under the tiles. This was a traditional method of providing secondary protection against driving rain and snow, before the use of modern underfelt. The sarking boards, viewed from beneath, appear sound. However, it is quite probable that the upper surfaces have been exposed to rain penetration over the years and will have deteriorated as a result. Rot outbreaks have been known to occur in these timbers and the sarking boarding should be inspected annually for any signs of leakage and resultant damage.

It is now standard practice to insulate lofts to a high level in order to conserve energy and reduce heating costs. With the increase in insulation it has become necessary to reduce the risk of condensation problems by ventilating roof spaces. This can be achieved in a variety of ways, including the provision of ventilation grilles in eaves and airbricks in gable walls, as well as roof ventilators in the slopes.

The boarding provided over the ceiling joists restricted our ability to undertake an inspection of the ceiling joists.

### **23.00 CEILINGS**

The majority of the ceilings in the property are believed to be formed from lath and plaster. The original lath and plaster ceilings were formed by applying plaster over narrow wooden strips, known as laths, fixed to the underside of the ceiling joists. The quality of the plaster was variable, and was often reinforced with horse hair. The ceilings are vulnerable to cracking and loosening, and due to their relatively fragile nature, failure can occur should they be disturbed. Patch repairs must therefore be anticipated. The ceilings have generally been covered with paper which is often used to conceal defects.

Some of the ceilings are formed from plasterboard. The plasterboard ceilings appeared to be in reasonable condition although there are some minor hairline cracks between boards in places that only require filling when next redecorated.

### **24.00 WALLS AND PARTITIONS**

The internal walls and partitions are formed from solid masonry with plaster finishes. It is likely that they are formed from concrete blockwork. The walls and partitions appeared to be in satisfactory structural condition with no evidence of significant movement. The plaster finishes appeared to be in fair order. However, it is likely that removal of decorative finishes will expose some loose areas of plaster that will require to be repaired.

There is a downstand timber beam in the main reception. It is not known whether or not this is original. Nevertheless, no evidence of significant movement was seen in its vicinity.



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## **25.00 FIREPLACES, FLUES AND CHIMNEY BREASTS**

The original chimney breasts have been retained in the main rooms. There is an open fireplace in the main reception. The flue should be swept and tested prior to use.

## **26.00 FLOORS**

The majority of the floors in the property are formed from suspended timber. The floors were all covered, but were found to be reasonably firm. The floors are not entirely level, however the deflection is within normal tolerances. Some of the floorboards were found to be loose and require re-securing. It should be noted that removal of furniture and floor coverings may expose some concealed defects.

The ground floor extension floors are formed from solid concrete. Solid floors are generally formed from a concrete slab laid over hardcore directly over the ground. The floor should have been built with a damp proof membrane incorporated in the structure. Opening up would need to be undertaken to establish the method of construction and whether a damp proof membrane had been provided.

The floor finishes comprise carpets, tiles and vinyl. Generally they are dated and in poor condition and require replacement.

## **27.00 INTERNAL JOINERY**

The built-in kitchen units comprise chipboard melamine faced floor and wall units with a laminate chipboard work surface and a stainless-steel sink. This together with the built in wardrobes and cupboards in the property are dated and you may wish to consider their replacement.

The internal doors comprise the original panelled doors faced with boarding and more modern flush doors that appeared to be in serviceable order. The timber staircase appeared to be in satisfactory condition although it is assumed that you will wish to remove the stair lift. The balustrading has been removed and it is recommended that this is reinstated.

## **28.00 INTERNAL DECORATIONS**

The internal decorative finishes are rather old and worn and you may wish to consider redecoration.

## **29.00 DAMPNESS, CONDENSATION, TIMBER DECAY AND INFESTATION**

### Dampness

Where accessible, moisture readings were taken with the aid of an electronic moisture meter, at low levels to the internal faces of the walls of the property and at vulnerable points elsewhere in the building. The readings were within acceptable limits for a building of this type.



