

***A PRE-LEASE  
BUILDING SURVEY  
OF  
The Cabinet  
High Street  
Reed  
Nr Royston  
Hertfordshire  
SG8 8AH***

***Prepared upon the instructions of  
Mr I Titmus and Ms V Hyde***

## **YOUR BUILDING SURVEY**

In this report your attention is drawn to some areas of the property I was unable to inspect. For reasons explained in detail, I have either recommended further investigations before you enter in to a lease, or at least made you aware of matters which you should fully consider beforehand. It may well be that further investigations will reveal the need for additional repairs, which could alter the terms on which you should lease the property.

I strongly advise that you read all the report and then consider, with my help if you wish, the wisest course of action. Personal circumstances and the nature of the property under consideration are both relevant factors in the decision to sign a lease.

My aim has been to give you as much information as I am able to at this time and to arm you with appropriate information to make up your mind and negotiate the terms as necessary.

## GENERAL INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

- **Clients Names:** Mr I Titmus and Ms V Hyde  
5 Tennyson Close  
Royston  
Hertfordshire  
SG8 5SZ
- **Address of Property :** The Cabinet  
High Street  
Reed  
Royston  
Hertfordshire  
SG8 8AH
- **Surveyed by :** Roger Driver M.R.I.C.S  
The Roger Driver Partnership
- **Date of Inspection :** Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012

Following your instructions I have not, at this stage, arranged for any specialists' reports on the drainage, heating, electrical or plumbing installations. I have, however, made a brief comment on these installations where appropriate within the body of the report.

The report reflects the condition of the various parts of the property at the date of my inspection. It must be accepted that defects can arise between the date of my inspection and you're taking occupation of the property.

It should be appreciated that at the time of my visit the premises had been closed for business for some time. It was still partly furnished, together with sundry items of stock and equipment in place. There were fitted floor coverings to various areas. Full access was not possible in some sections of the roof on account of limited size and the suspected fragility of ceiling structures beneath. The boiler enclosure was inaccessible.

The inspection was arranged through the agent, Mullucks, who loaned a key. The inspection has been as thorough as conditions allow but where further investigation or specialist attention is needed this has been recommended within the report. At the time of my inspection the weather was mild and dry. There had been no recent significant rainfall. The inspection has been made in accordance with our standard conditions of engagement for a pre-lease building survey which were sent to you on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2012.

## **A GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The agents details, copy of which is attached, give a general description of the accommodation and include an extract from the Ordnance Survey/Title Plan. It is noted that the lawned area beyond the northern edge of the pond IS NOT part of the property. It is believed that this division is roughly marked by the line of paving slabs that cross the lawn.

The Cabinet is a detached public house/restaurant occupying an attractive position in a pleasant rural village situation. It is a Grade II listed building and a copy of the listing that has been supplied by the agents is attached.

The building stands with either timber boarded or rendered elevations beneath pitched and tiled roofs on a slightly elevated site to the west of the High Street. As presented the building is a combination of elements from varying ages. It would appear that the original main section comprising the snug and bar on the ground floor with the residential accommodation above has been added to both north and south. To the north the single storey dining room addition has been provided and to the rear of this is a comparatively recent extension comprising the dining room with vaulted ceiling that extends in to the terraced area to the rear. To the south of the main building a single storey kitchen is attached. The original main section has been extended to the rear by continuation of the rear roof slope to provide additional kitchen facility, rear hall, lobby, together with male and female toilets. To the north of the first dining room extension is the cellar/bottle store, which appears to be the incorporation of a former stable type building. This element is clad beneath a slate roof, whilst roofs over the remainder are tiled. To the rear of the cellar/bottle store is a garden bar/barbeque area, together with an enclosure concealing an oil storage tank.

A paved terrace is laid out to the rear (west) of the main building with lawns beyond to hedging adjacent to agricultural land. Previous comment has been made relating to the northern most section of lawned area. To the east along the frontage of the building is a raised terrace with paving and slate borders, together with planting, whilst to the south the property is laid to a gravelled car park, within which is a detached timber store. An outline plan of the ground floor accommodation has been provided by the agents and is attached hereto.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

The agents details give a brief description of the accommodation. For the purpose of this report I would summarise the accommodation as follows:-

Ground floor:	Main bar, rear entrance hall, snug, dining room, dining room extension, rear lobby, female and male toilets. Kitchen and wash-up area.
First floor:	Approached by a staircase off the wash-up area. Residential accommodation comprising three rooms and bathroom.
Outside:	Cellar, incorporating beer and bottle store, boiler house partitioned off. Outside store, garden bar/barbeque.

## **TENURE AND OCCUPATION**

The property is proposed to be leased for a term of five years on full repairing and insuring terms. A copy of the agent's Heads of Terms are attached and whilst these describe the salient points it is stressed that a copy of the draft lease proposed to be used has not yet been provided. The inspection has been carried out against the suggestion made by the Landlord's Agent that the terms of the lease are to be '*in standard institutional terms for a full repairing and insuring lease*'. – Potentially a very onerous range of covenants.

