

ALAN J. YOUNG Ltd
Chartered Building Surveyors

BUILDING SURVEY

upon

2 EAST STREET
ILMINSTER

on behalf of

ILMINSTER TOWN COUNCIL

30 October 2020



The Lodge, Penn Hill, Yeovil, Somerset
BA20 1SF

Tel/fax: 01935 479164
Mobile: 07767 203637



Instructions

I am instructed by Mrs H White, the Town Clerk of Ilminster Town Council, to carry out a Building Survey upon 2 East Street, Ilminster.

The survey has been carried out and written up in accordance with the Conditions of Engagement previously sent to you; a copy of your signed and dated acceptance form is attached at the end of this report.

The property was inspected on Friday, 30 October 2020. The weather at the time of my inspection was overcast, with light drizzle, following a recent period of exceptionally wet and windy conditions. The ground floor of the property is presently unoccupied and has previously been used as a retail unit; the first and second floors of the property are currently occupied as residential flats.

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, I have confirmed with Ilminster Town Council that the interior parts of the flats would not be inspected due to the fact that they are occupied and it would not be safe or practical to carry out any inspection on these areas. None of the internal parts of the flats have therefore been inspected, or the roof voids and the means of support to the main pitched roof above the whole property.

Your solicitor must check the ownership of the property in order to confirm there are no onerous restrictions or encumbrances attached to the property, and also to very carefully check the present conditions and details of the leasehold arrangements for the occupants of the flats.

This report is produced solely on behalf of Ilminster Town Council and their professional legal advisers, and should not be disclosed to any third party without the prior written consent of Alan J. Young Ltd, Chartered Building Surveyors.

The Property

2 East Street comprises an end-terrace and attached mixed retail and residential unit. The external walls to the building are a mixture of solid local stone and solid brickwork underneath a pitched and part natural slate and part asbestos cement slate roof covering. The property has suspended upper floors and a solid ground floor.

I understand the ground floor of the property was previously used as a retail unit but has now been empty for approximately one year. The first and second floors are currently occupied and used as residential accommodation. The interior parts of the accommodation have not been subject to any inspection due to the Coronavirus restrictions and the practicalities of carrying out a detailed inspection on multiple occupied flats.

It is clear from my inspection that the property has not been subject to any recent refurbishment or repair and now requires an extensive refurbishment and repair, particularly to the external roof coverings, external maintenance and repairs to the walls and the complete stripping-out and refurbishment of the ground floor retail unit.

The property is situated centrally within Ilminster. You are obviously aware of the local area and amenities.

I would strongly recommend that you obtain an up-to-date asbestos survey of the building in order to confirm the amount, location and risk of exposure to asbestos, both on the external parts of the building but also on the internal parts of the building. This is particularly important given the amount of renovation and repair work that is now needed on both the internal and external parts of the building.

External Report

The Roof Covering

The main pitched roof over the front part of the property, to both the front and rear elevation roof slopes, is covered with asbestos-based slates. The slates were seen to be covering the roof on the front elevation overlooking East Street, the side elevation overlooking Ditton Street and the inner roof slopes overlooking the courtyard which gives access to the first and second floor flats. The slates contain a significant asbestos content.

It is clear from inspection that the roof has not been subject to any major refurbishment or repair probably at least since the 1950s or 1960s. It is therefore very unlikely that the slates will have the benefit of a felt underlay, or, if there is an older felt underlay, it is likely to be in a very poor and weathered condition. If any slates become loose or detached there is a very strong probability that water will pass directly into the roof void and the ceilings to the flats below.

There is evidence from the first floor flat roof structure that parts of the rear elevation roof slope have been subject to some more recent repair. A number of the asbestos slates have been taken off and replaced with modern cementitious slates.

The asbestos slate roof covering has now or will very soon reach the end of its useful life expectancy and should be stripped off and replaced with a modern natural or cementitious slate roof. These older asbestos slates become very brittle over a period of time and can now be easily damaged by impact or wear and tear.

The presence of asbestos content will mean that the slates will need disposed of by contractors licensed to handle this type of asbestos-based product. When lifting individual slates in order to carry out repairs, it is very often the case that all of the surrounding slates will break due to the very brittle and fragile nature of the slates. It is also extremely likely that the original nail fixing, which is used to secure the slate onto the timber battens underneath, will probably have started to rust and this will increase the risk of slates becoming loose or detached, particularly during windy weather conditions. I would therefore recommend that the entire slate roof covering should be taken off and disposed of by contractors familiar with the handling of asbestos-based products. The felt and battening underneath can be stripped off and replaced with treated softwood battens, a breather membrane underlay in preference to the older bitumen or tar-based roofing felts and then the replacement of the present asbestos slates with either natural slates or cementitious slates. The choice of replacement slate will depend on whether the property is located within a Conservation Area: if the property is in a Conservation Area you will probably need to use natural slates as opposed to modern manufactured slates.

The above works will require the provision of a safe and secure access scaffold to all elevations.

The leadwork that has been formed on the hips to the pitched and slated roof and also on all of the flashings and upstands between the slates and the adjoining walls, will all need to be

stripped off and replaced with lead installed to the design and specification laid down by the Lead Sheet Association, who is the approved and recommended body for the installation and specification of leadwork.

On the three-storey section of the building to the rear of the site which has the first and second floor flats, the pitched roof is covered with natural roofing slates. The natural roofing slates on the front elevation overlooking Ditton Street may well have been subject to some more recent repair work. There is evidence that the concealed valley gutter that is located between the parapet wall in front of the slates and on top of the wall has been relined with fibreglass. I suspect it was originally covered with leadwork but this has more recently been taken out and replaced with the current fibreglass lining. The rear elevation roof slope was not seen to be in a good condition and there is evidence of quite a few loose or detached slates that will need to be replaced. There is also evidence of some significant weathering to the lead flashings on the junction of the hip and ridge tiles, but also on the junction of the valley gutter between the roof covering over the second floor flats and the small section of the gable end wall that provides the junction between the natural slate and the asbestos slate roofs.

Whilst the roof may have had some recent repair work, I do not think that it has had any more significant refurbishment and therefore I suspect that the slates are located onto a very old, weathered and probably outdated felt underlay. It is therefore very likely that the natural slate roof coverings will also need to be stripped off in order to remove and replace the old and outdated felt and battens underneath with a breather membrane underlay, replacement treated softwood battens and then the reinstatement of serviceable slates. I would estimate that around 50-60% of the slates should be suitable for reuse; the others will need to be replaced due partly to the present condition of the slates but also due to the amount of natural breakage that will occur when you take off and re-nail slates back into position.

It is therefore my recommendation that all of the asbestos and natural slates to the pitched roof coverings will need to be taken off and replaced in order to provide a breather membrane underlay and replacement treated softwood battens, and to reinstate those serviceable natural slates but replace the asbestos slates with either natural slates or manufactured slates, together with replacement of leadwork. This will be a very expensive repair to the roof but also due to the provision of safe and secure access scaffolding which will need to be located on the pavements running along East Street and Ditton Street.

