BUILDING SURVEY

in respect of

‘HALL CLOSE FARM’, ALVELEY, NR. BRIDGNORTH SHROPSHIRE, WV15 6NG.

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SUMMARY

PROPERTY

Property address	'Hall Close Farm', Alveley, Shropshire, WV15 6NG.
Brief description	Grade 11 Listed period farmhouse standing in approximately 10 acres.
Property type	Grade II Listed 17th century part timber and brick detached farmhouse with later additions and separate garage block.
Year built	The original house was built during the middle of the 17th century and additions then added at what would appear to be the 18th century with a kitchen extension probably at some stage in the last 30 years or so.
Accommodation	Reception hall, dining room, sitting room, cloakroom with WC, drawing room, back kitchen, utility and separate toilet, study, kitchen/breakfast room. Staircase down to two large cellar compartments. There are two separate staircases leading up to the first floor accommodation:- Four bedrooms, ensuite bathroom with WC, additional ensuite shower room and WC, main bathroom with WC. Further staircase to second floor:- Two additional bedrooms.
Tenure	We understand the property is being acquired on a Freehold basis with vacant possession and includes ownership of the driveway off the main public highway, as well as 10 acres of land. We also understand that a vehicular right of way has been retained at the back of the property leading to the stables, details of which should be confirmed by reference to the Title Deeds.
Size in square metres	Main Dwelling:- 385 sq.m. Cellar Compartment:- 56 sq.m. Garage Block: 39 sq.m. Total Gross Internal Floor Area: 480 sq.m.
Insurance reinstatement cost	The property should be insured for fire reinstatement purposes in the sum of £653,000 to include the cost of demolition, site clearance, reconstruction and professional fees but excluding VAT.

BRIEF OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The property comprises a 17th century farmhouse which was then extended at some stage later in the 19th century and more latterly in the last 30 years or so providing a very large six bedroomed family residence. The property stands in greenbelt farmland including approximately 10 acres of paddock, fields and gardens.

A section of the property was sold some time ago under separate title constituting the former barns which are now being converted into separate dwellings.

The farmhouse itself appears to have been renovated at some stage in the last 30 years or so including ground floor extensions to the side and rear and the construction of a double garage block. Most of this work appears to have been completed to a satisfactory standard although some further ongoing maintenance is now required due to the age of the building fabric.

The farmhouse was built out of an oak frame with single skin brick panels and then later extended in Georgian times with solid brick extension to the west wing and further additions to the left hand side rear of the building. There are however now signs of general wear and tear to the oak framework particularly towards the rear main elevation where weathering has occurred and has caused surface rot of the oak beams which will require further remediation at some stage in the near future. Any work carried out in terms of upgrading and general maintenance will require Listed Building Consent from the Local Authority and specialist contractors will need to be employed to carry out any remediation. At this point in time there are certain areas of upgrading and modernisation work required together with the repair of stormwater downpipes and gutters to the right hand side and rear elevations where excessive water ingress has occurred into the cellar compartment and the timber floors and which in the longer term could result in wet rot or possibly dry rot unless this matter is resolved.

In conclusion it would appear that the farmhouse has been maintained and improved to an acceptable standard having regard to the age of the building fabric and during the course of my survey there were no signs of major issues that cannot be dealt with within the terms of general repair and maintenance. The property will however require ongoing maintenance in the future.

SERIOUS DEFECTS

None apparent.

OTHER REPAIRS

(1) Rake out and repoint open jointed brickwork to the west wing chimney. (£500)
(2) Employ a specialist Roofing Contractor to replace any slipped, broken or shaled tiles to the main roof and also re-set the ridge tiles in lime mortar where necessary. (£3,500)
(3) Clean out and leave secure and watertight all gutters and downpipes. (£450).
(4) Overhaul the existing window frames to replace any broken and perished sash cords and leave them all free and functional. At the same time replace any rotten window casements as required. (£7,000)

Guideline budget £11,500

FURTHER INVESTIGATION

(1) Obtain copies of service records or HETAS and Gas Safe Engineers reports as to the condition of the internal fireplaces.
(2) Obtain a timber specialist survey report and estimate for the cost of replacing any defective floor timbers at ground level and to examine the main floors above for the possibility of infestation.
(3) Obtain a Timber and Damp Specialist Report and estimate to eradicate rising damp and timber degrade. (£4,000)
(4) Obtain a Gas Safe heating engineers report or copies of service records to ensure the reliability of both central heating boilers and the hot water system.
(5) Obtain an electrical contractors report or a current Test Certificate to establish if the wiring circuits comply with current NICEIC regulations.

Guideline budget £4,000

MATTERS FOR YOUR SOLICITOR

Planning — No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with Planning matters. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.

Building Regulations — No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with Building Regulation matters. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.

Roads — No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with the road. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.

Rights of way — No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with rights of way. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.

Surveyor	Paul Jackson FRICS
Signed	Paul Jackson …….. For Paul Jackson FRICS

INSTRUCTION

Instruction from	
Date of instruction	
Date of inspection	
Weather	Dry, light and sunny with a fairly strong breeze.
Furnished or unfurnished	At the time of my inspection, the house was fully furnished including floor coverings throughout prohibiting detailed examination of all parts of the building fabric which were covered, unexposed or inaccessible.
Occupancy	At the time of my inspection, the house appeared to be owner occupied by the vendors, Mr. and Mrs. Rochelle. There are no signs of any formal or informal tenancy arrangements in place.
Orientation	For the purpose of description within this report all directions are given as facing the front elevation of the property, which faces 344° virtually due north.
Date of report	

SURVEY REPORT

EXTERIOR

CHIMNEY STACKS

Description

Towards the centre of the building is a cluster of five individual chimney stacks, together with a further double stack to the right hand gable wall along the west wing and further single chimney stack to the gable end of the ground floor breakfast kitchen.

