Condition Report

Property:	**28 Nicholas Way, Northwood, HA6 2TT**
Clients:	**Mr Neil Maroo**
Inspected On:	**6th October 2022**
Weather Conditions: (at time of survey)	**Overcast with rain showers**
Inspected By:	**S G Hands BSc MRICS ACIArb MPTS** **Chartered Building Surveyor**

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INSTRUCTIONS:

Instructions were received from you to undertake a survey at 28 Nicholas Way, Northwood, HA6 2TT.

It is understood from the various discussions and messages that the property is one that you already own, but that you are in the process of deciding on the level of work, both restoration and repair that you might undertake at the property. You wish to know if there were any significant structural defects at the house.

Access was provided to the property on the 5th October 2020.

We now set out below our full report.

LIMITATIONS OF REPORT

At the time of the survey access was provided to the subject property with keys brought to site by your father. The past owners of the property were not present and therefore we were not able to ask them questions in respect of when various items of work might have been undertaken.

At the time of the survey the house was unoccupied and had been cleared of furniture. Close fitting floor coverings had been provided throughout the house and the presence of these restricted inspection of floor structures beneath.

From discussion with you, it is believed that the property has been vacant for a considerable time (we believe from our discussions with you approximately 2 years). As the property has been vacant for such a time this certainly had contributed to its tired appearance.

During the survey we were able to gain access to the garden areas formed about the property. Directions given within this report are taken from the driveway which gives access to the property. The front elevation is the first elevation seen when approaching the property from the private driveway.

Our viewing of the property externally was to an extent limited. This was due to trees growing in the grounds close to the subject property which restricted viewing of the roof coverings particularly to the rear of the property.

DESCRIPTION & SITUATION

The property which you own is Netherby Cottage, 28 Nicholas Way, Northwood, HA6 2TT.

The subject property is a detached house in Nicholas Way, Northwood. This is a road which is entirely in residential use with the houses in the street generally being high class, detached residential house. It was noted that a good number of these have been redeveloped in comparatively recent years so that very high-quality properties are formed. Houses within the street are of individual character.

The setting of the property is slightly unusual, in that this is set behind the main line of houses in Nicholas Way. There is a narrow access road which extends to the left-hand side of 24 Nicholas Way and this narrow access road gives access to both the subject property and 26 and 26A Nicholas

Way. Access to the site in which the subject property is located is restricted with electrically operated gates opened by a keypad to the left-hand side of the access road and these gives access to the grounds of 28 Nicholas Way.

The property is set in an established and very popular suburban setting. Being within an established suburban setting there is access to facilities such as schools, medical facilities etc. The property is located very close to borders with Northwood Golf Club.

Within the area there are reasonable links to public transport with bus services operating in roads close to the subject property. The central areas of both Northwood and Ruislip are close to the subject house.

The subject property comprises a detached house and this is constructed in traditional manner. No precise information has been provided regarding when the house was constructed. It is difficult to age the property but from viewing the styling we suspect that this was probably early in the 1900's, probably 1910 to 1920. Unusually for this area the house is covered from a roof formed from pitched timbers and this has a thatched finish. The walls to the house are formed from (we believe) solid brickwork and these generally have smooth rendered finishes externally. There would appear to have been limited past extension to the house with we believe a single storey extension formed to the rear of the property.

It is assumed that the external and load bearing walls of the house and extension are constructed on traditional spreader type foundations. We have not been provided with any information indicating that there may have been past foundation strengthening or underpinning carried out to the house. If you have any evidence of such information please forward this to us as a matter of urgency as this may affect the advice given within the report.

Floors within the house are generally of suspended timber construction i.e., boards fixed to joists at both ground and first floor level.

Accommodation within the house comprises the following: -

Ground Floor Level

An entrance door which leads to an internal hallway. Access is provided from this hallway to the reception room at the central part of the left-hand side of the building, the main reception room which is to the rear of the building, and this runs from the right-hand side through to the left-hand side of the building. To the left-hand side of the entrance hall is a passageway and this leads to the ground floor lobby and cloak room (to the right-hand side of the building) with a storage cupboard (pantry) formed to the front of this. There is a door which leads from the passageway to the front of the building and off the internal corridor here there is a kitchen and utility room with access from the kitchen area to a reception room/dining room. There are store cupboards formed off the access way to the utility room and an understairs cupboard.

