BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

on

ARNOLD HOUSE, 31 HIGH STREET, CORSHAM, SN13 0EZ

for

James Whittleton
Corsham Town Council
Town Hall
High Street
CORSHAM
SN13 0EZ

29th March 2022

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1. **Instructions**

In accordance with the 'Terms and Conditions of Engagement for Building Survey Reports' which was sent to you on 29th March 2022 we have now carried out our inspection and are pleased to report below.

The report covers the house and any adjoining extensions unless otherwise stated. We have not extended our full detailed survey to any ancillary buildings and outbuildings, but will merely comment upon their overall construction and condition.

2. **Date & Time of Inspection**

29th March 2022
The survey commenced at around 11.00 am.

Weather Conditions

It was dry but overcast at the time of our inspection following a period of changeable weather.

Aspect

The front of the property faces due east.

3. **Description**

The property comprises two buildings, no's 29 and 31 High Street, with main accommodation comprising ground floor Shop, Offices and Cloakroom with two self-contained flats on upper floors.

There are two distinct frontages, the left property no. 29 dated 1703, the right property no 31, a later building. Both are Grade II listed and known as Arnold House.

No 29 has accommodation planned on three floors with additional wings at the rear providing further accommodation. No 31 is two storey.

The buildings are built with mainly stone tiled roofs over stone elevations. Our inspection considered the two buildings as one with interconnecting accommodation on both ground and first floors.

The main accommodation comprises:

Ground Floor:	Main Hall (31 High Street), rear lobby, Cloakroom with w.c, Tourist Information Office with Rear Entrance Lobby, Shop, Side Hall (29 High Street), Store Room/Shop, Rear passage to Kitchen, Rear Lobby, Staff Kitchen and Store.
Apartment 2	Located in 29 HS. Accessed from rear to ground floor Lobby, stairway to…
First Floor:	Landing, 2 front Bedrooms, Bathroom with w.c, Kitchen, Living Room. Stairway to …
Second Floor:	Landing, Attic Rooms.
Apartment 1	Located mainly in 31 HS. Main Hall with staircase up to…
First Floor:	Landing with Bathroom with w.c., Living Room, Bedroom (in 29 HS), Kitchen (in 29 HS).

Services:	The building is connected all main services and the accommodation benefits from both electric heating.
Outbuildings:	Outside w.c., not accessed.
Grounds:	Rear gardens.

4. **Conditions**

This report should be construed as a comment upon the overall condition of the property and is not an inventory of every single defect, some of which would not significantly affect the value.

The report is based on the condition of the building at the time of our inspection and no liability can be accepted for any deterioration in its condition after this date.

The property was occupied at the time of our inspection. As you will appreciate, the presence of floor coverings, furniture, fixed units and other items precluded a complete examination of many surfaces.

We have assumed that no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used and that the inspection of those parts which cannot be seen would not reveal material deficiencies or defects.

We would point out that we have not carried out either site or document research into whether the subject property stands on contaminated land. We would strongly recommend that the purchaser satisfies himself by investigation with the Local Authority.

We have made no enquiries concerning the boundaries or ownership of the site, surface water problems, rights of way etc and neither have enquiries been made of the appropriate authorities in relation to Town Planning, Building Regulations, road improvements or similar such matters as all of these are normally dealt with by your solicitor when formal searches are made prior to contract.

Where comments are made in italics please note that these are standard paragraphs applicable to most buildings but not necessarily specific to this property. It is important they are noted.

Having carried out our inspection as fully as possible and having due regard to our Terms and Condition of Engagement, we would comment as follows.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5. **The Property** The building appears to be in a generally satisfactory condition for its age despite having lacked substantial maintenance expenditure for a number of years. The time is coming when decisions about capital expenditure need to be taken to plan for the building being kept in satisfactory condition for the next 50 - 100 years. Further there are the typical issues affecting a building of this age and a need to address deficiencies which affect its performance and energy efficiency.

The points we would wish to bring to your attention are set out below, but it is important these be read in conjunction with the main body of the report where other points are noted. Photographs attached to the Report illustrate most points raised and some others.

Chimneys. 1. Generally the chimneys appear satisfactory as seen from the ground. However recent repair to the rear left chimney may not have solved the issue of occasional water ingress.

Roofs. 2. Generally satisfactory outside but there are a few slipped tiles on different roof slopes to replace and minor wear and damage to ridge tiles. Heavy deposits of moss should be removed. So whilst seemingly in reasonable condition see notes on 'Roof spaces' for comment on internal condition. Roofing contractor to inspect and advise.

Rainwater apparatus. 3. Generally satisfactory.

Walls. 4. Generally satisfactory. There is scope for minor repointing.

In addition there are areas where, unfortunately, cement mortar has been used to repoint and, in these areas, ideally replacing with lime mortar should be considered.

External joinery. 5. Generally satisfactory. There are instances with external timbers have been affected by past woodworm infestation. There are a couple of instances where window frames suffer rot such as the rear staff kitchen window.

Decoration. 6. Always scope for redecoration. In this instance the appearance of gutters and downpipes as well as external joinery, would benefit from attention.

Damp courses. 7. High ground levels around the back of the building and in particular the rear wing are causing damp problems. Reducing levels is advised but the position of underground drainage may prevent this. Further investigation by drainage specialist is recommended to check on levels.

Roof spaces. 8. The front roofs either have an old roof lining which is starting to fail or no lining at all such as in Arnold House. Generally the roofs don't appear to be leaking but will be susceptible to wind driven snow being blown in both where the roof is not lined and where there are holes in the old roof lining.

There is a specific issue with water ingress affecting the ceiling and walls on the left side of the stairs approaching the attic rooms. The valley and roof to the left of this roof over the stairs needs to be inspected.

Ceilings. 9. Attic ceilings are in poor condition.

Walls. 10. Generally satisfactory.

Floors. 11. Generally satisfactory.

Doors. 12. Some of the doors would benefit from adjustment and draught seals to improve operation.

Windows. 13. They have been draught sealed but some time ago and not very effectively. There is general scope for improvement.

Joinery. 14. There signs of rot affecting some skirting boards on the ground floor. This will be caused by contact with damp such as in wall and floor surfaces.

Decoration. 15. There are several areas, commonly ceilings but also some walls, where old lime paints lie under modern paints. As a result of the lack of adhesion between the two the modern paints peel. Affected surfaces need to be cleaned of loose paint and surfaces stabilised. Decorator to advise.

Insulation 16. Roof space insulation within the front roofs needs improvement with missing insulation over Arnold House particularly over sloping ceilings and with limited insulation fitted over Flat 1.

The rear bathroom for Flat 1 suffers from condensation causing mold all down to lack of proper ventilation extraction, lack of opening window and limited insulation in roof and walls.

Fire Protection. 17. The doors benefit from limited fire protection. Has the building benefitted from a recent Fire Risk Assessment and if so, have all recommended measures been followed?

There should be a fire break wall in the roof space which spans over the kitchens for both flats.

Dampness 18. There is sight damp by the chimney breast in Kitchen 2. Suggests a flashing issue. The roof above should be carefully checked.

There is damp on the ground floor, particularly the lobby at the base of the stairs to Flat 2 and rear hall on the ground floor. Part is because there are old flagstones laid onto bare earth, part is because outside ground levels are much higher than internal floors and part is where there are thin external walls such as by the stairs to flat 2. See notes on ‘Dampness’ for further comment.

Reducing the level of the outside ground either by lowering surfaces generally or by digging a narrow channel against external elevations with its base below internal floor levels is advised.

One could excavate to establish a french drain around the perimeter of affected structures.

Lining and insulating thin external walls should be considered to prevent damp affecting internal finish's and improve heat retention to prevent condensation and mold.

Timber defects

19. There are signs of active woodworm in the roof over 31 High Street and in the cupboard below the front left window Arnold House.

Rot affects some skirting boards. This should be checked and affected timber replaced.

We didn't find evidence of fungal decay such as Dry Rot although some of the rot in skirting boards could be down to fungal decay. A timber specialist should inspect.

Services

20. These generally appear satisfactory.

Water

21. However with the water supply being by gravity, water pressure may be weak to some fittings.

The shower fitting in Flat 2 was leaking when checked.

22. Is the incoming water supply via an iron pipe as seen in the main Kitchen on the ground floor?

Ventilation.

23. Insulated roof spaces should be ventilated.

6. **Legal Matters**

1. The building is listed. You should be aware that works to a Listed Building require separate consent to planning permission.

The standard of work required for Listed Buildings is higher and this is likely to significantly increase any costs involved with repairs or alterations to the building, including the interior, or any other item covered within the listing

2. Ascertain whether guarantees have been issued in respect of any previous damp proofing or timber preservation treatment. Guarantees are usually attached to the Deeds and relate to various treatments at the property. If a defect is mentioned in the report, recourse to the Deeds should be made to see if a treatment has been undertaken. If a guarantee exists, it will only cover areas actually treated and it will not necessarily be a blanket cover against that type of defect within the property.

3. You should also note that where works are carried out to a Listed Building without obtaining Listed Building consents, liability for any works which have not been carried out to an approved standard will fall to the owner of the property at the time they are discovered and not the person who undertook the work originally.

EXTERNAL NOTES

External areas of the property were viewed both from the ground and, where appropriate, with the aid of binoculars.

Directional references are made as if looking at the property from the front, being the elevation containing the front door, unless otherwise stated.

7. **Chimneys**

The ashlar built chimney above the right gable end elevation is formed with cornice and drip stone and having cement flashings to the roof.

The stone is weathered as to be expected mainly the front right corner. There is scope for minor re-pointing but this is not essential. From the rear, the chimney appears satisfactory, again with cement flashings.

