Our Ref: 2023-LF118

PROPERTY ADDRESS

23rd November 2023

Dear CLIENT NAME,

RE: PROPERTY ADDRESS – Defect Inspection

Introduction and Brief

We received your instruction on Tuesday 7th November 2023 to inspect PROPERTY ADDRESS and to provide a summary of the defects associated with the building. You and the other four Leasehold/Freehold owners intend on instructing a schedule of repair works and have requested this report to identify the main issues with the building, and what remedial works are necessary in the short term.

The purpose of this report is to identify the issues with the property, and for Leaseholders to establish which works they wish to be carried out as part of a short-term project. Once you have informed us of the works you wish to be carried out, subject to your instruction, we will endeavour to prepare a Schedule of Works/Specification and tender this to a number of contractors. Following this, we will oversee the project and administer the building contract between you and the chosen contractor.

I, Luke Field BSc (Hons) MRICS, carried out the inspection on Wednesday 22nd November 2023 at 10am. The weather at the time of inspection was overcast with intermittent sunshine. The front elevation faces West.

General Description

The property comprises a five-storey mid-terrace Victorian property, believed to have been constructed circa 1880. The building has been converted into five separate flats, with one on each floor.

The property is located within the AREA conservation area. Conservation Areas are designated to preserve the appearance and character of the locality. This means that if you propose to carry out any alterations which might affect the appearance of the property or the general area, Special Conservation Consent will be required in addition to normal planning permission. All trees in such an area must be treated as if they are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order and consent will be required to fell or prune them.

The property is of conventional construction and design for a building of this type and age with rendered walls, presumably of bungaroosh, which comprises flint fragments and brick rubble set in a coarse lime rich mortar mix. External facades are rendered to a smooth finish with stucco detailing in areas. There is a canted bay window to the front elevation, the roof of which provides a balcony for the second floor flat.

On the rear elevation, there is a four-storey projection, followed by a two-storey projection. Windows consist of traditional single glazed sliding timber sash type with some timber casement windows to the rear. Rainwater goods are a combination of uPVC gutters and downpipes and cast-iron gutters and downpipes.

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The main roof has a pitched hipped design with a Redland 49 interlocking concrete tile covering. There is a large 12-pot rendered brick party chimney stack on the north party wall and this is separated from the north roof pitch via a valley gutter that has been coated with a liquid system. Rendered party walls separate the roof from the adjoining roofs. There is a dormer on the front roof pitch with a Redland 49 tile clad gable roof and a dormer on the rear pitch with a mineral felt covered flat roof. Both rear projections have felt covered flat roofs.

General Condition and Defects

Internal

The inspection began in the top floor flat where I was shown three areas of the flat that are suffering from water ingress. Water staining and high moisture readings were recorded to the north wall and adjoining ceiling of the living room. Subpar patch repairs have been carried out on this wall in the past, presumably to address water damaged plaster.

Similar water staining was observed to the ceiling in the rear bedroom where it meets the north wall. High moisture readings were taken from this area, indicating an ongoing water ingress issue.

It is important to note that most ceilings within the flat have a textured paint finish. Certain textured coatings are known to contain asbestos, and it is not possible to establish this from a visual inspection only. Therefore, care should be taken not to disturb these ceilings, and testing must be carried out prior to any intrusive works to confirm the presence of asbestos. It is also important to promptly address any water ingress issues. Failure to prevent this will eventually lead to partial collapse of the ceilings and this may release asbestos fibres.

In the kitchen, elevated moisture readings were taken from the south wall.

The roof space was accessed via a hatch and drop-down ladder in the flat ceiling. The southern section of the roof space has been boarded both on the ceiling joists and rafters. There is a partition wall and hatch in the centre of the roof space which affords access to the north section of roof space which has not been boarded. The roof structure comprises timber rafters with timber close boarding fixed above. Through gaps in the close boarding, we observed a sarking felt underlay. This ensures a secondary line of defence against moisture ingress, should moisture penetrate the tiles.