First Floor Level

A staircase leads from the ground floor hallway centrally to first floor level on the right-hand side of the building. It was noted that there are 4 bedrooms and a master bathroom. The master bedroom which is to the rear of the property has an ensuite shower room to it.

The subject property is provided with all main services including drainage, electricity, gas and water. The services were not in working order at the time of our survey.

Heating throughout the house is provided by means of a gas fired central heating system. The boiler was not in working order at the time of the inspection.

We have not been provided with a copy of the Energy Performance Certificate for the house. We would expect the property to have a poor energy efficiency rating given the age of the property, the construction utilised at the property and old services.

EXTERNAL CONDITION

Chimney Stacks

Two chimney stacks were noted to project through the roof of the property. A chimney stack projects through the hipped end of the roof to the rear of the property and a further chimney stack projects through the left-hand half of the roof at approximately the centre of the house.

The chimney stacks were noted to be in poor condition with evidence of eroded pointing, spalling to the brickwork and notable lean to the chimney stack projecting through the hipped end of the roof at the rear end of the property.

The other chimney stack is a tall and slender chimney stack and there was note of considerable spalling and damage to the brick forming the chimney particularly to the front face of the stack. It was also noted that there is evidence of eroded and missing pointing and that the chimney stack again leans.

The chimney stacks will require rebuilding to return them to good order.

Roofs

The roof to the property comprises a centre ridged pitched roof with hipped ends to the front and rear of the property. The ridge of the roof runs perpendicular to the front of the house. There are projecting dormer windows from the main roof to both the right hand and left-hand side of the property with such dormer windows covered by further section of pitched roof with hipped ends.

As we had previously noted the roof to the house, unusually for the area is covered by thatch. The thatched roof covering was noted to be in very poor condition with wire netting covering part of the thatching in efforts to retain this. There is widespread evidence of thatch falling from partition. We

noted that the ridge of the roof (towards the rear of the building) has been covered by plastic sheeting (tarpaulin) obviously to cover holes in the roof covering.

Flashings are included at the junction between the dormer windows and thatch roof finish. The flashings were noted to be in poor condition being uneven and part lifted particularly to the left-hand side of the property.

Heavy moss growth was noted to the roof slopes at the rear of the property. This is an indication of slow rainwater run off from the roof and this is poor as it will lead to the thatch degrading

It is very clear that the thatched roof covering requires complete renewal.

There would obviously appear to have been leakage occurring through the thatched roof covering for a considerable time and we must consider that it is very likely that roof timbers adjacent the areas where leakage has occurred will have decayed or developed rot. These are likely to require replacing.

Walls

It is assumed that the walls are formed from solid brickwork, and these have generally been finished externally by rough cast type render which is painted with the plinth to the walls decorated in contrasting colours. Square openings have been formed in the walls at ground floor level for various doors and window.

No major cracking was evident to the walls, and we are curious as to whether there has been underpinning to the property given the many large and mature trees close to the house.

To the rear section of the building there is exposed brickwork adjacent the rear chimneys stack. It was noted that the pointing provided to the brickwork here is very poor and eroded as well as there being evidence of slight spalling to the bricks which form the walls. The walls will require complete repointing and the spalled and defective bricks will need to be cut out and renewed with sound new bricks.

As has been noted the floors within the house are of suspended timber construction i.e. boards fixed to joists. There is a limited amount of sub floor ventilation provided with air bricks set in the left hand and right-hand side wall. The level of sub floor ventilation, which is provided, is poor and we suspect that rot is likely to have developed in the timbers forming the suspended timber ground floors given the lack of sub floor ventilation. We are particularly suspicious of this in the office at the rear of the house.

The walls to the house will have very poor insulating qualities. These are formed we believe from solid brickwork. Works should be undertaken to greatly improve the thermal performance of this detached house especially given present energy concerns.

Windows

The windows included to the property are either original or at least very old. The windows are generally steel "chital" casement type windows which are set within timber subframes. The windows are glazed with leaded light type glazing.

There has clearly been a complete lack of maintenance to the windows, and these were noted to be in very poor condition. It was noted that the windows were difficult to operate. We attempted to open several windows, but we did not wish to force these open as we may not have been able to close them.

