

Sample Report on Building Inspection



Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Scope And Limitations of Inspection	2
3.0	Use Of Report / Third Party	3
4.0	Executive Summary	3
5.0	Roofs	4
6.0	Roof Void / Attic	5
7.0	External Walls	6
8.0	Windows & External Doors	6
9.0	Internal Elements	7
9.1	Ceilings	7
9.2	Internal Partitions & Wall Finishes	7
9.3	Floors	8
9.4	Doors & Joinery	8
10.0	Building Services	9
11.0	External Grounds and Boundaries	10
12.0	Planning Legislation	11
13.0	Building Regulations	11
14.0	Conclusions & General Recommendations	12

The SCSi developed this sample report for condition surveys of speculatively built houses. General info to include type of property, date of inspection, weather, any restrictions to inspection, who attended and general orientation for the reader.

1.0 Introduction

The subject property comprises a four bedroom semi-detached dwelling house of masonry construction with pitched, tile covered roofs. Windows are of double glazed uPVC construction. Floors are of solid and suspended timber construction.

The subject property was inspected on 12th March 2019. The weather was generally overcast but dry during our inspection. The purpose of our inspection was to report on the general condition of the property ahead of its purchase by private treaty.

The vendor's fixtures, fittings and furnishings remained in position during our inspection.

The selling agent of the property, Mr Bloggs, was in attendance during our inspection.

Directions i.e. front, rear, left, right etc. are given as if standing in front of and facing the property.

2.0 Scope and Limitations of Inspection



In this section set out the type of inspection that was undertaken and any restrictions, areas not accessed.

In accordance with professional guidance issued by the Society of Chartered Surveyors Ireland, our survey took the form of a 'Type Two' category inspection.

The survey took the form of an appraisal of the main parts of the structure including roofs, walls, floors and finishes, both internal and external, arising out of visual inspection only (i.e. no opening up work was undertaken).

Where parts of the structure were unexposed or inaccessible no opinion can be given as to their condition.

The lifting or opening out of cladding/linings to walls, ceilings and floors did not fall within the scope of the inspection and therefore, it must be appreciated that defects, such as woodworm or dry rot may be present, but cannot be conclusively identified.

Boundaries were visually inspected however, the position of boundaries were not measured or compared with the folio documents.

The services installations were visually inspected insofar as is within our competence however, no tests were carried out on the electrical, plumbing, heating or drainage installations.

No tests or monitoring were undertaken in association with environmental or physical factors associated with pollution or contamination of the main structure or site curtilage including issues such as noise, flooding, odours, mining / blasting or quarrying activities, the presence of asbestos, gases (including radon) radiation, aggregates containing reactive pyrite that can expand, or insulation boards containing chemical PIR 3009 which can shrink, or the like.

Minor details that do not materially affect the value of the property together with items of routine maintenance may not be commented upon.

This report may comment on issues regarding energy performance but is not intended as a Building Energy Rating report.



Surveyor to add any specific details or additional inspections agreed with client when taking instruction.

Any cap on liability that the surveyor wishes to add or as is required by their PII provider to be added.

3.0 Use of Report / Third Party

This report is for the sole use of xxxxx and their advisors. No responsibility is accepted to any third party or in the event that this report is used for any other purpose.

4.0 Executive Summary



General summary and overview / opinion to be provided here.
Surveyor can use "traffic light system" or "condition rating" system if desired.

The property is presented in good structural condition in general and consistent with other properties in the development. However backlog maintenance work should be attended to in order to prevent deterioration. Windows in particular need repair and maintenance as these were noted to be draughty. Services installations need service and repair. A small amount of fire stopping is needed to the party wall in the attic. The property would also benefit from redecoration.

5.0

Roofs



In this section describe the roof construction and associated elements, outline any works required and the consequence of not doing works as and if appropriate.

The main roof was viewed from ground level and comprises interlocking concrete tiles on pitched, timber construction. The coverings appear to be generally in good order and condition however there is a build-up of algae on the roof which should be cleaned down in order to prevent a build-up to gutters.

There is a slight misalignment in the bottom row of tiles however this is typical where a tilting fillet is not used and is not significant. There is potential however that rain could be blown under the bottom row of tiles in extreme weather conditions. The presence of a sarking felt below the tiles should prevent water ingress. No evidence of water ingress was noted during our inspection.