There are no obvious signs of water ingress through the roof structure in the roof space. However, elevated moisture readings and localised mould were recorded to some of the timber rafters and close boarding. This is due to condensation which is caused by inadequate ventilation in the roof space.

I also noted the presence of fibre cement board which has been used to enclose the cold-water tank. This material is potentially asbestos containing and therefore care must be taken not to disturb it. This material is currently in a sound condition.

External – Roof

I was able to access the rear four-storey projection flat roof from the rear dormer bedroom window of the top floor flat.

There have been reports that the roof covering itself is leaking and may therefore require wholesale replacement. I disagree with this assessment as the roof tiles are generally in a satisfactory and serviceable condition. These are very hard wearing and long-lasting roof tiles. Naturally, there is some wearing to the tiles, although this is minor at this stage in their life. These tiles should continue to prove serviceable for many years to come. Furthermore, the

sarking felt underlay below the roof tiles ensures a secondary line of defence against moisture ingress. I did, however, note one broken tile which appears to have been broken to allow for the installation of an overflow for the roof space cold water tank. A smaller notch could have been made in this tile for the overflow pipe, and there is a risk that the current broken tile could permit water ingress.

Mortar bedding to multiple ridge and hip tiles has cracked and deteriorated. This creates a risk of ridge and hip tiles dislodging from the roof in high winds.

Valleys

There are poorly designed narrow valleys either side of the front dormer roof, where it meets the front roof pitch. This creates a risk of blockages which can lead to water ingress, and indeed these valleys are blocked with vegetation. No signs of water ingress are apparent below these valleys at this moment in time.

Roof Party Walls

Render to all roof party walls is badly cracked and deteriorated, particularly at low- level where it has been applied over the lead flashings. Render should not be used in contact with lead, as the thermal movement of lead can cause premature failure of the render. The compromised state of these roof party walls has contributed to water ingress into the top floor flat.

Visible parts of the lead flashings used to weather the roof party wall and tile junction were seen to be in satisfactory condition.

Chimney and Valley

Much of the render to the large party chimney stack appears to have been replaced in recent years, however, cracking is visible to the high and low-level render of the stack.

Between the chimney stack and north roof pitch, there is a valley gutter. This is believed to be the primary cause of water ingress into the top floor flat. Basic attempts to prolong the life of the lining using a liquid system have been carried out, and this has clearly failed to prevent water ingress into the flat.

Dormers

Dormer cheeks have slate hung cladding and this is in a satisfactory condition. Timber window casings to the face of both dormers are suffering from wet rot decay.

Lead flashings either side of the dormers are also in satisfactory condition. However, the lead cover flashing to the front of the front dormer has split.

Flat Roofs

The rear dormer and both rear projections have mineral felt coverings. All three felt coverings have exceeded their serviceable life as evidenced by widespread deterioration and splits. These are at risk of water ingress.

There is a cast-iron fire escape ladder fixed to the rear wall of the four-storey projection and this extends to the roof over the two-storey projection. The ladder is suffering from widespread paint delamination and advanced corrosion of the metal.

Rainwater Goods

uPVC gutters to the front and rear of the roof are heavily blocked with vegetation and are overflowing.

The decorative spiral cast-iron downpipe on the north side of the front elevation is in a satisfactory condition. On the south side of the bay window, there is an old wastepipe which is suffering from paint delamination.

On the rear elevations, there are several cast-iron downpipes which are suffering from paint delamination and localised corrosion. In addition, the uPVC downpipes are experiencing flaking paintwork.

There is a cast-iron soil and vent pipe (SVP) mounted on the side of the four-storey projection. I believe the pipe is cracked and leaking at the pipe bend which is in line with the two-storey projection roof.

External Walls

Render to the front and rear elevations is cracked in large areas. Rendered cornices are also cracked throughout with some localised vegetation growth.