Condition

The central cluster of chimney stacks appears to have been rebuilt at some stage in the last 100 years or so on top of the original sandstone and brick base and creating five individual chimneys servicing the fireplaces to the internal rooms at ground and first floor level. The brickwork has been re-laid in lime mortar and capped with cowls on top of at least two of the flues servicing the solid fuel stoves downstairs and also provided with limed mortar flaunching around the base of the brickwork, as well as replacement lead flashings above the tiled roof of the rear central wing. Each of these chimneys is of a substantial design and have been rebuilt over the years to what seems to be a reasonably good standard and no further maintenance would appear necessary at this stage.

The double stack to the west wing has been built out of similar brickwork laid in lime mortar to a good standard with clay pots on top of the flues, as well as lead flashings and the single stack to the breakfast kitchen wing is of similar design but built in later years including a fairly modern clay chimney pot and lead flashings and soakers. Once again, these chimney stacks have been built and maintained to a good standard of maintenance in the last few years and no further repair work is necessary. The flashings all appear to be fairly secure having been replaced at the same time the roof was stripped and re-clad.

There is a further chimney stack just above the valley between the two west wings which is again of conventional brick construction laid in lime mortar and which has been provided with lead flashings at the base of the brickwork. The brickwork itself leans very slightly towards the rear of the dwelling as a result of frost action which has caused expansion of the joints and some of the mortar joints themselves are open and will need to be raked out and repointed.

Other repair

Rake out and repoint open jointed brickwork to the west wing chimney.

MAIN ROOF COVERINGS

Description

The house includes a number of different wings and elevations to what would have been the original farmhouse with later additions built at various stages in the last 350 years or so, each of which has been built to a conventional design of timber pitched construction with gable elevations to the side and rear of the main building, all of which have been stripped and re-covered with clay tiles supported by timber battens, together with triangular clay ridge tiles on the various apexes, partly secured in cement mortar.

When the roof was lifted and re-clad, metal 'Velux' roof lights were also incorporated across the rear elevations of the main building providing natural daylight to the first and second floor living accommodation, as well as a central valley between the two gable elevations to the west wing of the property.

Condition

Heritage and salvaged clay tiles have been used to re-clad the majority of the main elevations of the roof with the exception of the rear right hand wing where the tiles appear to have been replaced at a much earlier stage, whilst two of the main gable elevations, as well as that of the kitchen and ground floor utility have been created in later years at the time the house was extended. It would seem the majority of the tiles have been replaced on top of timber battens and sarking felt to large areas of the main roof structure, although there are now some signs of general wear and tear that have occurred in the last few years. This has resulted in some areas of broken, slipped and loose tiles to quite a number of the pitches of the roof in isolated areas, which will obviously require further attention in the next 12 months or so to ensure that there is no potential water ingress in the future. Identical reclaimed tiles will need to be used to satisfy the requirements of the Conservation Department at Wyre Forest District Council. Any broken, slipped or loose tiles need to be replaced and the ridge tiles to the kitchen and central spine of the main roof will also need to be lifted and re-set in gauged lime mortar where gaps have occurred as a result of frost action over the years.

In many respects however, the main roof covering seems to be reasonably secure in the majority of areas, but due to the age of the house, ongoing maintenance will be required in the next few years due to the age of the building fabric and the age of the tiles themselves, quite a number of which appear to have been reclaimed and partly replaced and which have weathered over the years causing some areas of displacement, fractures or slippage.

I would therefore recommend that you seek a report and estimate from a specialist Roofing Contractor to carry out localised repair and maintenance as required.

Other repair

Employ a specialist Roofing Contractor to replace any slipped, broken or shaled tiles to the main roof and also re-set the ridge tiles in lime mortar where necessary. (£3,500)

SECONDARY ROOF COVERINGS

Description	Over the kitchen wing and utility are further pitched roofs of similar design with clay tiles on timber battens and sarking felt, all of which have been laid when the house was extended at some stage in the last few years and incorporate 'Velux' roof lights across the rear elevation of the roof.
Condition	The roof cladding of the kitchen, utility and ground floor toilet has all been replaced in recent years with identical tiles of good quality. There are some signs of minor disrepair where a limited number of tiles have broken to the monopitched roof over the utility room. It will only require a small amount of repair and such work should be carried out at the same time as the main roof is upgraded.

ROOF DRAINAGE

Description	During the course of the last few years, replacement cast iron sections of guttering and storm water downpipes have been fitted to discharge rainwater from the main roof into underground drains around the perimeter of the building which in turn appear to feed into the pond at the side of the house with soakaways along the west side of the building.
Condition	The original metal gutters and downpipes were replaced with Heritage fittings some years ago when the house was extended and refurbished and all of which appear to be of good quality. There are however some signs of minor corrosion at some of the collar joints as well as leakage around some of the seals to the gutters and blockage of weed and silt to the front elevation over the recessed porch. It will therefore be necessary to employ a local builder to carry out localised repairs and maintenance as necessary to seal any leaking joints, clean out any deposits of weed or silt and ensure adequate discharge of water into the underground drains. The cat iron hopperhead and downpipe to the rear corner of the sitting room has been leaking quite badly over the years which has resulted in displacement of the sandstone soil below with disturbance of the block paving. The cast iron downpipe and hopperhead will therefore need to be repaired or replaced and the remains of a tree removed.
Other repair	Clean out and leave secure and watertight all gutters and downpipes. (£450)

EAVES, FASCIAS, SOFFITS

Description

Around the perimeter of the main roof at eaves level are exposed timber rafters from the main roof structure which are covered with sarking board and mineral felt with a projection above the first floor window reveals.

There are also areas of original oak beams which were used to configure the layout of the original farmhouse which incorporate brick infill panels, the majority of which are exposed to the rear south west elevations.

More modern joinery timbers have been incorporated in the form of bargeboards to the gable elevation over the right hand side of the kitchen wing as well as softwood fascias supporting the guttering brackets along the edges of the kitchen roof.

There are further sections of oak beams to the front main elevation of the building including soleplates at ground floor level above sections of brick and sandstone, as well as ornate carved oak plinths supporting the oak beams at first floor level above the ground floor windows.

Condition

During the course of my survey, it appears that the original oak beams all still retain their structural integrity.