## **LOCATION**

Reed is a small village lying between Royston and Buntingford in attractive countryside to the east of the A10. The village contains little in the way of service facilities and is largely residential with sporadic dispersal of houses.

## **ORIENTATION**

The premises front the High Street. The entrance and front elevation face east against the road which runs north south. Any directions given in this report are as if standing on the road and looking towards the front elevation.

## **THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREAS**

The site slopes slightly from north to south. It is broadly rectangular and enclosed by a mixture of fencing and hedging. The site is bounded by the High St. and open land and incorporates a small pond in the north east corner of the site. I am not aware of any particular flooding issues that might arise from this or other ground water sources or any unusual ground conditions within the immediate vicinity.

## **GENERAL ITEMS FOR YOUR LEGAL ADVISER**

The following points should be checked with your legal adviser to clearly define any rights or guarantees which should be reserved for you and to clarify any liabilities you may have to others with regard to this property. It is important to fully understand the rights, obligations and liabilities of all parties to the proposed lease.

1. The ownership of perimeter fences and clarification of the boundaries.
2. Any responsibilities for the maintenance and upkeep of any jointly used services but I suspect there are none.
3. It would appear that a public footpath may well cross the car park but this should be defined.
4. Obtain any certificates of guarantee with respect to works that have been carried out to the property. The Landlord should provide certificates covering fixed electrical testing, cellar plant, including coolers and refrigeration, as well as details of alarm, fire/smoke detection, asbestos survey, as well as food hygiene regulation compliance for facilities and equipment.
5. Obtain copies of relevant building regulation, planning approvals and listed building consents for the erection of the back additions and alterations and for any other structural alterations that have been made to the property.

The property is a 'Grade II listed'. Contrary to common belief, listing means that all of the building, both inside and out plus the area around the building is protected. This applies to all grades of building, including the most common grade II as we have here. You are not allowed to change the character of the building, alter or demolish or extend any part without permission. You should not even add a garden shed without prior agreement. This is done simply to ensure that owners don't inadvertently damage the fabric of the building and hence its historic heritage value. Permission to make changes to a listed building is known as Listed Building Consent and is granted by the District Council (Conservation Officer). They will decide if any alterations you wish to make are acceptable. If you are planning to

lease this listed building with the intention of adding an extension or plan to undertake extensive alterations, it will be advisable to have a conversation with the Conservation Officer in advance. Listed Building Consent is very important and it is essential before signing the lease to check that all previous works that have been done by any previous owners/occupiers did receive listed building consent and that any work carried out was done in accordance with that consent. Whilst the new lessee cannot be prosecuted for the previous unauthorised work, they can be forced to rectify them.

Insurance of a listed building needs careful consideration. With a listed building the Conservation Officer will insist that you reinstate with similar period materials and methods that match the rest of the building in the event of serious damage arising. These works will be more expensive than with a 'normal' building and your insurer needs to be willing to cover the full cost of these more costly repairs.

In summary, whilst the above points may seem to be very daunting, there can be enormous value attached to running a business in a historic building. There will be frustration at times balancing the demands of regular extensive upkeep with the restrictions on the materials and methods but there are various organisations available that can give appropriate advice. All work carried out on a listed building should be done by a builder who is competent at carrying out works on such properties.

I have not made any enquiries of the Local Authority but I do not know of any significant town planning or environmental matters, which could have an adverse effect on the property or its future saleability. Formal enquiries should, however, be made by your legal advisers in the usual way before committing yourself to this transaction.

## **CONSTRUCTION**

The building is of mixed construction, principally being timber framed but with part being 9" masonry over a 13½" plinth in the old part of the Dining room and more modern block/masonry being used in the structure of the dining room extension. External elevations are either timber boarded or rendered. The premises stand beneath pitched roofs that are principally tiled.

**Roof:** Roofs are pitched and tiled on timber structures of rafters, purlins and collars to the main elements of the property. The cellar/bottle store is clad with slate to a dual pitched roof.

**Rainwater Goods:** Half-round gutters in mixed materials, some being iron some being PVC are fixed at the lower edges of the main roof slopes and discharge to a variety of downpipes.

- Main Walls:** The main walls are of principally timber frame construction clad with weatherboarding. The timber frame stands on a brick or masonry plinth. Other sections of the building have elevations that are cement rendered over timber framing or solid masonry.
- Damp-proof Course:** The building originally would not have been constructed with a damp-proof course. There is, however, evidence of a physical damp-proof course in sections of the more modern construction, together with a lead drip between the timber frame and the plinth of the dining room extension.
- Floors:** The ground floors are generally of solid construction in part finished with timber boarding as in the dining room and dining room extension. Elsewhere floor finishes are either tiled, brick paved or finished with a vinyl type safety sheet flooring with welded joints and coved skirtings. The first floor is of suspended timber construction comprising joists and boards.
- Windows and Doors:** Softwood timber frames, single glazed with a variety of opening casements are installed to the main elements, together with pivoting Velux windows and sets of French doors to the extension that are double glazed in the more recent additions. Oak front doors are installed to the bar and dining room with painted softwood units elsewhere.
- Services:** It is believed that main water, electricity and drainage are connected. There is a Calor gas storage facility in the rear of the car park partly screened by fencing and there is also an oil storage tank concealed by fencing at the rear of the cellar. No access to a boiler house was available at the time of inspection but this unit is suspected to be installed in the rear part of the cellar/bottle store above which a modern stainless steel flue emerges. It is believed that the Calor gas installation effectively supplies the kitchen facility, whilst the oil storage tank is likely to serve a central heating/water boiler.
- As well as the limited central heating there are open fireplaces in the bar, snug and front part of the dining room.