The glazing to the windows in a good number of areas has "buckled" and distorted and this is particularly evident to the windows at first floor level to the front and on the right-hand side of the building.

It was also noted that there is cracked and broken glazing particularly to the utility room.

External Doors

The main entrance to the house is on the right-hand side of the property. At the centre of the building there is an oak entrance door, this is in a reasonably sheltered location as the thatched roof projects above the door at this point to form a storm porch. The door appears in reasonable order although we were unable to test the operation of this door as keys for it were not provided.

Elsewhere the doors included in the external walling were noted to be in poor condition. To the front of the property, it was noted that there are fully glazed French doors which gives access to the reception room accessed from the kitchen as well as a single fully glazed door which leads to this area. The doors were noted to be in poor condition with evidence of peeling and flaking paint as well as defects to the glazing. The glazing which is included to these doors (and to the external doors in general) is not safety or toughened glass as would be required by present day Building Regulations and therefore there is a possibility that serious injury could be caused to users or occupiers of the property if the glazing were to become broken.

Given the "defective" glazing and the poor condition of the doors/door frames the doors to the front of the property need to be renewed.

Further doors are formed to the left-hand side of the property. There are 3 sets of fully glazed French doors here. As for the French doors to the front of the building these have suffered a complete lack of recent maintenance with widespread evidence of peeling and flaking paintwork which has left exposed timber which will have deteriorated in the time it has been left exposed. The glazing to the windows of such French doors is also noted to be "defective" as the French doors to the front elevation.

The French doors located to the left-hand side of the property will require replacement before the doors are in a safe and useable condition.

Drainage

Evidence of above ground drainage was noted about the perimeter of the house. The above ground drainage was noted to be old fashioned with the wastes generally being old lead style type wastes and with the soil vent pipe picking up drainage from the WCs at first floor level being cast iron pipework which was in corroded condition.

Water services were not operating at the property at the time of the survey, and we are unable to confirm how effectively the above ground drainage operates.

We were unable to view the below ground drainage included to the property. This would be of considerable age and we fully suspect that this would be formed from stoneware drainage sections which would be rigidly set in place. Over the time that the property has existed there would have been movements in the sub soil and we fully suspect that if the drainage was subjected to a close circuit television survey this would show evidence of cracking and movement in the pipework. If the drains were subjected to either air or hydraulic testing, we suspect that leakage would be shown to be occurring from the drainage system.

We strongly suspect that the drainage installation at the property will require major overhauling and repair to return it to sound and watertight condition.

It was noted that there are several gullies included about the property, these were noted to be blocked and clogged by leaf and other vegetable matter.

We are unable to confirm how effectively the drainage installation operates.

External Areas

A tarmacadam driveway extends from the electrically operated gates up to the right-hand side of the house. A detached garage structure is formed to the left-hand side of the driveway prior to the residential accommodation.

The drive slopes upwards considerably on the site which slopes mainly from rear down to front but also to a lesser extent from right down to left. The tarmacadam covered driveway shows evidence of wear as well as there being cracking, settling, and splitting to the tarmacadam finish in places.

A ramp is formed off the driveway to the front of the detached garage. This rises considerably above the adjacent ground level to the front of the garage area.

A considerable amount of paving is formed adjacent the subject property, and this is generally very poor and uneven. The paving which is formed particularly to the front and on the left-hand side of the property has settled badly and is uneven. The paving is uneven to a degree where this is a “trip hazard” the paving will need to be taken up and re-laid as it is in very unsafe condition and the paving was also noted to be very slippery after rain showers encountered during our survey.

External steps are formed adjacent the doors to the front of the building. It was noted that the steps are of uneven rise and going which is dangerous and not permitted under Building Regulations. It was further noted that the steps particularly to the single fully glazed door have settled and pulled away from the building. This needs rebuilding.

The paving formed adjacent the rear end of the building is also very uneven and represents a trip hazard. Dwarf retaining walls are formed between the paving to the rear of the building and the adjacent planted beds. The ground beyond the retaining walls slopes considerably upwards and it was noted that the retaining walls have part collapsed due to the forces placed upon them. The walls are inadequate

Walls which are formed between the patio area to the left-hand side of the building in the main garden area were also noted to be in very poor and part collapsed state.