I would therefore very strongly recommend that you should have this work costed-up prior to purchase.

All the plastic rainwater gutters were seen to be partly blocked due to moss coming off the slates, and they were also seen to be leaking on the gutter joints and back-falling. The gutters should therefore be replaced in conjunction with the stripping-off and replacement of the roof.

A number of the gutters above the first floor flat roof were seen to be discharging rainwater into the foul water system. They are connected into what would appear to be soil and vent pipes. This is not good practice: the surface water drains should be routed into a dedicated surface water drainage system and not connected into the foul drains. The smells from the foul drains are likely to rise up through the rainwater downpipes and create rather an unpleasant drainage smell around the junction of the first and second floor windows.

The rainwater gutters and downpipes facing onto Ditton Street are completely broken and need to be replaced.

To the rear courtyard, the first floor flat roof structure which covers part of the loading bay and storage area to the rear of the retail unit has a flat roof which is made up of promenade roof tiles - these allow access on top of the flat roof structure and are laid onto an old asphalt roof covering. The promenade tiles are starting to lift in some places due to the bubbling-up of the asphalt underneath and will require resetting back into position. I believe the flat roof is also shared with the neighbouring building occupied by Boots. The condition of the asphalt could not be closely inspected other than where it is rolled over the edge of the roof at eaves level.

The visual appearance of the asphalt would suggest that the roof has not been stripped and re-covered for at least 40 to 50 years. Asphalt will typically have a life expectancy of around 50 to 60 years although this is very much dependent upon the type, quality and installation of the asphalt laid during the course of the last re-covering of the flat roof. It is therefore very likely that the asphalt roof covering will soon require replacement both across the flat roof structure for this particular building but also on the neighbouring building occupied by Boots. The replacement of the asphalt covering will be disruptive, particularly to the occupants of the first and second floor flats who use the first floor flat roof structure for the purposes of accessing the residential units.

The property has no chimneys discharging through the roof. I suspect that the original chimneys have at some time been taken down below roof level.

External Walling

The external walls to front elevation of the building and also the walls running along Ditton Street are of solid brick construction. The bond of brickwork and construction of the walls would suggest the building was probably built in the mid-1800s, although perhaps the part of the building to the rear which incorporates the second floor flats may have been built around 1900. The brick surfaces to the front elevation have a painted surface, along with some of the brickwork along Ditton Street. The painting of this type of brickwork is not recommended: unfortunately, masonry paint will tend to have quite a limited life expectancy when applied to old clay bricks and you can clearly see that the present decorative surface is wearing, flaking off in some places and beginning to show evidence of damp grinning through the decorative surface.

The external painted brick walls will therefore require very regular redecoration, which will involve an extensive and thorough preparation work on the brick walls in order to remove any loose or flaking paintwork. The walls will then require the application of a stabilising solution before they are repainted with a good-quality, exterior breathable masonry paint.

The external walls were not built with the benefit of a cavity and will therefore always allow penetrating damp to occur internally, which has and will continue to cause damp and more general deterioration to the internal plastered and decorative wall surfaces both within the retail unit but also within the flats above.

On the front elevation of the building there is very clear evidence of some distortion in the brickwork above the first floor windows. Evidence of movement in the bricks and the horizontal bed joints can clearly be seen. There is also evidence of some probably recent cracking which has split the decorative surface and also some of the mortar joints. It is interesting to note that there is quite clearly some deflection in the line of the asbestos slates over the roof supports directly above the front right-hand side first floor window: it is above this window that the most significant movement was seen in the front wall. The width and direction of movement in the brickwork together with the slight sagging and undulation of the roof structure suggests that the hipped roof construction has been subject to some movement

which has caused an outward and rotational movement on the front elevation wall and part of the gable wall.

The movement could also be associated with either the failure of the structural supporting lintels above the first floor windows but also quite possibly some disturbance that might have occurred many years ago as and when the shopfront was enlarged and subject to the introduction of steel beams across the original shopfront opening.

The amount of movement seen within the upper brick walls is significant and requires further investigation, both into the condition of the roof structure in order to see whether the principal hip rafter or hip truss has failed or requires structural improvement work, but also to very carefully examine the condition and make-up of the lintels above the first floor windows and also the ground floor shop front. This is very clearly something that must be undertaken prior to purchase so that you are aware of the causes of the movement both in the roof structure but also the front elevation wall, in order that the scope and extent of repair and costs associated with the work can be ascertained prior to purchase.

Whilst I appreciate that the front elevation wall has probably not been redecorated for many years and much of the movement in the brickwork has occurred prior to the more recent redecoration, there is nevertheless evidence of the splitting of the present decorative surface which would suggest that some of the movement is still ongoing.

The windowsill above the front elevation first floor right-hand window has also dropped significantly from the right to the left-hand side of the sill. This would also be consistent with an outward and rotational movement in the wall but also due to a slight drop in the level of the brickwork underneath the sill, probably as a result of a drop or disturbance in the masonry walling as and when the shopfront was previously modified.

The brickwork walling to the side elevation overlooking Ditton Street was seen to be in a better condition, although the masonry paint is very worn and dated and requires replacement.

The brickwork at low level has also been affected by significant spalling of the surface of the bricks. This is due to the effects of rising damp within the brick wall: the damp soaks into the brick, rises up through the brickwork by way of capillary action, freezes during cold weather, expands and leads to the gradual crumbling of the surface of the bricks. This is the cause of the crumbling brickwork at low level but also the very poor condition of the white-painted but also the black bitumen-painted surface that can be seen on the brickwork above pavement level. The bitumen coating should be stripped back and then replaced in order to maintain the integrity of the brick walling underneath. The painted surface above the bitumen should also be stripped off, the walls underneath require extensive preparation work including the removal of the loose and flaking paintwork, the repointing of the brick joints and then the reapplication of a new good-quality external masonry paint.

When redecorating external brickwork, you must use a paint that has a breathable quality. The masonry paint that has been applied to all of the external walls is not a breathable type and consequently will be more adversely affected by dampness within the wall.

To the right-hand wall overlooking Ditton Street there is clear evidence of some movement on the corner section of the wall between the brickwork and the stone gable end wall overlooking the private car park. Similar evidence of movement was also seen on the right-hand wall to the gable where the brickwork to the corner of the wall above the flat roof was seen to have split and separated from the stonework. It would appear that the brickwork to both the front and rear wall has separated and moved away from stonework on the gable end wall. This has

clearly caused some movement and distress in the walling. The junction between the brickwork and stonework now needs to be repaired in order to ensure that the stone and brick surfaces are properly cut-toothed and bonded into each of the walls.

Above the level of the first floor windows steel plates have been fitted onto the external surface of the wall and which are probably tied back into the original walls or roof structure. This would clearly suggest that the walls have previously been affected by structural movement which necessitated the provision of the steel plates and retaining bars.