Guttering is of uPVC construction and is in fair order and condition. There is a build-up of vegetation within the gutters, which requires cleaning. Guttering from the upper level roof discharges onto the lower roof at the front projection. This is poor practice as it can lead to the guttering being overwhelmed in extreme weather conditions. There is evidence of staining on the external wall below this point. We would recommend that the gutter is adjusted so that it discharges to the ground / an inlet gully.

Fasciae and soffits are of uPVC construction and appear to be largely satisfactory. These elements require cleaning.

A gap exists at the connection between the fascia and side wall along the front projection. This could allow the entry of insects or rodents into the property and the gap should be closed off.

The property is served by a single masonry chimney placed on the party line and shared with the adjoining property. The chimney is provided with two cowls, a concrete capping, flashed with lead and appears to be generally satisfactory.

A satellite dish is placed on the chimney (this appears to serve the adjoining property). It is generally recommended that satellite dishes should not be placed on chimneys as they can place an excessive wind load on the structure. There was no evidence of cracking during our inspection however.

Roof coverings to the front projection and porch are similar to those used on the main roof. Flashings provided at the connection between the roof and front wall are of lead and are generally satisfactory, but a little untidy. The lead stops slightly short along the right verge. There is no evidence of water ingress as a result of this however.

6.0

Roof Void / Attic



Here the surveyor outlines the roof voids that he has or has not had access to.

Access was gained into the main roof void using a pull-down ladder which is provided. The ladder is presented with a single handrail only. Building Regulations state that pull-down ladders such as this should be provided with two handrails. Consideration should be given to improving this aspect.

The roof is of prefabricated timber trusses with sarking felt placed below the concrete tiles. The sarking felt is largely concealed by an additional layer of insulation which has been placed between the rafter sections of the prefabricated roof trusses. This is held in position with small timber strips. This appears to be largely satisfactory however the insulation is pushed tight to the felt. It is generally recommended that a gap is retained between insulation and felt so that any condensation, which may occur in this area, can gather and evaporate. The fact that the insulation is placed tight to the felt may mean that condensation will be absorbed back into the insulation and this will become damp in time. We recommend that ventilation is improved to the attic generally in order to counteract this.

The attic is partly floored and a considerable amount of materials are stored within this area. You should ensure that the vendor removes all stored items.

Insulation on the floor of the attic should be checked when stored items are removed and any missing sections / pockets should be reinsulated. Ideally, a suitable insulating cover should be provided over the access hatch.

The party wall is of masonry construction and this has been constructed up tight to the underside of the felt. We could see in places that quilt type insulation has been provided on top of the wall to act as a fire break. A small hole exists however at the apex of the roof and additional fire stopping should be inserted here.

There is an area of slight dampness generally around the chimney. The cavity tray within the chimney (provided to prevent excessive water ingress) is placed slightly low meaning that a number of courses of brick project down into the attic and these are subject to wetting from external weather. No timber is in contact with the chimney and this is not therefore seen as a significant issue.

There is no access available to the roof void over the front projection and we cannot therefore comment on the presence or condition of insulation or on the roof structure however, pattern staining noted on the ceiling below would suggest that insulation levels within this roof void are poor. This is an aspect which you may wish to improve upon.

7.0

External Walls



Describe the construction type and outline any works required and the consequence of not carry out these identified works.

Walls are of masonry construction finished with a combination of brick and painted render. The walls appear to be plumb and are free from significant structural cracking or the like.

Previously painted surfaces are stained with algae and this will require complete cleaning down with a suitable fungicide prior to redecoration, which is now required.

Light hairline cracking is noted on elevations, particularly to the left elevation. This is minor in nature and should be raked out and filled as part of the preparation works for redecoration.

No weepholes are provided to the brick window heads on the front elevation. This is an omission from the time of construction. Brick is porous and can allow water through into the cavity. A suitable means should be left to allow it to escape back to the outside. Weepholes should be provided in order to improve this aspect.

There is generally a build-up of efflorescence on the bricks. This is caused by salts drawing out to the surface of the bricks through evaporation after heavy rainfall. Ideally this should be cleaned.

External walls are generally constructed using hollow block (except where brick finishes are present), see later note regarding insulation under internal walls and finishes section of this report.

8.0

Windows & External Doors



Outline the type of windows and doors used in the property and their condition.

Windows are of double glazed uPVC construction. The windows are generally in good condition but in need of overhaul / maintenance. The windows do not close fully against their frames and adjustment is required of the hinges and espag latches.

A number of handles were noted to be loose / broken and these require repair.

Low level glazing to the front is stamped as toughened in places however we were unable to see any toughened stamps on some of the glass. Ideally, suitable safety film should be provided on all low level, non-toughened glass.