The main garden area is to the left-hand side of the property. All about the property it was noted that there are a very considerable number of trees which comprise a mixture of large and mature broad leaf trees as well as several conifer trees (believed to be cypress). The trees are in very close proximity to the house, we feel that there is a possibility that these could cause damage to the house both through ground movements and also possibly by collapse of the trees.

There would appear to have been no obvious maintenance/cutting back of the trees adjacent the property in recent times. When viewing about the property there was evidence of fallen branches from the trees in several locations.

Outbuilding

A detached double garage building is formed to the front of the property, and this is accessed from the driveway leading to the house.

The garage is conventionally constructed, covered by a roof formed from pitched timbers with a tiled finish and having external walls which are rendered and painted. No access was possible to the garage at the time of our inspection.

The garage structure appears in generally sound condition from the external only inspection we were able to undertake.

Roads

Access to the property is unusual. As previously noted, this house as well as the adjoining properties 26/26A Nicholas Way are accessed via narrow roadway and are set behind other properties in Nicholas Way.

We assume the roadway is a private road. You should check on your responsibilities as regard to repair and maintaining this road area.

It was noted that the other properties which utilise this roadway, 26 and 26A Nicholas Way are modern properties and these obviously have been redeveloped in the comparatively recent past.

INTERNAL CONDITION

Roof Void

Access was possible to the main roof void with there being a fitted loft ladder. It appears that there is fitted lighting within the roof void but this was not working at the time of the inspection given the lack of electrical supply to the property.

It was noted that the roof is a traditionally operated roof. Close inspection of this was not possible although there has been past leakage through the roof given that a section of the ridge of the roof is covered by a tarpaulin. We fully suspect that sections of the roof framework will need to be renewed given the past roof leakage which has occurred, and which occurred obviously over considerable period of time.

When viewing in the roof void it was noted that there is evidence of daylight through the thatched roof covering in places, so rainwater ingress will still be occurring.

It was noted that the roof void has some thermal insulation provided but this would not appear to be to present day standards. The roof should be insulated to good modern standards to help reduce heat loss from the property especially given rapidly increasing energy prices as are being encountered at present.

Ceilings

We believe the ceilings are generally modern plasterboard type ceiling, generally with simple plastered and emulsion painted finishes.

There is evidence of damage to the ceilings, and it was noted that there is damp staining to the ceiling of the main bedroom at first floor level. This is not surprising given the tarpaulin which has been put over the ridge of the roof. There has obviously been damp penetration through the thatched roof covering here in the past and we suspect this is still occurring.

There are defects in other areas to ceilings within the property and these include both cracking as well as further damp staining/marking.

A good number of the ceilings within the property will need to be renewed.

Walls

There would appear to have been little/no alteration to the layout of the property since it was originally formed except for the forming of the extension to the rear end of the property with the office area accessed from the main reception room.

No major defects were apparent to the internal walls in the form of either major cracking or major unevenness to the wall plaster.

During the survey we tested the base of the walls at ground floor level with an electronic moisture meter. Evidence was found of high-level damp meter readings, and we therefore strongly recommend that you have a proper damp survey carried out at the house as we fully suspect that there is rising dampness to the property.

The property has been unoccupied for a considerable time and some of the high-level damp meter readings might due to condensation, with the property not being properly heated and ventilated.

Floors

The floors within the property are generally of suspended timber construction i.e., boards fixed to joists.

It was noted when walking into the office area from the main reception room that the floor is springy. It is suspected there is rot/decay in the timbers forming the floor structure. Investigations will need to be undertaken here so that the condition of the sub floor timbers can be viewed. The floors in the property generally appeared level but the finishes particularly to the floors which have a polished board finish have deteriorated and require sanding and polishing.

As previously noted, the sub floor ventilation provided at the property is poor and we suspect that rot/decay may have developed in some of the sub floor timbers where sub floor ventilation is particularly poor.

Internal Joinery

It was noted that there are a variety of internal doors provided. A number of these doors have glazed panels set within them and we do not believe that these are glazed with safety or toughened glass as now would be required by the Building Regulations. Due to this there is a possibility that serious injury could be caused to users or occupiers of the property if the glazing were to become broken. The door to the ground floor office is a fully glazed door and should be replaced

The other internal joinery i.e., skirting boards, architraves etc. are formed from timber and provided with painted finishes. These appeared free from major defect.