## **STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY**

The property has, as previously described, been enlarged by extensions to north, south and west. There are comments as to the origins of the building in the listing notes attached.

The principal elements are believed to be timber framed, which are made up of sole plates resting on masonry plinths. The walls comprise vertical studs, often incorporating diagonal bracing clad externally with weatherboarding or rendering. Horizontal wall plates provide intermediate support at first floor level and a wall plate at the head to which the roof structure attaches. The roofs are broadly simple structures comprising principal rafters with collars and purlins and common rafters which support sarking felt and battens to which the roof tiling is attached. The modern dining room extension has a vaulted ceiling, the structure of which is entirely enclosed and inaccessible. The rear extension of the original building is of relatively low pitch as previously noted and largely inaccessible and appears to comprise an arrangement of rafters with purlin, struts and ceiling joists.

The building has clearly seen many changes over its life through alteration and extension. Many changes and alterations that are within loft spaces, etc, display clumsy alterations where, for instance, sections of weatherboarding have been 'broken' to make an opening as opposed to having been neatly cut. Whilst such alterations do not necessarily detract from structural integrity in the light of the evidence available it is not possible to conclude that all alterations have been effected without detriment to the original structure. A building of this age and type is relatively 'lightweight' such that the floors are often out of level or slightly springy. These conditions can arise through inadequate sizing of timbers or through depletion of structural integrity as a result of alteration or indeed attack by wood boring beetle. Ceilings undulate for example and this is particularly noted in the central room at first floor level where repairs have been somewhat crudely carried out and are as yet incomplete following a collapse of ceiling, possibly through the results of a water leak. The remaining sections of original plaster are badly cracked and one must question the structural stability and integrity of such ceilings and features. Part of a partition at first floor level has had the lath and plaster cladding removed to reveal vertical studwork. Other sections of partitioning have been formed to create the bathroom and it is not possible to comment upon the effects that such additional loadings may have imposed upon the original structure.

Suffice it to say that the building cannot be considered in comparable terms to modern properties that comply with current standards and building regulations.

Any lessee of a property of this type which has evolved over the years has to accept that in engineering terms the structure would not comply with modern standards particularly in relation to size of rafters and joists but that the leasing of a property of this age is often governed by the needs of a lessee to acquire a property with charm and character over and above other considerations associated with business intentions. The lessee has to accept sloping floors, low ceilings and general weakness to finishes, etc, along with restricted access at varying floor levels and limited headroom. It must be accepted that such properties generally demand ongoing and more expensive repair and maintenance than you would find with a more modern building and that there would be continued seasonal movement to the

timber frame, which in turn will result in cracking of external rendering, etc. This again increases the need for ongoing maintenance.

You are bound by the fact that the property is a listed building and there will be limitations and constraints on what you are allowed to do to the property and how you can do it.

## **EXTERNAL CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE**

### ***Chimneys***

There are three chimney stacks. That above the main section of the building rises above the ridge and is brick built conducting flues from the fireplaces within the bar and the snug. The joint between brickwork and adjacent roof covering is finished with a cut tile fillet. Attached to the stack is an aerial there did not appear to be any chimney pots and the pointing appears to be in reasonable condition.

The chimney above the north gable of the dining room serves the open fire in that gable wall. This chimney is also brick built but has lead flashings to the adjacent roof covering. It appears to be serviceable and in reasonable condition without need for major renovation or repair.

Emerging through the rear slope of the cellar/store building is a sectional flue of stainless steel construction. This appears to serve the boiler to which access was unavailable. The chimney has a proprietary flashing plate and collar above the point of emergence. This is clearly a comparatively recent introduction to the roof slope and the flashing plate or collar has not been adequately or correctly installed. The upper edge appears to be tucked under a course of slate but the side edges and lower edge of the flashing collar are simply laid on top of the slate with the lower edge secured by nails directly through the slates. The chimney is not set vertically. This appears to be somewhat ham fisted and inadequate installation that may well be indicative of a poor installation of the remaining flue, especially where it passes through combustible material. It is strongly recommended that the whole of this installation for the boiler receives more detailed investigation.

Flue soundness and efficiency in older buildings must never be assumed. I have not carried out a smoke test to check soundness. If necessary old flues can be lined to bring them up to modern day standards.

### ***Roof Structure and Covering***

#### ***Main Roof***

The roof to the main original two storey section is pitched with slopes to front and rear and clad with peg tiles having hogsback ridge coverings and cut tiled fillets to the brick built chimney. The roof terminates at filleted verges to gables at north and

south and on the east discharges to an eaves gutter. To the west the roof slope continues in a more recent extension to enclose the rear hall, lavatories and wash-up area of the kitchen. This roof is set to a lower angle of pitch also clad with peg tiles and incorporates 5 no. Velux windows.

