



Evergreen Home Inspection Services

P. O. Box 45, Haverhill, Ma. 01831
978/373-1390 Fax 978/373-2228

Certified Member ##000792
American Society of Home Inspectors®

Building Inspection Report

Prepared For: XXXXXXXXXXXXX

Cell phone -----

Home phone -----

E-mail address: -----

Inspection Address: -----

Inspection Date: 11/8/2002 Time: 9:00
am

#Rooms: 8 Approximate Age: 152

SAMPLE REPORT

The below report, done on an antique home with multiple problems, shows how a written report can more clearly describe the conditions on a home and provide more useful advice and recommendations than a checklist type report.

(Given the condition of the home, the client walked on this home and purchased an antique home in better condition).

Nature of the home inspection - Please read

The report contained herein is CONFIDENTIAL and is given solely for the use and benefit of the client, and is not intended to be for benefit of or relied upon by any other buyer, lender, title insurance company, or other third party. Terms and conditions crucial to the interpretation of the report are contained in the below sections and in a separate Inspection Agreement. This report conforms to the Standards of the American Society of Home Inspectors, Inc. (ASHI).

Important: this is a limited, visual inspection of the apparent condition of the home on the day of the inspection. Many potentially important components, systems, and concerns are not covered in this inspection or report, even if discussed verbally at the inspection. Please the read this report carefully, plus the Standards, the Report Supplement,, and the contract to understand the limitations of this inspection. Call our office if you have questions.

As noted, the report conforms to the standards of the American Society of Home Inspectors®. Components are identified and their apparent condition is reported. There is no requirement for any defect to be repaired by the seller prior to the closing - but neither is there any absolutes on what can be asked in terms of repairs or allowances.

The report and inspection make no representation as to the advisability or non-advisability of purchase.

To Get the Most from the Report

1. Read the Report Supplement as this is part of the inspection report. Many routine and low-risk cautions or routine defects and conditions are discussed in the Supplement. Also read any additional materials provided as these contain both safety and maintenance information relevant to the home.
2. If you did not attend the inspection you would have received only a portion of its value. Consider having a post-inspection consultation with the inspector at the site. Also, it can sometimes be difficult to understand the condition of the home simply by looking at the inspection report. Please contact the inspection company for a discussion of the report if you have any questions.
3. The inspection does not provide cost estimates - other than 'ballpark' estimates provided verbally at the inspection. It is important to understand that costs can vary widely depending on: the repair option you chose (which may often include upgrades), whether you do the work or have it done at a reasonable or full cost, and the further problems that may arise once repairs are underway. We recommend that you bring out contractors or specialists to provide cost estimates on any item, large or small, that you are concerned about or plan to ask for an allowance on.
4. Very often the inspection cannot determine the degree of damages present. Reports document the observations of the inspector on the day of the inspection, plus an analysis as to the likely severity of the problem. Follow-up on this report by the appropriate specialist or contractor is necessary for all inconclusive observations or potentially major deficiencies observed.
5. Reports consist of the "*identification*" of the inspection components and the "*observations*" made on these items. These sets of observations are the formal aspect of inspection reports. "Comment" sections are designed to help you put the problems in perspective and to offer helpful advice and information. Importantly, the "comments" consist of my *opinion* as the likely degree of damages (where the evidence points in one direction), the *urgency* behind repairs, as well *recommendations or options* for dealing with the conditions found. Please note that for many of the systems and components inspected only the observed condition of the item will be noted in the report.

Conditions During the Inspection

The weather was cool and sunny

The temperature was around 50 degrees.

Recent weather has been dry today, rain on the previous day(s).

The soil was damp.

Present during the inspection: the buyers, one of the owners, and the buyer's agent

ROOF SURFACES

Location1: main

The home has a gable roof surface.

The main (front) roof is surfaced with asphalt strip shingles. Its age was estimated to be around twenty years old.

The roof was examined by walking the roof.

Observations and Recommendations

The main roof has an asphalt strip shingle covering. The roof shingles evidence of aging, but showed no significant wear, cracking, deformations, or other distress. The roof appears to be aging normally. The shingles were reported to be roughly 20 years old.

IMPORTANT: the main roof showed damage along the left back side. The roof edge has collapsed into the cladding. The cladding has pulled away and was full of leaf debris. The evidence would indicate damage to the roof sheathing along this section. Comment: needs to be 'opened up' and fully examined by a qualified carpenter or roofer.

IMPORTANT: the shingles on the rear ell appear to be very aged. They were worn and pitted and are starting to break down. Comment: the roof is at the end of its useful life and is due for replacement.

Notes and Maintenance

The report is not intended to be conclusive regarding the life span of the roofing system or how long it will remain watertight in the future. The inspection and report are based on visible and apparent conditions at the time of the inspection. Conclusions made by the inspector do not constitute a warranty, guaranty, or policy of insurance. Advice: leaks that occur are often due to worn flashings or wind-blown rain. Ice damming may be cause leakage during the winter months. These are not reasons to replace the roof surface.

See the Report Supplement for information on roof longevity and conditions observed. Shingles that show edge deterioration, a slight to moderate loss of granulation, cupping, or slightly curled edges indicate shingles that are aging - but these conditions, in themselves do not cause roof 'failure'. Most roofs fail by "slot wear", where the shingles wear out between the tabs. Shingles that are extensively cracked, or severely cupped, brittle, or deteriorated also indicate the need for replacement.

Chimney(s), Flashings, Roof Penetrations

Chimneys

Location#1: middle, brick

See the Interior section for comments on fireplaces, flues, and wood stoves.

Observations and Recommendations

**The brick chimney showed eroded mortar but no extreme deterioration above the roof line. Rain caps are desirable for the top of the chimney. The chimney showed a weeping of coal tars and creosote in the attic. The flues were not visible. Comment: have the flues examined by a chimney sweep.

Notes and Maintenance

General Note: the '**crown's** (caps) on masonry chimneys usually cannot be viewed unless the roof was fully walked. Most crowns will show cracks and moderate deterioration unless they have been renewed by a chimney sweep in recent years. Anticipate the need to do this. If replacing the crown, flexible concrete products are preferable and use an appropriate elastomeric caulk to seal between the crown the flue. Rain

caps are desirable as they prevent rain and vermin intrusion down the chimney. See the comments in the Report Supplement.