Further evidence of movement was seen over the ground floor right-hand side sash window where there is very clear evidence of some cracking and disturbance to the brickwork over the sash window arched lintel. Cracking was also seen on the internal surface of the wall to the rear internal loading area between the brickwork and the stone gable. There was also quite a noticeable bulge in the surface of the wall just above this window where the wall has moved in an outward direction. This would suggest that the outer brick surfaces of the wall are probably separated from the internal brick surfaces in what is around a 15- to 18-inch thick brick wall.

The cause of the separation of bricks is probably due to the inadequate tying-in of the brickwork during the course of initial construction, but which has been significantly and adversely affected by long-term moisture driving in through the solid brickwork wall. The moisture content within the brickwork has probably built up between the various courses of brickwork within the wall thickness and over a period of time this has caused some separation within the overall thickness of the brick walling. Further investigation work will need to be undertaken, including the removal of some of the brickwork above the ground floor right-hand side window, in order to establish the make-up and structural condition of the wall through the entire thickness of the walling, and to see whether any structural repair works are necessary to ensure that the outer and solid 9" brickwork is fully bonded through to the internal brickwork.

If upon further investigation work repair is needed, this will involve the application of either tie-bars or bed joint reinforcement, which will need to be cut into the masonry joints in order to secure the walls between the inner and outer courses of the bricks, but also between the brickwork and the stone gable end wall.

The brick arched lintels over the ground floor window will require structural repair. The first floor window above has had the brick arches removed and replaced with a single concrete lintel, and I suspect this may also be necessary above the ground floor window.

The solid stone wall to the gable end overlooking the car park is covered with very dense and overgrown ivy, all of which now needs to be stripped back. Unfortunately, the plant growth has caused quite a lot of damage to the mortar joints within the stone walling underneath. Upon removal of the ivy, the stone wall will require extensive repointing: all of the present mortar joints will need to be raked out and the wall then repointed with a pure lime mortar mix. Cement mortar should not be used for the repointing of solid stone walls. The brickwork on the central part of the gable end wall probably originally served a chimney which has now been taken down. The brick wall will require repointing. There is also evidence of some slight movement in the stonework and the mortar joints to the left-hand side of the stonework wall. Again, I suspect this is as a result of some separation and movement between the stone gable and the side elevation brick wall facing onto Ditton Street.

The stonework at low level was seen to be badly crumbling. The cause of this is due to the previous and poor quality and standard of repointing using cement mortar. Much of the cement mortar at low level, but also extending up to the outer walls of the loading bay and to part of the first floor flat above, was seen to be in a very poor, cracked and weathered

condition. All of this decayed mortar now needs to be taken off the wall surfaces and the walls then repointed with lime mortar.

Over the flat roof the walls are a mixture of solid local stone and part brickwork. The solid stone walls to the outer walls of the first and second floor flats also require some extensive repointing, partly due to the rather weathered nature of the mortar but also due to the extensive use of cement mortar rather than lime. The present poor condition of the cement mortar will certainly increase the risk of damp passing through to the internal surfaces of the first and second floor flats.

The brickwork detailing to the wall on the left-hand side where it wraps around the gable end wall was seen to be very weathered indeed. There was evidence of a lot of crumbling of stonework, which was seen to be very damp partly as a result of exposure to the external elements but also due to the leaking of the gutters above. The brickwork now requires extensive repointing but also generally some localised repair in order to ensure that the brickwork is properly cut-toothed and bonded into the surrounding stone walls.

The brick walls overlooking the flat roof have been subject to some more recent rebuilding in parts with modern bricks as opposed to the older clay bricks facing onto East Street and Ditton Street. The condition of the brickwork over the flat roof was seen to be better than elsewhere although, again, some patch repointing is required. You need to bear in mind that all of the external walls are of solid brick or stone construction and do not incorporate a cavity. Therefore, it is very important to maintain the condition of the external face of the brickwork and stonework in order to reduce the risk of damp occurring internally, which will certainly have an adverse effect on the plastered and decorative surfaces to the ground floor retail unit but also the first and second floor flats. The repointing of the brick and stone walls and the reapplication of a breathable exterior-quality paint is therefore now urgently needed.

External Joinery

There is evidence of some extensive rot in the high-level timber and decorative fascia boards underneath both the asbestos slate and natural slate roof coverings. During the course of the stripping off and replacement of the roofs, the fascia boards will need to be taken off and replaced where affected by rot or decay. They will then require decoration.

The timber sash windows to the front elevation first floor flats all require an extensive overhaul. There is evidence externally of rot to the lower parts of the sash, box sash and sill. The professional repair of old and traditional sash windows is expensive and would usually involve the taking out of the box sash casements in order to properly carry out the renovation and repair of these windows. The operation of the sash windows could not be tested internally due to the lack of access within the flats. The front sash windows now need extensive repair and redecoration.

There is also evidence of movement in the concrete sills underneath the windows and especially to the right-hand window which has clearly been affected by some movement associated with the brick walling underneath.

The brickwork to the arches over the sash windows will also require repointing. There is evidence of quite a lot of probably historical movement within the brickwork over the right-hand window arch, which has almost certainly been exacerbated by movement within the hipped roof construction and the walling above. As I have previously explained, this requires further investigation works.

The timber shopfront to the former retail unit is probably beyond any sensible form of economic repair, and will need to be removed and rebuilt. The present front entrance doors have smashed panes of glass. One of the doors has been boarded up with timberwork. The sill units to the shopfront were seen to be rotted with a lot of damage and splitting of timberwork. The glazing to the shopfront does not appear to be modern and appropriate toughened safety glass. I would therefore recommend the replacement of all joinery and glazing to the shopfront, together with the installation of new entrance doors.

The sash windows to the ground floor of the retail unit along Ditton Street all require very extensive redecoration and repair. There is probably less in the way of rot to these windows than that seen along East Street; nevertheless, they do require extensive repair. All of the sash windows are fixed and inoperable, and have broken, sealed or missing sash cords.

The side entrance door on Ditton Street is completely blocked up and sealed, and is affected by rot to the lower parts of the timberwork to the framework and door which will require replacement. The door cannot be accessed from inside the building as the door opening is covered over by a shop fitting on the internal surface of the wall.

The metal staircase giving access to the first floor flat roof structure and access to the flats will soon require redecoration, along with the protective railing. The railing will need to be removed in order to facilitate the future re-covering or replacement of the asphalt roof covering. The metal staircase to the second floor flats is also in need of redecoration, but also the replacement of some rusting and inadequately fixed brackets that have been used to secure the stairs onto the masonry surfaces.

The timber porch on the side of the second floor access to the flats is completely rotted out and probably beyond any sensible form of repair.

All of the timber windows overlooking the flat roof require extensive redecoration work.

The windows to the second floor rooms have been replaced with older PVC windows, whereas those to the ground floor have the original timberwork which is in need of urgent redecoration but also some localised patch repair where the lower parts of the frame and sills are affected by rot.