The single stack at the left side of 29 HS is built of ashlar stone with cornice and drip stone above lead flashings to the ridge. Condition satisfactory.

At the rear there is a central chimney located between the building fronting the High Street and the rear wing and rising from the base of the rear roof slope. It is built with ashlar and having cornice and drip stone. The chimney supports 2 clay square pots.

Both pots have suffered slight damage with sections of the clay pot missing and hairline cracks visible. Replacement is recommended but not essential as the hairline cracks may worsen with successive frosts. Some distance below the upper part of the chimney there is a lead flashing to the right of the rear stack which overlaps a lead lined valley between converging slopes. Not all the flashing was visible.

Behind the two rear wings there is a broad stone chimney supporting one clay pot with metal hood. There are cement flashings to the roof. Cornice and drip stone. The flaunching at the head of the stack looks to be in need of repair where other flues are capped. This should be checked and repaired as necessary.

At the right side at the rear there is a twin ashlar chimney with cornice and drip stone rising off a broad mainly rubble stone stack, The chimney supports a TV aerial. The stack supports two 2 modern clay pots, one with ventilation spigot and the other with bonnet. The flaunching around the clay pots has been repaired using a rubberoid solution. We understand there was concern there was moisture ingress so the caps to the chimney pots were fitted and a water proofing paint applied between the pots and flaunching to prevent water ingress. See notes on ‘Dampness’ for further comment. We are slightly surprised the rubberoid paint was used as this may not be effective and only a short term fix if so.

Redundant flues require ventilated caps or hooded spigots at the top of the flue and ventilation within the closed off fire openings in order to keep them dry and prevent condensation forming inside.

8. **Roofs**

Roofs were inspected commencing with the left side of the front elevation and continuing in an anti-clockwise direction around the building.

All roofs are clad with Cotswold stone tiles apart from the south slope to the middle rear wing roof which is clad with concrete plain tiles.

No 29 HS, dated 1703, has a tall roof with gabled dormers with double pitched roofs meeting with the front face with tiled valleys. There are attic rooms within this roof. There are cement flashings to parapet walls and adjoining structures.

The roof to the left of the left gable up to parapet and below single chimney appears satisfactory. Stone ridge satisfactory. The left roof slope to the left front gable satisfactory.

Central roof and inner slopes to the two gables. Satisfactory. Slight unevenness exists in the valley tiles but there was no suggestion of slippage.

Central section between two gables also satisfactory. Right slope to the left gable satisfactory. Left face to right gable there is slight unevenness in valley tiles. Minor cracking exists in the mortar bed to the ridge and the cement used to bond tiles at head of slope. In time this may need attention but nothing is required currently.

Right slope to the right gable satisfactory. The stone tiles on both the right slopes to the 2 dormers have a lighter appearance and we wonder whether those slopes have been cleaned recently to remove moss.

The forward facing slope to the right of gable satisfactory. There are cement flashings where the side of the roof slope meets with the upstand which forms the dividing wall between 29 and 31 HS. There is slight frost damage to ridge and wear in mortar bed.

Front slope to 31 HS is formed with semi-hexagonal hip over the two-storey bay and with slopes clad with Cotswold stone tiles.

A slight undulation was noted in the line of tiles but general appearance and condition satisfactory for age. There is wat looks to be a slipped tile on the central of the three slopes over the bay window near the ridge. This may have fallen from the head of the bay roof. Should be checked and refixed. Otherwise satisfactory. Cement flashings to parapet walls satisfactory.

Rear roof slope over the left building 31 High Street. Satisfactory. Cement flashings to parapets satisfactory. Slight frost damage to stone ridge tiles but condition generally satisfactory. Minor wear in mortar bed to ridge tile at left end.

At the right side there is a flat roof over the Bathroom serving Flat 1. This roof was not accessible so was not inspected but no damp was seen inside in the ceiling below.

The single-storey rear wing behind the Tourism Office has a mono pitched roof clad with Cotswold stone tiles. Cement flashings left side to garden wall are cracked and we recommend close inspection and repair as necessary. Lead flashings right hand side look satisfactory. Cement flashing head of roof slope intact but minimal.

The rear wing comprises two structures of different ages. At the left side we can see there is a quarter hip end facing the High Street and rear slope to the main roof over 29 HS. This hip end was not visible so no comment on condition is possible. It connects with the rear slope and side of the adjoining chimney.

Where the slope at the left side below the quarter hip meets with the base of the adjoining roof there is a short valley. There appears to be a loose tile at the head of the valley. This should be refixed.

The side slope to the first of the two wings appears generally satisfactory albeit with greater covering of moss than other slopes. Frost damage is present in the ridge near the central broad chimney, with stone fragments on the roof slope. Moss will tend to encourage frost damage. Fitting copper strips along the ridge so that a mild copper solution runs down the slopes can help prevent moss growth. Cement flashings to the rear parapet satisfactory.

The end wing has a hipped roof. Side slope is stone tiled and has cement flashings to the gable to the middle wing. There is a fair element of moss growth at base of slope. Lead flashings have been fitted under tiles forming the corner to the hip.

Rear hip end satisfactory. There are signs of a roof lining to the roofs over the rear wings. See notes on ‘Roof Spaces’ for further comment.

Inner facing side slope to rear wing could not be inspected from the ground. The middle wing roof is formed with two slopes with slightly steeper lower slope on the side wing roof above entrance to Flat 2 with vent pipe. Seen from the staircase window above, condition satisfactory where visible apart from a couple of missing tiles at the head of the upper slope. There is a lead flashing between the two.

Rear slopes to no 29 HS comprises the round roof over the staircase to the attic stairs butting up against the rear slope to Arnold House with, at the right side rear slope up to the side facing slopes to the gable elevation behind the rear twin chimney.

Staircase tower roof, where visible, satisfactory draining to the left side to a lead lined valley which could not be inspected. It is in the vicinity of the valley and the left slope to the roof over the staircase that there has been water ingress causing stains inside. See notes on ‘Dampness’ for further comment.

To the right of the conical roof over the stairs the rear slope to the main roof over 29 HS is partially visible.

There are one or two loose tiles such as to the right of the staircase tower. There also appears to be possible slight disruption in tiles on the rear face behind the chimney, with one or two disrupted/slipped tiles below the single stack abutting the main roof where it meets with the adjoining building.

There is no apparent ventilation into roof voids which there should be to prevent condensation occurring on the roof timbers or roofers felt. See notes on 'Roof Spaces' for further comment.

9. **Rainwater Apparatus & External Pipework**

It was not raining at the time of our inspection. We cannot confirm the performance of rainwater goods or surface water disposal. We are also unable to comment upon their overall alignment or possible leakage.

Arnold House has cast iron gutters on metal brackets fitted between dormers with the left gutter draining onto a lead roof to the adjoining property. Downpipes serving other gutters drain to the ground with downpipe to the right of the door to Arnold House draining to a channel which then drains to the pavement. The same with the downpipe to the left of Number 31 Arnold House. These channels need to be cleared possibly being blocked with leaves and moss etc.

Gutters skirting the roof to Arnold House and bay window drain to the roof to Number 29. All appears satisfactory.

Gutters to the rear of Arnold House are on metal brackets draining to the right hand side ultimately to the flat roof over the rear two-storey small rear wing.

The roof over the single-storey wing drains to cast iron downpipe at the left side draining to the ground with manhole and grating close by. The rainwater apparatus would benefit from being painted.

Regarding the gutters to rear wings these are also supported on metal brackets and drain to a downpipe at the left end draining to a hopper with then second intermediate hopper serving Bathroom or Kitchen fittings. All drains to another hopper with downpipe then draining to a broad gulley hidden under wire mesh but with manhole close by. Running parallel is the soil and waste pipe to the first floor Cloakroom. It lacks a wire balloon cover.

General condition is similar as elsewhere with scope for repainting. In addition there may be a leak at the right corner of the gutter before the end elevation below the hip.

Gutters to the wing skirt around the hip end, draining to a downpipe with hopper. The downpipe drains to a grating. The discharge point is a little high and water probably splashes against the corner of building. This could encourage damp.

Gutters to the right side of the rear wing look reasonably modern but difficult to see inspecting from directly underneath.

Gutters on the roof before the staircase tower are of metal draining to a downpipe with intermediate hopper picking up drainage from other fittings and then draining to a gulley with grating.

A soil and waste pipe runs up against the rear facing elevation to the narrow side wing containing the entrance to Flat 2. with manholes close by.

There are no gutters fitted to the round roof over the staircase. To the left of this roof there is what appears to be a lead lined valley gutter. It is in the vicinity of this that there are signs inside the attic stairs of a leak.

Cast iron gutters with downpipe serves the roof between the staircase structure and the rear gable. The downpipe drains onto a concrete path.

Gutters below the roof don't appear to be properly fitted to the metal brackets and as a result the base of the roof tiles appear to overhang so water would fall past directly to the ground. This to be checked when it rains and be adjusted if necessary.

There is another soil and waste pipe.

In summary gutter arrangements appears serviceable apart from in a couple of places where there may be a leak – such as the back corner of the rear wing, or gutters need adjustment back on no 29 HS.

We assume that eventual rainwater discharge is to a combined storm and foul water storm water drainage system but as this is below ground level we are unable to verify this point.

10. **Main Walls**

For the purposes of the survey only a brief description of the elevations is given followed by a more detailed report on specific items needing attention. The front elevation was inspected with side and rear elevations, considered in an anti-clockwise direction.

The front elevation comprises Arnold House at the right hand side and the 1703 building to the left. These two buildings appear to have been built at very different times but are now owned as one property with elevations faced in ashlar.