Some of the original oak timbers to the gables have become slightly weathered due to ageing although there are no signs of major rot to the gable over the kitchen roof. The exposed oak beams to the rear right hand corner of the west wing however are quite weathered in places and large sections of rot have been cut out in a couple of places and filled with cement mortar. The facing of the oak beams has been sealed with some sort of bitumen based paint. At this point in time the timbers still seem to retain their structural integrity but over a longer period of time certain sections will probably need to be cut out and replaced in their entirety.

Exposed oak beams to the front gable elevations are all original to the house although some sections appear to have been added to the left hand side of the picture windows. The first floor window reveals have also been trimmed with softwood timber in the past. Once again the original oak beams are slightly gnarled in certain areas and rot has occurred to the horizontal beam just above the ground floor windows a section of which has been cut out and replaced. Once again all of the joinery timbers will need to be monitored for future maintenance or repair.

MAIN WALLS

Description

The farmhouse has been built to a traditional design with an oak framework including 9" solid infill brick panels with external rendered finish with a timber sole plate on top of brick footings along the front elevation which appear to have been replaced at some stage in the last few years. The later additions to the house includes right hand corner, the rear two storey wings and the kitchen and utility room extensions were all built quite a few years ago in conventional 9" solid brick laid in lime mortar. One of the earlier parts of the house is the rear right hand corner of the west wing created from 225 mm solid brick laid in lime mortar with smaller brick facings, parts of which seem to have been increased to a depth of about 13 " along the right hand gable wall. During the mid 1800's the front right hand corner of the property was added including string courses of brickwork at eaves level with a recessed porch including a stone portico surround.

Large sections of the original house have been built out of single skin brick panels within the oak framed building and later additions are 225 mm solid brick.

Condition

Over the years the external brick facings have weathered in certain areas although the lime mortar which is very durable seems to have withstood the test of time to the main external elevations. Some spalling and frost damage has occurred to a limited amount of brickwork along the right hand gable wall just to the side of the cast iron downpipe and which will need to be cut out and replaced at some stage in the future to avoid the possibility of water ingress. Further repointing is also required within this area where it appears that the exposed elevation has been the subject of extreme weathering over the years.

Some of the brick panels in the oak frame have deviated quite significantly to the rear corner where the oak frame itself has displaced and has resulted in bulging at first floor level although this section of the structure has been secured with metal tie bars.

Some further repointing with cement mortar has been carried out to the corner of the sitting room.

The remaining elevations have been repointed in recent years with what appears to be a mixture of cement mortar which effectively has prevented any possibility of penetrating damp through to the interior of the dwelling. Another section of brickwork has been replaced to the corner of the kitchen wing where further repointing has been carried out over a period of time. All of this maintenance work has been completed to what appears to be an acceptable standard and during the course of my survey could not detect any signs of ongoing structural movement or major disrepair that is likely to cause any difficulties with regard to ongoing maintenance in the future.

It also appears that the footings have been replaced across the front of the original dwelling which may originally have been built out of sandstone and would probably have perished some years ago.

We found signs of a minor hairline crack to the rendering to the left hand gable above the kitchen roof and also a section of missing render and open jointed brickwork which will require localised repair.

SUB-FLOOR VENTILATION

Description

There are currently no external air bricks as the majority of the floors throughout the property are of solid construction although there is a cellar compartment beneath suspended timber floors to the west wing which provides natural ventilation. A new air brick has also been fitted at the back of the sitting room to the rear right hand corner of the dwelling. It would however be prudent to think in terms of commissioning a timber specialist to establish the condition of the suspended timber floors and sub-floor areas and to determine if any increased ventilation is required to avoid the possibility of long-term degrade. In that respect we can recommend the services of Prestige Preservation of Kidderminster who will also provide you with advice in terms of rot or rising damp.

DAMP PROOF COURSE

Description

The house does not include any form of damp proof course due to the age of the building structure and relies upon the fact that the property sits on a bed of sandstone.

A bitumen felt DPC has been installed across the front of the house beneath the timber sole plate on top of the brick footings and which appears to have been installed in the last few years. Similar treatment has been carried out to the kitchen and utility room additions in the form of a bitumen felt or plastic membrane.

Condition

There are visible signs and instrumental evidence of very high levels of moisture at ground floor level to the load bearing walls around the perimeter of the house and internally to the corner of the kitchen. This is considerably worse to the right hand west wing where excessive staining of the decorations and plasterwork has occurred and found signs of microscopic spores which could be the start of wet rot and possibly dry rot that will have an affect upon the joinery timbers over a longer period of time. It will therefore be necessary to engage the services of a damp specialist contractor such as Prestige Preservation to provide a detailed report and estimate for the cost of injecting a new chemical damp proof course of finding some other solution to eradicate damp to some of the internal walls and footings below ground where deterioration of some of the internal oak beams has occurred.

The level of damp is particularly high to the staircase and external wall leading down to the cellar compartment and in this area would question whether there are fractured stormwater drain pipes which could contribute to the degree of moisture and which will need to be examined in more detail. Here we found evidence of fungal growth suggesting that it may be the start of dry rot but once again would suggest that you seek the advice of a specialist contractors to provide a more detailed analysis and estimate for remediation.

Further Investigation

Obtain a Timber and Damp Proofing Specialist Report and estimate to eradicate rising damp and timber degrade. (£4,000)

WINDOWS

Description

The house includes a mixture of timber window frames, quite a number of which are the original sliding sash casements with stone sub-sills and lintels and some of which have been trimmed with replacement softwood timber.

Additional softwood timber frames with fixed and opening lights have been installed to the kitchen and the back kitchen wings.

Metal framed velux rooflights have been installed across the rear elevation at roof level at the time the roofs were stripped and reclad.

Condition

The majority of the window frames were jarred through continual painting and will therefore need to be examined by a specialist joinery contractor to replace all of the sash cords where necessary and also to ease and leave functional all of the sliding sashes. There are also signs of rot to the front left hand corner of the bedroom window which will need to be taken out and replaced with a new window frame to comply with the requirements of the Local Conservation Department. We also noticed there are wasps nests behind this particular window frame and also under the wall plate above the front drawing room window and which will need to be eradicated.

