BUILDING SURVEY REPORT ON

"The Chocolate Box",
The Street, Acle, Norfolk, NR13 3DY

PREPARED ON BEHALF OF

Acle Parish Council

DATE: 7th September 2020

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1 GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

1.1 Scope of Instructions

1.1.1 This building survey has been carried out in accordance with your instructions and our Terms of Engagement which are attached to the rear of this report. The inspection and report were undertaken by John Mansfield FRICS.

1.2 Client's Name and Address

1.2.1 Acle Parish Council, c/o Ms Pauline James, Parish Clerk, Beech Farm, 15 Marsh Road, Upton, NR13 6BP.

1.3 Address of Property

1.3.1 "The Chocolate Box, The Street, Acle, Norfolk, NR13 3DY.

1.4 Date of Inspection

1.4.1 We made our inspection on 7th September 2020.

1.5 Weather Conditions

1.5.1 At the time of our inspection the weather was fine and dry.

1.6 State of Occupation

1.6.1 The ground floor shop was occupied and trading. The ground and first floor offices were unoccupied with fully fitted carpets and floor coverings in some areas and some furniture remaining.

1.7 Tenure

1.7.1 We understand that you are purchasing the freehold subject to the lease of the newsagent.

1.8 Orientation

1.8.1 The front elevation facing The Street faces due east.

1.9 Limitations

1.9.1 We have not inspected those parts which were covered up, were concealed, were unexposed or inaccessible and are therefore unable to guarantee that such parts are free from defect. There is some furniture in the property and fixed floor coverings, as mentioned above.

1.9.2 We were not instructed to make arrangements for specialist surveys of the service installations (electrical wiring, plumbing, drains or intruder alarm). However, we have made brief comments about anything found to be apparently defective from a visual inspection.

1.9.3 We have not been instructed to organise a structural assessment or determine floor loadings, nor instructed to organise a Fire Risk Assessment, a Health and Safety Audit or an Access Audit to ascertain compliance with the Equality Act. We have not been instructed to undertake or organise an Environmental Survey.

1.9.4 This report is based on a visual inspection of the readily accessible areas of the property and has been undertaken from ground level only with the aid of binoculars. The purpose of the report is to highlight the general condition and standard of the property, including any principal defects. It is not intended to be an inventory of all minor defects or as a dilapidations appraisal report in connection with the shop tenant's lease (which we have not seen).

2 DESCRIPTION AND SITUATION

2.1 Description and Situation

2.1.1 The property comprises a ground floor lock-up shop trading as a newsagent's, which is let to a business tenant. The tenancy apparently includes the small yard at the rear of the building on which there are two sheds and an outside WC. In addition, there is a vacant ground floor office together with first floor offices which extend over the shop. At the southern end of the building there is a car parking space.

2.1.2 The property is situated amongst other mainly retail premises in The Street in the busy village of Acle. The city of Norwich is about thirteen miles to the east and the coastal town of Great Yarmouth about eight miles to the west.

3 ACCOMMODATION

3.1 Description

3.1.1 The shop premises, which are subject to the business tenancy comprise a sales area on the ground floor with a "behind counter" area, steps up to a lobby which leads into a basic kitchen with a door to an outside yard. In the yard there are two temporary store sheds and a brick outside WC.

3.1.2 The accommodation which is vacant consists of an entrance lobby at the southern end of the building with a staircase to the first floor and a store cupboard, together with a ground floor office off which there is a lobby and WC. At first floor level there is a landing with cloakroom/WC and three offices, two of which are intercommunicating. The southern office has a small adjoining cupboard/room used as a tea point. Outside, there is a car standing space.

4 CONSTRUCTION

4.1 The Roof

4.1.1 The main roof is pitched and covered with clay pantiles. At the southern end of the building there is a single storey modern addition which also has a pitched roof covered with interlocking concrete tiles adjacent to which is a small area of flat boarded and felted roof.

4.2 Walls

4.2.1 The walls of the original part of the building are of solid construction and of various thicknesses. The front and southern walls have been cement rendered and painted externally. The rear west-facing wall is of brick and flintwork and the northern wall is of red brickwork which has been coated with tar (and is barely visible because it is only

about 75mm away from the adjacent takeaway shop). The walls of the single storey addition at the southern end of the building are of modern brick and block construction.

4.3 Floors

4.3.1 The ground floor is of solid construction and the first floor is of timber.

4.4 Rainwater Fittings

4.4.1 There are plastic gutters of the box and half-round pattern and plastic and cast iron rainwater downpipes.

4.5 Windows

4.5.1 The windows are a combination of softwood casements, both single and double glazed and uPVC casements containing sealed unit double glazing.

5 CONDITION

5.1 Roof

5.1.1 The roof was inspected from ground level and from within the accessible areas of roof space. The ridge tiles at the apex of the roof are both old and modern and a mix of slightly different shapes. The cement mortar bedding is missing from beneath the ridge tile which abuts the northern side of the chimney and this should be re-bedded. At the southern end of the building there is a section of roof which is slightly higher than that to the north. Here, the ridge sags slightly, as does the front-facing roof slope which mirrors the slight deflection of the rafters beneath. The front-facing section of roof slope to the northern part of the roof is even and the clay pantiles to both parts are in generally satisfactory condition for their age.