The elevation to no 29 HS comprises two second floor gabled dormers with date stone 1703 in the right and initials of the builder or owner at the left above drip stones over twin windows with dressed stone surrounds and mullions.

The first floor elevation has four windows with sills. The ground floor has four windows and entrance door with lead covered canopy on stone brackets. At the foot of the elevation there are four air vents, one each below each window.

The general condition of the elevation is satisfactory with nothing untoward noted to cause concern. From other information supplied the front elevation was partly re-built in 1937. There is a date stone below the second from the right first floor window 'DJP 1937' being the initials of the then owner.

Arnold House elevation has a two-storey semi-hexagonal bay window right hand side, first floor window to the left above the front door with sill band running across the façade. There is a projecting cornice behind the gutters. The main entrance has rusticated stone arch to deeply recessed window with glazed light. This building has a stone plinth at the foot of the elevation. There is an air vent either side of the bay window but none in the bay.

The condition of the elevation is generally satisfactory. Minor re-pointing has been carried out below a bracket to the right of the bay. Some weather damage exists to the stone and slight spalling, very much commensurate with the age of the building.

The right side gable end elevation rises up to the chimney with stone parapets either side. Joints between coping stones to the rear right hand slope are open and should be re-pointed. It is common to find water leeching through joints causes frost damage to the stone below.

The elevation is built predominantly with rubble stone with what appears to be a possible blocked in window adjacent to the head of the first floor with a large vent at the foot of the elevation probably serving a fireplace.

The elevation was at one time was painted. Most of the paint has come off. There has been some patching of pointing. The general condition is satisfactory. Regarding the stone quoins at the left or front corner the way the stone has been laid could suggest that the ashlar façade to the front elevation, including the bay, was a later, early Victorian alteration.

At the foot of the elevation ground levels rise up close to internal ground levels. The back right corner butts up to a garden wall. There is the potential for damp in these two areas. See notes on ‘Dampness’ for any further comment.

The rear elevation comprises the upper elevation above a modern single storey wing. The upper part is built of rubble stone with single sash window with modern lintel. Marks on the wall above the window suggest there was an old ski slope canopy over the window.

At the right side there is a small single room two-storey ashlar built wing providing the rear entrance and first floor Bathroom with round window. The walls are capped with coping stones suggesting a flat roof behind. There has been some repointing of joints between the stone blocks. There was no suggesting of ongoing movement. The stone blocks used to build this wing are relatively thin, say 150 mm, and to see such cracking is quite typical. There is a timber lintel above the back entrance door.

The ground floor wing to the side is built with reconstituted stone elevations probably to a cavity wall. There is a broad rear door with glazed lights. Small window to a Cloakroom with timber fascia above. Similar left side with external door and fascia. There is a visible damp course at foot of elevation close to a grating which provides drainage at the back of the rear path.

Attached to the rear of the main buildings is the rear wing built in two stages. The first wing is built with approx. 150 mm ashlar blocks and is formed with two first floor windows with air brick to the side, and with pair of windows with central mullion at ground level with continuous sill. At the foot of the elevation are two air vents. Ground levels are potentially higher than internal floor levels.

There has been remedial work to the wall around the two windows at some time.

Nothing particularly was seen now to warrant concern but there is a hairline fracture rising from the centre of the twin window up through a couple of courses of blockwork. Small areas where cement mortar has been used to patch the wall ideally should be replaced with lime but this is not essential.

There is a short return wall at the right corner where this wing connects with the rubble stone built rear wing. The variation in the style of the stone between the ground and first floor suggest the upper floor was a later addition. This seems to be confirmed by the style of the now filled in first floor window the inner panel painted black. At ground level there is an old triple window with stone surround and mullions. At the foot of the elevation there are two air vents, one recessed behind a concrete edge. Ground levels are higher than internal floor levels.

There are one or two patches of cement pointing at the head of the elevation. Otherwise satisfactory. Stone quoins form the corner. These suffer slight weather damage at the base of the elevation probably as a result of being damp without a separating damp course between the ground and wall. This is not an issue with condition commensurate with the age of the building.

The rear elevation is built with rubble stone with dressed stone quoins and other ashlar stonework below the first floor window with dressed stone surrounds. Ground floor window with modern lintel with lead flashings above a modern casement probably replacing a similar sash window to that at first floor level. At the foot of the elevation there is an air vent right hand side.

Again ground levels are higher than internal floors. Elevation generally satisfactory but there is some wear in the pointing either side of the ground floor window. Cement repair to stonework and pointing around the window again poor quality with further cement repair above the lintel and at the foot of the elevation. There is scope for minor repointing to be done around the right corner stone quoins. Ground levels again, being higher than internal floors, should be lowered.

Right passage facing elevation to the rear wing also built of rubble stone with dressed stone quoins and single door at ground level with lead covering to the timber lintel. There is an old air vent at first floor level purpose of which is unclear.

The elevation has been re-pointed. There is cement pointing above the lintel. Where the lead above the door is pointed into the stone the cement has broken loose and needs re-fixing. There is an air vent at the foot of the elevation with perimeter surround because it is recessed below the path. There is another air vent. White paint affects the wall around the entrance door right side particularly.

The passage facing elevation to the middle wing comprises both rear and side facing structures built of single skin ashlar with first floor rear facing window to the Bathroom and door to a store below. The side elevation includes the side entrance door to Flat 2.

There has been some repair to the stonework above the window and below. Nothing was seen currently to warrant concern. There is a vertical metal strap at the left corner adjacent to the Bathroom, perhaps bracing the elevation. Ground levels are higher than internal floor levels. There is an air vent just before the round staircase tower. Ther are indications that minor re-pointing has been carried out to the elevation and one or two areas of soft stone where the hard outer face has worn with the general condition satisfactory for its age.

The staircase tower is built with rubble stone with upper floor window with dressed stone surround and drip stone. There is a side facing ashlar stone panel where there probably used to be an entrance door, now blocked-in. All has been re-pointed and is satisfactory.

The elevation to the side to the gable end up to the rear chimney is rubble stone and has been re-pointed There are signs there used to be a window in the gable end below the window, so the chimney may be a later alteration.

At ground level there are two windows. There is a drip stone above a right hand window with central stone column to the left window above which the drip stone has been removed. The stone sill is slightly damaged. Items in front restricted inspection of the base of the wall.

11. **External Joinery, Windows and Doors**

At the front and in second floor gables, there are old metal framed and lead beaded casement windows. Their condition is poor but being metal, stable, all reflecting their age. See the section on ‘Windows’ in the ‘Internal Notes’ section below for further comment.

There are Georgian sash windows with glazing bars on the first and ground floors similar windows. There is a part glazed central entrance door. First floor windows partly paint sealed shut with those at ground level believed to be mainly paint sealed shut. Again, see the section on ‘Windows’ in the ‘Internal Notes’ section below for further comment.

No 31 is fitted with Georgian sash windows to the bay and left side with metal balconettes. Some of the medallions are missing to the balconettes, otherwise condition is reasonable. Windows are quite old and there is the suggestion of slight rot in glazing bars.

Ground floor period panelled entrance door under a glazed light. Painted sealed sash windows are fitted to the ground floor of the bay.

The rear first floor sash window in Arnold House looks paint sealed shut. At ground floor there are double glazed door and side screens. The door frame possibly suffers slight decay, otherwise satisfactory. To the left there is a modern window the sill to which suffers slight decay. In the ashlar two storey wing there is the ground floor entrance door with weather bar. Rot affects the door frame and weather bar. The round window is fitted with extraction vent.

Regarding the rear wings, there are modern casement windows on the first floor with ground floor sash windows with glazing bars. Upper sash windows are paint sealed shut.

Three casements are fitted to the ground floor stone mullion window, all sealed shut. The stone surround is slightly worn, particularly the sill.

At the rear there is a metal balconette quite old with old lead medallions, some missing. Sash window first floor level looks satisfactory. The ground floor casement window suffers rot in the sill and bottom rail to the opening window, which cannot be opened because lead flashings fitted to stop water ingress at the head of the window obstruct its operation.

On the passage elevations, the rear facing Bathroom window is reasonably satisfactory. The external door below is satisfactory with glazed light. The side entrance door is satisfactory with weather bar. A wooden panel is fitted over the lintel position. This may hide rot. The window in the staircase structure is a modern casement which from inside seems to be in satisfactory condition.

Rear windows behind 29 HS comprise 2 sashes. The left window suffers rot in the bottom rail. Right hand window cannot really be seen but it is an old sash with glazing bars.

All exterior timber work needs to be carefully checked from time to time because rot is a progressive fungal decay and in particular before next redecorating any timber repairs should be carried out as necessary.

Regular upkeep of decorations is particularly important with modern softwood as this type of timber is prone to fungal attack.

12. **External Decorations**

The general decorative presentation of windows is poor with flaking and splitting of paint starting to affect windows.

Generally, redecoration would be of benefit throughout but in some instances where newer doors have been fitted for instance such as to Flat 2, the decorative presentation is better. Windows on the front elevation certainly need attention.

Some sections of guttering would also benefit from decoration.

It should be borne in mind that coatings and decorative treatments to external surfaces could obscure defects in the materials beneath not apparent from an inspection of the surface.

13. **Damp Courses**

A damp course is an impermeable layer built into a wall both on the external skin and also on an internal skin to prevent damp rising from the ground to affect internal finishes.

There are no damp courses except in the single-storey wing behind 31 HS.

Damp courses were not built into buildings of this age but there may have been later remedial treatment done, although there was no certain external evidence of this. Commonly there would be drill holes in the external walls if a chemical injected damp course had been used. As repointing had been carried out in several areas this may have covered such holes.