Above the first floor wall structure in between the natural slate roof covering and the roof covered with asbestos slates, there is a raised parapet wall covered with traditional coping stones. On the outer face of the parapet wall there is a cement-rendered surface which, from ground level inspection, was seen to be in a very poor condition and is probably in need of replacement. The condition of the render will need to be inspected during the course of the stripping-off and replacement of external roof tiles. I suspect, however, that it will need to be taken off and the wall underneath prepared and then re-rendered.

The leadwork at the foot of the wall, which forms a valley gutter between the parapet and the adjoining natural slate roof covering, was seen to be in a very poor condition indeed with the leadwork split, pulling out of the wall and in need of replacement across the entire length of the concealed valley gutter. The timber valley boards under the lead will probably need to be replaced.

The waterproof flashings between the natural slate roof and the raised parapet wall above the stone gable has been formed using a cement-based waterproof fillet. I would recommend that this should be replaced with a lead flashing and soaker in conjunction with the taking-off and replacement of the natural roofing slates underneath.

The condition of all of the natural stone and part concrete coping stones on top of the parapet walls to both ends of the roof above the natural slate roof covering will need to be subject to further inspection during the course of the taking-off and replacement of the slates. I suspect the parapet walls will require quite a lot of repointing and also quite possibly the lifting-off and rebedding of the coping stones in order to ensure they are secure, and are preferably bedded onto a horizontal damp-proof course to prevent damp penetrating into the walls underneath.

The decorative condition of the property was seen to be very poor, and has clearly previously been subject to a lack of decoration which has given rise to the need for immediate redecoration but also the rot seen to a lot of the external timberwork to the fascia boards, windows and doors.

Internal Report

The Roof Void

No inspection was possible on any of the roof structures above the first and second floor flats due to lack of access within the flats because of Covid-19 restrictions. I was therefore unable to inspect any of the roof structure.

I have previously recommended that all the asbestos slates should be taken off and replaced with either natural or manufactured slates. The natural slates on the rear part of the roof also should be taken off and replaced due to the need for the current overhaul, but also due to the general age and condition of the slates which will otherwise require very regular and significant maintenance costs. Based on the visual appearance of the external slates and also the presence of the asbestos slates, I would think that none of the roof slopes have had any more recent major refurbishment and therefore they probably either do not have a felt underlay, or if they do then the felt is likely to be very worn and perished and in need of replacement.

It is therefore my recommendation that all of the roof coverings should be stripped off and replaced in order to provide a breather membrane underlay beneath the slates and replacement treated softwood battens. This will have the significant benefit of enabling the placement of insulation within all of the roof voids: I very much suspect that there is presently a lack of appropriate levels and thicknesses of insulation over the ceilings to the first and second floor flats. The roof structure may also require the application of woodworm treatment. Woodworm activity is very commonly found in roof timberwork of this age and type.

I have previously mentioned the evidence of a significant deflection in the line of the asbestos slate roof to the front elevation over East Street, towards the hipped roof. This requires further investigation work. The deflection within the roof but also the movement seen in the external brick walls would suggest that the hip truss may well have moved in an outward direction, possibly as a result of either rot in the foot of the truss or the separation of components that make up the truss, and the connections between the truss and the surrounding purlins and rafters. The horizontal purlins under the rafters may also be deflecting and in need of repair or strengthening. This will require further investigation work in order to ascertain the condition of the roof structure and then to correctly specify the structural repair work.

Due to the rather poor condition of the lead linings under the valley gutters and also on the upstands to the raised parapet walls above the level of the slates, it is also likely the roof structure might well have been adversely affected by some long-term moisture penetration

and, again, this is an area where further investigation work will need to be carried out in order to confirm whether any structural repair work is necessary on the timberwork underneath the valley gutters or where located close to each of the exposed gable end walls.

The Interior of the Flats

None of the internal surfaces of the flats were inspected due to Covid-19 restrictions, given that the properties are all occupied.

The repairs that I have previously reported that will be necessary on the side elevation brick wall overlooking Ditton Street will, however, involve some opening-up and exposure of the walling within the first floor flats. This will be disruptive to the occupants of the building and will need to be subject to further investigation work.

The poor condition of the external brick and stone walls will undoubtedly be giving rise to damp penetrating through the thickness of the walling.

Ground Floor Retail Unit

Ceilings

The suspended ceiling in the retail unit is in very poor condition. It is probably beyond any sensible form of repair, and will need to be taken down and replaced.

Where there are a number of loose or broken ceiling panels, this revealed the make-up and condition of the original ceiling underneath the first floor flats. The underside of the floor to the first floor flats has not had the benefit of any replacement with a modern fire-protected ceiling structure or insulation.

Where the ceiling panels are presently broken in the suspended ceiling, this revealed a plaster and lath ceiling in very poor condition. Under the floors to the rear flats above the retail unit the ceilings have partly collapsed and are lying across the suspended ceiling panels. The condition of the plaster and lath ceilings would also appear to have been adversely affected by service leaks within the first floor flats.

To the front of the retail unit there is evidence of an older tongue-and-groove painted ceiling above the suspended ceiling - this was also seen to be in a very poor condition.

I would recommend that all of the present plaster and lath and timber-boarded ceilings should be taken down from the underside of the first floor structure. The first floor structure can then be inspected in order to confirm whether the structure requires any modification either in terms of the structure or perhaps the application of woodworm treatment.

The first floor structure appears to comprise of a steel framework with a number of concrete-clad beams but the majority of the floor is of timber joist construction. The timber joists comprise some of the older and original floor joists that are likely to be affected by woodworm activity. There are also a number of replacement timber floor joists. The steelwork located within the floor requires the application of an intumescent fire-protective paint in order to maintain the structural integrity of the steelwork in the event of a fire.

The first floor structure will also require the provision of a suitable sound-protected or sound-deadening quilt in order to restrict noise between the flats and the shop underneath. The ceilings should be replaced with a fully-encapsulated and fire-protected ceiling structure in

order to provide adequate fire protection between the retail unit and the underside of the first floor structure.

The above repairs and replacement of ceilings would apply to all ground floor ceilings throughout the retail unit but also the storage areas and loading bays.

Internal Walling

The internal walls to the retail unit and storage areas have very poor quality dry-lining and shop fittings that have been affected by a lot of general impact damage and wear and tear, but also damage due to contact of the dry-lining with the very damp brick and stone walls underneath. All of the dry-lining and shop fittings will need to be removed from the internal surfaces of the retail unit and storage areas, the walls behind repaired and probably repointed and then to have the application of a vertical tanking system in order to prevent further damp occurring through to the internal wall surfaces. The tanking system should take the form of plastic sheeting such as that manufactured by Delta Membrane or Newtonite, and which can be fixed onto the surfaces of the brick and stone walls using sealed proprietary pegs. The internal surface of the wall can then be insulated and dry-lined. The provision of the tanking will prevent further and more significant damp affecting the internal replastered or dry-lined surfaces, and will also enable the placement of insulation within the wall thicknesses which will help to reduce heat loss through the cold and uninsulated brick and stone wall surfaces. This work applies to all of the walls within the retail unit, the rear storage areas and internal loading bay.