Roof penetrations, including cast iron vent stacks, skylights, and chimney flashings are prone to leakage. Some authorities have estimated that ninety percent of all skylights may leak at some time if the right weather condition occurs. Do not confuse flashing leaks with leakage from the roof surface. The flashings on both chimneys and vent stacks are often sealed with tar. While not the optimal sealing method, asphalt can prevent leaks. Tars do wear out, however, and need renewal every few years. Re-flashing is often desirable just prior to roof surface replacement. If skylights are present have an 'ice and water shield' membrane installed around the flashings as this may help prevent ice damming type leaks.

Important: while we do try to look up fireplace openings, the home inspection does not include an **inspection of chimney flues**. This requires specialized equipment and procedures and often involves cleaning the flue first and possibly disconnecting wood or other usages. Please consider having a chimney sweep examine the chimney to rule out defects. Do this within contingency periods for maximum assurance. Even when the flues can be seen from below, cracks beneath soot will not be visible, and possible gaps in the mortar behind the mantel will not be visible to the inspector.

Chimney flashings are seldom perfectly installed and many rudimentary flashings appear to work fine. All flashings may leak under the right weather conditions. A lot depends on the orientation of the flashings to wind-driven rain. Much of the time, what is believed to be flashing leaks may be leaks due to water penetrating through the cap or brickwork. It is normal to be able to see light through flashings. Very often the flashings have been tarred. This is not optimal but it can be effective at sealing leaking flashings and will often suffice until future roof resurfacing when flashing repairs are best done. Tars wear out, however, and need to be renewed. See the comments in the Supplement also.

Fascias, Soffits, Rakes, Valley Flashings

The fascias, soffits, and rakes are clad.

Observations and Recommendations

The soffits and fascia showed no visible deficiencies other than the damage at the back left side.

Notes and Maintenance

The condition of **fascia boards** behind gutters may not be determined.

The bottom edges of **rake trim** (which runs along the gable ends of the home from the eave to the ridge) often shows decay or incipient decay. Ten to thirty year old homes often show decay on rake trim. To prevent decay apply a wood preservative to the exposed end grain and other sections prior to painting.

Gutters, Downspouts/Roof Drainage System

Gutters were present on most of the eaves.

Observations and Recommendations

The gutter on the right side was functional but showed numerous seams. Only one downspout was present. Comment: functional but not optimal.

The downspouts discharged water away from the foundation. Comment: make sure you check these yearly as downspouts that become disconnected can cause water penetrations into the basement.

Notes and Maintenance Tips

Gutters are desirable if: the basement is prone to water problems; or, if splashback from roof water is occurring onto masonry landings or back onto the siding or trim. See the comments in the Supplement also.

If gutters are not going to be installed:

- a. Roof water coming off of the eaves should ideally fall onto masonry blocks angled to direct water away from the home or onto a stone bed. Bark mulch will just wash out.
- b. The grade should slope continuously away from the foundation. No low spots should be present.
- c. V-strip or other deflector flashings should be installed on the roof over landings, decks, and stairs to prevent roof water from cascading down onto these areas.

Gutter maintenance:

All gutters with overhanging trees need to have the leaf and other debris cleaned out. A blocked gutter is worse than no gutter at all. This must often be done twice a year if the overhanging trees release seeds in the spring.

Downspouts should discharge the roof water at least several and ideally 6-8 feet away from the home. Install splash blocks or sections of PVC pipe to discharge the water away. Splash blocks and downspouts typically become displaced and will need resetting yearly.

Downspouts may discharge into pipes that lead to a drywell or an outfall. The location and drainage capacity of these components is not determined. Ask the owner if they know where the drywells are located. Drywells may eventually clog up and will either need to be cleaned out or the downspouts redirected to discharge water away from the foundation.

Grading and Drainage Near the House

IMPORTANT: the siding and sills had minimal clearance to the grade along the back of the right side. Along the back side, the patio was installed above the level of the sills. This has led to extensive damage to the sills and band joists along these sections. Comment: see the Basement section also.

Recommendations: keep the soil pulled back away from the home. Eliminate splashback, if occurring, by installing and maintaining gutters. If minimal clearances are a necessity, install gravel or stone next to the foundation and leave a couple of inches of clearance. Do not pile bark mulch against the home (and check after landscapers have installed new mulch).

Low spots were present adjacent to the foundation at the left side. Comment: build up the grade close the house - taking care to leave at least eight inches clearance between the grade and the siding - and lower the grade slightly away from the foundation, in order to promote better drainage away from the home. Where the home has limited clearance to the grade, it is sometimes necessary or desirable to lay a pressure treated timber a couple feet away from the foundation to hold the earth back from the siding. A stone bed can then be installed adjacent to the foundation.

Notes and Maintenance

Proper grading is important to keep water away from the foundation. Soil should slope away from the building to prevent problems caused by excess water. Also see the Gutter Section.

Limitation: The grading and drainage are inspected only insofar as they affect the home. Drainage conditions away from the home are not part of the inspection. We recommend that you take note of deficient drainage conditions elsewhere on the property

Siding, Trim, Exterior Windows, Paint

Description

The predominate siding on the home is aluminum .

The trim on the house is primarily a combination of wood and claddings.

Observations and Recommendations

The home has an aluminum siding. The siding was largely intact.

*Damaged or loose sections were present at the right side.

*The siding lacked ground connections at the corners. Comment: these are desirable to prevent the siding from becoming 'energized' by errant electricity or lightning. This can consist of ground rods in the earth, with wires running to clamps on the siding.

Note: aluminum siding is durable but is subject to damage if banged into. It is difficult to duplicate many of the older aluminum sidings if pieces must be replaced. This type of siding can be painted.

**The siding will need to be cut back to do the sill replacements on the back ell. The siding may be difficult to restore in a proper manner.

*The paint on the windows and window trim showed extensive peeling.

Notes and Maintenance

Decay. Exposed window sills, casings, and other wood trim on the exterior is prone to decay unless well detailed and properly maintained. Most wood trim is not decay resistant wood such as would be found on cedar sidings. Sidings are also vertical and, excepting where they meet the ground or horizontal surfaces, are less prone to decay. Older homes with possible lead paint coatings on the exterior are less prone to decay than wood on newer homes. The wood used for windows and trim over the last 30 years has little decay resistance and decay may often be found after just a few years. This is especially true of wood bay windows.