Some of the original manufacturer's protection coating remains on the external face of the windows. This should be removed.

The window to the front right bedroom on the upper floor has been painted on the inside and this appears a little untidy.

The front entrance door is a sliding double glazed, uPVC unit. A high threshold is provided on this door and this poses a slight trip hazard. The original double glazed timber door remains on the inner section of the porch. This is of double glazed timber. Again, glass may not be toughened and a film should be provide as a precaution.

The rear doors are of double glazed sliding aluminium construction. Glazing here is marked as being toughened and this appears satisfactory.

Mastic sealant to the perimeter of doors and windows would benefit from renewal in the medium term.

9.0

Internal Elements



Describe the various internal elements and outline their condition and any works needed.

9.1

Ceilings

Ceilings are generally of painted plasterboard construction and appear to be largely satisfactory throughout.

Ceilings are pattern stained at ground floor level within the front left room. This suggests poor levels of insulation as outlined previously.

There is loss of adhesion to the taped joint which exists at the ceiling / wall junctions generally on the upper floors. This is not unusual where taped joints have been used and minor settlement / drying out takes place afterwards. Consideration should be given to providing cornices to these areas in order to conceal this.

Ceilings will require redecoration following removal of the vendor's fixtures and fittings.

Head height is slightly low at the base of the staircase. This is not untypical but breaches building regulations. A minimum of 2000 mm is required. Significant works would be needed to correct this.

9.2

Internal Partitions & Wall Finishes

Internal partitions are a combination of lightweight and solid construction finished with painted plaster, ceramic tiles and wainscoting. The entire appears to be largely satisfactory however the property will require complete redecoration following removal of the vendor's fixtures and fittings.

External walls are dry-lined. The standard of insulation would fall well below current day standards.

Typically fibreglass insulation was used in the drylining systems incorporated into the construction of this type of house. It has been found that this insulation can sag leaving large uninsulated sections of external wall. This is an aspect that may need improvement in time.

9.3 Floors

The ground floor is of solid construction finished generally with floating timber finishes and ceramic tiles. The floor appears to be generally solid underfoot with no significant defect noted.

The upper floor is of suspended timber construction finished generally with carpet and ceramic tiles. Again, the floor appears to be generally satisfactory however some of the floor sheeting creaks, particularly within the front left bedroom. This will need re-fixing / re-securing.

Ceramic tiles are broken up generally within the main bathroom. This can happen when ceramic tiles are used on suspended timber floors as the tiles cannot accommodate the slight deflections which occur in timber floors.

Floor coverings are generally well worn.

The application of a floating timber floor at ground floor level has resulted in an uneven or unmatching bottom step to the staircase. This may pose a trip hazard.

9.3 Internal Doors & Joinery

Doors are generally of timber panelled construction. The original doors have been replaced at ground floor level with panelled and glazed timber doors. Ironmongery is generally poor throughout and most doors require adjustment to ensure that they close / latch is engaged properly.

There is significant damage to the door frame of the rear right bedroom. It appears that the door was forced open in the past.

There are open mitred joints to architraves throughout and we anticipate that all joinery will require filling and redecoration.

The staircase is of timber construction with timber balustrading and appears to be generally satisfactory. A number of openings in the balustrading are in excess of 100 mm. This contravenes Building Regulations and poses a risk to children. Consideration should be given to improving this aspect.

10.0

Building Services



Outline the various services installations in the property and highlight the restrictions or limitations of your inspection.

As previously outlined services installations were not tested or inspected in detail however the following observations were made:

HEATING

Heating is provided by a gas-fired central heating system. The boiler is located in a cabinet within the kitchen and discharges spent fumes to the external. There is no evidence of installation or service record dates on the boiler. A number of valve covers are missing from radiators within the house. We recommend that the entire installation be assessed and serviced and radiators balanced etc. to ensure that the entire is operating properly.

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION

The main Electrical distribution board is located within the front left reception room. The trip switches are labelled and appear to be satisfactory. There is staining generally around the transformer serving the doorbell and it appears that this may be overheating. This should be checked by an electrician.

HOT AND COLD WATER

Hot water is stored in a copper cylinder, located in the hot-press to the first floor landing. The cylinder is pre-insulated and appears to be satisfactory. The cylinder is provided with an immersion heater however this was not tested.