The wall surfaces behind the dry-lining where they are currently exposed were seen to be very significantly affected by the penetrating damp through the walls but also rising damp. The external walls would not have been built with the benefit of any form of horizontal damp-proof course and this will naturally allow rising damp to occur internally. Without the benefits of damp-proofing and dry-lining, the damp will continue.

I have previously explained that there is evidence of some cracking and movement on the rear internal loading bay wall between the brick wall looking out onto Ditton Street and the stone wall to the side of the loading bay door. This confirms my previous opinion that there has been some separation between the brick walls and the stone gable end wall. The two surfaces need to be fully cut-toothed and bonded back in where the brick and stone surfaces have recently or previously moved.

Flooring

The internal floors to the retail area have a tiled floor surface that was seen to be very dirty, worn and cracked in numerous places. The floor tiles have also been damaged by the removal of shop fittings, particularly around the perimeters of the walls. I am not sure whether it would be feasible to repair the floor tiles - I suspect they will probably all need to be taken up and replaced.

During the course of the replacement of the floor tiles, you will also need to provide a new waterproof membrane underneath the tiles in order to restrict damp coming up through the floor, but also the risk of damp between the edges of the floor and the tanking system that I have recommended should be applied to the internal surfaces of the walls to the retail unit and storage areas. The floor surfaces to the rear storage areas were seen to be very worn and in need of a significant amount of repair and making-good, and the application of a new protective floor covering.

There has been quite a lot of general impact damage to the floor and the low-level wall surfaces surrounding the rear internal loading bay. The internal walls within this area have the application of a metal checker-plate which has been fixed to the walls in order to reduce further damage to the surrounding plaster and rendered surfaces. The checker-plate on the floors and walls is beginning to rust and was seen to be affected by quite a lot of damage as a result of general impact and wear and tear.

Internal Joinery

I have previously recommended that the shopfront should be replaced in its entirety: I am not sure that is suitable for any form of sensible repair. The entrance doors are completely broken, with smashed glass and are in need of replacement.

The sash windows fitted along Ditton Street are not operational and have numerous broken panes of glass. They would not be suitable for opening-up and exposure and if the windows are needed for either light or ventilation, they would all certainly need to be replaced.

There has been a significant amount of general impact and wear and tear on all of the internal surfaces to both the retail unit and the rear storage areas. The retail unit will require completely new and replacement shop fittings throughout.

The thermal performance of the retail unit will be very poor indeed.

The access ramps to the rear of the retail unit and storage areas also require some further making good.

The decorative condition of the internal parts of the retail unit and storage areas was all seen to be very poor indeed. The property will require extensive redecoration.

Internal Services

Electrical Installation

The electrical installations throughout the property, whilst having undergone some fairly recent updating seen by way of the relatively modern distribution boards, is nevertheless seen very significantly and adversely affected by the stripping-out of the contents of the retail unit and also the shop fittings. There are numerous and extensive broken or stripped-out data cables but also some electrical wiring. The electrical wiring above the suspended ceiling was seen to be very poorly installed and is not laid in trunking or bundled up into protective cable runs.

I believe the retail unit will almost certainly require complete rewiring in order to achieve an installation that is safe and compliant with the latest standards and codes of practice. I would therefore very strongly recommend that you have the electrics subject to a full electrical inspection prior to purchase, so that you are aware of the costs and work that will be necessary in order to strip out, replace and rewire the installations within the retail unit. I also noted the retail unit has three-phase electrics connected.

Some of the electrical wiring within the first floor flats is exposed beneath the first floor floorboards. This needs to be properly protected and insulated between the replacement ceiling to the retail unit and the floor structure above.

You should also have the fire alarm system subject to a test and inspection prior to use.

Plumbing and Heating

The property has very little plumbing within the building. What is left will need to be replaced with a new toilet facility and washroom facility provided for the occupants of the building, including replacement sanitaryware, sanitary fittings, hot and cold waterpipes, wastepipes and heating. The property presently has no heating system to the retail unit.

You should also check whether the electrics and plumbing and heating installations to the first and second floor flats have previously had regular Gas Safe inspections of any gas-fired appliances, but also electrical periodic inspections to see whether the installations are compliant with the latest 18th IEE Standards and Codes of Practice.

External Drainage

There is one inspection chamber cover within the rear storage area. The cover was lifted to reveal a system of reasonable depth, partly running freely under flushing; however, there is a considerable build-up of waste and grease within the drains. I suspect that all of the drains will require professional cleaning-out and rodding-through in order to remove the grease and deposits from the drainage pipes. The metal downpipe that is discharging into the drain is clearly showing evidence of rust and will need to be replaced.

I have also previously explained that quite a lot of the surface water drains appear to be discharging into the foul drainage system. This is not recommended. The rainwater pipes on the asbestos slate roof above the flat roof are discharging into a soil and vent pipe.

On the outer stone wall surfaces above the flat roof there are two high-level wastepipes from the second floor flat that are discharging directly into the surface water drainage system and, again, this is not permitted.

The Site

The boundaries to the site are not particularly well defined. Your solicitor should check who owns the rear service yard, who is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the yard, and also the rights for parking and offloading in the communal yard space.

The side entrance door to the brick-built storage room has a shared access with Boots. The walls to the room are only of single-skin blockwork. There is also a lightweight timber-framed roof over the shared entrance lobby which is not particularly secure and could be relatively easily broken into.

Summary

The property has clearly had very little in the way of any significant refurbishment or repair, and therefore now requires an extensive repair and refurbishment, particularly on the external roof coverings, external walls and joinery.

I would very strongly recommend that you have these works costed-up prior to purchase so that you are aware of the level of expenditure that will be necessary on the building in order to maintain the structure of the building, but also to significantly reduce future maintenance costs.

I will itemise below the more expensive repairs that you will need to consider, together with any other material factors prior to purchase.

1. Maintenance costs associated with the asbestos and natural roofing slates seen on the main pitched roofs. These now require an extensive overhaul.
2. Due to the presence of asbestos within the slates and the vulnerability of these slates to impact damage or wear and tear, I strongly recommend that the asbestos slates should now be removed by contractors licensed to handle and dispose of asbestos-based products. The roof can then be re-felted and battened using a breather membrane underlay, replacement natural or manufactured slates, together with replacement leadwork to all of the various lead flashings and valley gutters on the ridge, hips, lead upstands and valleys.
3. Due to the present condition of the natural slate roof covering to the rear parts of the building above the second floor flats, I would also recommend that this roof covering should also be stripped off, re-felted and battened in order to incorporate a breather membrane underlay and then the replacement of those serviceable roofing slates. This work will also necessitate the replacement of the leadwork to the valley gutters, the replacement of the cement fillets adjacent to each of the parapet and gable end walls with lead, and the re-lining and/or replacement of external rainwater gutters.
4. All of the above works will require the provision of a safe and secure access scaffolding.
5. The above works will also allow the installation of additional insulation within the roof structure and also, if necessary, woodworm treatment, and the repairs to any roof timberwork where seen to be affected by rot or movement within the roof structure.
6. Further investigation work will need to be undertaken in order to establish the cause of the deflection noted in the front elevation roof slope underneath the asbestos slates above the front right-hand first floor window.
7. To ensure that all rainwater gutters are discharging water into the surface water drains and not the foul water drains.
8. The guttering requires extensive repair or more likely replacement.
9. The repair to the coping stones on top of the parapet walls above roof level, the re-rendering of the internal surface of the parapet wall above the natural slate roof, and the stripping-off and replacement of the lead linings to the valley gutters.