Adjacent to the north gable is formed the original dining room. This is a single storey structure having a peg tiled roof that abuts the north gable of the main building with lead flashings to the weather boarding of that gable. The front slope faces east and discharges to an eaves gutter. To the rear the roof slope has been significantly altered where the dining room extension attaches. The ridge to the dining room extension runs east west and thus valleys are formed against the rear roof slope of the dining room extension. The slope adjacent to the gable of the main building has been reduced in pitch and lengthened so as to accommodate part of the female toilet and ease the angle of valley with the adjacent dining room extension. There is a verge to the gable above the cellar/bottle store that incorporates a brick chimney with lead flashing to adjacent tiling.. The dining room extension is clad with more modern clay tiles and terminates in a verge over the gable facing west.

The kitchen extension abuts the south gable of the main building and is asymmetric in section having a plain tiled slope to the east, a filleted verge above the gable to the south and falling to a very low eaves above the back door to the kitchen in the west. Metal flashings are fixed at the abutment to the main gable.

The west facing slope of the main section is set to a good angle of pitch and appears to be adequately clad with peg tiles. These appear to be old handmade tiles probably now secured by nails, although previously they would have been hooked over battens by timber pegs. The roof covering is underdrawn with sarking felt, which is seen to be rotting where it projects below the eaves towards the gutter. It would be appropriate for the lower courses of tiling to be taken up and for such felting to be replaced with a reinforced membrane so as to ensure no water penetration can occur at eaves level. This activity would give the opportunity for ensuring that the rainwater goods are properly aligned and watertight so as to conduct rainwater to downpipes as appropriate. The rear roof slope has been altered where in the lower section the pitch has been reduced and the length of the roof extended to accommodate the rear addition. Where windows at first floor level in the rear elevation existed Velux roof lights have now been incorporated to retain a means of natural lighting to the rear part of the building. The condition of roof tiling, particularly in the lower slope of the rear elevation (west facing) is poor. The tiles themselves have been subject to considerable breakdown through frost damage and this may be as a result of the low angle of pitch allowing rainwater to be retained more readily. It is anticipated that this section of roof should be stripped and re-tiled with replacement reclaimed peg tiles but trying to ensure that their condition is such as to reduce the prospects of shaling in the future.

One should consider obtaining a quotation for stripping and re-covering appropriate areas of the main roof (western slope), together with the lower courses of the eastern slope so as to address the sarking felt problem at the eaves.

### *Dining room and Kitchen extensions*

The northern extension for the dining room and that to the south enclosing the kitchen are also pitched to front and rear and clad with more modern clay tiles that are more regular in appearance. The condition of these tiled sections appeared to be fair although it is noted that there are sundry slipped or broken tiles that would merit replacement. The rear slope of the dining room roof has been reduced in pitch as previously described on account of the conjunction at the valley with that over the dining room extension.

### *Dining room extension*

Plain machine made tiles appear to clad the dining room extension with slopes to north and south and a cement filleted gable to the west. Valleys appear to be lead lined to the rear slope of the front dining room roof. Tiling appears generally sound and the roof even to the extension and it would not appear that there are any major works required.

### *Cellar/bottle store*

The slate roof covering over the cellar/store is in part uneven with apparently insecurely fixed slating to some sections. Piecemeal repair and replacement is likely to be a feature of maintaining this roof in satisfactory condition. The conditions that exist within the building as a result of the chillers have resulted in significant condensation taking place. Such condensation on the underside of a roof covering can have a detrimental effect and lead to deterioration of rafters and timbers on account of persistent dampness being present. It is important that such roof structures should be adequately ventilated to prevent such moisture build-up resulting in wood rot occurring.

### ***Rainwater Fittings***

The rainwater goods are of part metal and part plastic. In association with works to the roof they need to be overhauled. They need to be set on brackets off the rafter feet at a suitable distance not only to ensure that an even gradient is maintained but also that they will catch the majority rain water running off the roof slopes. The gutters show general dipping and unevenness and will undoubtedly overflow. Some end stops were seen to be missing.

It has not been possible to ascertain where all the points of discharge for rainwater are conducted. There were, however, no indications to suggest inadequate discharge, although there had not been any significant rainfall in the preceding 24 hours.

It is important that gutters and downpipes are regularly and thoroughly maintained to ensure that they are clear of debris and that metal fittings are properly decorated and not corroding. It is also important to ensure that plastic guttering is adequately maintained with properly sealed joints and clips engaged to support the gutters and attach to positions of outlet, etc.

### ***Main Walls***

The main walls are predominantly of timber framing with part weatherboard and part rendered elevations supported by a brick plinth. The dining room section of the main building is of solid masonry construction with rendered elevations. There is no evidence of any recent movement or cracking that might indicate structural instability or inadequate/insufficient foundation.