Other repair

Overhaul the existing window frames to replace any broken and perished sash cords and leave them all free and functional. At the same time replace any rotten window casements as required.

EXTERIOR DOORS

Description

Behind the recessed porch is an original pine panelled door with glazed top lights within a wooden surround with an ornate carved post and timber panelling. A solid oak stable door has been fitted to the kitchen wing as well as the back kitchen which have been installed in more recent times.

Condition

All of the external doors appear to be of substantial design and of reasonably good quality and still remain functional and adequate at this point in time. No further repair or maintenance work is necessary.

EXTERIOR DECORATIONS

Description

The external joinery timbers have been decorated with a black oil based paint with a white exterior paint to the rendering, stone lintels and sub-sills as well as the portico surround of the entrance porch. The rainwater guttering and downpipes have also been finished in black gloss paint.

Condition

At this point in time the majority of the paintwork seems to have been maintained to a reasonable standard although there are some areas of weathered oak beams which are exposed to the elements and which will need to be treated with a preservative to avoid excessive deterioration. There are areas of flaking and weathered paintwork to the portico surround as well as the left hand gable wall of the original dwelling which is badly stained and weathered and where some of the brick facings have begun to perish will need to be cut out and filled. Further decoration will therefore need to be carried out in certain isolated areas in the next 12 months or so.

INTERIOR

MAIN ROOF CONSTRUCTION

Description

The various pitched roofs have all been built to a traditional design in what would appear to be oak purlins on top of which are a mixture of oak and pine rafters. Whilst there is no visible means of access to any part of the loft apart from the small rear wing bathroom it would seem that the roof has been lifted, felted and relaid in quite a number of areas. The only visible means of gauging the condition of the roof was from the inspection of the exposed beams at first and second floor level all of which have been constructed out of oak timbers.

Condition

During the course of my survey there were no signs of water ingress or staining of the first or second floor ceilings which would suggest that the roof cladding seems to be reasonably secure and watertight. We did however find some signs of water ingress through to the chimney breast in the loft space above the rear right hand bathroom where it appears the flashings will need to be replaced. It is therefore likely that a number of the areas within the valleys and around the chimneys themselves will need to be examined in more detail and localised repairs or replacement work carried out.

The original oak beams where exposed have all been affected by woodworm to varying degrees over the years. The purlins have also deflected quite considerably above the middle wing over the rear elevation where there is no lateral support across the span of the roof although this does not appear to be ongoing or of major concern.

The oak beams have deteriorated in certain areas through attack from house longhorn beetle or similar infestation which has caused some flaking of the oak beams along the faces. It would seem that the majority of the beams have been treated over the years as there did appear to be any ongoing signs of active infestation. I would however suggest that all of the timbers are examined by a specialist contractor and as a precaution the beams should be treated to avoid any further infestation.

The valley to the west side of the building has a limited size of hopper head and downpipe and appears to be discharging water from the roof down the outside layer of the brickwork which is then penetrating through the walls and causing excessive levels of moisture to the wall in the front corner sitting room as well as the basement and cellar compartments where it is also running in through the ventilation shaft to quite a significant degree. This has caused some deterioration of the floor timbers as well and additional water ingress has occurred to the front elevation through the ventilation shaft which also needs to be sealed.

CEILINGS

Description

Throughout the house are a mixture of modern plasterboard panels and original lime plaster areas of which have been retained where possible or replaced with modern boarding in certain areas during the course of renovation.

Condition

All of the ceilings throughout the house appear to have been either upgraded or replaced over the years with modern plasterboard and which has also been applied to the internal oak framed partition walls.

WALLS, PARTITIONS AND PLASTERWORK

Description

The majority of internal walls have been built out of oak frames with panels that have been covered with plasterboard to replace the original lime plaster. The other internal wall sections have been built out of oak frames with brick infill and lime plastered finish at a point between the various wings of the building that have been constructed at different periods in time. The solid walls have been built on a sandstone base as well as sole plates.

Condition

The interior structure of the building has a mixture of oak frames with brick and plaster panels and with sandstone footings between the different rooms at ground level. All of the original joinery timbers appear to be of good quality and provide adequate support to the floor and ceiling joists and could not detect any internal signs of deflection or major disrepair. The oak beam in the main drawing room has been provided with vertical support off a sandstone pad and also spliced and strapped as well as tied in with steel bolts to support the floor structure above. Large sections of the oak frames have deteriorated as a result of infestation over the years but once again would appear to have been treated in the past but all of which should be verified by the timber specialist contractors.

Whilst there has been evidence of historic movement of the oak frame and some minor displacement of the walls there does not appear to be any ongoing issues.

In the cellar compartment the external wall and sandstone footings are saturated with water ingress mainly from the roof above the right hand wing and which has caused excessive saturation of the solid brickwork and the sandstone footings and in turn the beginnings of rot to the floor joists and boarding which will need to be rectified in the immediate future.

FIREPLACES, FLUES AND CHIMNEY BREASTS

Description

A cylindrical wood burning stove has been fitted on sandstone blocks inside an inglenook fireplace in the main drawing room.

A gas fired stove of traditional design has also been installed in the kitchen which extends into the main single chimney stack.

There is a further wall mounted gas fire in the front snug.

Additional cast iron wood burning stoves have been installed in the rear sitting room and back kitchen and there is also a traditional fireplace in the right hand dining room which has a sandstone surround, quarry tiled hearth and metal grate although this is not currently utilised.

Condition

The internal fireplaces feed into the main chimneys by various methods. The wood burning stoves have been provided with metal flues whilst the modern gas fire in the snug appears to be a flue less fitting.

All of the fireplaces seem to be functional although none of the flues were tested during the course of our survey. In particular the sandstone traditional fireplace in the dining room needs to be tested and swept and may also need to be lined prior to further use.