5.1.2 The rear, west-facing roof slope intersects at the southern end with the roof over the single storey addition. At this end of the roof the roof slope sags slightly due to the deflection of the roof members beneath. Where this roof intersects with the modern concrete tiled roof of the modern single storey addition there are lead-lined valleys, one of which connects to a lead flashing between the roof and the west-facing wall. From the ground we observed no significant defects in the lead and we can report that both valleys are clear of silt and leaves.

5.1.3 The main west-facing slope (to the centre and north of the building) is longer than that to the east because it extends down over the single storey part of the building at the back of the shop. The roof slope is relatively even and the tiles are in generally satisfactory condition for their age. However, the north wall dog-legs slightly and the tiles have been laid to follow suit rather than cut to follow the contour of the wall. This means that almost all the tiles to the west-facing roof slope have been laid so that they are slightly out of alignment with varying overlaps. We lifted two tiles at the edge of the roof to reveal that they are lined with old reeds (rather than felt or a breathable membrane) but despite these points, we found no evidence to suggest that the roof is leaking.

5.1.4 At the northern end of the roof we were unable to get a clear view of the full length of the mortar verges, but the part that was visible has only a nominal overhang above the northern gable, which is not ideal as it is insufficient to throw any rainwater clear. At the southern end of the roof the gable extends up above roof level to form a low parapet and

this has been cement rendered with the rendering extending down to the tiles rather than there being a lead flashing. Cementwork has a tendency to shrink and crack, and for that reason lead weatherproofing is preferable. This southern end of the roof is separated from the northern end by a former party wall which extends up above roof level and, like the southern gable, is cement rendered. Once again, there are mortar fillets rather than lead flashings and the rendering has weathered and deteriorated. The modern single storey addition has a pitched roof covered with concrete tiles and a flat felted roof which extends over the two ground floor WCs. The roof slopes to this part of the roof are even and the concrete tiles are weathered but in adequate condition for their age.

5.1.5 The mineralised felt to the area of flat roof has "rucked" slightly, but otherwise we observed no significant defects in the felt. However, you should be aware that felt coverings to flat roofs have a limited life (sometimes not in excess of ten years) and once they do leak, the decking beneath can become damaged. At this time there is no sign of staining on the ceilings beneath this roof, but we suggest that you budget for re-felting in the short to medium term.

5.1.6 There is an entrance canopy roof above the southern external door which is covered with clay pantiles. There is a lead flashing but no gutters, and the roof is supported on timber gallows brackets. The roof appears weathertight and the timberwork is presently sound.

5.1.7 There are three separate roof access panels in the ceilings of the first floor rooms. This is because they allow access to three separate areas of roof space; the southern section of roof is separated from the northern section by a former party wall and the northern section is effectively divided in two by the chimney breast. The first floor ceilings are partly sloping, with the lower parts fixed to the underside of the roof members, which are consequently inaccessible. The roof space access panels are simply squares of panelling screwed to the underside of the ceiling, rather than there being conventional, properly formed access hatches. There is a fourth access to the single storey roof of the modern addition in the ground floor office. Here, a proper hatch has been formed and there is a loft ladder and light.

5.1.8 From within the southern section of roof space we were able to observe that the rafters include hewn timbers, and for some reason many of the rafters have been cut short and then extended with additional pieces of timber. This is probably why the rafters bow slightly. They have doubtless done so for many years, but reinforcement by the insertion of additional timbers would be prudent to take the additional load in the event of a heavy snowfall. Inevitably in a property of this age, there is evidence of timber infestation, most of which appears old, but we cannot rule out the possibility of active outbreaks. The tiles are lined with felt and we found no sign of rainwater penetration into this part of the roof space. The southern gable could be seen to be of brickwork which has been patched with mortar. There is a thickness of about 75mm of glassfibre insulation quilt on old lime plaster reed-backed ceilings. There is no effective crossflow ventilation of the roof space but we found no evidence of condensation problems. Nevertheless, when the roof insulation is improved to modern standards we recommend that some crossflow ventilation is provided.

5.1.9 From within the roof space above the centre first floor room we observed that the rafters and purlins are of sawn timber and therefore more modern than those in the southern part of the roof space. We found no sign of any significant deflection of the roof

members but the tiles are backed by old reeds which are in poor condition. In some areas they have been patched with felt, but we could see no sign of current leaks. Once again, there are signs of apparently old outbreaks of timber infestation in the roof members. In this area there is no roof insulation. The section of roof above the northern first floor room is similar in terms of construction and condition. There are some open joints to the brickwork of the northern gable which ideally should be re-pointed.

5.1.10 From within the roof space above the ground floor office we could see that the roof structure is of modern cut rafters and ceiling joists and that there are lateral restraint straps between these timbers and the gable peak. The tiles are lined with felt and we found no sign of rainwater penetration into this area of roof space or significant deflection of the visible roof members. However, there is no crossflow ventilation of this section of roof to help prevent condensation occurring in cold winter weather, but we observed no sign of condensation problems. Most of the floor of this area of roof space has been boarded out, but in the small section which is unboarded alongside the roof access hatch a thickness of about 100mm of glassfibre insulation quilt was visible. (Nowadays a thickness of at least 250mm is recommended).

5.1.11 In summary, the southern section of the main roof needs to have the roof members reinforced and the northern section (i.e., both sides of the chimney) needs to be stripped, to have the reeds removed and then the good tiles re-laid on a breathable membrane and any defective tiles replaced. Treatment for timber infestation should be undertaken and the roof insulation increased. Also, at the same time, defective cement rendering should be repaired and mortar fillets replaced with lead.