To prevent decay, use a paintable wood preservative prior to painting. This is critical. Paint trim and exterior woodwork more often than siding.

For superficial decay, the use of epoxy consolidants and fillers (as well as wood preservatives) can often prevent or forestall larger repairs and, when painted over, will often provide the same look as the original wood.

Limitation: water seeping through small cracks or small openings in flashings may cause damage where the extent of the problem will not be visible to the inspector. The same is true of weather-checks on windows, which can allow water to flow in and cause decay, while the sill appears to be intact.

Decks, Porches, Entryways, Stairs

Entryway#1: front

Entryway#2: back side

Observations and Recommendations

The front entryway has brick steps and landing with a concrete infill surface, IMPORTANT: the stairs and landing were deteriorated. The mortar joints were open and many sections have been recently sealed. Sections have loosened and the structure was generally deteriorated. Comment: a removal of the structure will be desirable.

**The walkway slopes down to the lower stairs. The lower stairs were also deteriorated.

Notes and Maintenance

Properly treated and installed **pressure treated wood** will not decay. The pressure treated lumber used as deck/stair flooring, however, will weather, cup, and become splintery with age and the effects of the sun. To minimize these conditions we recommend using a deck finish designed for pressure treated wood. Wood sealers can also be used. Warning: this type of flooring can be splintery so do not walk on with bare feet.

Optimal handrails for decks should be at least 36 inches high and locally enforced codes may require higher railings. Railings may not be required for decks or stoops that are not high off of the ground (30 inches in some areas). Older decks, landings, and stairs may not have railings that conform to today's standards. If not, upgrading these for safety reasons will be highly desirable. In addition, current standards call for railings that do not allow a sphere 4 inches or greater to pass through. Almost all 'older' decks, stairs, and porches have wider spaces. See the Supplement for further information.

Stair safety. Almost all stairs will be slippery under the right conditions. To maximize safety: 1. Remove ice and snow but do not use salt on masonry as it will cause them to disintegrate. Use salt substitutes instead. 2. Remove mildew occasionally with a bleach solution. 3. Fix or upgrade handrails as noted in the Supplement. 4. If painting, use pumice or special non-slip additives. 5. Consider installing special safety tiles or other non-slip coverings. 5. In some cases, avoid using at risk stairs during inclement conditions.

Exterior Foundation/Casement Windows/Bulkhead

Observations and Recommendations

*The bulkhead showed extensive rusting. Comment: apply a rust-inhibitive paint on the interior and exterior to prevent immediate rust-out and to forestall replacement. (This can be a metal-based or an oil-based paint) Any existing rust spots should be sanded out and the area primed prior to painting.

*The bulkhead partition door at the basement had a decayed frame and was very loose.

*The bulkhead has been subject to water seepage.

Notes and Maintenance

Basement windows Maintain clearance between the ground and the sills of casement windows. In many homes the window sills lack clearance; a degree of decay on older units is typical and is usually not critical as long as conditions are stabilized. Installing a stone bed outside the windows, very often with timber or metal window wells, will often be desirable.

Bulkheads. Metal bulkheads should be painted to prevent rust out. The red color one typically sees is just a factory prime. Existing rust spots should be sanded out prior to repainting. Also, periodically remove leaf debris from the top flange as this will also promote rust-through. If the ground is level with (or higher) than

the base of the metal cover, lower the grade and install a stone bed around the foundation. Most bulkheads allow at least minor water seepage at the seam where it meets the house.

Trees and Vegetation

**The large maple tree at the back yard showed extensive distress. Comment; needs removal prior to the tree coming down.

Notes and Maintenance

Keep **branches** cut back so that they are not close to the roof or siding. Also keep bushes trimmed so that clearance exists and air flows can keep the siding dry and mildew-free. Ideally maintain a foot or more clearance - but more is better than none.

Limitation: Trees and vegetation are inspected only insofar as they affect the home. Large trees that overhang or are near the home are not listed as a defect unless the branches are growing against the roof or siding.

Driveway and walkways

The driveway is asphalt.. The main walkway is asphalt.

Observations and Recommendations

The driveway was 'functional' for vehicle use but is in 'rough' condition, with cracks and uneven sections.

The walkway at the front entryway slopes down to the lower steps. Comment; not desirable from a safety standpoint.

Limitation: The driveway and walkways are inspected only insofar as they affect the home. Most 'older' (10+ year) driveways will show cracks, edge break-up, and low spots. Many driveways are in 'rough' condition, with extensive heaving, break-up, etc. The condition of the driveway is obvious and you should take note of this. Older, worn, and cracked driveways are still "functional" for vehicle use - although they may not meet your standards.

Asphalt driveways may show raised spots. These are usually 'rising stones'. The only cure is to dig out the stones and fill the holes with crushed stone and a cold patch asphalt mix. Low spots that pond have no easy solution except to fill them in. Driveways with ruts, numerous low or uneven sections, and deteriorated asphalt are best dealt with by repaving. Steep, difficult, or deteriorated driveways may be a significant concern - but these conditions are subject to a non-professional evaluation so it is up to the buyer to evaluate these conditions as well as possible repair measures.

Retaining Walls/Yard/Fences

Description/location:

Note: Fences and retaining walls are not mandated for inspection. Comments are optional. Smaller, remote, or obviously deficient fences will not be commented on.

Observations and Recommendations

*Abandoned materials were present in the yard.

The fence was deteriorated and was not inspected.

General Comments

Many **walls** will show a slight to moderate tilt. No absolute prognosis can be provided on when these walls may progress to a point where they need to be rebuilt. The newer the wall the greater the uncertainty.

Timber retaining walls and landscaping ties are popular but these all rot out unless pressure treated (which most aren't). If replacing use pressure treated wood or masonry.

Note: retaining walls are mandated for **inspection** only insofar as they affect the home.

Note: the presence of **debris or abandoned materials** will not be noted in the report. It is normally desirable to have the current owner remove debris and abandoned goods from the property.

Garage/Barn

Description/location: back side

The garage doors are wood.

An automatic opener is present on one of the doors.

The garage was largely accessible - but stored items prevent viewing much of the interior.