The remaining log burners need to be certified by a HETAS engineer and the gas fires should be examined by a Gas Safe Engineer or copies of service records obtained from the vendors. This is to ensure that the fires all comply to current Safety Regulations.

Further investigation

Obtain copies of service records or HETAS and Gas Safe Engineers reports as to the condition of the internal fireplaces.

FLOORS

Description

The majority of the ground floor is of solid construction to the original house, kitchen and utility room extensions whilst the later addition to the west wing of the building has been built out of timber with floor boarding on suspended wooden joists.

The first and second floors are also of timber construction with boarding on suspended joists and all of which have a covering of carpets and other surfacing.

Condition

Over the years the solid floors downstairs have been maintained to a good standard including red quarry tiles to the majority of the original house and in the kitchen wings. Flagstones have been fitted in the ground floor utility and toilet as well as the rear hallway and back kitchen. These floor surfaces have been relaid to a good standard and on top of what would appear to be some form of damp proof membrane. We did however notice some high moisture levels to the stone footings between the inner hallway and front snug where it appears that marginal rising damp has occurred and will need to be examined in more detail by a specialist contractor.

The timber floors in the sitting room and dining room have been built out of oak boards on suspended wooden joists supporting the cellar by additional oak beams. Water ingress from the valley above the roof has however caused beginnings of wet rot to the joist ends along the right hand side of the dining room and across the side and rear wall of the corner sitting room. This has already begun to form spores across the joinery timbers as well as rot to the ends of the joists a section of which has been supported by an RSJ in the cellar compartment across the rear of the building. It will therefore be necessary to cut out and replace all sections of badly perished and rotten floor joists as well as any boarding and also examine the walls for any spores that may relate to dry rot as there is excessive staining down in the cellar compartment.

The upper floors are all of timber construction but none of which could be examined in detail due to fitted carpets. It would therefore be prudent to lift the carpets throughout and examine the floors and joists for infestation or other general degrade. Where a ‘heel test’ was applied however there were no signs of excessive bounce or other movement.

Further investigation

Obtain a timber specialist survey report and estimate for the cost of replacing any defective floor timbers at ground level and to examine the main floors above for the possibility of infestation.

BASEMENTS AND CELLARS

Description

Below the west wing of the building beneath the dining room and corner sitting room are two individual cellar compartments approached by a brick staircase off the rear hallway.

The sides of the stairs are supported by sandstone blocks on top of which is an 18" thick load bearing wall partly built out of brick and sandstone leading into the right hand cellar. There are ventilation shafts in the right hand compartment as well as a brick built chimney breast supporting the fireplace in the ground floor sitting room.

Condition

The cellar compartment has been subjected to quite excessive water ingress by means of discharge along the side valley which has then run down the external wall. The alls along the right hand side and front elevation of the building are saturated with rainwater which has also spread across the quarry and brick solid floor to a limited degree and at some stage in the past part of the floor has been removed to create a sump for drainage. As a consequence quite extensive wet rot has occurred to the floor joists above the dining room large sections of which will need to be cut out and replaced.

Excessive moisture has also occurred in the left hand compartment where cellartex bars have been fitted underneath the floor boards which need to be removed and the level of ventilation increased.

It also appears that there may be a fracture to the cast iron downpipe along the right hand side elevation of the building which has resulted in storm water discharging straight into the sub-soil which has penetrated through the solid brick and stone wall. Once again this a matter that will need to be remedied by fitting a new downpipe and underground stormwater drain into a soakaway.

INTERIOR DOORS

Description

Throughout the house are sections of softwood pine door linings and architraves in certain rooms where new joinery timbers have been fitted whilst the majority of the door linings and architraves have been built out of hardwood. New skirting boards have also been installed in certain areas whilst the original fittings downstairs have been retained.

The internal doors are a mixture of oak timber brace and ledge units as well as original pine panelled doors to quite a number of the rooms at ground and first floor level.

Condition

Internal joinery components have been retained where possible although most of the original pine doors have been provided with new metal handles and lever latch mechanisms in place of the original door furniture. It will therefore be advisable to try and obtain some original door furniture in order that the units can be reinstated to their original style although in essence they are still functional at this stage.

STAIRCASES

Description

There are two separate staircases at ground floor and also at first floor level leading up to into the second floor accommodation. The older staircase is located off the inner hallway by the main kitchen which has been built out of oak treads and risers supported underneath the stairs with timber props and softwood battens.

Another staircase has been built off the rear hallway to the west wing of the building which also appears to be in good repair and created out of hardwood and two additional dog-leg staircases located on the first floor with access to the second floor rooms within the attic space.

Condition

The majority of staircases appear to be fairly secure and fulfil their purpose but did notice quite a springy loose tread on the turn at the bottom of the older staircase off the inner hallway which will need to be secured.

BUILT IN AND KITCHEN FITTINGS

Description

Within the kitchen extension are a range of purpose built base units constructed from brick with timber panelled doors with a painted finish as well as granite worktops with a wooden trim.

An additional back kitchen has been created towards the rear of the house which contains a more modern range of base units and wall cupboards. These comprise chipboard melamine carcassing with laminated doors and woodblock working surfaces all of which have been installed in the last few years.

Condition

The kitchen units to both rooms have been fitted in the last few years to a reasonable standard providing adequate storage facilities. No major replacement work was found necessary at this stage.

SANITARY FITTINGS

Description

Towards the rear of the house is an understairs cloakroom with WC and a wall mounted wash basin with gold plated fittings both of which were installed some years ago.

There is a further cloakroom off the utility with a low flush WC and pedestal wash hand basin with gold plated taps.

On the first floor the main bathroom towards the front of the house contains a reproduction roll top bath with gold plated shower fitment to the pillar taps as well as a close coupled WC and a pedestal wash hand basin with tiled splash and a separate shower cubicle in the corner with sliding aluminium screen in a tiled surround.

There is an additional en-suite bathroom above the middle rear wing elevation which contains a vanity wash hand basin, panelled bath with gold plated shower mixer and taps as well as a low flush WC with wooden seat and lid.