You will need to carry out ongoing repairs, in particular the following:-

1. The timber boarding to main elevations where there is some localised deterioration and splitting. Repairs are needed with appropriate redecoration from time to time.
2. There is localised cracking to the rendering. Minor repair and making good is required and this would appropriately be accommodated at the time of redecoration. It is important to ensure that any such cracks exclude water from the fabric of the building so as to prevent, as far as possible, the onset of any internal deterioration to the timber frame and damp penetration of brickwork. Cement renders are hard and tend to crack with the slightest bit of thermal movement and also prevent the property from breathing. You might consider, when repairs are required, re-rendering using a softer lime mortar that would accommodate such movements and permit moisture to evaporate.

By any standards the old walls have limited if any foundation/footing and simply have a plinth which is part brick or rubble built off the earth. This is typical and as one would expect to find in any property of this age.

### ***Damp-Proof Course***

The building was not originally built with a damp-proof course. It was not convention at that time. Parts of the more recent construction appear to incorporate a damp-proof course, together with a lead drip below the timber frame and over the plinth as previously noted in the most recent extension.

Typically there is dampness noted within the plinth at the lower section of the walls. This is not uncommon in a property of this type and age. High ground levels and rendering to ground level do concentrate moisture into the structure and possibly bridge any damp-proof course that may be present. The extent of the damp ingress is significant and should be tolerated but you do have to accept that any timbers and joinery in contact with damp walling will invariably suffer from continuing and steady decay. The Conservation Officer will often not permit a damp-proof course to be inserted into listed building and dampness within any such buildings has to be

accepted and tolerated by an owner/occupier. Positive ventilation of the interior spaces will help to reduce the effects of dampness through natural evaporation and dispersal of moisture arising from the fabric of the structure. This is particularly so with regard to solid floors that should not be covered so as to entrap any moisture that might emanate from the sub-floor formation. External rainwater dispersal and regular maintenance, including avoidance of rendering being in contact with the ground should ensure the most favourable opportunity for reducing the effects of dampness.

It is not possible to keep any older property such as this completely dry and a degree of dampness is inevitable.

As the majority of the ground floors are of solid construction there is no sub-floor ventilation is provided. However, the boarded finishes that prevail in the dining room appear to be laid over solid floors as opposed to structural suspended timber floors. No comment or observation can be made upon the presence or otherwise of a damp-proof membrane in such sections. There do not appear to be any means of ventilation and it would not be surprising to find that the sub-floor of the original dining room area suffers from damp emanating from the ground. In the light of its age it would appear most likely that the dining room extension is such as to have incorporated a damp-proof membrane in the formation of the ground floor slab.

### ***External Joinery, Windows and Doors***

Windows throughout the accommodation are of painted softwood construction generally incorporating opening casements. They are single glazed and of a variety of ages. They range from significant age in the front elevation of the main part of the building to comparatively recent units with double glazing in the dining room extension. All of the old windows are well worn and as such fit poorly within their frames with localised areas of piecemeal repair and indeed rot being noted. It is fair to say that all need a good overhaul with the possibility of replacement casements being needed or piecemeal patching and repairing with appropriate timber repair methods being employed. Some of the joinery units in the modern dining room extension have been somewhat neglected in that decorations are peeling and indeed areas of wet rot are now present in both doors and window casements. A thorough and careful examination during the preparation for decorating work is likely to reveal further areas of softening that will require attention prior to redecoration.

Areas of weatherboarding have been previously noted as to be requiring attention where wet rot is present. When redecoration is undertaken further areas requiring repair and remedial work will certainly be uncovered.

### ***External Decoration***

The whole of the property is now in need of external redecoration. Indeed one would anticipate that the lease will require redecoration at a regular interval as well as in the last year of the term. It is therefore appropriate that the premises are in a condition anticipated by the lease covenants, for maintenance and repair etc, at the commencement of the term and thus free from dilapidation.

## **INTERNAL CONDITION AND MAINTENANCE**

### ***Roof Space***

There are access points to the loft areas in the kitchen (sealed and un-openable), in the wash-up area, giving access to the low rear extension of the main building, in the original dining room and at first floor level in the small room adjacent to the bathroom.

The main roof area displays old timbers comprising the roof structure, many of which are pole, whilst others are regularised to rectangular section. There is extensive evidence that the majority of timbers have been infected by the infestation of wood boring beetle. There is a considerable amount of debris and ill-fitting, poorly positioned fibreglass quilted insulation over the horizontal ceilings. There is extensive pipework associated with the plumbing and heating system within the roof void that is insufficiently and inadequately lagged, together with an un-lagged cold water storage tank set at high level within the roof structure. There has been considerable displacement of ceiling joists that results in the unevenness and undulations that are evident in the first floor ceilings. Previous comment has been made upon the unfinished repair to the ceiling in the living room. It is considered that the repair as executed to date is inappropriate for a listed building and should it come to the notice of the Conservation Officer then further repair or remedial work may very well ensue. The weatherboard cladding to the gables show considerable gaps and daylight such the loft space is exceedingly well ventilated! The downside of such ventilation in the situation as prevails is the vulnerability of plumbing facilities, including water storage tanks and distribution pipework to freezing but also to excessive heat loss on poorly lagged pipes associated with hot water distribution.