Observations and Recommendations

The barn has an asphalt shingle roof surface.

IMPORTANT: the roof shingles are extremely aged and deteriorated. The roof shingles have worn through and the roof sheathing was deteriorated on the left side. Extensive leakage is occurring along the left side.

Comment: the roof surfaces need immediate replacement.

*The batten on board siding showed damaged sections on the left side but was overall functional. The base of the siding showed decay where it ran into the ground.

The foundation on the left side was concealed. The foundation along the back side showed no significant distress.

IMPORTANT: the entire right side structure, attached to the main barn structure, showed numerous and serious deficiencies. As a partial list: the rafters were spliced in the middle and many have collapsed; the roof has been leaking extensively; the wall structure showed evidence of massive damage; the floor slab was heaved and cracks, with perimeter sections sunk roughly eight inches below the rest of the slab.

Comment; this is not a viable structure. A removal will be necessary. A further inspection by a contractor could be done.

IMPORTANT: the post and beam structure was largely intact. The right to left beams supporting the second floor were dropping down. The front side lacked support and it appears that a post may have been removed. The rear post runs below the wood floor and has settled. Comment; proper support for the beams is needed.

IMPORTANT; the crawlspace under the first floor was not visible or accessible. Comment; this space should be accessed and the structure inspected for damage and other problems.

IMPORTANT: the barn and shed were full of abandoned goods and debris. Comment: these need to be removed.

**The overhead doors were difficult to open and, at the minimum, need repairs to the springs and hardware. The automatic door opener was not tested. Comment; this should be disconnected until the operation of the safety mechanisms are verified.

IMPORTANT: the wiring in the barn showed numerous deficiencies, including safety hazards. Comment; the wiring to the barn should be disconnected at the house. Rewiring will be needed.

Notes and Maintenance

Garage door safety tips: The garage door is the largest moving object in the home. Operation of the safety mechanisms should be verified monthly. Switches for door openers should be located as high as practical to prevent children from playing with the door. Children should be warned of the potential risk of injury. See the further comments in the Supplement.

The **springs for overhead doors** can fail and whiplash violently. This would be hazardous to anyone near the door when this occurs. We recommend that safety wires be installed in the doors. (They are not inspected for but are rarely found).

Regular lubrication of the **garage door tracks**, rollers, springs, and mounting hardware is recommended.

If the garage has **stored items** or is housing vehicles the **sills*** and perimeter typically are not accessible.

Virtually all **garage floor slabs** show cracks. These will not be noted unless heaving or extensive break-up is present. Cracks are inevitable given the most codes do not require metal reinforcement or expansion joints. No guarantees can be provided on newer slabs on the degree of cracking or other distress that may occur.

Attic and Ventilation

Location1: main

Location 2: rear section

Observations and Recommendations

The home has a conventional roof structure, whereas the wall structure showed a combination of post and beam and stick framing. Most of the rafter sections were concealed. No evidence of problems were the rafters was observed.

**The roof structure lacked cross ties to keep the outer walls from spreading outwards. The right to left beam located at floor level has pulled out of its mortise notch and may not have been secured to start. A turnbuckle was added on the left side, but this was secured to a joist only and not to the beam on the opposite wall. Comment: measures to secure the sidewalls together are recommended. Consult a qualified contractor or structural engineer for options.

The main attic was insulated with vermiculite . The R (insulating) value was estimated to be 11 to 19.

Vermiculite insulation was observed in the floor of the attic space. The vermiculite was largely covered with other type of insulation. Note: some type of vermiculite insulation made prior to 1983 (by W.R. Grace Co.) may contain a type of asbestos insulation called 'tremolite'. No determination can be made as to the

presence of asbestos except by a laboratory analysis. Environmental labs may offer this testing. Comment: if the insulation is covered and not disturbed it may pose minimal risk factors. No gutting of the ceilings or removal of the insulation should be done unless the material is tested. If found to be asbestos-containing, appropriate cautions and ideally professional removal is recommended.

The framing in the rear section was a bit unorthodox but showed no distress.

**The attic lacked a means of permanent ventilation. Comment:, it will be highly desirable to have ventilators installed in conjunction with insulation or roofing work. Ventilators will help reduce attic temperatures, plus reduce the risk of ice damming or moisture condensation in the attic. See the below comments.

The access is provided by a pull-down stairwell. The unit fit adequately. Pull-down stairwells allow heat losses, both around the opening and conductive losses through the panel. Losses can be considerable if the unit is loose-fitting. Comment: reduce heat losses by either adding weather-stripping around the rim of the door panel and installing insulation between the stairs, or installing an insulated box that goes over the unit (this works only if the cover can fit tightly to the attic flooring or framing for the stairwell).

Notes and Maintenance

The optimal **amount of insulation** to have present is R-30 to R-38 - equivalent to nine to twelve inches of fiberglass or cellulose insulation. Energy savings follow the law of 'diminishing returns' however, so the first six inches will provide the greatest savings. Each layer added will provide less and less savings. Many homes built in the 1970's and 80's have six inches of insulation (equivalent to R-19 insulation value). Depending on the fuel costs and the tightness of the installation, adding insulation in these homes may be marginally cost effective at current fuel prices. When insulation levels are less than six inches, upgrading the insulation levels is recommended. Where possible, install blown-in insulation as this fills gaps better than fiberglass batt insulation. Adding insulation is usually considered an upgrade item.

Hot air by-passes. Just as important as insulation levels in controlling energy costs is sealing any hot air by-passes, where warm household air can flow into the attic unimpeded. Common by-passes include: scuttle holes and pull-down stairwells (weather-strip the edges and add rigid board insulation to the back side; openings around vent stacks and wires (seal small holes with foam insulation; openings around ducts that run through the attic (seal with foam); and spaces around chimneys (these should be sealed with a fire-resistive material such as metal flashing or drywall). Other by-passes include wall cavities that open up into the attic; dropped soffits over bathrooms; and recessed light fixtures (you must leave three inches space around these, however, unless they are rated for insulation contact (as determined by an electrician).

Walkboards and Flooring. Many attics have floors with insulation and no flooring. Where not present, add walk boards to provide access across the attic. These should be nailed down to prevent the hazard of stepping on one end of the board and possibly loosing one's footing. If flooring is installed space the plywood sections or boards to allow the insulation to 'breathe'.

