

3.0 Executive Summary

Crabtree House is certainly a property with much potential and following our discussions, it is clear that you are aware of the input and care required to return this house to full health.

Key areas to prioritise are:

- * Implement required measures to ensure the future stability of the structure.
- * Reduction of external ground levels, most notably to the rear elevation.
- * Removal of impermeable materials to the external walls and timber frame.
- * Allowance for necessary, sympathetic repairs to the timber frame, masonry walls and any daub/rendered panels to allow full breathability and to prevent further water ingress.
- * Removal of cementitious and other impermeable materials internally.

It should be noted that in any property of this age, type and condition, there will be general unevenness of the surfaces and minor surface crack to the structures of walls, floors, ceilings, doors, windows and other elements. These have occurred due to the natural settlement of the structure, as well as more recent gradual structural movement and general usage over an extended period. It is not possible to highlight each individual example of such distortions and only those felt to be of an unusual nature have been highlighted.

Any purchaser of an older building such as this would need to accept that they require a higher level of regular maintenance and attention when compared to a more modern property if value and saleability is to be unaffected. A prudent owner would make a suitable financial allowance to cover the required annual maintenance.

We would recommend that you go on a Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) weekend course on looking after and maintaining older properties. Even if you do not intend to carry out the work yourself it does give you a far better idea of what work should be carried out. The website for this is www.SPAB.org.

The issues at the property are detailed throughout this report; the items which should be considered as a priority / risk are:

1. External Walls External walls have been rendered with a cementitious material. Works will be required to future proof the property.
2. Roof and Chimney The roof is generally sound although requires some minor repairs and clearing of moss and lichen to prevent moisture ingress. Chimneys require further investigation and remedial action.
3. Rainwater Goods Rainwater goods require comprehensive overhaul or replacement.
4. Ground Levels The ground levels are high around the perimeter of the building. High ground levels can contribute to water ingress via penetrating damp and all ground levels should be 150mm below the finished floor level.
5. Modern Interventions There have been modern interventions which have compromised the building's fabric. Internally the walls have been plastered and painted with non-permeable materials which will reduce the ability of the walls to ventilate and will trap moisture.
6. Drainage The drainage arrangements are unclear, and we recommend a CCTV drainage survey is undertaken prior to purchase.
7. Ventilation There was limited ventilation throughout the property and this needs to be improved everywhere.
8. Services We recommend that further information is obtained regarding the services and servicing reports.
9. Further Information Your solicitor should be asked to verify the legal position and advise upon the implications of the following:

Any adverse easements, restrictive covenants, servitudes or wayleaves affecting the property.

The right of access over the adjoining land for the purposes of maintaining parts sited on boundary lines. Similar rights may exist in favour of adjoining owners/occupiers.

The responsibility for maintenance and repair of boundary walls or fences etc.

The actual property demise and boundary demarcation.

That absolute (good) registered title is available for the property and grounds.

The precise maintenance and repairing responsibilities in respect of shared drains and sewers.

If there is a cancel-repair liability upon the property under inspection.

It is essential to obtain costs for the works so that you are fully aware of budget requirements.

Taking into consideration the amount of works required at the property and its structure, the use of traditional materials such as lime mortars, plasters and renders is highly recommended. These are compatible with the existing fabric and the technology the building employs. It is always advisable to seek advice from an independent conservation professional if you are unsure and we are happy to discuss this further.

We suggest that consulting with the conservation officer will be beneficial at an early stage.