The roof void above the original dining room clearly displays apertures and access points having been made in the gable of the original main building for the multitude of cables and service conduits that are contained within the loft area. Part of the sarking felt in the rear slope is displaced illustrating and exposing the connection of the vaulted roof structure over the dining room extension, as well as a structure in blockwork that provides a main element of support to the latter roof. Very similar comments and conditions are appropriate as to those already made in regard to the

main loft. The level of insulation material is low by modern standards and poorly and inadequately arranged in practical terms.

No access is available to the roof structure over the dining room extension and nor has practical access been obtained to the low extension at the western side of the main building. The kitchen roof was inaccessible.

In overall terms the roof structures appear to have performed adequately and whilst clearly there have been changes and alterations over the years it would appear that things have continued to deform in their intended function and that there are no significant or imminent repairs required. Considerable improvement is required to enhance insulation and lagging to pipes and the watertanks.

### *Ceilings*

Old lath and plaster ceilings remain in much of the original part of the building with more modern plasterboard sections being evident elsewhere. The old ceilings undulate and are in part friable and care will be required to ensure that proper preservation is achieved at the time of redecoration. Observation and comment has already been made upon the section of first floor ceiling that had collapsed and the authenticity and standard of repair that has been employed. There are considerable cracks to the remainder of this area indicating stress and displacement and the possibility of further collapse should not be overlooked unless remedial works are properly carried out at this juncture.

One should anticipate the need for continuing piecemeal repair and renovation during times of redecoration. It will be found that the old lath and plaster ceilings are now delicate, showing weakness and unevenness. This is a feature and fact that must be tolerated.

### *Floors*

The ground floors are primarily of solid construction and are accommodated at varying levels throughout the building. They are in part uneven but this is part of the character of the building. The kitchen floor is covered with Altro type safety flooring over a level screed incorporating welded joints and coved skirtings to provide hygienic easy clean surfaces. The condition of the floor is lamentable with displacement of welded joints causing individual sheets to become de-bonded from the substrate and the remainder of the floor being in a poor and dirty condition. It is anticipated that to achieve the required health and safety and food hygiene standards that this floor covering should be replaced. Previous comments have been made upon the brick and tiled floors noted elsewhere with regard to inherent dampness and the need to allow for floor surfaces to breathe such that any moisture present may be dissipated rather than trapped by fitted floor coverings. It would not appear that there is significant or detrimental penetration of dampness arising from ground

moisture or condensation within the timber floors such that boards are becoming rotten and in need of repair.

The first floors were covered at the time of inspection and will typically be formed with boarding over joists but on account of the inherent characteristics of the building a degree of flexibility and springiness is noted, together with characteristic levels being uneven. The state of first floors is to be expected and tolerated in a building of this age and type.

### ***Damp***

Much of the external walling within the original building is covered with wainscoting that has been replicated elsewhere in the extension. Externally low level hanging baskets with automatic watering are fixed at intervals and at low level. There is evidence of considerable water run-off from this system judging by staining of the brick plinth below the timber boarding. There is inevitably considerable evidence of damp penetration that has had adverse effects upon part of the wainscoting. Part of the boarding is rotten at its lowest levels and one should be aware of this and the need for piecemeal repair or replacement being necessary. This kind of deterioration is symptomatic of the continuing decay that occurs in this type of structure. The decay cannot in practical terms be arrested and therefore one must tolerate it and be prepared to accommodate piecemeal repair and replacement from time to time. The way in which the building is occupied, heated and ventilated will have a contributory influence upon the effects and appearance of such dampness. It is important to maintain kitchen extract equipment in peak performance to ensure that there are no adverse effects arising from the cooking processes. Previous comments have been made upon the conditions within the cellar/store area as a result of chillers. The incidence of mildew as a result of condensation is quite dramatic, especially as the building has not been in use and has been closed up for some considerable time. It is expected that significant improvement and enhancement on ventilation will be required to produce conditions that would be appropriate to the standards required for cellaring.

### ***Internal Joinery***

Internal joinery is typically as one would expect to find. There are a variety of doors which are generally adequate for their purpose. The staircase is fully carpeted and enclosed by a fire door and lighted by a Velux. However, the glazed panel to the upper level of the rear hall would appear to be in non-fire resisting glazing and thus the staircase is not protected as a means of escape as it should be. Careful examination of all fire precaution and protection work should be undertaken so as to provide suitable and adequate means of escape from the first floor. None of the first floor windows would achieve compliance to the specification required for fire escape windows. In other respects the internal joinery appears to be generally

adequate for a property of this type and age, although many alterations and changes have been made to effect the installation of the present bar and fitments, etc.

### ***Internal Decorations***

The internal decorative condition of the building is considered to be poor and likely to fall well below the standards required by an institutional lease on a full repairing and ensuring nature. The building has the appearance of having been vacated in a hurry with aged items of stock remaining and generally speaking the building being in an unclean condition. It is anticipated that wholesale clearance and cleaning will be required, together with redecoration before the premises can be reopened for trade. Conditions within the kitchen are such that extensive cleaning and decontamination of kitchen units will be necessary, together with careful scrubbing of tiled surfaces to the internal walls, including the prospects of regrouting. As previously noted the floor finish requires considerable attention.