Directly opposite this bathroom is a further shower room with WC containing a pedestal wash hand basin, shower cubicle with aluminium screen and shower mixer as well as a close coupled WC and a heated gold plated towel rail.

Condition

All of the sanitaryware has been upgraded and replaced at some stage in the last 20 years or so by the previous owner occupiers containing white sanitary fittings of a reasonable standard.

The more recent addition was the main bathroom on the first floor and contains a relatively modern suite with replacement shower cubicle including a power shower facility to that and the en-suite bathroom at the rear.

The fittings are all of a reasonable standard and generally functional although there are a couple of blemishes and some tarnishing of the gold plated fittings downstairs in the cloakroom off the utility.

INTERIOR DECORATIONS

Description

All of the internal walls and ceilings have been painted in emulsion an the joinery timbers have a dark finish which is oil based.

Condition

The majority of decorations have been upgraded and maintained to a reasonable standard throughout in the last few years although there are some areas of general soiling and further decoration is required. Some staining of the wallpaper coverings has occurred in the ground floor dining room due to penetrating of rising damp which will need to be dealt with in due course.

In all other respects there are no signs of major issues that need to be dealt with prior to taking up occupation.

SERVICES

NOTE

Only detailed specialist tests will confirm the adequacy, efficiency and/or safety of services' installations. Surveyors are not qualified to undertake these tests. Any comments on services in this report are made by way of general observation of the visible parts only. We recommend that you arrange for the services' installations to be inspected by specialists.

DRAINAGE

Description

Storm water drainage feeds from the main roofs into hopper heads and downpipes around the perimeter of the house all of which feed into soakaways below ground.

Foul waste discharges from the toilets and bathrooms into a private drainage system that runs along the right hand side of the dwelling into a septic tank which is a traditional facility that was installed many years ago.

Condition

The storm drains appear to have fractured below ground to the right hand side west wing and rear main elevation which has caused excessive stormwater ingress to the cellar compartment. The drains will therefore need to be exposed and repaired / replaced as necessary to avoid ongoing problems.

The discharge of foul waste appears to take place through existing drains into a septic tank which was installed quite a few years ago but was not fully tested during the course of our survey. We therefore recommend that you obtain the advice of a drainage engineer to ensure the system still remains watertight. You will also need to be prepared to empty the septic tank periodically depending upon the degree of use.

COLD WATER

Description

Domestic cold water is supplied by Severn Trent Water Authority with a rising main and stop tap which feeds a cold water storage tank.

Condition

The cold water supply appears constant and adequate but was not fully tested during the course of our inspection.

GAS

Description

The property is connected to mains gas.

Condition

The gas supply appears adequate but was not fully tested.

ELECTRICITY

Description

Mains electric is supplied to lighting and power circuits by means of a meter and a consumer unit beneath the staircase on the ground floor.

Condition

The electrical wiring circuits appear to have been upgraded over the years although some further attention is needed to the wiring circuits in the west wing and the rear cellar compartment where stormwater discharge and ingress has caused fusing of the system.

As we are not qualified electrical contractors and whilst the circuits appear generally functional and adequate it would be prudent to obtain an electrical contractors report to ensure the system complies with current NICEIC Regulations.

HOT WATER

Description

Domestic hot water is supplied by a large copper direct circulating hot water cylinder in the first floor airing cupboard at the back of the landing.

Condition

This appears to supply draw off points at first floor level to the main bathrooms and shower rooms.

The system of hot water seems to have been upgraded at some stage in the last few years most probably at the time the boiler was installed and seems to be generally functional. I would however suggest you seek the advice of a qualified heating and plumbing contractor to ensure there is sufficient capacity for a house of this size bearing in mind the number of bedrooms and bathroom facilities.

There is another hot water storage tank in the airing cupboard off the en-suite bathroom servicing this particular room which also appears to be of adequate capacity.

HEATING

Description

There are two individual heating systems both of which are gas fired facilities and servicing the ground and first / second floor accommodation on two separate zones.

Downstairs is an ‘Ideal Logic’ combination gas boiler in the utility room servicing all of the radiators on the ground floor.

Upstairs is a wall mounted ‘Mainstream HE’ gas system heating boiler in one of the airing cupboards of the en-suite bathroom feeding radiators on the first and second floor.

Condition

The system of central heating has been upgraded and fairly modern boilers have been installed in the last couple of years or so both of which appear to be in good repair and generally functional but were not fully tested. I would therefore recommend you seek the advice of a Gas Safe engineer or obtain copies of service records from the existing owners to ensure the reliability of the system.

THERMAL INSULATION

Description

There are some layers of fibre glass quilt in the loft space where accessible although the majority of the roof space is occupied by bedroom accommodation.

Condition	The level of loft insulation appears quite reasonable but should be increased to 300 mm in thickness where accessible to minimise heat loss and comply with Energy Efficiency Guidelines.

GROUNDS

THE SITE

Description

The farmhouse stands in approximately 10 acres of gardens and fields as well as paddocks which extend to a point towards the rear left hand boundary and have separate access from a lane towards the rear for servicing the timber stables at the rear of the property. The house is approached by means of a long winding tarmac drive through remote controlled metal double gates off the public highway and has parking along the rear of the house in front of the garage block. The grounds themselves are in need of some general further maintenance and improvement and the timber post and rail fencing and hedgerow will obviously require ongoing maintenance in the future.

GARAGES

Description

At the back of the house is a double garage block built in the last 30 years or so of solid brick surmounted by a timber framework along the side with shiplap boarding and the whole of which is surmounted by a timber pitched clay tiled roof. To the front of the garage are two sets of timber double doors and a pedestrian door along the right hand side.

Condition

The garage block itself was built some years ago probably at the same time as the new kitchen was built and contains a number of reclaimed oak beams providing vertical and horizontal support all of which have been surmounted by fairly modern softwood rafters. A concrete floor slab has also been laid and the garage block seems to be generally secure and watertight.

PERMANENT OUTBUILDINGS

Description

To the rear right hand corner of the house is a stable block of timber construction which has been built in recent years and seems to be generally secure and watertight.