The **optimal ventilation system** is to have soffit and ridge vents in equal balance. This is typically found in new construction but rarely in older homes. Most homes built before 1985 has less than optimal ventilation systems, often consisting of just gable end louvers. The 'adequacy' of the ventilation system is typically rated according to how well the system is performing. Almost all older homes will benefit from upgrading (adding more ventilators). If problems are not present, this is not rated as a deficiency. Older homes may sometimes have insulated stuffed into the rafter cavities, such as with blown in insulation. While not optimal, this may not be rated as deficient if the installation has been without problems. Keeping moisture levels in the home at reasonable levels is critical, especially when the rafter cavities are stuffed or the attic cannot be fully ventilated.

Interior Components

Wall, Ceilings, and Floors

Description

The walls and ceilings appear to be a mix of plaster and drywall, with a number of ceilings covered with acoustical tile.

Interior floors were a combination of wood, sheet or tile vinyl, and carpeting.

Observations and Recommendations

No cracking was observed on the interior or exterior walls that would indicate significant movement.

The walls and ceilings were intact in most rooms, but a number of areas showed distress, as noted below.

**The ceilings in the front hallway, below the bathroom, showed extensive damage from past water leakage.

*The ceilings in the livingroom showed water stains. The source of the leakage was not determined. No current leakage was observed.

**While the floor coverings were not inspected, many of the floors showed plywood or mixed materials that will need some type of covering. The vinyl floor in the kitchen was worn and showed cracked and damaged sections.

The paddle fan in the livingroom was not working.

Wall insulation was not verified. See the below comments.

General Comments

Floor coverings (including carpeting and sheet floorings) are not inspection components. Their condition is normally obvious and their acceptability is usually a matter of standards, taste, and budget.

Minor cracks are found on interior surfaces in all buildings and are typically cosmetic in nature. This type of cracking is usually caused by settlement and/or shrinkage of building components. Small cracks of this type are not mentioned in the report.

The condition of floors underneath carpet and other coverings cannot be determined and is specifically excluded from the inspection and report.

Paddle fans are not an inspection item - although we may operate these for normal operation. The mounting of paddle fans cannot be checked. I recommend that you verify with the owner that the unit was professionally installed and had a bracket or proper support installed for the fan housing. Also consider having electrician check suspect or wobbling units to make sure they were properly installed. Note: many of the fans installed are inexpensive units.

A **determination as to wall insulation** is not part of the home inspection. In most homes, the wall cavities are completely inaccessible unless holes are drilled in the walls. In some cases, specific walls may have been insulated while others were not. For these reasons, wall insulation is not considered an inspection item.

Windows, Skylights, Sliders, and Exterior Doors

Description

The windows on the first floor are mostly single-glazed casement units with integral storm panels attached to the sashes. Most of the windows on the second floor are single glazed units with storm panels.

Most of the exterior doors are wood.

Most of the interior doors are hollow-cored.

Observations and Recommendations

IMPORTANT: the windows were overall functional. The double hung windows were loose-fitting and showed putty deterioration and loose paint. Design issues,, however, are paramount. Comment: the windows could be utilized in the short run if weather-stripped and repaired, where necessary. Replacement will be desirable.

**The storm units are older units. Several windows had missing screen panels. Comment; replacement panels will be difficult to find, given the age of the units.

*Two windows had broken glass (rear bedroom and kitchen).

Many of the second floor rooms were lacking doors.

One or more exterior doors had an interior keyed lock. Comment: interior keyed locks on doors are not desirable as they may prevent quick egress. Ideally keep a key in the lock. If not feasible due to security concerns, keep two keys in close proximity to the door. Or replace the door unit.

*The storm doors at the front and back doors were old and worn units.

General Comments and Advice

Inspection of: Windows are evaluated by a basic criteria of functionality. They are spot checked only. Almost all 'older' windows need some degree of maintenance and repairs. Most will show at least some putty deterioration. Most older windows also contain lead-based paint - although this would need to be tested for. All but the most deteriorated windows may be subject to repairs - although replacement will be desirable for windows that are extremely deteriorated or loose or where lead paint is a concern. The inspection notes the functional condition of the windows tested - and not how acceptable the windows may be to a buyer. Architecturally appropriate windows should be retained, where possible, or duplicated, if replacing.

Caution: Please be careful when opening the windows for the first time as even new windows can have broken springs that can cause the top sash to crash down, possibly causing injury.

Storm windows and doors are not an inspection item - although we may note if a number of storm or screen panels are missing or damaged. On older units it may be difficult - or simply uneconomical - to replace panels so the entire units may need to be replaced. If double-glazed windows ('thermopan'es') are present or are going to be installed, combination storm units may not be needed.

Advice: ask the owner if they have the storm or screen panels that have been removed from doors and windows.

Chimney and Fireplaces, Wood, Coal, other Stoves

Also see the Exterior section for comments on the Exterior of the chimney. Note: the filling out of this section (for the chimney does not mean that a fireplace - or viable fireplace - is present.

Observations and Recommendations

*The chimney was covered with wood paneling where it runs through the first floor living space. Comment: should not be covered with flammable materials.

Interior stairs and Landings

No problems were observed.

Notes and Maintenance

Handrails should be present on all stairs.

Many code approved (in the past) handrails cannot be readily grasped (such as when 2 X 6" members are used). Where the railings are not optimally 'graspable', consider installing 'round top' railings with a cross section of no more than 2 1/8").

Kitchen Components

The kitchen sink waste drains showed no evidence of leakage.

The range burners were operable. This is an older and worn unit.

The oven elements appeared to be operable.

**The disposal was not operable. Comment: needs repairs or replacement.

The kitchen fan is a venting type unit. The fan was operable. The unit lacked a proper exterior hood.

The kitchen counter outlets lacked ground fault interrupter protection. Comment: these are desirable and recommended - but were not required when the outlets were installed. See the further comments in the Electrical section.

Notes and Maintenance

Need for electrical upgrades typical. Older (20+ year) kitchens may have a limited number of outlets on the kitchen counters. In many cases, one circuit serves several outlets. In most cases, adding one or more outlets and at least one dedicated circuit for the kitchen counter is a desirable upgrade item. Ground fault circuit interrupters are desirable for kitchen counter outlets. As this is a relatively new requirement existing outlets without GFCI's is not rated as a defect. Adding ground fault interrupters is a safety improvement.