If treatment has been done there should be documents confirming what was done, when, by which company.

There is damp in the property as noted in the section on 'Dampness' below. In part this is caused by ground levels being higher outside than inside so reducing ground levels and providing a french drain of separating gulley to prevent direct moisture ingress needs to be considered.

The current Building Regulations require a minimum clearance of 150 mm (6") be retained between damp proof course and ground level or pavings in order to prevent possible bridging and water penetration internally.

14. **Sub Floor Ventilation**

There are vents at the front of the building and in rear wings, but, not in the modern single-storey wing.

Some of the vents in the rear wings are now below outside ground levels with perimeter curbs to protect those openings from being clogged with gravel and earth.

The floors on the ground floor are suspended timber floors in most main rooms. These may have been fitted over original solid floors as seems to be the case in the left front store room/shop.

It is essential to ventilate the space beneath the timber suspended ground floor in order to help prevent conditions arising that could lead to an outbreak of rot. We cannot confirm that there are no obstructions to the cross movement of air beneath the floor, thereby preventing full ventilation of all areas, without undertaking a complete sub floor inspection.

15. **Foundations**

We have not inspected the foundations to the property or other areas below ground level. This would involve extensive excavations, including the breaking up of external pavings and internal floors which would have caused unacceptable damage. Accordingly, we cannot comment upon the design or condition of the foundations or base of the walls.

Having made our inspection around the perimeter of the building we found no evidence of important fractures or distortions to imply any weakness in foundation support.

16. **Site Factors**

We have made no enquiries concerning the boundaries or ownership of the site, flooding or surface water problems, rights of way etc and neither have enquiries been made of the appropriate authorities in relation to Town Planning, Building Regulations, road improvements or similar such matters as all of these are normally dealt with by your solicitor when formal searches are made prior to contract.

17. **Radon**

This area has been identified as one where there isn't a risk of Radon gas. It is not practical in the course of an inspection/survey to determine whether Radon gas is present or not in any given building. This can be determined by fixing a small test instrument within the building over several months, after which it is sent back to the Public Health England – Radiation Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environmental Hazards, Chilton, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 0RQ or telephone (01235) 822622 for testing.

For more information please check out www.UKradon.org which sets out information about radon and how to obtain a test kit.

18. **Flood Risk** According to the Environment Agency Flood Map the property is located in an area with a moderate risk of surface water flooding from the High Street.

If there is a risk of flooding you should ensure Buildings Insurance is available under normal terms.

INTERNAL NOTES

19. **Roof Spaces** There is a roof space over the attic rooms in no 29 HS accessible through a small hatch in the left attic room ceiling.

We viewed from the hatch rather than crawled in being concerned about the strength of ceiling joists.

There is an old cut timber frame. There are four principal trusses with purlins above the ceilings. The front slope is not lined so we can see the underside of stone tiles and battens. The tiles are held in place with what appear to be galvanised nails. The fact the roof is not lined suggests the last overhaul was over 70 years ago but it is difficult to be certain.

With unlined roofs rainwater ingress is unlikely unless there are missing tiles. However should the weather produce wind driven powder snow this will be blown through gaps between the tiles where it will accumulate ion insulation and ceilings and when it melts damp patches are likely to arise. To prevent this is one good reason to line a roof.

Rear slope is lined with an old bituminous felt lining in visible areas. The roof has at some time been stripped and straightened so there are modern timbers alongside old. Be aware that bituminous felt linings perish over time particular where exposed to moisture so there may well be holes such as where there has been recent water ingress.

Old woodworm infestation is evident in the timber frame as to be expected. We didn't see evidence of active infestation but couldn't check all timbers particular the far end of the roof space which was not accessed.

Insulation levels are good in the areas around the hatch and over level ceilings the central roof space but not in the far end roof area beyond the fourth truss up to the party wall to Arnold House. We understand the insulation was updated relatively recently and installers were anxious about the strength of ceiling joists so did not venture all the way along fearing ceiling collapse. There isn't believed to be insulation over the level ceilings in the dormer roofs or over sloping ceilings.

There is a second roof space above the central rear wing. Here again the roof frame has been repaired. The underside of the roof slope is lined with an insulated bituminous felt lining with lining paper under the insulation. Much of the paper is now loose but no issues were noted. The main central level area over the ceiling has also been insulated and appeared, where visible, to be satisfactory.

There is metal beams supporting old and now redundant galvanised water tanks with modern plastic water tanks on modern staging. These tanks should have close fitting lids and breather kits and be insulated.

It should be noted that this roof space lies over both Kitchens serving Flat 1 and in Flat 2. There should be a fire break wall in the roof space above the dividing wall between these two Kitchens.

There end roof space is accessed via a modern drop down ladder. Here too the underside of the roof is lined with an insulated bituminous felt roof lining with relatively modern roof frame and with recently fitted insulation over ceilings. All satisfactory.

There is another roof space over Flat 1 in Arnold House. The frame is a conventional timber frame which has been strengthened on the rear face with modern timbers fitted, all supported with central truss with purlins which are propped with struts in places. There is an old bituminous felt roof lining which is torn in places. Daylight is visible through the top of rear roof by ridge in centre suggesting a missing tile.

Front slope is also lined with an old felt which is sagging and torn in places. The felt at base of roof slopes is perished, such as in the bay.

There is evidence of active woodworm infestation to a limited extent. A timber specialist should inspect and advise on the need for and cost of remedial treatment. The infestation didn't seem significant.

There is limited insulation over the ceilings, with missing insulation in places.

We noted there is no specific ventilation into roof spaces which is required where those roof spaces are insulated. However, with rear roofs lined with insulation under the tiles this is not required, and with front roofs the partial lining of one and holes in the lining in the other the roof spaces benefit from ventilation. If the roofs were to be stripped and relined then a breathable lining should be used,

FLAT 2.

20. **Ceilings**

Attic ceilings in the left attic room formed with plasterboard panelled central section with exposed underside of trusses and purlins as well as arched brace collars, with lath and plaster in the front dormer. Sloping ceilings are lath and plaster and in poor order with numerous cracks in various places where the lath and plaster appears weak and in danger of collapse, such as inside the right side of the front dormer in the level ceiling in the dormer and sides of the dormer. Part of the distortion will reflect the condition of timbers above.

To the right of the rear gable which supports the chimney and perhaps used to have a window, the sloping ceiling again is quite weak.

The main room ceiling is divided into three bays. Central bay ceiling very damaged. Far end ceiling level ceiling less so but there has been some patch repair. There are old metal hooks usually used to hang food.

Inside the front slope the level ceiling in the dormer window is not too bad. Regarding sloping sections, left side poor condition, right side better.

To the left of the dormer, the inside of the front slope has been patched in various places and a section of lath and plaster at its base has collapsed exposing the timber laths.

The rear sloping ceiling to the right of the stairs has collapses below where water ingress has been a problem. There is a textured finish applied in part.

Please note that some types of textured ceiling finish can contain asbestos fibres as a binder. If this was the case, whilst there is not known to be a risk if it is left undisturbed, any work to this material (for example, drilling, sawing or removal) can pose a hazard to health. If it is to be removed, you should have the textured finish tested and act accordingly.

There is patched repair above the purlin and towards the base of the rear slope right hand side.

Staircase ceiling level area not in bad condition. Right side above the stairs is starting to collapse probably connected in part to water ingress. There is a textured finish applied. There has been patched repair. Some of the plaster skim is breaking loose.

Looking back to the entrance to the attics at the top of the stairs, foam has been used to seal a joint between the broad board at the base of the valley and the ceiling on the right side. This type of repair is of course not really appropriate with a listed building. In addition if used to prevent moisture ingress it can mean that the leak still exists and that the wood covered by the foam is damp in which case rot is likely to develop. Much better to have draughts so that damp wood dries out but more importantly deal with the source of the leak by repairing the valley. We didn't detect moisture here so the foam may have been used to seal a gap to stop draughts.

On the first floor, the front Bedroom has a plastered beam. Minor cracking was noted at the front end. This might suggest weakness in the beam end but the cracks by themselves are not significant.

The Landing ceiling suffers moisture staining around the ceiling below the attic stairs where there has been a leak.

The Bathroom ceiling is part sloping and plasterboarded, satisfactory. The roof void above may be insulated. The front Bedroom ceiling is satisfactory. The Landing ceiling with roof hatch is satisfactory.

The Kitchen ceiling is papered with smoke and heat detector, extraction vent which we are not sure where it vents to. Slight damp is present left of chimney breast.

Rear Living Room ceiling with patterned surface, possibly Artex,

On the ground floor the ceiling has been slightly damaged below the Bathroom where there has been a leak at the base of the stairs. Slight damp registered and there is currently a leak in the shower above.

The ceiling in the Lobby is satisfactory. There are slight stains around the light fitting but this did not register damp.

You should note that lath and plaster ceilings tend to lose their key with age and cannot easily be repaired. When they are defective and weakness is determined sections may require hacking down and renewal. The gradual loss of key over time will also cause them to deflect and they can collapse without prior warning.

21. **Walls**

Facing the building from the street, the left attic room includes rendered plastered chimney breast with textured finish. Otherwise there are sloping ceilings down to the floor. The inside of the front dormer window gable is plastered to a solid wall with painted stone mullion and metal framed casement window. At the back of the room is the outline of the former window and chimney breast. There is an old lath and plaster stud partition between attic room. The plaster above the doorway is damaged.

There is a lightweight modern partition around the door to the stairs.

Inside of the front elevation dormer solid wall with splayed reveals to the window. Painted stone surrounds.

Gable end wall right hand side not accessible because of mattresses but it is a solid wall with plaster finishes and where visible appears satisfactory.