### ***Cellar/Store***

Access to the cellar/store is up a steep ramp to a former stable door. Internally the floor is of concrete paving apparently loose laid on the earth and laid to a slope. An internal arrangement of division appears to segregate a boiler enclosure and was not accessible at the time of inspection. The chiller room has been previously described as suffering from considerable effects of mildew on ceiling boarding through lack of ventilation and the conditions prevailing. The chiller unit is connected to an outdoor fancoil fixed to the rear elevation of part of the ladies lavatory. The general state of the building comprising the cellar is well worn, being an aged agricultural type of structure having heavily boarded external elevations and a slate roof as noted above. The primary store area has been lined and perhaps provides only adequate accommodation.

### ***Timber Defects***

On a collective note the presence of woodworm infestation appears to have been fairly universal. I am unaware of any previous treatments having been administered or whether any such surveys have been undertaken. As a precautionary measure it is recommended that one contemplates a detailed examination by a timber specialist with a view to retreatment being carried out so as to at least endeavour to curtail any current activity in the absence of any guarantee upon which the Landlord might be able to rely. It should be stressed that there will be considerable areas of the building that are unexposed or inaccessible and therefore treatment will not be able to be administered unless refurbishment and renovation of finishes is undertaken so as to expose elements of the timber frame. Diligent preparation for external decoration is bound to reveal sections of wet rot in external boarding and all such areas should be cut out and replaced with steps being taken to try and preclude

recurrence of such deterioration. Attention to rainwater gutters and downpipes, together with proper management of watering of wall hung flower baskets should come within the view of long term preservation.

## **SERVICES**

### ***Thermal Insulation***

The standards of thermal insulation within the building are extremely poor. It is doubtful whether any such steps have been taken to enhance the voids or fabric of the main walls to cut down on heat loss. The open areas of boarding and the loft area are prone to high levels of heat loss and the inadequacy of present insulation and lagging is a contributing factor. One must accept that the building per se will be inefficient when judged against modern standards but considerable improvement can be taken through diligent attention to details that are readily being capable of address.

### ***Electricity***

The electrical installation appears to be metered at the Board's fuses in a cupboard off the front bar. Distribution facilities are also provided. It would appear that the installation has been added to and amended in a piecemeal fashion over the years on account of the conditions that are apparent with regard to the variety and untidiness of wiring noted in the loft space, together with the extent of cables fixed to the exterior of the building it strongly recommended that an immediate electrical test is carried out and that the Landlord should be asked to provide details of the most recent fixed electrical test certificate. It should be noted that any alterations and improvements are now a matter of building regulation control and it is important, especially in a building of this type and nature that the electrical installation is fully serviceable and certificated. Electrical installation deficiencies are a major cause of fires in buildings and one should take steps to ensure prior to entering in to the lease that the installation is fit for purpose. It would not be surprising to find that extensive areas require replacement or rewiring and fittings improved.

### ***Plumbing and Sanitary Fittings***

The plumbing installation is fairly minimal the service provided only to the kitchen, wash-up and hand basin, bar, ladies and gents lavatories and a bathroom at first floor level. Within the bathroom (were also a sofa and bookshelf!) is an airing cupboard containing a hot water cylinder. The cold water storage tank as previously noted is located at high level in the loft space and is un-lagged. Facilities in the lavatories are conventional urinals and WC in the gents with two WCs in the ladies and hand basins to both. At the time of inspection water was turned off and

therefore no details of tests, water pressure, adequacy or otherwise of cold and hot supplies has been able to be established. It is strongly recommended that all plumbing and sanitary facilities are reviewed prior to entering in to the lease with steps being taken to ascertain the suitability of the present installation and its functionality. There appear to be redundant drain/waste facilities in the bar area that may not be properly disconnected. A full investigation and examination is recommended.

### ***Heating/Hot Water***

No access to the heating chamber was available at the time of inspection and therefore no comment can be made upon the facilities provided. Hot water appears to be stored in an indirect cylinder in the airing cupboard to which is also connected an immersion heater. This is very much a domestic installation apparently serving the bathroom facilities at first floor level, together with the cloakrooms at ground floor level. Full investigation and testing of the installation following refilling and commissioning is recommended prior to signing a lease. The oil storage tank that is evident on site is an old welded steel unit. This is tightly enclosed with fencing, does not appear to be bunded and may well be in need of replacement, especially if corrosion through lack of decoration has caused significant deterioration. It would appear that the supply of central heating is extremely limited and of questionable adequacy. It is noted that portable gas heaters have previously been utilised in the dining room extension which might indicate insufficiency of fixed heating facilities. I strongly recommend that a detailed and thorough investigation of the boiler, heating and hot water facilities are undertaken to ensure that an adequate system to service not only the residential accommodation but also the cloakrooms and kitchens is available.