The **mounting** of cabinets, countertops, and sink units is excluded from the inspection. In most cases, the integrity of the mounting cannot be verified by a visual analysis.

Appliances are tested by turning them on briefly. Extensive testing of timers, thermostats, and other controls is not performed. No determination is made regarding the effectiveness of any appliances. (A dishwasher, for instance, may operate but may not clean dishes). The inspection only determines whether or not the appliances run.

Bathroom Components

Bathroom 1 Location: second floor

IMPORTANT: The bathtub has a ceramic tile 'surround'. The surround has failed. The tiles were caulked onto the wall at the lower section.

**The wall was slightly spongy and tiles were loosening.. Comment: The surround needs replacement. The bathroom components were functional but most were older. Comment: the bathroom will benefit from a partial to complete renovation.

The ventilation is provided by a window only. Note; windows can be used as bathroom ventilation but they are not as effective as exhaust fans. In some cases, they may provide only minimal ventilation. Bathrooms in new construction typically must have exhaust fans. Comment: have an exhaust fan installed, if at all possible. The best arrangement is to have the fan on a timer switch so that it can be left running for a short time after leaving the bathroom. Also, mildewcide resistant paints can be used on the ceilings and walls.

Bathroom 2 Location: first floor

*The electrical outlet was on the light fixture and lacked ground fault interrupter protection. See the comments in the Electrical section.

The plumbing fixtures operated normally.

General Comments and Advice

Optimal Ventilation: windows provide a 'functional' source of ventilation. Exhaust fans are not required except when no window is present and many bathrooms have just a window. Nevertheless, exhaust fans are far more effective at discharging moist air and are recommended for all bathrooms with bathtubs or shower enclosures. These should vent to the exterior and not into the attic. Note: many existing fans are 'functional' but do not discharge air sufficiently to be effective and many fans are excessively noisy. Replacement of noisy or older fans is desirable with the low noise fans now available. Consider having fans put on a timer so that they can be left on for a specified period after someone leaves the bathroom.

Caution on overflow drains: Avoid using the overflow drains in bathtubs. In many cases they have never been used so it is impossible to tell whether the pipes are connected or whether the flanges are tight or will allow leakage.

Functionality Standard. Note: as with all inspection components, we are looking at the functionality of the systems - not the highest standard the units can be brought to..

Heating System(s)

Description

The heating system for the home located in the basement consists of an oil fired steam boiler.

The heating system reported to be one year old.

Combustion system: oil

The supply of combustion air appears adequate.

The failure probability of this system, based on its age, is low.

Observations and Recommendations

The home is heated by a steam system. The boiler is a newer unit. The system showed no evidence of leakage or other distress. The burner showed a normal response to controls. Comment: recheck the boiler at the time of the walk-through inspection for normal operation and any evidence of leakage - as this may indicate a failure of the boiler.

Please see the comments in the Supplement on the need for regular system maintenance. The system will need to have water flushed out on a regular basis during the heating season. Do not worry about running the water until it runs clear - just get most of the sludge out. Water must then be added from the fill valve, where shown. Reminder: when refilling the system, do not allow a large volume of cold water to enter to a hot boiler; and second, never walk away from the shut-off valve while the system is filling.

**The system has an automatic fill valve. The water levels in the boiler were too high. Comment; this needs further inspection by a plumber. It is possible that the automatic fill valve is faulty.

The oil tank is older and showed surface rusting but no evidence of corroding through. Note: get put on a fill schedule with a reputable oil delivery company. Keep the tank full in summer to reduce condensation in the tank. Anticipate replacing.

** Limited sections of the heating pipes, mostly behind the framed walls in the basement., were covered with a likely asbestos-containing material. Most of the insulation has been removed. Sections at the front wall may need to be removed as they are adjacent to supply pipes that are corroding and need repairs.

It was reported that some of the radiators may not be heating up. As noted, this may be due to closed or faulty valves, malfunctioning vents, or disconnected sections.

The radiator in the middle room on the first floor was disconnected.

Comments and Advice

IMPORTANT: Be advised that defects or failure can occur at any time, and that the inspection in no way lessens the risk or likelihood of repairs or replacements being needed at any time in the future, including the day after the inspection. Any mechanical equipment can fail without warning at any time.

Be sure to **check the system** at the walk-through inspection prior to the closing for normal operation and any signs of failure. (For boilers this would typically mean evidence of leakage from the system).

Servicing. It is recommended that all heating equipment be serviced once a year. Regular service is very important for efficient operation and to achieve maximum life span. Servicing may also prevent carbon monoxide poisoning (see below) due to a malfunctioning system or faulty venting.

Carbon monoxide concerns. Defective furnaces, blocked flues, or back-drafting conditions can be fatal due to carbon monoxide poisoning. The installation of a UL listed carbon monoxide detector is strongly recommended. These are recommended for outside bedrooms, although rooms over a garage or finished basement rooms would also be good candidates for CO detectors. Also see the article in the folder on carbon monoxide.

Note: it is impossible to predict **comfort levels** in the home except under actual use conditions. Many homes - and particularly older homes - will experience rooms or areas that stay cooler. This may be due to hidden insulation deficiencies or areas that are at the end of heating runs.

Basement and Structure*

Description

The foundation walls are constructed of brick or granite blocks over mortared stone. The walls are concealed behind finish materials. They are not readily accessible. The basement floor is concrete. The basement columns are a combination of brick piers and screwjacks.

Observations and Recommendations

The basement stairs showed no significant deficiencies.

The foundation showed a minimal inward bulge on the right side but overall, showed no distress. The foundation was concealed on the front and left side.

The bulkhead is a masonry structure with a metal cap.. See the previous section for comments.

IMPORTANT: the basement ceilings were finished off. The framing was largely concealed. The joists and joist connections were not visible. The right to left beam on the front side, however, showed damage and was sagging. The flat beam under the main beam prevented a full viewing of the damage. Comment: needs a further inspection by a qualified contractor.