Staircase wall right side head of stairs affected by damp and some of the plaster has fallen loose. All needs repair once the leak has been dealt with.

There is a curved rear wall following the stairs with window with stone mullions. Plaster surfaces to the left side also rough with patching of plaster carried out with modern pink plaster.

On the first floor in the front main Bedroom there are splayed reveals to the window with woodchip paper surface to solid walls, robust thickness 450 mm. There is a plasterboard stud partition to the right Bedroom and solid rear wall with chimney breast with fireplace.

Partition walls around head of stairs to front Bedrooms. Solid wall to main stairs. Bathroom with dry lined and ceramic tiled outer walls. Thie wing providing this space is built with thin external ashlar walls.

There is a modern stud partition to the Kitchen. Within on the left side lies a chimney breast. There are moisture stains to the left of this. There is a plasterboard panelled wall to right of chimney breast. The outside wall is single skin ashlar now plasterboard lined.

Living Room walls are more substantial and include splayed reveals to rear window with cupboard beneath. Walls solid with plaster finish, satisfactory. Chimney breast on right on entry.

Descending the stairs to the ground floor some of the plaster and painted finishes are quite rough and peeling, particularly the inside of the outside wall which is again single skin ashlar. When checked damp registers. The surface seems to have old lime paint underneath the current paint which includes a textured finish as well as perhaps modern plaster skim which has blistered towards the base of the wall above the stairs. The base of the stairs has new string course so that has been repaired perhaps because it became rotten.

In the Lobby there is the outline of the former doorway back to the main building, now blocked-in with step.

There is a thin wooden tongue and groove wall with basic glazed partition through to the Lobby by the entrance door where there is a solid wall to the rest of the rear accommodation. The old plaster surfaces register slight damp. Outside ground levels are higher than the floor by about 300 mm.

22. **Floors & Staircases**

The floors to the attic rooms are boarded but the boards are fixed onto an underlying surface which could be chipboard or plywood. Various types and ages of boards have been used so appearance is not uniform. The floors undulate but there is no sense of important weakness but we could not get right to the perimeter of rooms really to check the ends of joists.

Be aware if water gets into the boards through roof leaks, for instance, there is the potential for this to cause hidden damage to the underlying boards.

Old wooden stairs wind down to the first floor. No significant weakness was evident.

On the first floor there are carpeted surfaces to suspended timber floors. There is some creaking in these boards very typical of old buildings, particularly towards the Bathroom where there is vinyl flooring and vinyl in the Kitchen. No weakness was detected. There is slight springiness in the floor in the main Bedroom.

An enclosed straight wooden staircase leads to the ground floor. We noted repairs in the staircase string towards its base and that the enclosed void under the stairs benefits from ventilation. The bottom treads to the stairs do creak slightly which could indicate damp is causing slight weakness.

On the ground floor, there is a rough flagstone floor which registers damp. This is as we would expect as there won't be any impermeable membrane under the flagstones which will be laid directly onto the earth.

The existence of floor coverings and furniture obviously restricted our inspection of floor finishes.

23. **Doors**

There is a simple flush fitting door to the attic rooms with basic china and Bakelite handles. It is not a fire door. The door does not close, snagging with the frame.

There is the remains of a modern tongue and groove door through to the end room.

On the first floor there are period panelled doors to front Bedrooms one with two heart-shaped cut outs in the top panels. No self-closers are fitted to the Bedroom doors.

Panelled door to under-stairs cupboard, fine. Glazed door to Bathroom, satisfactory.

Smoke seals have been fitted around the edge of the Kitchen door together with upgraded door stops. Self-closer fitted.

The Living Room door is quite lightweight and fitted with two glass panels.

On the ground floor the external door is plain and fitted with a letterbox and Georgian wire glass partition. The inner door is tongue and groove panelled with rim lock which does not work entirely satisfactorily but it does close. The door frame to the blocked up doorway suffers from rot.

24. **Windows**

On the attic floor, there are old metal casements fitted with mainly original old glass. The windows can't easily be reached with items placed in front. In the main attic room we could get a bit closer to the window. The opening casement does open. There are one or two cracked glass panels. Draught sealing would be of benefit. The windows ought to be checked to ensure they are satisfactorily supported, unlikely to fall out in other words.

On the first floor the main Bedroom has a sash window. Draught seals are fitted but not to the best standard with these now not that effective. The same in the small Bedroom.

The Bathroom is fitted with a side hung casement with obscured glazing. After-market draught seal has been fitted. There is an extraction vent.

Kitchen is fitted with a modern casement. Weak brass handle and after-market draught seal fitted. Upper casement possibly does not function properly. Partial draught sealing has been fitted.

Livibng room fitted with sash window. Again there are signs of draught seals. Despite the seals please note that the sash windows will be quite draughty. Having a specialist sash window company upgrade the draught seals would be a sensible course of action.

25. **Internal Joinery**

On the attic floor the main timbers forming the roof frame are visible. There was no sign of any particular weakness. They are black painted and general appearance and condition is poor. There is quite a lot of evidence of past woodworm infestation. No signs of on-going activity.

On the first floor, there are basic skirting boards and architraves and handrails to the winding staircase. Kitchen units reasonably modern.

There is a staircase to the ground floor.

Any internal joinery in contact with a damp surface will be prone to deterioration which will not be immediately apparent from an inspection of the surface of the timber. We noted rot in the door frame to the blocked in door which is as a result of contact with damp in the wall.

26. **Fireplaces**

On the first floor the front Bedroom fireplace has an old cast iron grate. It has been draught sealed with slab insulation panels but the tenant complained of water coming down the capped off flue(s). There are signs of this on paper left on the fireplace.

The amount of water looks slight and its appearance understandable because the caps to the chimney pots don't seal the tops but do prevent direct water ingress.

Openings are left to ventilate the redundant flues so some rainwater (and powder snow) will get in in certain weather conditions. This isn't something which should be considered a problem.

Keeping the flue ventilated by fitting a hit and miss vent in a panel in front of the closed off fireplace will help it dry out when water gets in.

The fireplace in the Living Room has modern surround. The Kitchen fireplace has been removed and there is a heater in front.

We cannot confirm the condition or adequacy of flues, nor the existence of any flue liners as these are totally concealed and cannot be inspected. We would always recommend careful sweeping prior to use.

None of the fireplaces were in use at the time of our inspection and we are therefore unable to confirm their practicality or efficiency in use.

27. **Fittings**

On the attic floor, there is a fire alarm and smoke detection system with ceiling detectors. There is surface mounted cabling to power and light points.

On the first floor there is modern electric night storage heating, power points and light switches. Small bedroom with electric panel radiator.

The Bathroom is fitted with modern fittings, extraction vent, electric heater and electric heated towel rail, low flush W.C. suite and wash basin. All quite good. There is an electric shower fitted which usually indicates weak water pressure. There is a leak from the electric shower which was fitted quite recently.

There are modern electrical consumer units fitted on the landing.

Kitchen has modern fittings, electric radiator, stainless steel sink, In the Living Room there are both modern and older electric night storage heaters.

On the ground floor, there is a modern radiator in the Lobby and power and light fittings.

Please note that none of the fitted appliances have been tested and no warranty can be implied that they are in good working order.

28. **Decorations**

Attic floor and staircase poor, with first floor mainly satisfactory except where there are damp stains and wall paper has been torn away. On the ground floor in the lobby and by the stairs damp has affected painted surfaces.

FLAT 1.

29. **Ceilings**

In Flat 1, in the Bedroom, the ceiling is lath and plaster with central beam. This room is in Arnold House and adjoins a Bedroom in flat 2 and lies below attic rooms.

There is flaking paint where there is an old lime wash finish. There are some hairline cracks but no evidence of important weakness.

The Kitchen in the rear wing is lath and plaster. It suffers a few minor cracks. Nothing significant.

The Living Room ceiling is lath and plaster and satisfactory with no signs of water ingress in the bay.

The Bathroom ceiling underneath the flat roof is fitted with eyeball spot-lights, it is plasterboarded, we do not know if there is any insulation there but there is quite a lot of condensation above the shower area. There is an extraction vent in the fixed round window.

30. **Walls**

The inside of the front wall on the landing is possibly lined with lath and plaster to the substantial outside wall rather than being the usual plaster applied directly to the wall structure. We think this because the plaster sounds universally hollow rather than there being a few hollow patches which, if so, would suggest the plaster was 'blown.'

Blown plaster is where it is no longer secure to the wall structure so flexes or sounds hollow when tapped. If covered with wallpaper which you wanted to remove the process could also remove loose plaster, or if you wanted to chase the plaster to fix cables it is likely a greater area of plaster would need to be replaced.

There are splayed reveals to the window. Modern plasterboard stud partition around the main staircase.

In the Living Room the inside of the front walls appear dry lined to substantial solid walls except in the bay where the walls are thin ashlar with panelling below the windows. Elsewhere appears dry lined with chimney breast on the right wall and window at the rear.

There is a solid wall dividing the landing from the Bedroom where there are two front windows in the front wall again 450 mm thickness. There is a solid division wall through to the adjoining flat except where there is a panelled wall where there is a doorway back through to the other flat. Back wall with fireplace and deep wall with access through to the Kitchen.

The Kitchen lies in the rear wing with outside wall single skin ashlar which is dry lined with plasterboard. There is a solid division through to the kitchen in the adjoining flat. The wall back to the bedroom is tonged and groove panelled.

Bathroom with fully tiled surface to dry lined single skin ashlar walls with small round window opening.

31. **Floors**

In Flat 1 there are boarded floors with carpeted surfaces. There is a reasonable staircase but no handrail. There is a certain amount of undulation in the floor before the Bathroom which has a vinyl floor covering.