EXTERNAL AREAS / PATIOS / PATHS ETC

Description

The driveway approach off the public highway has a tarmac surface which has not been edged to a certain degree but seems to be fairly level and no major attention is required at this stage. To the rear of the kitchen of the main house and across the front of the building are concrete cobble stones which have been relaid in the last few years.

The external surfacing has been replaced during the course of general renovation although some further ongoing maintenance is needed to certain places particularly where the cobble stones have subsided to the right hand side and across the rear elevation due to storm water discharge from the downpipe.

BOUNDARIES AND FENCES

Description	The boundary lines are enclosed by a mixture of post and rail fencing, a brick wall to the front left hand corner and main elevation of the garden where it adjoins the original barns. There is also a brick wall across the rear boundary of the main garden that extends as far as the corner of the garage block. The remaining land is contained by post and rail fencing as well as a mixture of different hedgerow and wire fencing.
Condition	It was not possible to carry out detailed examination of all the boundary lines due to the size of the plot and you will therefore need to carry out some further ongoing maintenance in the next few years particularly where some of the brick walls have perished over a long period of time due to frost damage.

GENERAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Description	Hall Close Farm is situated in a rural location around greenbelt farmland on the outskirts of Bridgnorth in a village known as Alveley. The property was built in the 17th century and has an existing use for residential purposes and appears to comply with current Planning Regulations. There are no adverse Planning Proposals to my knowledge affecting this or the immediate location but have not carried out a local search. I am not aware of any adverse ground conditions in terms of mining, landfill or contamination, flooding or any other environmental issues. It would however be prudent to obtain a report from the Environment Agency to verify those details.

STRUCTURAL RISKS

NATURAL SUBSIDENCE RISK

Geology	The Geological Survey Map shows the property standing in an area of Alveley Mudstone, Siltstone and sandstone sedimentary bedrock.
Comments	This is a slightly variable strata but of suitable bearing capacity for general residential development. See surveyor's comments under Structural Movement below.

TREES

Inspection	During my inspection of the property I did not see any tree that would have any significant effect on the foundations.
Comments	See surveyor's comments under Structural Movement below.

STRUCTURAL MOVEMENT

Past and current movement	During the course of my survey we found evidence of historic movement to the main oak framework of the farmhouse which has caused bulging of the rear flank wall of the west wing and which in previous years has been secured by the insertion of steel tie bars which now appears to have arrested the possibility of any ongoing movement.
Risk of future movement	Geological mapping indicates that there is a low potential risk of foundation damage to domestic properties from subsidence hazards for the postcode in which the property is located.

DAMPNESS

Inspection	Tests were carried out with a electronic moisture meter to the internal rooms. We found high moisture levels to the 9 " solid brick walls in the corner dining room which is probably the result of an ineffective DPC. High moisture levels were also noted beneath the floors in that and the sitting room within the cellar compartment partly the result of stormwater ingress from fractured downpipes.
Comments	We found evidence of widespread damp to the right hand side of the building and also within the sandstone footings within the main drawing room and study below the timber sole plate. These areas will therefore require further examination by a damp specialist contractor who should provide an estimate for the cost of any localised treatment.

TIMBER DEFECTS

Inspection	We carried out an examination of all of the structural timbers to the floors, walls and roof as far as possible as well as the external facings of the oak framework.

Comments

We found widespread evidence of historic infestation by wood boring beetle to quite a number of the structural timbers which now appears inactive but will need to be examined in more detail by a timber specialist contractor. There are no signs of ongoing problems but did detect some weakening of the oak framework to the rear wall of the west wing where surface rot has occurred. Whilst these oak beams have been sealed you will need to ensure that the level of rot has not penetrated to such a degree that it affects the structural integrity of the building fabric. It would also appear that at some stage in the next few years some replacement work may prove necessary during the course of ongoing maintenance.

There are no other widespread timber defects and where there are any specific problems I have mentioned these under the elements concerned.

STATUTORY & OTHER RISKS

PLANNING

Matter for your Solicitor	No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with Planning matters. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.
Comment	Bearing in mind this is a Grade II listed building it would appear that Planning Consent may have been required for the kitchen extension, garage block, rear utility and ground floor toilet which appears to have been built at some stage in the last 30 years or so. Further enquiries should therefore be made of Bridgnorth District Council to confirm the necessary Approvals were obtained. It also appears that velux rooflights have been installed to the rear elevations of the main roof. These would have also required Approval from the Conservation Department at the Local Authority and further enquiries should be made of the vendors Solicitors or the Conservation Officer.

BUILDING REGULATIONS

Matter for your Solicitor	No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with Building Regulation matters. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.
Comments	Upon inspection it appears that the various ground floor extensions would have required Building Regulation Approvals. Copies of Completion Certificates should therefore be obtained from the vendors Solicitors to ensure all work has been carried out to the satisfaction of the Building Control Department at Bridgnorth District Council.

PARTY WALL ETC. ACT 1996

Note	Since 1 July 1997, this Act has obliged anyone undertaking works of a structural nature to or near the party wall such as the installation of beams, installation of damp proof coursing or other structural works, to notify all adjoining owners, irrespective of whether planning permission has been applied for or granted.
Comments	During my inspection of the property, I did not see evidence of any building works undertaken since 1 July 1997 to which the Act would apply.

ROADS

Matter for your Solicitor	No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with the road. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.
Comments	From my inspection, I believe the road is made-up and adopted by the Local Highway Authority. The driveway approach off the public highway is in private ownership and there no longer appears to be a right of way to the adjoining barns which have separate access from the rear.

RIGHTS OF WAY

Matter for your Solicitor	No enquiries have been made of the Local Authority in connection with rights of way. You should ask your Solicitor to advise you in this respect.
Comments	During the course of my inspection I was made aware that there is a vehicular right of way towards the rear of the site for access to the stable block which comes along the driveway which is currently owned by the adjoining barns although vehicular and pedestrian access has been retained within the title deeds. Further details should be confirmed by your Solicitors.