****Screwjack type columns were used to support the main carrying beam. Comment: light weight screwjacks are not designed to provide support for main carrying beams. Cement filled columns, installed on footings, and secured to the floor and the beam, provide a preferable means of support.**

****Signs of past water entry consisting of mineral deposits and staining were observed on the basement walls and/or floor.. The basement may be prone to chronic water but has been prone to seepage. Comment; exterior grading measures will be desirable. A sump pit and pump may be needed to fully control water inflows.**

****The finished walls in the basement showed water damage and one moldy section. Comment; all damaged material and insulation should be removed.**

Comments and Advice

Water. The home inspection will note evidence of past water intrusions. If the basement has been recently painted or finished off, the evidence of past water penetrations may not be visible. Due to the extreme weather conditions that can occur, we cannot offer any absolute assurance that a basement previously 'dry' will remain so in the future. Most basements will be prone to seepages under worst case conditions. I now recommend that all basements have a sump pit installed, with dual ½ horsepower sump pumps (one set as a back up). These should have a permanent discharge system that empties the water a good distance (and downslope) from the house. Homes with finished basements may need to have a perimeter ("French") drain system installed to increase the likelihood of remaining dry. Also, basements that currently have one sump pump may need two sump pumps under extreme conditions. I recommend keeping a spare pump on hand as pumps may fail when most needed. Sump pumps will not be operable if the power goes out. Battery back-up pumps can be obtained or generators installed where this is a concern. Be sure to ask the current owner if water entry has been a problem.

The **inspection of the structure** is limited to the visible members in the basement and attic. The wall structure members are enclosed with siding on the exterior and drywall/plaster or other sheathings on the interior. No absolute representations can be made as to the condition of enclosed structural members. In isolated cases, opening up the walls will reveal damage or other conditions that were not revealed by the home inspection.

Support columns. The optimal means of support for main carrying beams is provided by cement-filled columns. Older homes may have wood posts or brick columns which, if well sized and intact, may still be serviceable. Screwjack columns (especially lightweight types) as primary means of support for main carrying beams, are regarded as temporary and replacement should be considered.

Crawlspace(s)

Description/Location: back section

The crawlspace was examined by entering the space.

Observations and Recommendations

IMPORTANT: as noted in the Exterior section, the sills and band joists on the back and right side walls showed extensive damage. Comment: extensive repairs are needed. The patio on the back side will need to be removed or cut back to allow repairs. Get cost estimates.

IMPORTANT: the center beam in the crawlspace was minimally sized and was sagging between supports. The brick piers were also rudimentary. Comment: desirable to have replaced.

*The foundation at the back right corner showed a limited section that has broken and dropped into the crawlspace.

*The joists were toe-nailed to the house structure. Comment; this is not an optimal support mechanism. The use of hangers is desirable.

*The dirt floor lacked a vapor barrier.

Plumbing System

Description

The water is supplied by the municipal system.

The feed pipe is a copper pipe. No problems were observed.

The main shut off is located where the water comes, at the front wall, just prior to the meter. Note: shut offs are not operated - see the below comments.

The waste disposal system is believed to be municipal sewers.

The visible supply pipes are copper. The waste pipes are cast iron.

The hot water is provided by a electric 30 gallon water heater located in the basement. The water heater was estimated to be less than five years old.

Observations and Recommendations

The water pressure appeared to be normal.

The readily visible supply piping system overall functional but corroding pipes or gate valves were observed at the following locations:

*Pipes adjacent to the foundation wall on the front side were corroding through. Comment; need repairs by a plumber.

**The readily visible drain piping system was in functional condition overall, but sections of cast iron pipe showed incipient corrosion. Replacement will be needed - although this can be deferred where the corrosion is incipient, as observed in the basement.

Water was run through all fixtures and drains. Functional flow was observed. Functional drainage was observed. (Also see the Bathroom and Kitchen sections).

The toilets and sink and bathtub/shower fixtures were operated. All fixtures were functional.

**The hot water was provided by an electric-fired water heater. The heater(s) showed no evidence of leakage. The unit is only 30 gallons. Comment; this unit is undersized for normal household usage. Replace with a larger unit.

The hot water temperature is unsafe. The temperature should be lowered to no more than 120 degrees, with the shower control set to allow no more than 112 degree hot water. Note: Be aware of the risk of scalding from water temperatures above 112° F in the shower or bathtub. The risk is especially acute for infants, children, and the elderly. Water temperatures should never be set higher than 112° F. Newer water supply valves contain anti-scalding mechanisms to prevent scalding. These can be retrofitted. Note that higher water temperatures are not necessary for the types of modern dishwashers which can heat the water to 140 F degrees.

The washing machine has rubber hoses. See the below comments and the Supplement for information on burst washer hoses.

The dryer had a vinyl duct. Comment: upgrade this to a metal vent. The best vents are solid sheet metal or flexible metal. Corrugated aluminum vents are less desirable but can be functional.

General Comments

Gate (and globe) valves are not tested at the home inspection. Old valves and even main shut-offs very often have not been operated for a number of years. Some will leak when operated. We recommend caution when trying them - or let a plumber do this. Standard gate valves are notorious for not fully closing off the water supply. Consider having these replaced with levered ball valves.

Washing machines have hoses that supply water to the washer. Typically the hoses are a rubber type. These hoses do not have the reliability of supply plumbing and occasionally will burst. If this occurs this can cause significant damage to the home as the water will run until the leak is found. This can be when the water has filled the basement if no one is home when it occurs. When the washing machine is located in living space all of the floors and drywall surfaces can be ruined as well as those on any floors below. Due to this risk we recommend the following. First, have metal hoses installed in place of the rubber hoses. Second, turn off the water after each use of the washing machine. Third, if knob shut-offs are present, consider having accessible, levered valve shut-offs installed; then make sure they are used. And lastly, avoid using the washing machine if you are going out and no one will be home until the end of its cycle

Dryers should be ducted to the exterior. Gas dryers must be vented and should have a metal duct. Duct runs should be as straight as possible. For all dryers make sure that the lint screen is cleaned after each use. Dryer ducts may collect lint and, if this clogs up it will be a fire hazard. To avoid this, periodically remove the duct from the back of the dryer and clean it out. Do this at least once a year.

Wells, septic systems, sewer lines, and water treatment equipment are not inspection items and are expressly excluded from the inspection and report. Information provided on these should be regarded as an effort by the inspector to provide additional information and do not constitute an inspection.

Electrical System

Description

The home has a 120/240 volt, 100 amp service. overhead.