There is a slightly creaking floor and springy floor in the Bedroom. There are steps up to a suspended floor in the Kitchen with vinyl flooring. The floor feels slightly springy, probably laid over a hardboard surface. There was no sign of important weakness. Living Room floor satisfactory.

32. **Doors**

In Flat 1, the entrance door is fitted with rim lock, lever handles, self-closer, smoke seals and upgraded door stops.

Ideally the door should be fitted with a different style of lock to enable the door to be closed without locking, which is sensible should there ever be a fire, when searching for keys to ensure easy re-entry in the event of a false alarm could either delay leaving the building with the inherent danger that brings and/or result in the need for damage to the door if it slams shut when exiting in a hurry.

There is a lightweight period panelled six-panelled door with rim lock to the Bathroom. There is a six-panelled door to the Living Room, which is satisfactory. There is a six-panelled door to the Bedroom with rim lock, which is a reasonable fit. There is a flush fitting door to a landing cupboard. There is a basic flush fitting door to the Kitchen.

None of the doors are fire doors except the entrance door.

33. **Windows**

In Flat 1, sash windows have been draught sealed but this is minimal with seals fitted between the two sashes to the parting bead.

We could not check the right of the two windows in the Bedroom. The left of the windows functions, the top is paint sealed shut. Bottom windows function. The Kitchen is fitted with a single glazed casement window.

The Landing has a sliding sash window with basic catch and it is difficult to reach the window to check. There is possible slight weakness to the bottom rail.

In the Living Room the top bay windows are paint sealed shut. The bottom windows function and are draught sealed. The rear one is similar. The Bathroom is fitted with an extraction vent.

34. **Internal Joinery**

In Flat 1 there are moulded skirtings and architraves, which are a bit plain. Kitchen fittings are reasonably modern wood grain effect tops. There is tongue and groove boarding at the back of the Kitchen.

35. **Fireplaces**

In Flat 1 there is a fireplace in the Bedroom which has been panelled in, possibly with asbestolux or possibly hardboard. There is a gas fire. We think it could be asbestolux. Old stone surround now painted.

The Living Room fireplace is probably also panelled in with asbestolux, with electric night storage radiator in front.

36. **Decorations**

In Flat 1, there are emulsion surfaces to walls and ceilings.

37. **Fittings**

In Flat 1, the Kitchen is fitted with a stainless steel sink, reasonable number of power points, cooker hood not sure where it vents to, cupboard with factory insulated hot water cylinder with electric immersion heater, so limited water pressure. Smoke alarm and heat detector in the Kitchen. Water tanks in main roof space above.

The Bedroom has an electric panel radiator. There is a gas fire.

There is a fire alarm bell and smoke alarm on the Landing, modern fuse board, gas meter and electric night storage radiator.

The Bathroom is fitted with an electric heated towel rail, electric fan heater, wash basin with quite a lot of mould, low flush W.C. suite, small bath with side panel, electric shower.

The Living Room is fitted with a two electric night storage heaters.

GROUND FLOOR

38. **Ceilings**

The ceiling in the main Hall with staircase is satisfactory with smoke alarm. The left Shop has two beams, patterned paper ceiling, simple cornice, satisfactory. There are signs of possible old damp back right corner.

The left Hall ceiling is fitted with a beam. The left end Store room ceiling is lath and plaster with exposed beam. There is a certain amount of cracking all the way to the back of the room. This room is under the main first floor Bedroom. There is no apparent significant weakness.

The right hand Reception Room ceiling is lath and plaster with a plaster cornice. The room behind with modern ceiling. We don't know if the roof space above is insulated.

The rear Lobby Hall has a plasterboarded ceiling below the Bathroom to flat 1. The Cloakroom ceiling is plasterboard and satisfactory.

The rear Store Kitchen has central beam. The ceiling appears to be satisfactory. The rear corridor behind the Shop and passage up to the front Hall has a lath and plaster ceiling. Nothing was particularly seen to warrant concern.

The rear Lobby rear wing before the fire escape side entrance and ceiling in the Staff Kitchen is satisfactory. the store of the rear lobby was not accessed.

39. **Walls**

On the ground floor, main walls are of solid construction. There are signs of damp on the right Hall wall to the right Office with minor damage to plaster. On the left side the wall to the stairs is panelled. Under the stairs there are three modern air bricks in the dividing wall to the shop providing ventilation to the suspended timber floor in the Shop.

In the Tourist Office there is a solid wall with chimney breast right hand side with two arched recesses and splayed reveals to the door back to the rear lobby. There are panelled walls below the front bay.

The front left Shop has splayed reveals to the windows with solid surfaces. There is a period fireplace at the rear. There is a plasterboard stud partition to the left Hall. Within the left Hall the archway at the back of the Hall currently closed would connect to the passage connecting with the rear Kitchen.

A solid wall forms the division to the left Store/ Office with fireplaces in front and rear corners blocked-in, solid wall surfaces.

There is a twin window at the back and the blocked-in doorway which leads to the corridor.

The rear Lobby behind the main Hall is built with single skin walls which again show signs of some damp before the main rear Kitchen and around the old doorway threshold from the Hall to that Lobby. There are plasterboard lined walls in the Cloakroom to hide damp presumably and provide better surfaces and insulation.

The rear Kitchen has single skin outside wall on the right side with two windows. There are signs of slight damp below the windows. There is a broad fireplace at the back covered over and blocked-in with a fitted vent. There are fibreboard linings to walls on the left as you enter and side wall where there is a former doorway back to the separate Hall to Flat 2.

There is a passage leading through to the back of the front left Hall with solid walls. There is general evidence of damp in these walls including mould.

Walls in the rear Lobby with fire escape door include stud partition to the locked store and with solid walls in the Staff Kitchen. The bottom metre of walls in this room appear dry lined. We noted that outside ground levels are higher than internal floor which is presumably the reason. We can't check the walls on the sides being hidden in part by kitchen cabinets.

There is slight roughness around the side window and some splits in the stone frame such as where there are metal brackets fitted into the right stone mullion.

40. **Floors**

On the ground floor, there is a mat-well in the front Hall floor a boarded surface which looks modern. The floor boards under the stairs are also modern suggesting at least partial replacement of the floor.

The level boarded floor continues into the Tourist Office. We noted rot in skirting boards to the right of the bay window. There is a boarded floor in the rear single-storey wing. We found slight undulation but no weakness.

In the front left Office there is a boarded floor. There is rot in skirting boards at the back of the room to the right of fireplace.

There is a boarded floor in the second Hall. There is a step up to the wood floor leading to the back passage to the Kitchen.

In the left Store/ Office the floor is again boarded. There is a cupboard in the bay below the front window. Within this space one can see there is a gap under the boards to what might be a solid floor surface. This together with other evidence might suggest that the boarded floors were fitted over the original floors or perhaps modern concrete floor but we can't be certain.

At the rear of the main Hall there is a flagstone floor and then concrete floor in the Cloakroom. The flagstones are old. There is another step up to a boarded floor in the old Kitchen and a step down then to a flagstone floor in the passage, with old flagstones and a wooden boarded floor.

There is a boarded floor in the side Lobby behind the Kitchen with fire escape door and in the Staff Kitchen. Boards here as elsewhere are quite modern. There was no sign of weakness.

41. **Doors**

On the ground floor, the front door is not particularly well draught sealed and has a rim lock, bolts and upgraded fire hinges. There is a panelled door to the Shop with self-closer, no smoke seals. There is the same on the door to the main Tourist Office. The doors can be secured open by magnets which release the doors in the event of a fire.

There is a glazed French window through to the back of the Tourist Office where there are double glazed doors and windows through to the garden. There is a six-panelled door through to the second Hall.

There is a single glazed front door in the left Hall with rim lock. There is a lightweight panelled door through to the left Store/ Office where there is an old, panelled door with rim lock through to the passage back to the Kitchen, currently locked.

At the back of the main Hall there is a six-panelled door with rim lock to the Cloakroom, glazed back entrance door which is not particularly well draught sealed and is not a good fit.

There is another period six-panelled door with rim lock and Bakelite handles through to the Kitchen and a simple four-panelled door back through to the passage. There is an old, panelled door at the back of the Kitchen through to the Rear Lobby with fire escape door part glazed. There is a flush fitting door to a services cupboard and tongue and groove ledged door to the Staff Kitchen.

42. **Windows**

On the ground floor, there is a glazed light above the front door. The front Office is served by bay windows which are paint sealed shut. There are fixed windows in the rear wing. The Cloakroom has a single fixed casement with extraction vent.

The Kitchen has a pair of sliding windows which are draught sealed. Part open with part paint sealed shut. The Staff Kitchen is fitted on the side with casement windows in stone mullion frames with white painted metal furniture. Both are paint sealed shut. The rear window casement is paint sealed shut and locked.

The windows in the main Shop have been overhauled but they look to be paint sealed shut. Windows in the far left Store/Office have old shutters which are not working. The window is paint sealed shut.

43. **Internal Joinery**

On the ground floor, there is a range of moulded skirting boards and architraves.

There are modern skirting boards in the Hall and period handrail and balustrade. Some of the panelling below the main stairs has parted company from the frame.

There are signs of possible rot in the skirting boards before the door to the main Tourist Office with further signs of possible rot in skirting boards to the right of the bay.

There are panelled shutters now sealed before the French window at the back. Skirting boards to the right of the fireplace look modern with slight rot.

There are moulded skirting boards in left Office.

There are fairly modern units in he Kitchen and some fairly basic cupboards in the Staff Kitchen

44. **Fireplaces** On the ground floor, there are two left end fireplaces, one blocked-in definitely at the front and one covered over but it is an old fireplace. Items stored in front limited inspection.