On the rear wall of the rear four-storey projection, there are some large cracks in the render and masonry substrate. This is due to corrosion of the cast-iron fire escape ladder where it is embedded in the wall. Due to corrosion, the metal has expanded which has caused the cracking.

There are cast-iron bay window railings to the ground floor windows. These are suffering from corrosion. Cast-iron balustrades to the second-floor balcony are also suffering from corrosion and the spindles on the north side of the balustrade are damaged.

Windows

Most windows to the building are traditional single glazed sliding timber sash units. These generally appear in satisfactory condition but would benefit from redecoration to address peeling paintwork in areas.

The sliding timber sash window to the front dormer and rear timber casement window to the rear dormer are suffering from wet rot decay.

There are two old, metal roof windows to the front and rear roof pitches. Metal parts to these windows are suffering from corrosion, and the timber parts are suffering from wet rot decay. In addition, the perimeter gutter channels are heavily blocked with vegetation.

External Areas

Multiple quarry tiles to the entrance pathway are damaged and detached.

Metal railings to the front boundary are suffering from paint delamination and localised corrosion.

The rear north bungaroosh boundary wall is suffering from isolated areas of deterioration, particularly to the high-level mortar joints.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the short term, I recommend that a comprehensive scope of external repair and refurbishment is carried out on the external building fabric. The scope of works should broadly comprise the following:

- Re-bedding of the ridge and hip tiles to the roof.
- Replacement of the broken tile over the water tank outlet.
- Re-configuration of the valleys either side of the front dormer roof. The 2006 NHBC standards recommend a minimum valley width of 125mm.
- Re-rendering of all roof party walls and re-using the lead flashings. New render is to be taken down to a bell-drip detail tightly fitted above the lead flashings.
- Cracked render to the chimney stack should be hacked off and replaced.
- The valley gutter between the chimney and north roof pitch should be re-lined using good quality lead.
- Replacement of rotten timber to the dormer windows and replacement of the lead cover flashing to the front dormer.
- Re-covering of the three flat roofs with new three-layer high performance mineral felt coverings. New insulation will be included in the flat roof coverings to meet current U-Values specified under Part L of the Building Regulations.
- Treatment and redecoration of the metal fire escape ladder using proprietary metal coatings.
- Unblocking of all rainwater gutters and repairing any damaged sections and seals.
- Redecoration of the cast-iron downpipes, uPVC downpipes and the front wastepipe.
- Replacement of the cast-iron soil and vent pipe with a uPVC soil and vent pipe.
- Replacement of cracked render to external walls and reforming cracked cornices. Includes for localised redecoration to the render patch repairs and removal of vegetation.
- Replacement of rotten timber and redecoration to the dormer windows.
- Redecoration of the bay window railings and balcony railings and repairs to the damaged balcony spindles.
- Replacement of defective tiles to the entrance pathway.

Considerations

The below are works that are not entirely necessary at this stage but should be considered as part of the overall project works.

- Installation of roof vent tiles to prevent condensation and mould in the roof space.
- Full window redecoration.
- Replacement of the old, corroded front and rear roof windows to the top floor flat - New good quality Velux windows should be considered.
- Redecoration of the external walls, as opposed to localised redecoration where the render is patch repaired. This will ensure a more attractive finish to the building.
- Redecoration of the garden railings.
- Repointing to the rear garden boundary walls.

I understand that windows are the responsibility of the leaseholders. If the leaseholders wish to have their windows redecorated as part of the project works, then this can be included within the specification and the costs apportioned to the respective leaseholders.

A contingency sum should be held as part of the project to account for any unforeseen defects that might become apparent during the project works.

For projects, we engage main contractors who, in addition to their own direct workforce, have access to a variety of subcontractors. This approach ensures a more streamlined and straightforward construction project, as it involves a single point of contact who assumes all the risks. This is preferable to managing and coordinating multiple subcontractors. Sussex Surveyors maintain a list of approved and trusted main contractors for project works. We possess extensive experience in this specific type of work on buildings of this nature. The contractors we engage are likewise highly proficient in this field.