5.2 Chimney

5.2.1 There is a single brick chimney stack to the property constructed of red bricks and having a cement mortar fillet where the tiles meet the base of the chimney. We observed that there are cracks in the said mortar fillet which we recommend is replaced with a lead flashing when the roof is stripped and repaired. There is some loose and open-jointed brickwork at the base of the chimney which is in need of repair, and some damage to the brickwork has been caused by the TV aerial bracket. The aerial itself is leaning at a sharp angle and should be re-fixed. There is no chimney pot, and as this chimney is redundant, we recommend that it is capped to prevent rainwater driving down the redundant flue.

5.2.2 Within the roof space the chimney brickwork can only be inspected from a distance, as we were unable to get that far into the roof space. It is likely that upon close inspection the mortar between the bricks has softened and quite likely that the brickwork is damp. This is because old chimneys, unlike more modern chimney stacks, do not contain a damp proof course to prevent dampness which has soaked into the exterior of the chimney moving down by capillary action.

5.2.3 At first floor level the chimney breast is contained within the wall between the centre and northern rooms. Random damp meter tests taken into the chimney breasts produced negative results, indicating that it is presently dry. The chimney does not extend down into the shop beneath and therefore rests on the first floor. This raises the question of whether there is any reinforcement in the floor to take the load. In the shop there is a ceiling beam, but this by itself if probably insufficient to take the weight of the chimney

brickwork. There are various lengths of boxing beneath the shop ceiling which probably conceals RSJs and it is very likely that these were inserted when internal walls within the shop were taken out to provide a clear sales space. It may be that at that time some support was inserted into the floor to take the weight of the chimney, but we cannot be certain about that and therefore can only recommend that further investigation is undertaken which will involve the removal of part of the chipboard covering the first floor. In the event of the chimney being found to be inadequately supported, some steelwork may have to be inserted under the direction of an engineer or alternatively, the chimney and breast entirely removed.

5.3 Rainwater Fittings

5.3.1 As it was not raining at the time of our inspection we cannot comment on the efficiency of the rainwater fittings, although it is fair to say that we found no sign of any significant leaks. The long gutter above the roadside elevation discharges into a hopper head (which is chipped) at the top of a cast iron rainwater downpipe which passes into the ground at the eastern end of the southern elevation. Hopper heads invariably get blocked with leaves and silt which has to be cleared from time to time. The gutter beneath the west-facing roof slope connects to a downpipe close by the outside WC. The gutter to the flat roof above the WC is missing a stop end. The roof of the modern single storey addition has a gutter and downpipe discharging into a gully at the western end of the south elevation.

5.3.2 The long lengths of guttering beneath the east and west-facing roof slopes and the positioning of the downpipes might suggest that the gutters may be prone to overloading in storm conditions, but if this is the case, we found no evidence of that. The downpipes pass directly into the ground and therefore we assume that they connect to an inaccessible system of underground drains which might discharge into soakaways, or possibly connect into the main sewer. Old underground rainwater drains very often leak and the leaks can become closer to the building as the pipes gradually silt up over the years. Leaking underground drains are a common cause of structural movement in buildings and therefore we recommend that a precautionary test of the rainwater drains is undertaken by a drains specialist before you exchange contracts.

5.4 Walls

5.4.1 There was rubbish and old timber panelling leaning against the southern end of the west-facing wall, close by the outside WC. Also, as previously mentioned, the north-facing wall is only about 75mm from the adjacent building accommodating the takeaway food outlet.

5.4.2 The ends of old tie bars are visible at about first floor level in the roadside elevation. This elevation was originally constructed so that it dog-legs slightly towards the northern end and this gives the impression of structural movement. There has been some movement resulting in a slight bulge in the wall in the area of the tie bars, but the ties are old and we found no evidence of cracking or other recent movement in this area. In a building of this age and type it is not unusual for there to be signs of old general movement throughout the building, partly because of the nature and standard of construction and partly because the foundations are almost certainly shallower than

those in a more modern building. However, we found no sign of any significant recent movement.

5.4.3 The roadside elevation and that to the south of the building have been coated in a hard cement render. As is commonly the case, shrinkage cracks which occur from time to time in rendering of this type have been filled, and when struck with a blunt instrument, some areas of the rendering sound hollow, which suggests that they are not keyed to the wall behind. The rendering extends down to the ground. One of the problems associated with hard cement rendering is that it has a tendency to crack as it expands and contracts with temperature and rainwater can seep into those cracks and become trapped between the rendering and the wall behind. This can result in patches of penetrating dampness evident internally, which we can report is the case in this instance. Originally, render coatings to old buildings would have been of a soft, lime-based type, which allows rainwater to soak through it but is sufficiently porous to allow any dampness in the wall to evaporate through it in warmer weather. Needless to say, to remove this rendering and to replace it with a softer, more breathable rendering would be costly. As the rendering extends down to the ground, rather than being finished with a "render stop" above it, ground dampness can rise up through the rendering by capillary action, exacerbating rising dampness in the walls (which we identified internally). The south-facing wall of the modern single storey addition is rendered and painted, but here you will note that the rendering is stopped before it reaches ground level in accordance with good building practice.