Leading between ground and first floor level there are timber staircases. The staircases appeared level and were noted to be sound to walk on. Satisfactory balustrading has been provided about the stairways.

Kitchen Installation

The kitchen installation was obviously of good quality when it was installed. This would appear to have been a considerable time ago. The kitchen installation is now very dated. It was noted that there is need for repair and adjustments to the doors fitted to units etc.

Damp

As previously noted, we tested the base of the walls at ground floor level with an electronic moisture meter during our survey. High level damp meter readings were obtained, and it is suspected that this is caused by rising dampness.

Woodworm and Timber Defects

No obvious evidence of these could be viewed at the time of our survey.

It is noted, however that the roof covering is in very poor condition and that this has part been covered by a tarpaulin obviously as damp ingress was occurring into the house. It is not known how long damp ingress into the house was allowed to continue.

Given the obvious damp ingress that has occurred it is likely that timbers forming the roof framework will have decayed or rotted and it is highly likely that works will need to be undertaken to the roof framework in replacing timbers prior to the roof being recovered.

We have also noted that the voids beneath the suspended timber ground floor are poorly ventilated, and this may also be an area where timbers have decayed or rotted.

We noted that the floor adjacent the entrance to the office off the main reception room was springy and we have recommended that investigations be undertaken so that the condition of the sub floor timbers can be properly assessed.

Asbestos

Given the age of the property and that this will have been altered and repaired over time it is very likely that there will be asbestos containing materials at the property. Specialist surveys to check for the presence of such materials should be undertaken before any works are carried out.

Services

The comments provided here offer general guidance only and should not be considered as a substitute for proper testing by specialist contractors.

Electricity

The property is connected to mains electrical supply.

We are not aware when the electrical installation at the property was last tested. The electrical installation appears dated with limited power socket outlets included to the various rooms.

There have been changes to electrical regulations in recent years and it is highly likely that the electrical installation at this property will need to be totally renewed prior to it meeting present day standards.

Gas

The property is connected to mains gas supply. No obvious defects were noted but we believe that the gas supply system is switched off.

Gas appliance installations should be regularly tested so that it is known that they are operating safely and efficiently. We believe that the property has been unoccupied for a considerable time (you have informed us over 2 years).

If there are gas appliances which you wish to retain (doubted) you should have these checked by a Gas Safe Registered Contractor so that it is known that they are operating safely and efficiently.

Cold Water Supply

The cold-water plumbing system at the property is old and dated. It would be very strongly recommended that this be renewed if you are to refurbish the house.

We believe that a good part of the cold-water plumbing contains lead pipework. There are well known health risks with this.

Hot Water Supply

The hot water supply system to the property is dated. It is assumed that this is heated via the central heating boiler. Hot water is stored in a copper hot water cylinder which has a poorly fitting insulation jacket.

This installation should be modernised/renewed so that the hot water supply system is more efficient and so that adequate hot water is provided to the property.

Space heating

The space heating within the property is very dated. The system is a conventional water filled system and this is fired via a floor mounted Ideal Concorde Boiler located in the utility room. This is a very old boiler, probably 40-50 years. We were unable to confirm that the boiler is in working order.

The boiler provided is very inefficient. The central heating system as a whole should be replaced .

Summary and Conclusions

As can be seen from viewing this report the property Netherby Cottage, 28 Nicholas Way, Northwood, HA6 2TT has been unoccupied for several years.

The property whilst appearing to suffer no major structural defects is in poor condition and requires a considerable work to return it to habitable condition.

Given the level of repair which is required; the poor energy efficiency of the existing building and given the poor condition of utility service we feel it would be desirable (as has happened at other adjoining plots) for the property to be redeveloped.

This economic decision is also probably influenced given present tax arrangements.

We trust the above has been of assistance to you but if you require any further information, or if any points raised during the course of this report need clarification, then please do not hesitate to contact us.

Finally, it should be appreciated that this report is carried out on the basis that we have not carried out any tests on the drains or other services or other parts of the structure that were not accessible, covered or unexposed at the time of our inspection. We are therefore unable to report that such parts are free from rot, beetle attack or insect infestation or other defects.

This report has been prepared solely for your use and whilst it may be referred to in negotiations with third parties, the contents and detail of such report may not be disclosed to any third party without the prior consent of Simon Hands & Associates in writing.

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Dated **:** ***14th October 2022***

Signed **:**

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