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## Condensation

We checked for any signs of widespread or persistent condensation problems within the property. We found no such evidence, although we would point out that any property can be subject to condensation forming if it is not adequately heated and ventilated.

It should be noted that older buildings even with cavity external walls can suffer from condensation particularly to the corners where there are cupboards and exposure may reveal that there is some condensation.

Heating should be utilised to allow floors, walls and ceilings to be warmed even whilst the property is unoccupied to provide low level background heating. This should be balanced with ventilation to reduce internal humidity and in this respect we would suggest that, when replacing windows, you ensure they incorporate trickle vents to provide low level background ventilation without the need to open windows and that the bathrooms and kitchens and utility rooms have mechanical ventilation.

Often there is some condensation in the reveals of the windows as there will be a direct thermal bridge from the outside. The property will be more prone to condensation, unless the house is adequately heated and ventilated.

## Timber Defects

During our visual inspection there was no obvious evidence of significant timber decay in this property. However properties of this age will contain timbers built into walls usually above and below openings and at floor levels. Such timbers are at risk from penetrating damp and infestation by wood boring insects. As the walls to the original parts of the property are of solid construction and will be affected by penetrating damp some decay may exist which is hidden from view. Without opening up the structure of the building including the floor, walls, etc, we cannot comment upon the timbers that will be built into the external walls and these include floor joists, roof joists and rafters, timber lintels over window and door openings, wall plates and the back of skirtings. Opening up may well reveal rot in concealed timbers.

No signs were found of significant active infestation by wood boring insects in visible or structural main joinery timbers. However a large amount of the timber structure, particularly the floors, is concealed and exposure is likely to reveal some wood boring insect attack. Generally only localised repair and treatment is necessary.

## **SERVICES**

In accordance with the Conditions of Engagement service installations have been visually inspected without causing damage to the structure or opening up fixed or concealed casings, ducts or voids or removing heavy furniture or stored effects. Specialist tests have not been applied as these can only be undertaken by suitably qualified contractors.





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It must be appreciated that in all but the most modern properties it is possible that alterations and adaptations have been undertaken and some of these works particularly where they are concealed may be found to be inadequate or old and exposure may reveal concealed defects. The vendors should be requested to provide copies of service records and any tests certificates that may have been issued.

It is recommended that the service installations are tested. In the event that you do not arrange for the service installations to be tested, there is a risk of defects being found and works being required when proceeding with the purchase of the property.

### **30.00 ELECTRICITY**

There is a mains electrical supply to the property and the meter and two consumer units are located in the kitchen cupboard. The consumer units have miniature circuit breakers. The electrical fittings in the property are fairly old.

The installation is fitted with Residual Current Circuit Breakers. RCCB's are modern systems designed to protect the users from electric shock. RCCB's are extremely sensitive and consequently occasional tripping of switches will occur, effectively shutting down the affected circuit. It can often result when a light bulb fails, or it may be the result of a defective appliance such as a washing machine or refrigerator. When this happens, the 'trip-switch' has to be reset. If this occurs with any frequency, an electrician should be instructed to investigate.

It is impossible to fully assess the condition of an electrical installation on the basis of a visual inspection only. There are many factors relating to the adequacy of electrical installations that can only be identified by a test covering such matters such as resistance, impedance, current, etc.

The Institute of Electrical Engineers recommends that electrical systems are tested on change of ownership or every 10 years.

It is recommended that you arrange for a qualified NICEIC registered electrician to inspect and test the electrical installation.

You should obtain a quotation for upgrading the electrical installation.

### **31.00 GAS**

The property is connected to the mains gas supply and the meter is located in an outside meter box. The whole installation should be tested annually and this must only be carried out by a Gas Safe registered engineer. The system should therefore be fully tested in accordance with the Gas Safety Installation and Use Act 1994, if there is not a recent test certificate.



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## **32.00 WATER**

### Cold Water

The property is connected to the mains water supply. The outside stopcock is believed to be located in the drive. The nature of the incoming mains water pipe into the property is not known. Sometimes they are the original lead pipe or are of a small size and require replacement. The majority of the internal plumbing pipework was concealed. There are two plastic cold water storage tanks in the loft that were covered with insulation but appeared to be free from leaks. There is a pump in the loft.