5.4.4 It is evident that the building has been altered several times over the years. For example, a doorway in the roadside elevation has been blocked up, as has a window and door at the southern end of the building. To the west, patches of old red brickwork have been replaced with modern fletton bricks, possibly where there were doorways before. These alterations do nothing to improve the appearance of the building.

5.4.5 The west-facing wall is of single storey height and is of brick and flintwork. There are some areas of poor pointing and flaking bricks close to ground level, and some localised areas where the pointing to the flintwork is not in good condition. Brickwork inside the back door in the kitchen (where the walls are unplastered) has been damaged and deteriorated, and close by the outside of the door ivy is growing up the wall and has found its way into the interior beside the doorframe. The ivy should be removed, the brickwork repaired and the brickwork and flintwork repointed as necessary.

5.4.6 The north-facing wall cannot be examined properly because of the proximity of the neighbouring building. It is apparent that the brickwork has been coated with tar, presumably in an effort to make it watertight. Nowadays this is considered to be an unsatisfactory remedy, as it has a tendency to trap moisture into the wall rather than to let water evaporate from it.

5.4.7 The walls of the single storey addition are of modern brick and block "cavity" construction and we found no significant defects in these walls, although at ground level the west side of the building is above damp proof course level and ideally should be lowered to prevent the damp proof course being bridged.

5.5 Dampness and Timber Decay

5.5.1 Random damp meter tests taken internally at regular intervals throughout the accessible parts of the walls suggested that there are patches of rising dampness

throughout the ground floor of the building, and most notably in the sales area of the shop and the rear ancillary areas. There are patches of dampness in the outside walls of the first floor rooms and the north and south walls have been dry-lined internally. Buildings of this age were constructed without a damp proof course (the horizontal layer built into the walls of modern properties to prevent ground dampness from rising). The absence of an effective damp proof course is the reason that there is rising dampness in the walls of this building. The exception is the single storey modern addition. Bearing in mind that the walls are of modern cavity brick and block construction, it is likely that they contain a damp proof course, although this could not be identified, probably because it is contained within a mortar joint.

5.5.2 Rising dampness should be eliminated in accordance with the recommendations of a specialist firm, which will probably involve the insertion of a chemical injection damp proof course together with some internal replastering to a height of at least one metre. While the shop is still trading, that will be problematic. Penetrating dampness is more difficult to deal with. It is important to maintain the condition of the external rendering and to ensure that the gutters do not leak or overflow. The fact that the northern and southern wall of the first floor level have been lined internally suggests that the linings may have been installed to mask dampness. If that is the case, and if the linings are attached to timber battens, then the battens will be susceptible to decay. Obviously, this could not be ascertained without removing a section of the wall linings, which is beyond the scope of our inspection.

5.5.3 There is some timber decay in the external joinery, and we commented on apparently old outbreaks of timber infestation in the roof members. It is likely that any original floor members will be similarly affected. We did not identify any outbreaks of current wood-boring beetle activity but cannot rule out the possibility that this occurring or has occurred in concealed or inaccessible areas. The building is in need of a comprehensive scheme of repair and improvement and at that time we recommend that all the old roof and floor members are treated for timber infestation by a specialist firm under long term guarantee.

5.5.4 Where there are timbers in contact with damp external walls these will be susceptible to decay, and for that reason it is important to eliminate the dampness that we have mentioned.

5.6 Floors

5.6.1 In the kitchen to the rear of the shop the floor is of painted concrete and is damp because there is probably not a damp proof membrane contained within the floor structure. Elsewhere in the shop ancillary areas the floors are surfaced with old tiles which are dirty and worn and may contain asbestos. The floors registered positive with our damp meter, which seems to indicate that the concrete may have been laid directly on to the ground without a damp proof membrane beneath. We recommend that the tiles are tested to see if there is any asbestos content and then removed, at which time appropriate Health and Safety precautions should be undertaken. The floors should be damp proofed before laying new coverings.

5.6.2 In the entrance lobby to the offices and the understair cupboard the solid floor has a cement screeded finish. In the ground floor office the surface is of chipboard, which we suspect is laid on a concrete base because it feels firm underfoot (although it creaks

slightly). We could not thoroughly inspect the floor because it is covered by a fully fitted carpet, but we found no indication of any significant defects. At first floor level the floors are also covered with fully fitted carpets except in the cloakroom, where the floor is covered with vinyl sheet flooring and in the tea point area where it is surfaced with ceramic tiles. Ceramic tiles are rigid and ideally should not be laid on timber floors, which tend to flex slightly, but despite this we did not identify any damage to the tiles. The vinyl flooring is stained and there is minor wear to the carpets. We were able to lift a loose corner of carpet in one of the rooms, where we could see that the floor is of chipboard rather than old timber boards. We do not know whether the chipboard has been laid on to the old timber boarded surface or replaces it. The first floor is comparatively firm underfoot but noticeably uneven. This unevenness could be due to old general movement having occurred throughout the building and/or the first floor having settled slightly when the internal walls in the shop were removed and replaced by what we assume to be RSJs contained within the timber boxing below ceiling level. Where the roadside elevation bulges outward slightly we found no sign of a gap at the edge of the floor, although there is a gap of about 5mm to 8mm between the surface of the floor and part of the underside of the skirting. We would therefore conclude that the first floor was probably replaced after the movement had occurred in the roadside elevation and that since the floor was installed it has dropped very slightly as it settled on to the supports within the shop which replaced the original internal walls.