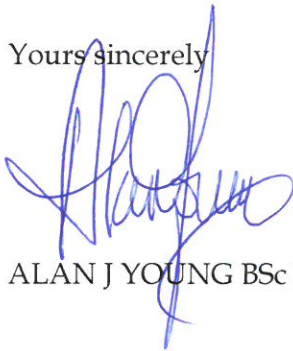
10. The rather poor condition and application of exterior paint to the external surface of the brick walling, which is clearly showing evidence of weathering and crumbling of the face of the paint. The painted surface will now require reapplication. I would recommend the walls should be thoroughly prepared, subject to repointing where necessary, and then the application of a breathable-quality, exterior emulsion paint onto the surface of the external walls.
11. Evidence of some significant historical but also some recent movement on the brick walling to the front elevation overlooking East Street, above the level of the first floor windows. The cause of the movement will require further investigation work but is probably either due to the effects of movement and displacement within the roof structure, particularly the hip truss and/or purlins, or due to the poor condition of and instability within the brick arch lintels over the first floor window openings. The movement may also have been exacerbated by the previous enlargement or taking-out of the shopfront at ground floor level.
12. Evidence of spalling and crumbling brickwork at low level above the pavement, due to the incorrect method of repointing of walls using cement mortar rather than lime mortar.
13. The reapplication of the bitumastic paint sealant to the low-level brick walls.
14. Further investigation in order to establish the movement seen in the brickwork overlooking the side right-hand ground floor window on Ditton Street. It would appear that the outer brick walling has separated from the internal brickwork, possibly as a result of long-term moisture penetration through the wall but also due to the inadequate tying-in of the outer brickwork through to the internal brickwork. This will require further investigation in order to confirm the make-up and construction of the wall. The wall will probably require the installation of either bed joint reinforcement or additional wall ties in order to secure the inner and outer leaves of the wall together.
15. The brick walls to the front and rear of the building require structural repair where there is evidence of movement and cracking between the brickwork and the solid stone gable end wall overlooking the car park.
16. The removal of the plant growth on the car park wall and the repointing of the wall behind with lime mortar.
17. The repointing and localised repair to the concrete windowsills beneath the sash windows.
18. Repointing and further repair to the brick arched lintels and keystones above the sash windows.
19. Extensive repair to the high-level timber fascia boards where they are rotted out.
20. Extensive repair and redecoration to the timber sash windows. The windows on the front elevation overlooking East Street require taking out completely in order to enable appropriate repairs to be carried out to the box sash casements, the sash casements and the sills. The first and second floor sash windows on Ditton Street also require extensive redecoration and localised repair. The ground floor sash windows and side door to Ditton Street require extensive repair - these windows are probably approaching an age and condition where they are not suitable for repair and will need to be replaced.

21. The redecoration of all of the windows and doors to the first and second floor flats.
22. The redecoration of the metalwork to the staircases and balustrading. The replacement of the timber joinery on the porch to the second floor flat.
23. The removal of the weathered and cracked cement mortar from the solid stone walls and its replacement with pure lime mortar.
24. The age and condition of the asphalt roof on the flat roof structure suggests that the asphalt will probably require replacement, probably within the next five years or so, along with the promenade tiles over the top of the asphalt. This will be disruptive to the occupants of the first and second floor flats. The lead flashings around the asphalt roof will also require replacement.
25. During the course of the stripping-off and replacement of the asbestos and natural slate roofs, it will almost certainly be necessary to supply and install additional insulation over the ceilings to the first and second floor flats, to inspect timberwork to see whether woodworm treatment is required for woodworm activity. To inspect the more vulnerable and exposed parts of the roof timberwork where they are likely to be affected by penetrating damp due to the solid stone and brick walls, but also to the leaking and defective leadwork around the parapets and upstands and the poor condition of the cement mortar fillets between the slates and the raised parapet walls. The extent and specification of repair works can only be seen and undertaken in conjunction with the lifting-off and replacement of the external slates.
26. The ground floor retail unit requires a complete strip-out and replacement of all of the present internal surfaces and shop fittings.
27. The retail unit and storage areas will require the taking-down of the suspended ceilings and the original plaster and lath or timber-boarded ceilings to the underside of the floors to the flats above. The floors to the flats can then be insulated to reduce sound penetration between the retail unit and flats but also to provide a fire-protected ceiling structure between the retail unit and the flats above.
28. All of the internal solid stone or brick walls to the retail unit require the stripping-off and replacement of the dry-lining and shop fittings. The walls will then require the provision of a vertical tanking system, insulation and replacement dry-lining.
29. The taking-up and replacement of the floor tiling to the retail unit. The floor underneath will require the provision of a damp-proof membrane which will need to be carefully specified and linked to the vertical tanking system in order to prevent damp building up between the external walls and the internal floor surface.
30. The internal solid brick or stone walls will require a good deal of preparation work and repointing prior to the application of the vertical tanking system.
31. The very poor-quality, worn and damaged internal joinery within the retail unit.
32. The internal surfaces to the retail unit require extensive redecoration.
33. The rather poor quality and construction of the single-skin brick or block walls to the outer storage room which gives access to the communal lobby between the retail unit and Boots.

34. The property should have a full electrical inspection. I suspect that the retail unit will require complete stripping-out and rewiring due to the amount of damage that has been caused to the electrical wiring, fixtures and fittings during the course of the previous occupation and stripping-out of the retail unit. The electrical wiring above the suspended ceiling was seen to be in a very poor and unsupported condition.
35. I would recommend that an inspection is carried out on the mains fire alarm system.
36. The property requires a new plumbing and heating system and the provision of replacement and/or new sanitary fittings, toilets and washroom facilities.
37. The external drains require thorough cleaning-out and rodding-through due to a build-up of waste, grease and debris.
38. Your solicitor to check on the scope and extent of all boundaries, together with responsibilities for maintenance and repair.
39. You must obtain a copy of an up-to-date asbestos register of the building in order to confirm the parts of the building that contain potentially dangerous or contaminated asbestos-based materials.
40. I have not carried out any inspection on the internal parts of the first and second floor flats - these have been specifically excluded from this report due to the risks associated with Covid-19.

If there are any matters within this report on which you require further explanation, then obviously please do not hesitate to contact me.