### Hot Water

Hot water is provided by the central heating boiler in a garage cupboard and is stored in the copper hot water cylinder in a cupboard in the garage. The cylinder is covered with thermal insulation. The cylinder has a cylinder thermostat. No leaks were seen to be occurring to the cylinder although it is apparent that it is old.

## **33.00 HEATING**

Central heating is provided by the British Gas 330 plus condensing boiler that it is believed may have been installed in 2008. The boiler is now fairly old and may be starting to approach the end of its useful life. There pump, pressure vessel and valves are next to the boiler. There appears to be a copper distribution pipework system to older style steel panel radiators provided throughout the house. There is a room thermostat in the hall and the control panel is in the hot water cylinder cupboard.

Enquiries should be made to establish whether or not the central heating/hot water installation has been regularly serviced and copies of reports should be obtained.

It is recommended that you should arrange for a Gas Safe registered engineer to inspect and test the central heating/hot water installation.

## **34.00 SANITARYWARE AND FITTINGS**

There is an acrylic bath and acrylic shower tray with glazed screen and ceramic wash hand basins and toilets. The sanitary fittings are all old and you may wish to consider their replacement.



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## **35.00 DRAINAGE**

### Underground Drainage

There are three inspection chambers to the front and side of the property. The covers were lifted and the clay drains visible in the inspection chambers were found to be relatively clear. The front inspection chamber is provided with an interceptor trap.

It should be noted that an inspection of the below ground drainage system is always limited to readily accessible chambers and the underground pipes can never be seen during a Building Survey. In any case the absence of any obvious problems within the inspection chambers does not necessarily mean that the concealed parts are free from defects. You should arrange for the underground drains to be tested.

It is not known whether or not the drains from the rainwater downpipes discharge into soakaways around the property. These will have a tendency to become blocked over a period of time.

There are a number of gulleys surrounding the property. They should be flushed through and tested to ensure that they operates satisfactorily.

### Above Ground Drainage

There is an original cast iron soil and vent pipe that is mostly concealed by the first floor extension although parts were visible in the toilet in the garage. Where visible it appeared to be in serviceable order. The plastic and soil vent pipe to the side elevation in front of the garage appeared to be in reasonable order. The external waste pipes appeared serviceable.

Most of the internal waste pipes were concealed and were not able to be inspected.

## **36.00 OTHER SERVICES**

It is recommended that smoke alarm/detectors are provided to the ceilings in the hall and landing and kitchen. Periodically they should be tested as a fire safety precaution.

## **GARAGE, SITE/GARDEN**

### **37.00 GARAGE**

There is a garage that has been added to the side of the property. There is a first floor provided over the front section. It appears that the rear single storey section has been added at a later date. The front section is constructed from 225mm thick solid brick external walls and there are reinforced concrete lintels provided over window and door openings.



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There is a solid concrete floor with a part tarmac finish and a plasterboard finished ceiling. There is a toilet and cupboards containing the boiler and hot water cylinder. No evidence of movement was seen in the front section of the garage.

However, the rear section of the garage is constructed from lightweight blockwork of approximately 150mm thickness and there are severe vertical cracks at the junction between the rear single storey section and the front two storey section. There are also severe cracks in the concrete floor. The structure is insubstantial and severe movement has occurred and it is recommended that this section is demolished and rebuilt.

Repairs are required to the external joinery and doors of the garage.

### **38.00 GARDEN/SITE**

The concrete paved drive, path and rear patio appeared to be in fair order. The small front timber boundary fences are in fair condition. Repairs are required to the brick retaining wall to the edge of the patio.

There are deciduous trees roughly in line with the boundary between the front garden of the subject property and the neighbouring property. They are between approximately 2 metres and 4 metres away from the property and the tallest tree is approximately 10 metres high. Roots of trees, hedges and shrubs can cause damage to foundations and underground services. It is generally believed that pruning helps to reduce root growth and it would be prudent therefore to keep the vegetation regularly pruned and at a reasonable height.