5.6.3 Earlier in the report we commented that the chimney does not extend down into the shop and therefore is supported at first floor level, probably by the floor itself. As previously recommended, the floor should be opened up to ensure that the chimney is adequately supported.

5.7 Joinery

5.7.1 As previously mentioned, there is some decay in the gutter boards. The old back door frame is weathered and there is timber decay and defective putties in the window close by the back door. There is also decay in the south-facing window to the ground floor office which contains sealed unit double glazing. Sealed units are often prone to failure when they are contained in timber rather than uPVC frames, but in this case we found no sign of misting of the panes to indicate that there has been premature failure of the seals.

5.7.2 There are some non-opening timber framed windows to the shop which are aging and weathered. These windows have been barred internally for security purposes. For the same reason, adhesive-backed paper or vinyl with printed advertising has been stuck to the window panes. The replacement of these windows would be an improvement.

5.7.3 The first floor windows are of the uPVC type containing sealed unit double glazing and when tested at random were found to open and close satisfactorily. The lower parts of two of the first floor windows are hinged and perhaps allow an opening which is just big enough for a person of small or average size to escape in the event of a fire. Nevertheless, consideration should be given to replacing at least one of the windows with a type allowing a wider opening. Once again, we found no sign of misting of the panes to indicate premature failure of the seals. We would add that the window in the southernmost first floor room is quite close to the level of the floor and at this level it is important that the glass is of the safety type to prevent somebody accidentally putting

their foot through it. We are uncertain that safety glass has, in fact, been used and recommend that this is checked by a glazier.

5.7.4 The front door to the shop is worn but operates adequately. It is single glazed and, once again, safety glass should have been used at the bottom of the door, but we are uncertain that this is the case and therefore it should be checked by a glazier. A metal shutter has been fitted outside the door and we did not operate it because there were customers coming in and out of the shop, but the salesperson assured us that it operates satisfactorily. The southern door to the offices is single glazed and opens and closes satisfactorily. Within the building the joinery in the offices at ground and first floor level shows the normal signs of wear and tear that one would expect in a property of this age. The staircase is firm underfoot and is adequately guarded. The treads have modern aluminium and rubber nosings. The cupboard in the northern first floor room has been poorly formed and consists of a frame with ill-fitting doors secured by pieces of timber rather than proper catches. The internal doors operate satisfactorily but consist of varying types and designs.

5.7.5 Very little internal joinery is apparent in the shop because the walls are covered with displays or shop fittings of one type or another. Ideally, the shop needs to be emptied, dampness eliminated, the plasterwork repaired and new skirtings and other joinery installed at that time.

5.8 Ceilings and Internal Walls

5.8.1 The ceiling in the outside WC has a textured decorative coating. Coatings of this type sometimes contain asbestos, but nevertheless are not regarded as hazardous so long as they remain in situ undamaged. In the kitchen part of the shop the painted surface of the board ceiling is peeling. In the adjacent lobby the whitening to the old lime plaster ceiling is also peeling. In the sales area of the shop the ceiling is in three sections and is partly of old uneven lime plaster, partly papered (possibly on plasterboard) and partly of painted board with timber fillets covering the joints. We cannot rule out the possibility that some of the ceiling boards are of a type that contains asbestos. We recommend that you obtain an Asbestos Report. In the ground floor office the ceiling is of plasterboard and at first floor level the uneven old lime plaster ceiling in the southern room bows significantly. In the other two main rooms the ceilings are relatively flat, which may be an indication that they are of plasterboard. In the tea point and cloakroom they are uneven and clearly of old lime plaster.

5.8.2 Old lime plaster is usually applied to timber laths (thin timber strips) or reeds. In this case we found reeds in the roof space. Lime plaster tends to deteriorate with age, eventually losing its key, necessitating repair or replacement. The unevenness we have mentioned is a consequence of the lime plaster having deteriorated due to age. The significant bow in the ceiling of the southernmost room is probably due to the fact that the ceiling joists are sagging slightly under the load and perhaps that a large part of the ceiling has lost its key. At present, the ceiling is firm to the touch but nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that eventually the ceiling, or part of it, will fall, and therefore we recommend that it is replaced.

5.8.3 As previously mentioned, the internal walls in the sales area of the shop have at some time in the past been removed. The remaining walls between the shop and ancillary

areas are of solid construction. The walls of the cupboard off the "behind counter area" have been lined internally, probably to mask dampness.

5.8.4 The internal walls at first floor level are a combination of solid walls and partitions of studwork construction. The internal doors generally open and close satisfactorily (sticking doors or twisted frames are often an indication of structural movement) and we found no sign of any significant defects in these walls and partitions. As mentioned earlier in this report, the southern external wall in the southern first floor room and the northern wall in the northern first floor room have been lined internally.

5.9 Plasterwork and Decorations

5.9.1 The walls of the kitchen at the back of the shop have not been plastered and the brickwork has been directly painted. The lower part of the northern wall in the kitchen has been lined and so have the walls of the cupboard behind the counter. Generally, the walls of the shop are difficult to access because of the displays, shop fittings and stock. Nevertheless, we were able to ascertain that the plasterwork in the shop and ancillary areas is in poor condition. In fact, an area of damp and defective plaster has entirely fallen away at low level between the windows to the east-facing elevation and is presently covered by black cloth which has been pinned into position. The shop is in urgent need of improvement.