There is a period open fireplace in the Shop, the flue sealed up with vent in place.

If there is a fireplace in the Tourist Office it is covered over by cabinets and units.

In the Kitchen, the fireplace has been covered over at the back of the room and there is no sign of a fireplace in the rear wing Staff Kitchen.

45. **Decorations** General decorative appearance is mixed throughout.

46. **Fittings** On the ground floor, there is daylight safety lighting and smoke alarm in the Hall and other lights. There is a cupboard, probably with meters. There is a gas pipe coming in, we think. There are surface mounted electrical points and fire alarm bell.

The Tourist Office has an electric night storage radiator, strip lights and smoke alarm. Modern fuse board under desk. The rear wing has daylight safety light and an automatic door to the rear garden.

The rear Cloakroom is fitted with W.C., the seat to which is loose, electric heated towel rail, electric water heater and cold tap.

The mains water stop tap is thought to be located at the back left corner of rear Hall. There is a metal water pipe in the Kitchen with stop tap.

Shop with smoke alarm, electric night storage heater, daylight safety lighting.

The second Hall has daylight safety lighting and smoke alarm.

The left Office/stone has a cupboard under the window where there used to be a gas supply we think. There was visible heating. Ther is a smoke alarm and daylight safety lighting.

The Kitchen is fitted with simple cabinets. Staff kitchen also with simple modern cabinets.

47. **Dampness** We used an electric moisture meter to check for problems with dampness throughout the property.

On the attic floor there is damp where there has been a roof leak above the staircase. The sloping ceiling in the attic room behind the partition to the stairs and in the same area as the stain above the stairs, has collapsed and this could be the result of a persistent water leak.

On the first floor, in Flat 2, there is damp in the Kitchen chimney breast.

On the ground floor, there is limited damp on division wall to front Tourism Office with signs of rot in skirting boards to right of the door to Tourism Office. Further damp exists in the rear doorway at the back of the Mian Hall where there is painted stone, with further slight damp in the rear wall around the back door.

There are signs of repair to the rear entrance door frame to deal with rot.

Within the tourism Office old rot was found in skirting boards to the bay window.

No damp registered where the skirting boards by the Shop fireplace have a wrinkled surface but damp registers in the wall and ceiling back corner.

Damp registers in walls both sides of the second Hall, with signs of damp at the back of the left Store/Office but not too significant.

Damp was generally evident in passage Damp off the kitchen and below the side window in the Kitchen.

Inside of the walls in the Staff Kitchen are dry lined. The right hand wall covered over by Kitchen units. Seems to be dry lined behind Kitchen units. So the base of the walls in the Kitchen are dry lined except for the recess as you enter the room which registered damp.

Finally damp is present in the entrance lobby to Flat 2. and in the outside wall to the side of the stairs up to the flat. Further damp is present in the old flagstone floor.

48. **Timber Defects**

Outside there are minor instances of rot in external joinery which can be simply dealt with as part of the next redecoration.

Inside we saw signs of recent woodworm infestation in roof timbers over Flat 1. There is plenty of evidence of past activity in the roof space over Arnold House. There are signs of possible infestation in the cupboard below the window in the left ground floor shop/store.

There is rot in some skirting boards on the ground floor and the door frame in the entrance lobby to flat 2. These are issues connected with damp in the adjoining walls.

As the building suffered an infestation by woodboring insects it is possible the building has been treated against woodboring insects. If so, there should be a guarantee. If treatment has not been done then please appreciate you could come across signs of activity in timbers when undertaking alterations when otherwise concealed timbers are exposed.

Whilst we have taken all reasonable care, hidden timber infestation could be present in areas which we were unable to inspect. Unless all the timbers have been treated, hidden outbreaks might exist.

49. **Thermal Insulation**

Insulation levels have been improved in the attic roof and rear wing roof spaces relatively recently. Not all the attic roof space was insulated as installers were concerned whether the old ceiling timbers would carry their weight. In addition there will be no insulation over the sloping ceilings.

Rear wing roofs have insulation fitted under the slopes as well as over the level ceilings. In the roof space over the Kitchen the ceiling insulation installation could be improved.

In the roof space over 31 HS Flat 1 there is much less insulation. This needs to be upgraded.

There are thin ashlar stone external walls in the middle rear wing as well as the small 2 storey wing at the rear of 31 HS. This means those walls will be prone to condensation and damp, such as is particularly evident in the wall to the side of the stairs to Flat 2.

Most of the windows have been draught sealed but the effectiveness of this Is, we believe, limited. Having a specialist window company inspect would be a sensible course of action to improve the way the sash windows in particular perform.

50. **EPC**

29 High Street, Corsham.

According to the Government website https://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate, this property has had an EPC assessment which rates the property:

Energy Efficiency Rating. E. This assessment was made 2011 and expired in March 2021. Since the assessment the roof spaces have been better insulated. The assessment states gas fired central heating which is not correct.

Flat 2. 31 High Street, Corsham.

According to the Government website https://www.gov.uk/find-energy-certificate, this property has had an EPC assessment which rates the property:

Energy Efficiency Rating. E. This assessment states insulation levels 100 mm and the flat is double glazed – both not correct.

This property is a Listed building and as such there is no requirement to provide an Energy Performance Certificate unless the property is ‘Let.’

SERVICES

We have carried out a visual inspection of the services as far as it was possible and we will indicate those defects that were apparent. We would always recommend that if you wish to satisfy yourself as to the condition and adequacy of services, that you obtain independent specialist reports. From our limited inspection, and without undertaking a test of any system, we noted the following.

51. **Water**

Mains water is connected with supply to water tanks in the rear wing roof space feeding appliances by gravity pressure. There is an iron or galvanised iron pipe in the main ground floor Kitchen which connects to a copper pipe with stop tap. This may be the incoming supply.

Old iron water pipes corrode so be aware, if this is the incoming main replacement with plastic should be considered to avoid the potential for future leaks.

We are unable to verify the condition of the water supply pipe within the curtilage of the property to the point of entry into the house as this runs below ground level. This length of pipework will be the responsibility of the owner of the property.

The use of dissimilar metals in the same system is not recommended as corrosion can occur through electrolytic action. We would therefore recommend that all non-copper pipework is replaced.

We are unable to confirm without complete inspection of the cold water system, to include exposing hidden areas that the installation accords with all necessary regulations and bye-laws. If any part of the installation has been altered since the recent regulations came into force, certain elements of these alterations must be to a specific type and standard as set out in the bye-laws. Checks should therefore be made to ascertain whether any recent alterations have been undertaken, to which parts of the system and whether these accord with necessary regulations.

52. **Electricity**

Mains electricity is connected with modern fuse boards located in each flat and with a consumer units serving the ground floor located in the Tourism Office.

The fuse boards or consumer units are modern so it appears the system has been checked and updated recently. Much of the cabling is surface mounted as are power points and light switches. Clearly this does little to in prove the appearance of the listed building accommodation.

There are presumably certificates confirming the wiring system has been checked recently.

53. **Gas**

Mains gas is connected. There is a meter on the landing for Flat 1 which also has a gas fire.

There used to be a supply to Arnold House with capped off pipe in the cupboard under the front window in the front left Store/Shop.

We cannot confirm that the gas installation conforms to modern standards and regulations. We always recommend that it is checked by the local Gas Company to ensure that it is both sound and safe.

Is there a recent Gas Appliance safety check certificate?

Please note the gas meter itself is the responsibility of the gas supply company so does not form part of a gas a safety check by a gas safe contractor. The meter should be checked every 2 years.

54. **Hot Water & Heating** Electric water and room heating in all areas. Some of the heaters are on off-peak tariffs being night storage radiators.

55. **Drainage** *We are unable to confirm the precise condition of underground pipework as it is obviously not visible. Without a water pressure test of the system we cannot determine whether drains are watertight and free from leakage. We would, therefore, always recommend a specialist water pressure test of the system.*

There are soil pipes round in the passage to the side of the rear wings and back of no 29 HS Arnold House with further drainage pipes behind 31 HS. There are various manholes.

The cover to the manhole near the entrance door to no 2 was lifted. No problems were noted but the extent of the inspection was limited.

The main point to appreciate is that the height of the concrete paths to the side of the wing reflect that fact that the drainage pipes are set fairly close to the path surface and that therefore this will limit how the level of outside ground can be lowered to alleviate damp problems.

We recommend a level survey of the drains to determine if the fall is sufficient to allow the drains to be buried lower to allow ground levels to be reduced.

OUTSIDE NOTES

56. **The Site** The site has not been considered generally but the stone boundary walls appear satisfactory. The metal railings at the front are specifically noted in the Listing.

57. **General Notes**

In accordance with our usual practice, we recommend that specific enquiries be made of your insurers to make certain that the property is covered against damage resulting from ground movement or tree roots in the future, and that it is covered where there is a flood risk.

It is essential that all further enquiries, specialist reports and competitive estimates are obtained for repairs prior to legal commitment to purchase so that you are fully aware of your liability before proceeding.

This report should be read as a whole and although we have stressed certain items we consider to be important, other items mentioned in the report should not be neglected. There will also be other matters of a personal choice which will involve expenditure in the future and these should be borne in mind.

We must remind you that in accordance with our letter dated 29th March 2022, together with our Conditions of Engagement, we have been unable to inspect woodwork or other parts of the building or services which were covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

We must state that this report is for the use of the parties to whom it is addressed and no responsibility is accepted to any third party for the whole or any part of its content. No section of the report or the entirety may be reproduced without the express written authority of Hextalls Surveyors Limited.