Some repairs are required to the rear timber boundary fences. There was no apparent demarcation of the front right hand side boundary and you may wish to make a further investigations in connection with this matter.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER ISSUES**

### **39.00 ENVIRONMENTAL DESK TOP SEARCH**

An Environmental Search provided by Landmark dated February 2017 has indicated that ground stability is an issue. This matter has been addressed earlier in the report.

### **40.00 THERMAL INSULATION**

It appears that there is no insulation provided in the loft. Insulation should be provided as this is a relatively cheap method of improving the thermal standard of the property. It is understood that the external walls of the house were insulated in 1980.

### **41.00 LEGAL ENQUIRIES**

In addition to the usual searches and other solicitor's enquiries your solicitor should advise and investigate the following matters:



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### Regulations:

- Planning Permission, Building Regulation approval and a Building Control Completion Certificate for the extension to the side of the property incorporating the garage.
- Building Regulation approval or Certification for electrical and gas alterations.
- Building Regulation approval or a FENSA agreement for double glazed units if installed after 2002.
- Copies of electrical certificates for minor works were provided for alterations to the bathroom electrical installation in 2007 and electrical works to the boiler in 2008. A boiler commissioning document was provided in 2008.

### Guarantees:

- Guarantees for double glazed windows and doors.
- Guarantees for any building works or works on services including the central heating system undertaken recently.
- Damp proofing and timber treatment works that may have been carried out and the availability of the guarantees. There is a guarantee provided by Capital Cure Ltd for woodworm treatment in rear reception dated 1996.
- There is a guarantee provided by Rentokil for cavity wall insulation dated 1980.

### Other Matters:

- Location and ownership of the boundaries and responsibility for maintenance. The location particularly to the front garden right hand side.
- Party wall awards that may have been entered into in relation to the extension.
- Service agreement for the central heating/hot water installation and copies of reports if available. A British Gas check list annual service report was provided dated 1996.

## **42.00 VALUATION**

After the recession ended in about 2013 residential property values experienced a period of rapid growth. Nevertheless, due to uncertainties partially created by Brexit, measures taken by the government to cool the housing market, restrictions on mortgage availability and the prospect of inflation rises there is a considerable degree of uncertainty as to what will happen with the residential market.



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We have taken into account the market condition at the time of valuation and comparable evidence of similar properties sold in the locality as listed below:

Comparable 1

.....  
5 bedroom detached house within 300 metres of the subject property.  
Floor Area: 280 sq metres.  
Sold for £1,475,000. Date 15 December 2016

Comparable 2

.....  
4 bedroom detached house in the same road. Smaller property. Sold at the height of the market.  
Floor Area: 192 sq metres  
Sold for £1,225,000. Date 16 June 2016.

Comparable 3

.....  
5 bedroom semi-detached house slightly smaller.  
Floor Area: 215 sq metres.  
Sold for £1,175,000. Date 22 March 2016.

Comparable 4

.....  
5 bedroom semi-detached house recently constructed.  
Sold For £1,275,000. Date 15 September 2016.

The purchase price of **£1,330,000** for the property would be reasonable without the structural issues that have been identified in the report. It is strongly recommended that you enter into negotiations and obtain a reduction in the purchase price to take into account the structural issues mentioned in the report if you wish to proceed.





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#### **43.00 INSURANCE REBUILDING COST ASSESSMENT**

The current cost of reinstating the property in its present form is estimated to be £421,000 (Four hundred and twenty one thousand pounds).

Signature.....

**Surveyor's Name & Professional Qualifications:** Donald Fitt, MRICS

**Date:** 8 February 2017.

**Company Name & Address:** **Graham Fitt Surveyors Limited**  
**The Powerhouse**  
**87 West Street**

**Harrow-on-the-Hill**  
**Middlesex**  
**HA1 3EL**

#### **APPENDICES**

- Photographs
- Glossary
- Terms of Engagement