5.9.2 In the offices the plasterwork and decorations are in generally better condition. As previously mentioned, some of the walls are lined and almost all the walls are covered with thick wallpaper, presumably applied to conceal imperfections which are inevitable in old lime plaster in properties of this age.

5.9.3 The external paintwork is in poor condition and complete repainting and redecorating will be necessary once the internal and external repairs we have recommended have been completed.

5.10 Outbuildings

5.10.1 The only permanent outbuilding is the outside WC, which is decoratively neglected but in otherwise reasonable condition. There are two pre-fabricated store sheds in the rear yard, but as these are temporary buildings they were excluded from our inspection.

5.11 Site

5.11.1 The ground level to the west of the building is above damp proof course level and should be lowered to prevent the damp proof course being bridged. Weeds and rubbish dumped in the rear yard should be removed. The southern boundary is defined by a concrete block boundary wall strengthened with brick piers. Some of the concrete copings on the top of the wall are loose and should be re-fixed because they could easily be dislodged and possibly cause injury. The neighbour's ground on the west side of the curtilage is several feet higher than the yard within the curtilage. The boundary is a concrete post and timber fence with a retaining wall beneath. The retaining wall is largely obscured by foliage, but so far as we were able to ascertain, does not contain weep holes to allow surface water to run through it, and thus reduce ground pressure on the neighbour's side of the wall. We recommend that the foliage is removed so that the wall can be properly examined. The northern boundary appears to be the southern extremity of the adjacent takeaway outlet. The timber fencing to the west is in

reasonable condition. The eastern part of the southern boundary is defined by flower boxes containing shrubs, some of which are dying.

6 SERVICES

6.1 General

6.1.1 Mains electricity, water and drainage are believed to be connected and there is a gas meter box attached to the southern elevation, although we suspect that gas is currently disconnected. No tests were undertaken on any of these installations, although we hope that the following comments, made as a result of our visual inspection, are of assistance. However, if you require more specific information we recommend that separate tests are undertaken by specialist trades.

6.2 Electrical Wiring

6.2.1 There is a modern consumer unit and residual current device contained within the southern first floor room and this appears to service the office accommodation. The label on this equipment indicates that it was last inspected in 2008, and should have been inspected in 2013. Generally, the electrical fittings within the offices appear modern, but as the system has obviously not been inspected for many years, we recommend that a precautionary test is undertaken by an NICEIC registered electrician before you exchange contracts. We were unable to gain access to the consumer unit in the shop which is contained in a low-level cupboard against the eastern wall and has sacks of animal food piled against it. We understand that the electrical supply to the shop is separate to the offices but once again would recommend a precautionary test by an NICEIC registered electrician before you exchange contracts.

6.3 Hot and Cold Water Supply

6.3.1 The water is directly from the rising main, with instant electric water heaters over the washbasins and sinks. We were unable to get any of the water heaters to function. A pipe to the water heater in the tea point has been severed so that when the tap beneath the heater is turned on water issues from the severed pipe.

6.4 Kitchen and Sanitary Fittings

6.4.1 Some of the sanitary fittings are stained and this particularly applies to the kitchen sink to the shop. Generally, the fittings have been neglected.

6.5 Space Heating

6.5.1 There are electric night storage heaters in the offices which were not in use at the time of the inspection. We have no reason to believe that they do not work other than satisfactorily, but nevertheless they should be included in the electrician's test. The shop has a single electric heater which is inadequate by present day standards.

6.6 Gas

6.6.1 There is a gas meter box attached to the outside of the southern external wall and although we had a key to the box, we were unable to open it because it has been painted shut. Gas pipes within the office accommodation have been capped off, and it seems likely that the gas meter has been removed, although this could not be confirmed

by inspection. Gas-fired heating systems are generally more efficient and economic than electric night storage heaters and it would be a worthwhile improvement to install more efficient heating. If this is what you are contemplating, we recommend that you contact the gas supplier before exchange of contracts to ascertain whether gas is available for reconnection and the cost of supplying it.

6.7 Drains

6.7.1 There are modern plastic foul water drainpipes in the roof space above the ground floor office. Outside the southern external door is an inspection chamber which is of the pre-fabricated plastic type. The channels within the chamber were clear, although there was waste matter on the benching which suggests that there has been a blockage in the past. The outfall drain runs towards the road, where it seems likely that it connects to the main sewer. We have no reason to believe that the foul water drains are defective, but have recommended that the surface water drains be tested. Therefore, it would seem prudent to have both foul and surface water drains tested at the same time.

6.8 Intruder Alarm

6.8.1 We did not test the intruder alarm in the shop and do not know whether this is a tenant's fixture or fitting. If it is part of the building, the tenant should be asked to produce the service record.

7 SUMMARY

7.1 General Summary

7.1.1 This building has been neglected for many years, and this particularly applies to the shop, which is in need of a comprehensive scheme of repair and improvement which will be difficult to achieve while the shop is trading. Before exchange of contracts the electrical wiring should be tested by an NICEIC registered electrician and also as a precautionary measure the drains should be tested by a specialist. We have commented on and recommended further investigation of the means of support of the chimney at first floor level, which ideally should be undertaken before exchange of contracts just in case expensive remedial works are necessary.

