

STRUCTURAL SURVEY REPORT

on

**61 MALTRAVERS STREET
ARUNDEL
WEST SUSSEX
BN18 9BQ**

for

MRS C JONES

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Our Ref: SGG/GEE/2014

22nd August 2014

Mrs C Jones
3 Henderson Road
Wimbledon
London
SW18 3RR

Dear Mrs Jones

RE: 61 MALTRAVERS STREET, ARUNDEL, WEST SUSSEX BN18 9BQ

1.00 INSTRUCTIONS

In accordance with your instructions, we inspected the above property on 14th August 2014 to advise you as to the structural condition and state of repair.

Our report which follows is divided into sections in the interest of clarity, followed by a brief summary of our advice. We have added a Glossary describing a number of building items and defects to be read in conjunction with the report.

The front elevation of the property onto Maltravers Street faces roughly north-west. The rear elevation is therefore south-eastward. For ease of reporting, we have referred to the front and rear as north and south respectively.

Our inspection of the property was carried out on a cloudy and largely dry day, although there were one or two light rain showers. Immediate weather of late had been mixed, but this followed a somewhat dry period.

We have not investigated any legal matters such as planning or building control or highways. Your solicitor will advise on these matters.

We have not carried out any investigation to determine if high alumina cement concrete, calcium chloride additive, asbestos or any other deleterious material has been used in the construction of this property, and we are unable to report that the property is free from risk.

Similarly, we have not carried out any investigations or inquiries regarding possible contamination of the site, and for the purpose of this report have assumed that it is free from all contaminants. If it is subsequently established that the site is contaminated the value of the property could be reduced.

The porch has a flat lead covered roof. The leadwork is on two levels, a main section with lower outer trim. Leadwork is lifting on edges, particularly the westerly side. There is no impression that the roof is leaking by way of staining/decay to the roof underside, but some tidying up would be of benefit.

The balcony roof is also a flat structure, set behind brick raised parapets and finished off with floor tiling. The underlying roof protective material is not known due to the tiling. Around the edges of the roof, where this meets the parapet, leadwork is in place which is also 'glued' to the top of the tiling.

The state of the surface to the balcony was fair with no signs of undue unevenness although there is an element of sagging towards the west side. In periods of heavy rain, rainwater may collect here, but there were no signs of problems in the verandah area below to suggest active leakage. There is no real contour and roof surface to encourage rainwater to drain to the rainwater outlet, but this is not uncommon. Overall water discharge performance will need to be monitored, principally due to the underlying age of the balcony construction, and also potential weaknesses around the sash window of the 'office'.

To both subsidiary roofs there is no underlying visible roof construction, but in view of no staining, undue fracturing or decay, we have no reason to recommend further investigation. It is relevant to note, though, that the verandah has been recently redecorated. Whether this was completed as part of normal maintenance or for marketing purposes is not known.

Insulation to both roofs is not relevant, as there is no living accommodation below.

4.03 Chimneys

The property has four chimney stacks. The main stack is positioned in the centre of the house. One other is situated towards the rear and two are on the westerly party line with the adjacent house. We cannot confirm whether these latter structures are shared with the adjacent house, but we suspect not. All three chimneys are constructed of brickwork. To the head of the central stack there are seven flue outlets, defined by fluted pots, most fitted with metal 'hats' (although now largely corroded). There are four flues to the rear chimney, three having open circular pots, one fitted with a T-shaped pot. Both westerly stacks have three flue outlets, the forward being of the white clay castellated type, the rear having two open pots, and a further one fitted with a terminal. At the junction with the roof line, all chimneys utilise metal flashings. The central stack is also used as an aerial support, as is frequently encountered. Others may have been similarly so used, but no substantial aerial structures are in place.

The central stack is considered to be in a reasonable state for its age. Mortar pointing between brickwork is fair, and there were no signs of deterioration to brick faces. At some stage the chimney has been coated with a black mastic paint, but this has now mostly washed away. The head of the chimney is covered with lichen, a natural ageing patina. There was no

evidence of any specific defect warranting essential repairs, but we would refer you to comments made later in respect of the effectiveness of flashings.

The rear chimney also appeared in a fair state with no specific faults noted.

The front party wall chimney is beginning to fail close to the head of the chimney. There is a fracture within the top six courses on the inner side, and one of the pots is broken. Some rebuilding to the head of the chimney is going to be required soon, particularly as this chimney is actively used for the fireplace in the living area of the kitchen. Otherwise, even though the chimney is quite tall, it was reasonably vertical.

The rear of the party wall chimneys is a smaller structure than others, and from the appearance of its brickwork, is possibly newer or has been rebuilt. Mortar jointing between brickwork and brick faces was relatively neat and no specific deterioration was evident.

On a general note, our observations in respect of the state of the chimneys externally is reliant on from what could be seen from ground level and the upper roof areas. Opposing aspects of the chimneys, particularly to the party chimneys is taken to be as the visible areas.

Only the two westerly chimneys pass down through any open roof void. These were seen above the bedrooms of bedroom 1 and 3. Chimney brickwork here is typically stained, and active dampness was recorded, but not down to ceiling level. Added to this, there were signs of fractures within masonry to the forward chimney, with surrounding black soot staining. This would suggest an element of flue gases is getting into the roof void. This does give some cause for concern, and further to recommendations in respect of an overhaul to the head of this particular chimney, we would also advise making good within the roof void itself.

To other chimneys, specific checks were made at ceiling level within the top floor bedrooms, as to effectiveness of flashings. To the chimney breast in bedroom 7, we obtained no untoward damp readings, but there was an element of dampness to the inside wall of bedroom 5. However, whether this is due to defects in the chimney externally, or even from failings of the valley gutters is unclear, but from the spoiling of the plaster finish, the problem has clearly been longstanding. We consider that some opening up of the building fabric is necessary, to clarify the position, and allowance made for repairs, even if these cannot be defined at this stage.

Chimney flashings are always susceptible to problems, particularly in an older property such as this. The defects as noted regarding dampness are not uncommon, and can sometimes be extremely difficult to eliminate. Over time chimney brickwork can become increasingly porous, as does mortar jointing, and with strong winds and heavy rain, water can permeate through upper structures and bypass built-in flashings. Even if there is no problem now, this should not be ruled out in the future.

As we would expect in a property of this age, almost all principal rooms have fireplaces. We do not propose to describe or comment on each, principally as we suspect most are not used, and are merely retained for decorative purposes. Only the fireplaces in the drawing room, the living area of the kitchen and the office fireplace would seem to give evidence of active usage. Fireplace grates vary in styling even between these three rooms, the largest being the living area fireplace where there is a large freestanding grate, with cast-iron fireback. The fireplaces are all conventional features of the property, and day to day performance can only be determined through trial and error, but there was no obvious sign of significant problems, by way of smoke odours to suggest down draught problems.

We cannot confirm whether any of the flues are lined, but we strongly suspect they are not. It is not essential that they should, but lining a flue can assist with historic deterioration of such areas, as is highlighted by problems seen to the chimney brickwork within the roof void above bedroom 1.

We have no particular comment to make in respect of fireplaces which are not actively used, but we would suggest that the flues served by these fireplaces are capped externally, i.e. to the head of the chimneys, by way of fitting vented capping cowl. They do not preclude future use, but it does help limit water and animal life ingress, as well as assisting with a certain element of ventilation that is always important to chimney flues. It does mean disused fireplaces should not be totally sealed up.