HEXTALLS Surveyors Ltd
Chartered Surveyors
14 Greenhill
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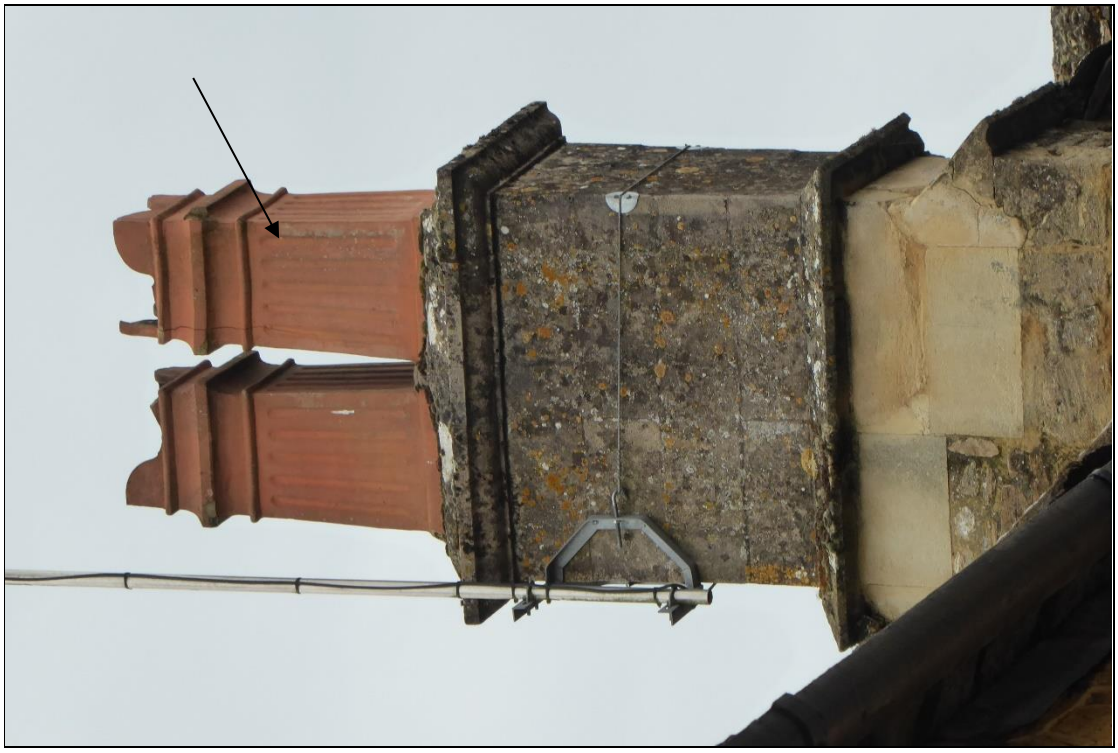
SN13 9RN

Dated: 11th April 2022

Signed: .....
T R H Elias DipBldgCons MRICS.



Damaged and cracked pots.

Rubber paint to seal against damp not an ideal repair on a listed building. Water ingress still arises despite the fitting of the caps. Therefore the bonnet might be better placed to shield against the westerly weather.

Slipped tile.

Cracked flashings single storey rear wing.

Loose tiles.

Minor damage to the ridge.

Slipped tile.

Close up.

Possible slippage in this area.

Roof slope west facing over Flat 2. A couple of missing tiles. There is damp in the chimney breast so the cement flashings may need work. Inspection advised.

Location of the source of the roof leak affecting the attic stairs. Couldn't quite extend high enough to see the valley gutter. Roof contractor should make inspection.

Cement pointing on rear elevation not appropriate with stone or with this being a listed building.

Poor quality rear staff kitchen window. Lead flashing stops the casement from opening.

Ground levels higher than internal floor levels particularly in the rear wings.

The side wall is damp inside. This structure is built with thin ashlar blocks which will tend to draw moisture in and will also be cold and limited insulation.

The end of the timber wall plate has been affected by rot and woodworm. Not an important issue. However the end is exposed so will suffer further decay, and the downpipe bracket fixing may be loose. Repointing around the window lintel to the Bathroom in Flat 2 shows slight movement. Again the wll is single skin ashlar so susceptible to movement and cracking.

Need for external redecoration.

There are signs of past movement in the ashlar blocks which from the Bathroom wing to Flat 1. This type of movement is typical with single skin thin stone walls.

Slight rot door frame to entrance door to Flat 2.

Rot in window cill.

Scope for minor repointing rear right corner of the rear wing.

Air vents are close to ground levels or below.

The gutter may need to be re-aligned.

Far end roof space over the attic rooms was not insulated when other insulation was installed.

Unlined inside of the front roof slope over Arnold House.

No insulation over sloping ceilings.

Roof space over the kitchens of both flat 1 and flat 2.

Roof space over the Living Room in flat 2.

Roof space over Flat 1.

Dust indicates recent woodworm activity although this could still be quite old.

Torn felt base of roof and lack of insulation.

The old bituminous felt lining is torn and has collapsed in places.

Peeling paint here and elsewhere in the building often caused but application of modern paints over old lime paints which don't have a stable surface to which the modern paints can adhere to.

Collapsed sloping ceiling adjacent to the top of the attic stairs.

Weak lath and plaster ceilings in the attic rooms.

Old hooks fixed to attic ceiling.

Damp in the wall and ceiling top of the attic stairs.

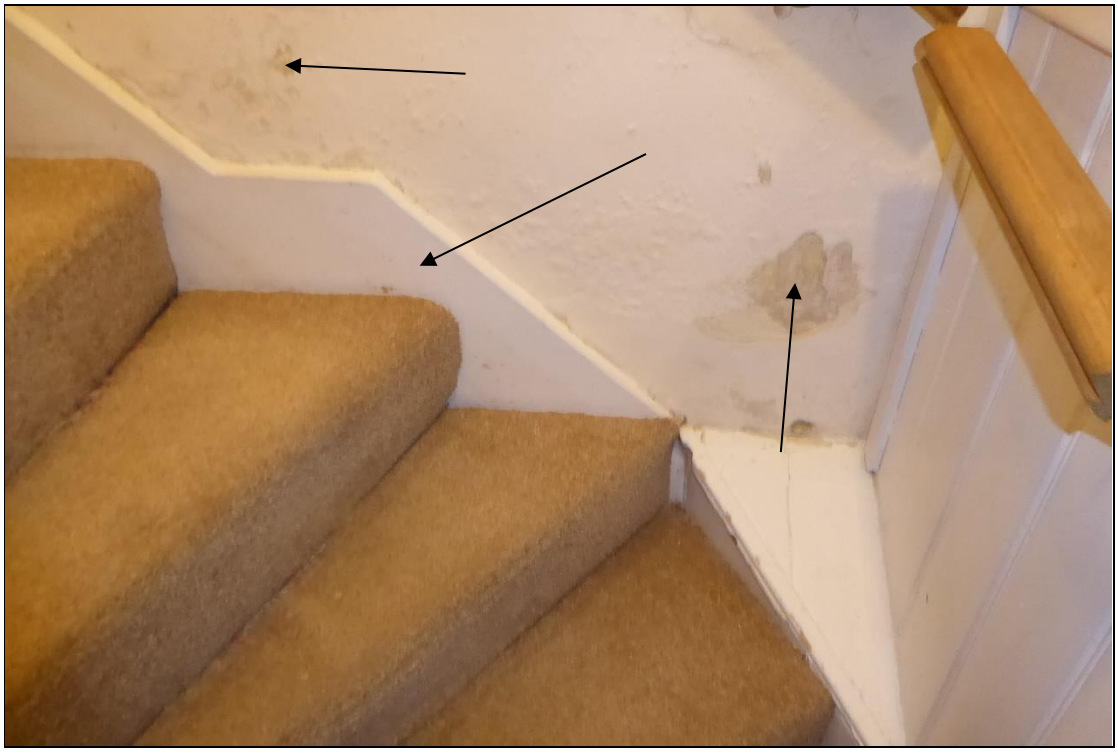
Another example of damaged ceiling top of the stairs to the attic rooms.

Expanded foam used to seal a gap in the ceiling at the top of the staircase to attic rooms in flat 2. Not best practice.

Damp in the recess to the left of the chimney breast in the kitchen of flat 2.

Damp stains where the shower in the bathroom flat 2 has leaked.

Rot affects the edge of the frame by the not close off doorway to the Kitchen.



There is damp in the wall at the base of the stairs. The string or side of the stairs has been replaced suggesting rot caused by contact with damp had caused problems.

Flagstone floors damp. – Lobby entrance to Flat 2.

Damp causing issues in the staircase wall to flat 2.

Mold stains indicate condensation issues in the bathroom to flat 1.

Windows have been draught seals but some time ago we suspect and effectiveness limited.

Entrance doors to flats should be fitted with thumb locks.

Rotten skirting boards front of the Hall.

Signs of damp in this Hall wall.

Rot affects the skirting boards in the Tourism office.

Signs of rot in the skirting board to the right of the fireplace at the back of the shop.

This is the cupboard int the recess below the left Store/shop below the front left window. There are signs of woodworm in the board to the right. Old gas main pipe.

The floor under the suspended floor seems to be modern concrete suggesting the suspended floor is not that old.

Old flagstones will be damp so should not be covered.

Damp in the rear Lobby before the Kitchen.

Damp a general issue in the floor and walls in the passage between the left Hall and Kitchen,

As above,

Is this the incoming main? Old metal pipes such as this tend to corrode particularly if the pipe is the one laid under ground to the public water main.

Ceiling collapse under the stairs not important. The vents are modern and serve the Shop floor void. The flooring looks modern.