The main service panel is located in the basement. The main panel contains circuit breakers.

No main disconnect was present.

Service grounding connections were at the water feed pipe.

The over-current protection is provided by circuit breakers and fuses.

Branch panels locations: In the closet of the rear bedroom.

Most of the wiring that could be observed is a mix of knob and tube, armored cable, and plastic sheathed wire.

The receptacles are a mix of the older two pronged (ungrounded) type and the newer, three prong grounded type.

Observations and Recommendations

The service drop from the street appeared normal.

The main panel was opened and examined.

IMPORTANT: the main panel is limited and will not accommodate the addition of a number of circuits, as needed. The panel is an antiquated split bus type. While the panel may be 'adequate' for existing usages, its replacement will most likely be mandated when additional circuitry is installed. A service upgrade will be desirable at this time.

IMPORTANT: this home has a limited number of circuits. Many of the rooms have just two outlets. The outlets tested showed numerous deficiencies, including: no neutral connection, no ground connection, and reversed polarity. In addition, the visible wiring in the basement and attic showed evidence of extensive non-professional work, including: splices outside of junction boxes, wires hanging out of boxes, poor routing of wires along surfaces, etc. At least portions of the wiring are believed to be older knob and tube wiring. Much of the wiring is the armored cable type. Comment; due to the limitations of the system and the numerous deficiencies observed, a complete rewiring of the home may be in order.

IMPORTANT: a panel was present in the closet of the rear bedroom. The panel is antiquated and is in a location that would not be approved today. The fuses were over-sized for the wires they 'protect'. This can allow these circuit wires to carry overloaded current, possibly resulting in melted wires and a fire. Comment: while fuses can provide a safe and effective over-current device, the limitations of the panel, the other defects observed, and the inability to add circuitry to this panel will make an upgrading of the panel desirable and probably necessary. Up upgrading of the service (and service drop wires) is normally done at this time. If the panel must be used in the short run, type S fuses should be installed by an electrician. These will allow only the proper size fuses to be installed.

Smoke detectors were not checked. State law mandates that the local fire marshal inspect and approve these. This is the seller's responsibility. See the below comments also.

The kitchen counter, bathroom, barn, and exterior outlets lacked ground fault circuit interrupter protection. Their installation is recommended. See the below comments.

IMPORTANT: The wiring to the barn runs out from the attic. The unprotected wires rest against the cut aluminum siding. Comment; highly improper and potentially dangerous. The siding may tend to cut through the cloth sheathing. This would lead to the siding becoming energized. The wiring should be disconnected in the attic. The barn would need to be completely rewired.

General Comments and Advice

A **ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)** is a modern electrical device, either a receptacle or a circuit breaker, which is designed to protect people from electric shock. In the event of a fault in an appliance that you are touching, the current that passes through your body to ground is detected and the circuit is shut off, protecting you from potentially fatal shocks. They are now required in new buildings in wet or damp environments. The Inspector recommends that all receptacles located in the kitchen near the sink, baths, garage, at spas, hot tubs, fountains, pools, crawl spaces, near laundry tubs, and outdoors be upgraded to the Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter type by a licensed electrician if they are not already present. This will considerably improve electrical safety for occupants of the building.

Note: GFCI's are sensitive microprocessor devices and need to be regularly tested to make sure they are operable. Do this by hitting the "test" button on the outlets and GFCI breakers. Insert a night light into the GFCI outlets when this is done. If the power goes off the unit is working. If the test button doesn't cause a trip or the power to the night light doesn't go off, have an electrician do the repairs.

Smoke Detectors. Detectors should be installed (if not already present) on each floor (including attics and basements) and outside all sleeping areas. Consult the manufacturer's literature or local fire inspector for recommended mounting locations. Be sure to test your smoke detectors just prior to moving in and monthly thereafter.

Massachusetts law specifies that the home seller must have the smoke detector system inspected and approved by the local fire marshal - so we do not always check these at the inspection. A smoke detector certificate is needed at the time of the closing.

Exclusions. The inspection does not include low voltage systems, telephone wiring, intercoms, alarm systems, cable TV wiring, timers or smoke detectors.

End, summary follows.

Inspector: Evergreen Home Inspection Services

Ernest A. Simpson, ASHI[®], Certified Member ##000792.

SUMMARY

Major repairs that might cost more than \$600.00 to remedy, or items needing urgent attention, include:

1. The repairs to the main roof and replacement of the roof surface on the rear ell.
2. The electrical system (complete replacement ?).
3. The barn roof.
4. The barn shed and other structural concerns.
5. The extensive debris and abandoned goods in the barn and elsewhere.
6. The large decayed tree adjacent to the barn.
7. The front entryway structure.
8. The lack of attic ventilation.
9. The windows and storm units.
10. The condition of the bathroom.
11. The disposal.
12. The apparent malfunctioning of the fill valve for the heating system.
13. The structural concerns with the supports and beams in the basement.
14. The decayed sills and band joist for the rear ell. Also the center beam for this section.
15. The water heater (undersized).
16. Repairs to the interior surfaces.

Note: this list does not include items that are 'functional' but 'less than optimal', possible upgrades, or that 'may be reaching the end of their useful life'. These types of items can be very important, but in many cases the need for or time frame for repairs is not subject to precise determination, or may be deferrable.,

IMPORTANT; the home inspection does not determine the costs of repairs for defective or problematic components or systems. While some ballpark may be provided at an inspection, any determination of costs involves bringing out a contractor or specialist to examine the problem. In some cases, what appears to be a small defect may involve large repair costs. This is especially true for repairs to decay or insect damage, masonry repairs, but it also applies in many cases to repairs to plumbing, electrical, and mechanical systems. Also, the chosen repair option (for instance, spot repairs versus total replacement) can make a huge difference in the costs incurred. It is your responsibility to follow up on all

Other repairs are needed as mentioned in the report. Not all the repairs are urgent, and some of the items you would probably ignore if you were already living in the house.

While we make an effort to identify existing or potential problems, it is not possible for a home inspector to predict the future. For this reason, it would be advisable to budget perhaps \$1000.00 to \$1500.00 dollars a year for unforeseen repairs and maintenance. This would hold true for any house you were considering.

Please feel free to call at any time if you have any questions.

END OF REPORT