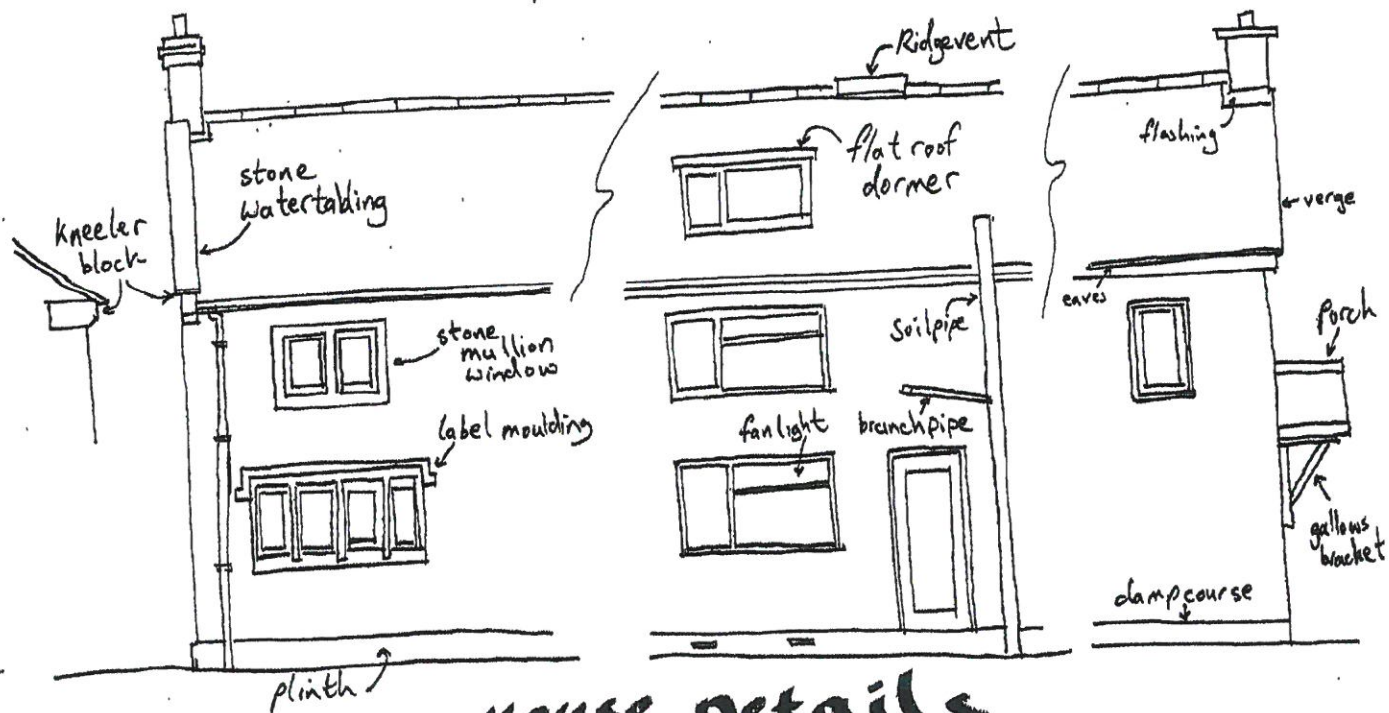
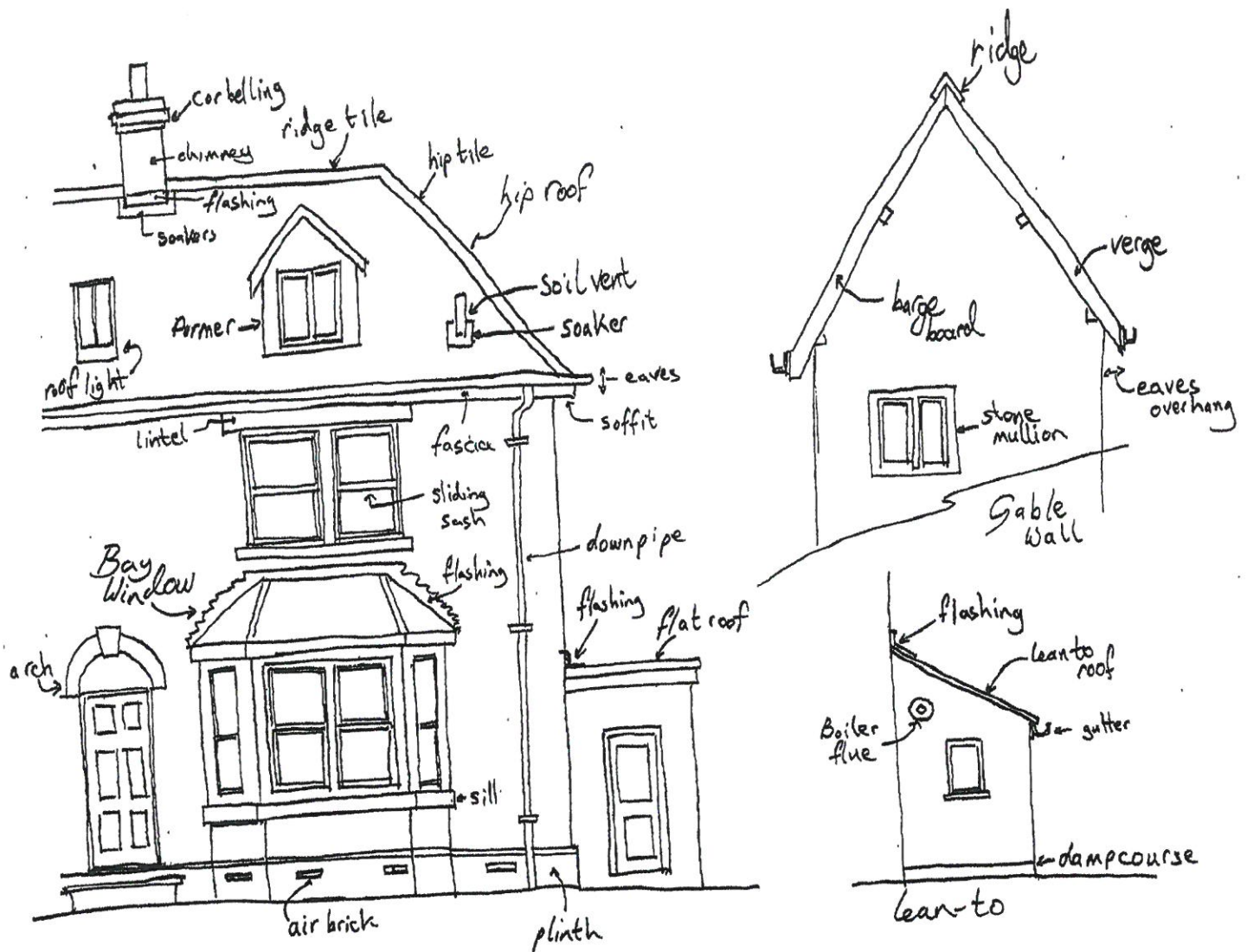
Yours sincerely