7.1.2 Your legal advisors should advise you as to the ownership of the boundary walls and fences and the responsibility for maintenance. They should also ask the tenant's solicitors whether they have an Asbestos Report and service documentation for the intruder alarm, as well as up-to-date electrical report for the electrical system which is within the demise. As this is a commercial building there should be an Asbestos Report, and a copy should be obtained in order to ascertain, for example, whether some ceiling boarding and floor tiles contain asbestos or there is asbestos in other parts of the building. In any event, such a report will be required in order to comply with Asbestos Regulations. The tenant should also be asked to produce a Fire Risk Assessment and documentation for the testing of the intruder alarm (assuming that this does not belong to the tenant). A Fire Risk Assessment will also be necessary for the offices once a tenant has been found and the number of people likely to be using the building is known.

7.1.3 Works that are in need of immediate attention are the stripping and lining of the roof tiles, together with treatment for timber infestation, improvement of the ventilation

(which should be achieved by using a breathable membrane rather than roofing felt) and the upgrading of the roof insulation to comply with Building Regulations. Rising dampness should be eliminated by a specialist firm under long term guarantee and this will necessitate some internal replastering and consequential redecorating. Rotten gutter boards and windows will need to be repaired and/or replaced and the external paintwork renewed. The hard external cement rendering should ideally be replaced with a softer, breathable render which should not extend down to ground level. As far as possible, penetrating dampness in the first floor external walls should be eliminated (but in an old building with solid walls that is difficult) and the areas of the north and south walls behind the wall linings and also in the cupboard in the "behind counter area" should be opened up to ascertain the condition of the walls behind the linings and the condition of the fixings. The floors in the shop should be damp proofed. The brickwork to the west wall needs re-pointing and the brickwork inside and outside the back door needs repairing and the ivy removing. As the concrete copings to the boundary wall are loose and a hazard, they should be re-fixed as soon as possible.

7.1.4 Works for the medium term will include the re-felting of the flat roof and the upgrading of the plumbing and heating systems. We have not seen the lease relating to the shop and do not know the repairing liability of the tenant. However, we suspect that the tenant may be of limited means and as the shop area is in poor condition with damp walls and defective plaster, poor decorations, differing ceiling types and has unplastered walls in the kitchen, you may wish to consider upgrading the shop at your own expense to maintain the condition and the value of the building. Ordinarily, the re-pointing of the chimney and the replacement of the mortar fillets at roof level with lead weatherproofing that could wait, but inevitably these works will be undertaken during the course of the roof repairs.

7.1.5 In the longer term, you may wish to consider upgrading the first floor office accommodation, installing up-to-date lighting and an efficient heating system.

7.1.6 In view of the extent of work that is necessary to put this building into repair and to upgrade the shop, it is difficult to recommend that it is phased over a period of time. Inevitably, there will be much disruption when the roof is stripped and lined and damp proofing works carried out, and this would therefore seem an appropriate time to give the building a complete overhaul, particularly if the business tenant is prepared to close for a period of time. Ultimately, the cost of the work may be cheaper if it is carried out in a single operation rather than phased over a longer period.

8 APPENDIX

8.1 Terms of Engagement

Signed: .....
John Mansfield FRICS

Date: 7th September 2020

BUILDING SURVEY TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

(Commercial Buildings)

1 THE SERVICE

1.1 Based on an inspection as described below the Surveyor, who will be a Chartered Surveyor, will provide in an appropriate reporting format as agreed with the Client:

1.2 A detailed report describing the condition of the property, identifying apparent defects and repairs necessary at the time of the inspection, together with future requirements for maintenance. It will also refer to readily apparent potential hazards;

1.3 A description of the property and other factors likely materially to affect its value:

1.4 The report will not purport to express an opinion about or to advise upon the condition of uninspected parts and should not be taken as making any implied representation or statement about such parts; nor will it mention minor defects which the Surveyor considers do not materially affect the value of the property. If the report does refer to some minor defects this does not imply that the property is free from other such defects.

1.5 The report is provided for the sole use of the named Clients and is confidential to them and their professional advisers. No responsibility is accepted to others.

1.6 In preparing the report the Surveyor will exercise the skill and diligence reasonably to be expected from a Surveyor competent to advise on the property.

1.7 The report will not identify the existence of contamination in or from the ground, as this can only be established by other specialists.

2 THE INSPECTION

2.1 The Main Building: The Surveyor will inspect as much of the surface area, both internally and externally, of the property as is practicable and will lift loose floor boards and trap doors where accessible and where reasonable to do so, without causing damage to the property or furnishings, and where necessary with the consent of the vendor. The Surveyor will not lift floor coverings, move heavy furnishings or remove fixtures or fittings to facilitate the inspection.

2.1.1 The roof and upper areas will be inspected from vantage points accessible from a 3 metre ladder. With particularly tall buildings some roofs, chimneys or flue pipes might not be accessible with safety and without undue difficulty and these will be inspected from ground level or from a nearby available vantage point, with due regard to safety. Roof voids will be inspected assuming suitable access points are available, but insulating material and any items stored therein will not be moved.

2.1.2 No comments can be made upon the practicality of using chimneys and it is not generally possible to report on the condition of flues or the presence of flue liners.

2.1.3 Except where the contrary is stated, parts of the structure and of the woodwork which are covered, unexposed or not readily accessible with safety and without undue difficulty, will not be inspected and it is, of course, impossible to inspect every part of every timber. The report will not purport to express an opinion or to advise upon the condition of uninspected parts and should not be taken as making any implied representation or statement about those parts.