If you intend to instruct us on the design and specification of the project works, I will aim to send out tenders either before Christmas or shortly thereafter in the New Year. Contractors typically require a 2–3-month lead time and considering that this type of work is best undertaken in the spring when the weather improves, we should target a project start in March or April.

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I trust the above is clear, however should you wish to discuss anything then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Luke Field BSc (Hons) MRICS
Associate Building Surveyor
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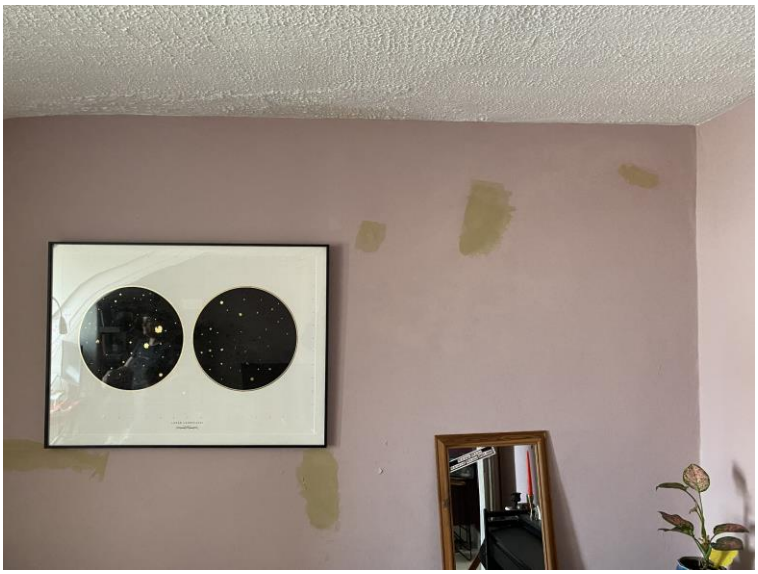
Photographs

1. 

Water damaged and poorly patch repaired north wall to the top floor flat living room.

2. 

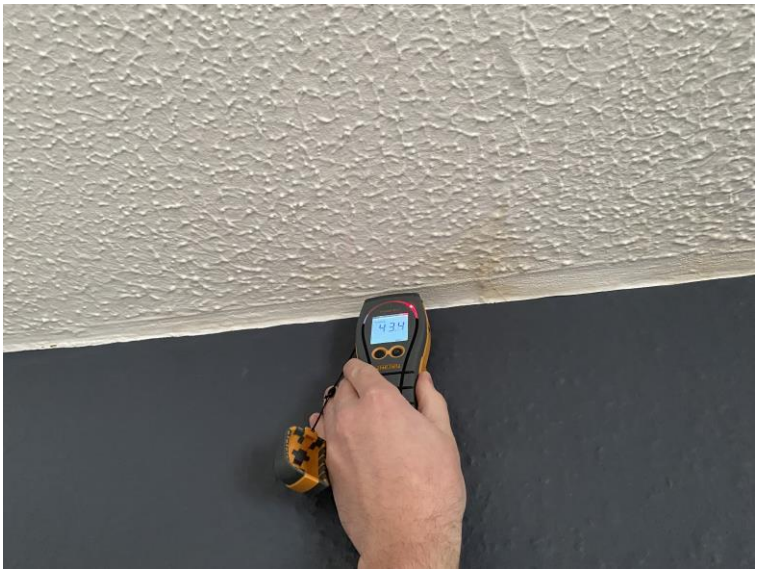
Water stained and saturated ceiling adjacent to the north wall of the top floor flat's living room.

3. 

High moisture readings to the ceiling.

4. 

Water staining to the ceiling adjacent to the north wall of the top floor flats bedroom.

5. 

High moisture readings to the ceiling.

6. 

Elevated moisture readings and some mould to the timber rafters and close boarding in the roof space above the top floor flat.

7. 

Presumed asbestos fibre cement board to the cold-water tank in the roof space.

8. 