The main water storage tanks are of uPVC construction and are contained within the attic. The tanks are covered, insulated, provided with an overflow and are satisfactory. However some of the insulation has fallen away from the tanks. This should be tidied up to prevent frost damage or freezing.

Insulation should be checked to all pipework once stored items within the attic are removed.

A water softener system is provided and is located on the external footpath adjacent to the kitchen sink. This unit should be serviced.

VENTILATION

An extract fan is provided over the cooker in the kitchen. This does not discharge to the external and should be addressed.

No extract fans are provided to the en-suite or bathrooms. Consideration should be given to improving this aspect in order to reduce the likelihood of condensation forming within the house.

Rooms are generally provided with permanent ventilation and this appears to be satisfactory.

FIREPLACES AND FLUES

An open fireplace is provided within the front right reception room. The chimney should be cleaned prior to use of the fireplace.

We recommend installation of carbon monoxide alarms in the areas where fuel burning appliances are provided.

ABOVE AND BELOW GROUND DRAINAGE

The drainage installation was not tested however we did open a number of armstrong junctions around the perimeter of the property.

Surface water and foul water drains were opened and these appear to be generally free from obstruction.

The cover to an armstrong junction at the front left corner is damaged and requires replacement.

Waste pipes serving the upper floor en-suite and bathroom are not adequately supported and brackets to the soil stack on the left façade are broken and require repair. Suitable brackets should be provided.

11.0

External Grounds and Boundaries



Give observations noted to the external grounds and boundaries.

Our instruction did not include the undertaking of a boundary / folio check. It would be prudent to have a comparison made between the folio and the existing boundaries on the ground. This can be carried out by us by way of a separate instruction.

The property is presented on a large site with boundaries well defined and formed generally in masonry walls. These are concealed generally to the rear with extensive hedgerow and shrubs. Some of the trees are quite large and would benefit from pruning back. Boundaries are generally well defined.

Brick piers with large timber gates are provided to the front. The gates are excessively heavy for the piers and the pier to the right has partially broken up at the top. The piers would need to be strengthened (or a metal column placed within the piers) in order to accommodate the gates.

Temporary structures were not surveyed. A timber shed is provided, which is suffering from decay. Stored items with the shed should be removed by the vendor.

12.0 Planning Legislation

We have not been instructed to investigate and set out in detail the planning history of this property. Therefore, no planning search has been undertaken.

There is no evidence of any alterations having been made to the property which would have required Planning Permission.

Your solicitor should seek an opinion on compliance from the vendors.

13.0 Building Regulations

As is typical with buildings or alterations and extensions carried out since the introduction of Building Regulations on 1st June 1992, there has been poor attention to detail in terms of compliance with the regulations. As a result, of the system introduced at that time, which allowed 'self-certification' and the acceptance of 'substantial compliance', most buildings have many incidents of non-compliant works. Although we may have commented on issues of noncompliance in this report, we do not set out to highlight each and every individual occurrence and therefore issues may exist in the property but are not specifically commented on.

The statute under which the Building Regulations are made in Ireland is the Building Control Act 1990 introduced in 1992. Neither this Act, nor the Regulations themselves are applicable retrospectively. This avoids the need for constant improvement of properties to satisfy current standards.

It is important to note that the Building Regulations stipulate minimum standards, which must be achieved, but those standards have been improved upon at various intervals since first implemented. Without particulars, in terms of the date of Planning Permission, date of construction etc., it is difficult to comment on certain aspects of compliance with the regulations.

14.0

Conclusions & General Recommendations



Set out the surveyors considered opinion and any further investigations recommended before completion of the purchase.

The property is presented in good structural condition in general. Backlog maintenance work should be attended to and the property would benefit from redecoration. The following items should be noted in addition;

1. Ventilation should be improved to the attic.
2. A small amount of fire stopping is required within the attic.
3. Insulation should be tidied up to the water storage tanks.
4. The heating system should be serviced.
5. The Electrical distribution board should be checked by an electrician and the doorbell transformer upgraded.
6. Windows should be overhauled and low level glass should be covered with a safety film.
7. Internal doors require repair and ideally balustrading should be improved. Consideration should be given to improving the head height at the base of the staircase.
8. Floor sheeting on the upper floor needs to be resecured / screw fixed down to prevent noise.
9. The front boundary walls require repair.

There are many other items raised within the body of our report which are not listed here. This report should be read in full.

We trust that this is sufficient information in order to allow you to be fully informed as you proceed with your intended purchase of the property, however, should you have any queries with regard to the contents of this report, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Building Surveyor

Signed and dated by Surveyor.

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