Wherever possible the building will be inspected for evidence of structural movement or foundation defects, but no excavations will be made to establish or examine the nature of those foundations. Theoretical calculations to check sizes and/or adequacy of structural elements will not be made.

2.2 Services and Electro-Mechanical Equipment: The Surveyor will provide an overall impression of the services but any electro-mechanical equipment will not be inspected. No tests will be undertaken unless specific written instructions are given by the Client. Such tests will usually involve an additional charge.

2.3 Ancillary Buildings and Leisure Facilities: General comments only will be made on ancillary buildings and leisure facilities (if any).

2.4 Boundary Structures (walls, fences, gates, etc) will be inspected only from within the boundaries of the property and to the extent necessary to establish their stability. Comments will be made regarding any potential liability in respect of boundaries.

2.5 Site: The Surveyor will report on the existence of any trees where these are likely to materially affect the stability of the property and where these present an insurance risk. Car parking and open areas (such as landscaping) will be visually inspected only with a view to ascertaining their overall condition.

3 THE REPORT

3.1 If it is suspected that hidden defects exist which could have a material effect on the value of the property, the Surveyor will so advise and recommend more extensive investigation prior to entering into a legal commitment to purchase.

3.2 If it is not reasonably possible to carry out any substantial part of the inspection (see Section 2 above) this will be stated.

3.3 Any obvious evidence of serious disrepair or potential hazard to the property will be reported, as will any other matters apparent from the inspection which are likely to materially affect the value.

3.4 Where the Surveyor relies on information provided, this will be indicated in the report, with the source of the information.

3.5 The report will state the existence of any apparently recent significant alterations and extensions so as to alert legal advisers.

3.6 Where the apparent sharing of drives, paths or other areas might affect the value of the property, the Surveyor will so report.

3.7 The report will not be a report on asbestos to comply with the Asbestos Regulations.

4 CHARGES

4.1 The Client will pay the Surveyor the fee agreed in writing for the report and expressly agreed disbursements within 28 days of the invoice date. Interest will be charged at the rate 1½% per month on outstanding accounts.

4.2 Before agreeing the fee the Client is expected to give a fair indication of what is to be inspected and in the event of the inspection being substantially more extensive than described by the Client, the Surveyor shall be entitled to an additional reasonable fee.

4.3 Where fees for surveys are paid in advance, they will be paid straight into Brown & Co's office account and will not therefore be covered by the RICS client money protection scheme.

5 COMPLAINTS

5.1 The firm operates a complaints handling procedure a copy of which is available from any of our offices. If you are dissatisfied with any aspect of our handling of your complaint, you may wish to refer to: (for consumer clients) The Ombudsman Services: Property at PO Box 1021, Warrington WA4 9FE – www.ombudsman-services.org – 0330 4401634; or (for business clients) The Neutral Evaluation Procedure for Surveying Disputes at IDRS Limited, 70 Fleet Street, London EC4Y 1EU – www.idrs.ltd.uk – tel 0207 520 3800

6 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

6.1 We are required by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors to ensure that the acceptance of an instruction does not lead to a conflict of interests on our part. Should any potential conflict arise we are required to inform you and offer you the opportunity to seek separate independent advice. We can only continue to undertake the instruction if all parties are satisfied that notwithstanding any potential conflict, we will at all times continue to act in your best interests. There may however be times when we cannot continue to undertake the instruction, where for instance the interests of an existing client might be prejudiced were we to do so.

6.2 In the event of any potential conflict arising, our policy is to refer the matter to the Senior Partner of Brown & Co, whose responsibility it is to manage such conflict of interests to a satisfactory conclusion. Further details are available on request.

7 PUBLICITY & DATA PROTECTON

7.1 In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, we must inform you that Brown & Co_intends to process data relating to our clients for the purposes of both performing the contract and marketing our services. If you have any objection to this, please let us know.

8 PAPERS AND DOCUMENTS

8.1 We store files and papers for clients, normally without charge. We also do not normally charge for retrieving stored papers or files in response to continuing or new instructions to act for you. However, we reserve the right to make a charge based on the cost incurred and time we spend on reading papers, writing letters or other work necessary to comply with the instructions.

8.2 On completion of a matter and payment of any outstanding accounts we shall return to you, if you so request, any documents lent to us by you for the purpose of the matter. We do not undertake to retain files for any particular period of time but generally keep all files for a minimum period of 15 years. We reserve the right to destroy files without further reference to you 15 years after completion of a matter.

9 COMMUNICATION BY E-MAIL

9.1 As with most organisations, we are seeing an increase in the use of e-mail as a means of communicating with our clients. All e-mail messages sent to us will, if properly addressed, arrive on the terminal of the person to whom they are addressed. However we advise that you take note of the following points:

- internet messages may not be as instantaneous as a telephone call or fax message;
- it is not possible to implement easily across the internet a system of monitoring when a message has been read;
- the confidentiality of e-mail sent via the internet cannot be guaranteed.

10 DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1995

10.1 As part of our compliance with the above, if you need to visit us and if you think there might be circumstances giving rise to difficulties of access to or within our offices please let us know and we shall be happy to discuss mutually convenient alternative arrangements such as meeting you at your office or home.

Brown & Co - Property & Business Consultants LLP