OUR TERMS & CONDITIONS

1. These terms and conditions form (together with the Order Form) part of a contract between Paul Jackson FRICS and the Customer named on the front of the report. These terms and conditions apply to the exclusion of all other terms and conditions. However, the report is objective and can be relied upon by any party that has a valid legal interest in the condition of the property, provided that interest has been notified to and acknowledged by us in writing. If required, upon payment of a reasonable administration fee we will re-issue the report, e.g. in the name of a purchaser of the property.

   Important: No-one should rely on the report or make any inferences from it beyond the extent of the original instructions accepted by Paul Jackson FRICS

2. The **purpose of the inspection** and the verbal and written reports is to put the present condition and performance of the property into an overall perspective and this inspection will be undertaken by a person (the "Surveyor") who is assessed and approved by Paul Jackson FRICS.

3. The report is **NOT a guarantee** that the property is free from defects other than those mentioned in the report, nor is it an insurance policy.

4. The report will **NOT include a market valuation** unless additional fees are agreed in writing beforehand.

5. The report **WILL include an IRV** - Insurance Reinstatement Valuation - based on the Guide to House Rebuilding Costs prepared by the Building Cost Information Service of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors and The Association of British Insurers.

6. The report follows a **visual inspection of the accessible parts** of the property. Notes are taken during the inspection and these notes contain the original information to which the Surveyor refers and upon which the Surveyor relies when subsequently reporting to a client, either verbally or in writing. A written report supersedes any verbal report and should be considered fully before any legally binding decision is made in respect of any expenditure on the property.

7. The inspection and report will focus on the **condition of the principal elements** of the property. Fittings and finishes will be subject to general inspection only. Comparatively minor points will be excluded. Permanent outbuildings converted to habitable use will be inspected to the same level as the main house.

8. There will be **practical limitations** on the scope of the inspection. The Surveyor will not break out or open up the structure, lift fitted carpets, cut floorboards or move heavy or delicate furniture. Ladders are carried for access to flat roofs and structures up to a height of three metres. The Surveyor will inspect accessible and safe roof spaces and areas below floors, but will be unable to report that parts of the property which are covered, unexposed or otherwise inaccessible are free from defects.

9. The report will include a **Summary** that will summarise the Surveyor's findings under the headings of "property", "brief overall assessment", "serious defects", "essential repairs", "other repairs", "further investigation", "environmental matters" and "matters for your Solicitor". The comments in this summary are derived from the report and must be read in conjunction with the report in its entirety.

10. **"Serious defects"** are defined as defects that, in the Surveyor's opinion, threaten the stability and safety of the structure or of persons using the property. Examples include subsidence; wall-tie failure; excessive bowing or fracturing of walls or chimneystacks; and extensive dry rot in structural timbers.

11. **"Essential repairs"** are defined as defects that, in the Surveyor's opinion, require attention within six months to prevent the defect from becoming a "serious defect". Examples include failing roof coverings; blocked, broken or inadequate gutters and downpipes; heavily eroded pointing; and active beetle infestation.

12. **"Other repairs"** are defined as defects that, in the Surveyor's opinion, are not "serious defects" or "essential repairs" within our definition, but require attention either now or at some time in the future to put the property into, or maintain it in, good condition for its age and type. Examples include plasterwork repairs; insulation upgrades; internal and external decorations. "Other Repairs" are beyond the scope of and are not reported in the Headline Survey.

13. **"Further investigation"** is recommended where the Surveyor has good reason to suspect the presence of a "serious defect" or "essential repair" but has been unable to confirm this or ascertain the extent of the problem. Examples include blocked or leaking drains; timber decay; questionable alterations to the structure.

14. **Guideline Budgets** for repairs are included in a report where appropriate, but they are based on information available to the Surveyor at the time. We recommend that all repair costs are subject to confirmation by further investigation/specification and then contractors' competitive tenders prior to making any legal commitment.

15. Surveyors are not qualified to test or confirm the adequacy or safety of services installations. The Surveyor will report on the basis of a visual inspection of the accessible parts. We recommend that you arrange for **specialist tests** of the water supply, drains, electrical, gas and/or heating installations.

16. Surveyors are not qualified to test or confirm the condition of **leisure facilities** such as swimming pools, Jacuzzis, gyms, tennis courts, etc. Customers are advised to commission their own specialist inspection.

17. This is NOT a specific asbestos or other **hazardous materials** survey. The sampling and testing of asbestos containing materials or other hazardous or suspect materials lies outside the scope of the building survey. Where such materials are discovered or suspected within the normal scope of inspection, they will be reported and appropriate recommendations made for further investigation.

18. If the property is offered **leasehold**, then you must obtain advice from your solicitor in respect of your legal liabilities under the leasehold arrangements for the property and in particular in respect of the repairs. The scope of the Surveyor's inspection will relate to internal finishes of the leasehold property to be purchased and adjacent fabric within the immediate curtilage of the property. Other elements of the structure will be subject to a brief inspection from the exterior and/or common parts only.

19. Unless otherwise agreed, **fees for further investigations, follow-up advice** and/or other Surveying services are charged at the current rate per hour plus expenses and VAT.

20. **Force Majeure** – whilst every reasonable effort will be made to carry out the inspection at the date/time agreed, we cannot be held liable for any losses caused by matters outside our control, such as, but not exclusively:- surveyor illness, traffic/vehicle delay/breakdown, extreme weather conditions or vendor unavailability.

21. **Health and Safety** – Paul Jackson FRICS and its surveyors are required to comply with Health and Safety legislation and RICS Guidance Note "Surveying Safely – A commitment to Surveying Safely". The surveyor will assess the safety implications presented by the site and may have to restrict the scope of the inspection that is able to be carried out.

22. We operate a **complaints procedure**, a copy of which is available on request.

23. If we are found to be negligent in providing any of the services under this contract, the measure of damages for and limit of any liability will be diminution of property value at the time of the report.

24. This contract is governed by **English Law** and the parties hereto hereby submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

25. These terms and conditions may be varied by Paul Jackson FRICS on written notice to the Customer at its address shown on the Order Form.