ALAN J YOUNG BSc MRICS

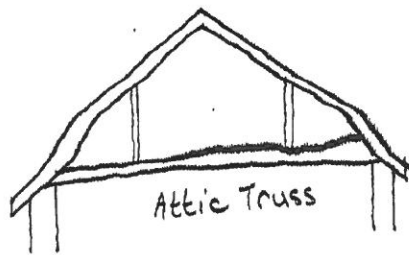
GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following pages contain illustrative drawings of the architectural/building terms used in the preceding Building Survey

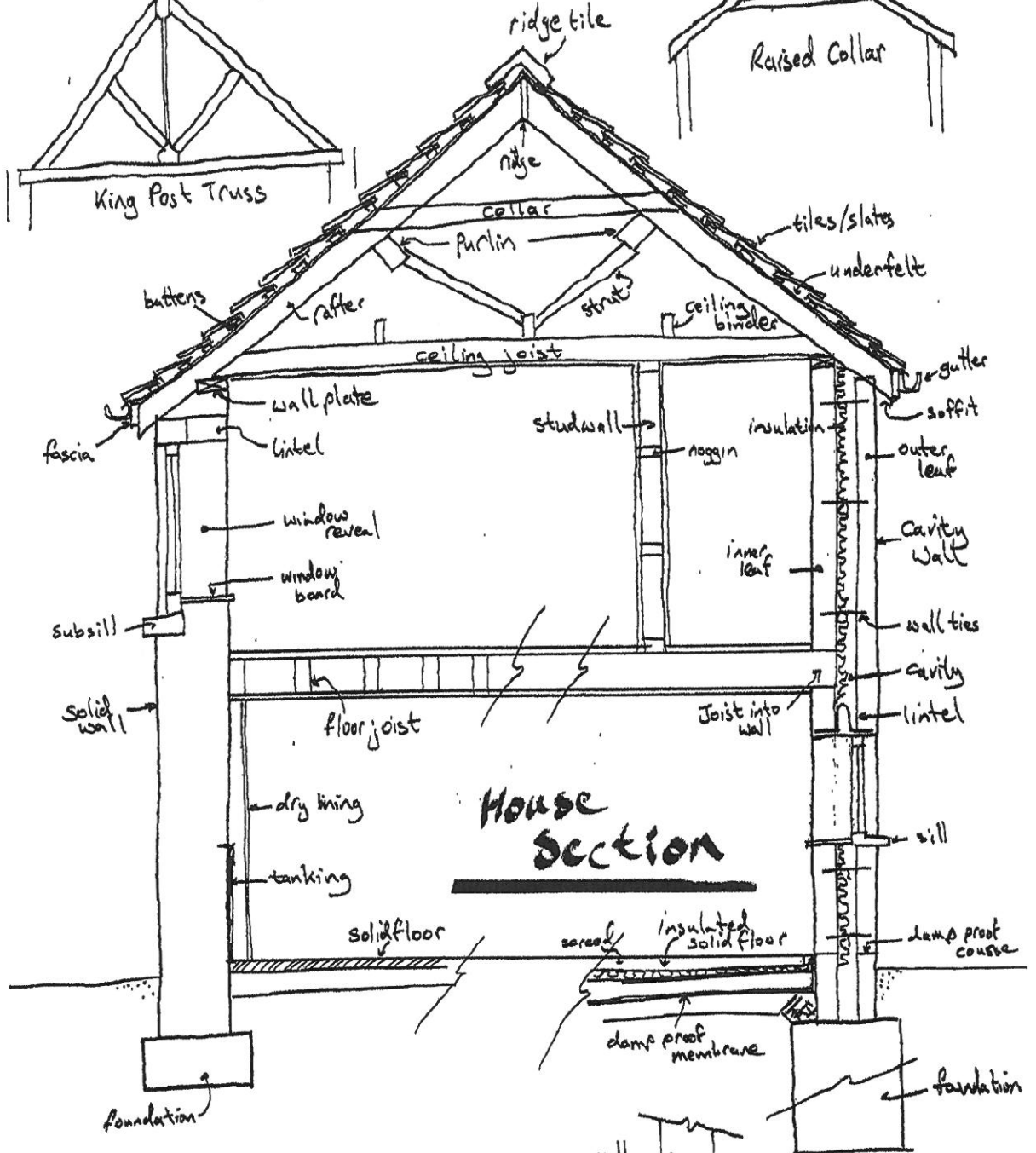
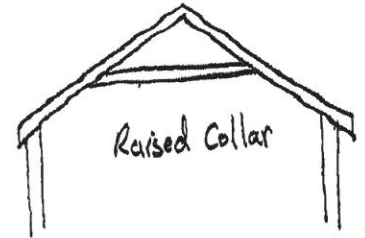
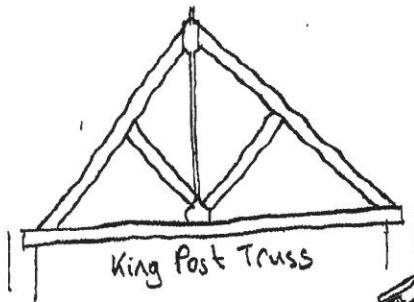
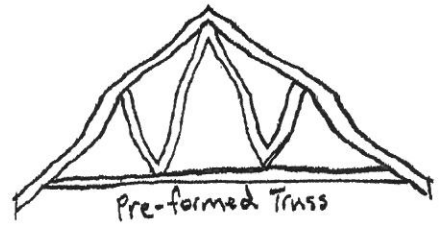


House Details

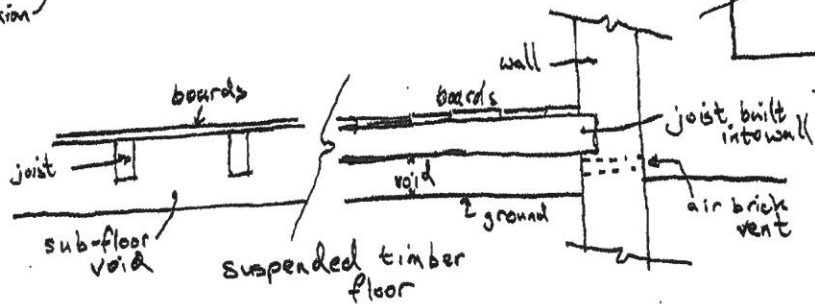
FOR PURPOSES OF ILLUSTRATION



Roof Types



See also



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NOTICE OF ACCEPTANCE

I/~~We~~ have read the above Conditions of Engagement and confirm that they are acceptable and that I/~~we~~ wish Alan J. Young, BSc MRICS to proceed with the Building Survey upon **2 East Street, Ilminster.**

Signed :



Mrs H White, Town Clerk, Ilminster Town Council

Please print name(s) :

HAYLEY WHITE

Dated :

25 9 20