### ***Drainage***

It is believed that the property is connected to the mains sewer. There is an inspection chamber adjacent to the south west corner of the building where the drain run changes direction from running beside the western elevation and appears to discharge in an easterly direction across part of the car park towards the street. This inspection chamber is relatively shallow, was dry but displayed root infestation on the upstream side. A second inspection chamber is located in the terrace towards the rear of the single storey extension of the main building between the toilets and the wash-up area. This inspection chamber could not be lifted at the time of inspection. Invasion of roots to the drainage system suggests that it is incomplete and runs the risk of becoming blocked through roots causing the arrest of debris. Since the water supply was turned off no visual observation of the drainage installation was possible beyond the limited view accessible through the one inspection chamber. It is strongly recommended that further investigation of the underground drains is undertaken to ascertain whether the tree roots evident have gained access through a section of broken pipe or merely through a joint but one

should devise a plan for remedial work to ensure that the system is properly functional prior to signing the lease.

### ***Environmental Issues and Hazardous Materials***

I am not aware of any adverse environmental issues in the vicinity that are likely to affect the property. Your pre-lease enquiries should be carried out to ensure that an appropriate environmental search is carried out so that you may be appraised of all circumstances that prevail. It would be appropriate to endeavour to ascertain the source of water for the pond and ascertain the direction of any overflow or discharge there from. It is likely to be down at street level and thus well away from the buildings themselves.

It is now a responsibility of a building owner to have prepared an asbestos survey of the premises and if any asbestos bearing materials have been identified then a means of managing the same should be developed and adopted. The Landlord should be asked to provide such information. Depending upon the content one can make judgement as to the type and location of any such materials and assess the risks associated therewith.

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This is an appealing public house within a quiet area of the village and in a promising catchment area for trade. However, the premises have been closed for some time and as a result of neglect and minimal maintenance work for some considerable time have continued to deteriorate. The principal areas that ought to receive attention include:-

- Repairs to the lower section of the front roof slope to the main building.
- General overhaul of the rainwater gutters and downpipes.
- Re-tiling the lower section of the rear roof slope to the main building.
- Comprehensive overhaul of external joinery replacing soft and decayed timber and leaving window frames fully operational.
- External redecoration.
- Thorough test of all service facilities including the electrical installation, plumbing/heating/hot water and waste drainage.
- Treat the timbers as appropriate for continuing infestation.

- Re-arrange, enhance and improve thermal insulation and pipe lagging in exposed roof areas.
- Attend to health and hygiene requirements in the kitchen facilities.
- Improve atmospheric and environment management of the cellar/bottle store.
- Acquire details of all listed building approvals and consents, ascertain that no significant alterations have been accomplished without the same.
- Obtain appropriate documents to comply with asbestos at work regulations. Servicing of facilities including alarms, fire detection and electrical installations.

In ideal circumstances the building should be presented as being ‘in condition and repair’ prior to the commencement of the lease such that there would be no cause for a Landlord to consider serving notice of dilapidation. One should not overlook the prospect of taking the premises in their present condition and immediately being liable to ‘put’ the premises into a condition that would comply with the repairing obligations contained in the lease. It is considered that it would be inequitable for the lease to be entered into with premises in their existing condition without some significant measure of compensation that would enable the tenant to put the premises into the expected condition without penalty.

Circumstances are such in the pub trade that it is unlikely that there are a host of prospective operators wishing to take on premises of this type that have been closed for some time and where any prospect of deriving goodwill from a previous trade has evaporated. Bearing in mind the comparatively short length of lease proposed and the likely onerous covenants contained, one should be extremely wary and cautious to recognise the investment in time and effort (to say nothing of cost) that would become involved to bring the premises up to an appropriate condition as envisaged by a full repairing lease and to established a viable trade.

I would suggest that quotations are obtained from competent local contractors to quantify the cost of the foregoing works required. Only then would one be in a position to evaluate the prospects for the business and be able to renegotiate the Heads of Terms so as to reflect the real costs that will be incurred to bring the premises into a condition that will comply with the terms of the proposed lease and correct any equitable imbalance that exists.

For fire insurance purposes it is calculated that the premises extend to a gross external area in the order of 267m<sup>2</sup>. It is recommended that the sum of £520,000 *five hundred and twenty thousand pounds* be taken to cover reinstatement for fire insurance purposes. The landlord proposes to maintain insurance but to recharge the premium to the tenant.

## **OBLIGATORY NOTE**

This report provides a general guide as to the state of repair. No exposure work whatsoever has been carried out, the foundations have not been inspected, plasterwork has not been tested, no under floor inspections made and flooring where concealed by coverings was not inspected. Flues were not inspected nor electrical, water or drainage tests carried out.

## **LIMITATIONS**

In making this report the following assumptions have been made:-

That no high alumina cement concrete or calcium chloride additive or other deleterious material was used in the construction of the property.

That the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions, encumbrances or outgoings and that good title can be shown.

That the property and its value are unaffected by any matters which would be revealed by a local search, by replies to the usual enquiries or by statutory notice and that neither the property, nor its condition, nor its use, nor its intended use, is or will be unlawful.

That inspection of those parts which have not been inspected would neither reveal material defects, nor cause the surveyor to alter the valuation materially.

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***Roger Driver M.R.I.C.S***  
***10<sup>th</sup> April 2012***