South wall of the top floor flats kitchen affected by water ingress.

9. 

General view of the rear roof pitch.

10. 

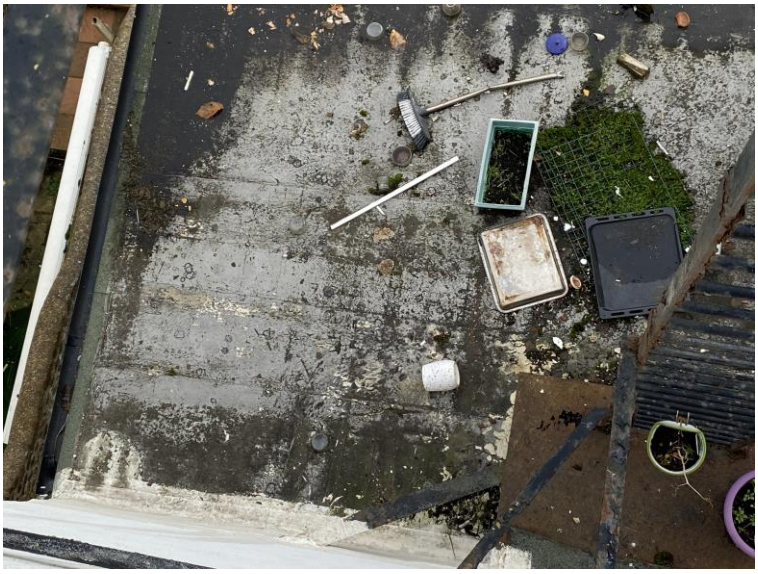
Cracking to the rendered party wall on the south side of the four-storey projection roof.

11. 

Heavily worn felt over the four-storey projection roof.

12. 

Advanced corrosion to the rear roof fire escape ladder.

13. 

Heavily worn felt covering over the two-storey projection flat roof.

14. 

Cracked render and masonry to the rear of the four-storey projection.

15. 

Rotten timber to the rear dormer.

16. 

Cracked render to the top of the chimney stack.

17. 

Cracked render to the top of the chimney stack.

18. 

Heavily worn felt over the rear dormer flat roof.

19. 

Cracked render to the rear north roof party wall.

20. 

Broken roof tile to the rear pitch and cold-water tank overflow pipe.

21. 

Cracked render to the rear south roof party wall.

22. 

Corroded and rotten frame to the rear roof light with vegetation blocking the perimeter gutter channels and flashings.

23. 

Cracked render to the front south roof party wall.

24. 

Poor quality valleys either side of the front dormer gable roof where it meets the front roof pitch.

25. 

Poor quality narrow roof valleys either side of the front dormer.

26. 

Cracked render to the front north roof party wall.

27. 

Valley between north pitch and the chimney stack, believed to be leaking into the top floor flat. Attempts have been made to prolong the life of this valley by coating it with a liquid system.

28. 

Worn valley lining.

29. 

Cracked low level render to the chimney stack coated with a liquid system.

30. 

Deteriorated mortar bedding to the roof hip and ridge tiles.

31. 

Split lead cover flashing to the front dormer.

32. 

Heavily blocked front gutters.

33. 

Rotten timber to the front dormer window.

34. 

Cracked render to the front north roof party wall.

35. 

Cracked render to the front elevation bay window.

36. 

Cracked render to bay window cornice and vegetation growth.

Corrosion to bay roof balcony balustrade and damaged spindle on the north side.

37. 

Deteriorated paint finishes to the front elevation wastepipe.

38. 

Damaged and missing quarry tiles to the entrance steps.

39. 

Corrosion to front ground floor railings.

40. 

Cracked render to the rear elevations.

41. 

Cracked render to the rear elevations.

42. 

Deteriorated rear uPVC downpipes and cracked and leaking cast-iron soil and vent pipe.

43. 

Deterioration to the rear north garden boundary wall.

44. 

Flaking paintwork and minor corrosion to front garden railings.