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BUILDING DEFECT DIAGNOSIS & REPORT

OF

WALL CRACKING

TO

X KENSINGTON PARK ROAD
LONDON
W11 3BU

COMMISSIONED BY

MR & MRS SMITH

TAKEN 14th July 2006

ISSUED ON 17th July 2006

CONTENTS

SECTION A – REPORT DETAILS	Page
• INTRODUCTION	3
• TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT	3
• WHAT THE REPORT TELLS YOU	3
• WHAT THE REPORT DOES NOT TELL YOU	3
• WHAT WAS INSPECTED	4
• PROPERTY DETAILS	4
SECTION B – RECORD OF INSPECTION	
• DESCRIPTION OF DEFECT	5
• DIAGNOSIS	5
• REMEDY	6
SECTION C – CONCLUSION	
• SUMMARY OF CONDITION	6
• FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS	6

SECTION A – REPORT DETAILS

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide a diagnosis of the wall cracks in areas surveyed. I have given my opinion as to the cause and have recommended steps to be taken to remedy the problem.

Although there has been an increase in subsidence claims in recent years, most buildings of this age suffer minor cracking at some time which does not mean that there is a subsidence problem; however the first obvious sign of subsidence is the appearance of cracks.

The size of the cracks measured does not indicate that there is a significant structural problem, however a monitoring period of six months is recommended prior to cosmetic remedial works being carried out.

WHAT THE REPORT TELLS YOU

This report has been commissioned by Mr & Mrs Smith and describes the condition of the areas surveyed, on the date of inspection, those parts of the property that have been inspected and those parts where an inspection has not taken place.

This report tells you about the type of property inspected a description of the defective cracked plaster and locations, the size of the cracks, whether moisture is present and identification of the possible cause and remedy. It also tells you whether and where further enquiries are needed.

WHAT THE REPORT DOES NOT TELL YOU

This report does not tell you the value of the property. You should commission independent advice if you require a valuation. It does not tell you about any minor matters that would not ordinarily have an effect on a buyer's decision to purchase. This report does not warn you about and health and safety risks to occupiers or visitors to the property except where the risks are such that repairs or building works are required.

WHAT WAS INSPECTED

A thorough external inspection was carried out to the walls, windows and roof to the front and rear elevations together with an internal inspection of the rear section the Party Wall between 22 and 24 Kensington Park Road, as the cracks are isolated to this area only. No services were inspected and no equipment was tested. No opening up and investigation works were carried out except for the removal of a small section of plaster on the 1st floor to ascertain as to whether the crack run through the brickwork behind the plaster. No furniture was moved to inspect walls.

PROPERTY INFORMATION

DATE OF INSPECTION: 14th July 2006

ADDRESS: X Kensington Park Road, London, W11 3BU

SURVEYORS NAME: Dennis Brett MCIQB LCGI

TYPE OF PROPERTY: Mid terraced House spread over for storeys.

NUMBER OF BEDROOMS: 4

AGE OF PROPERTY: Approximately 165 yrs

CLIENT NAME: Mr & Mrs Smith

TEL: 02072295304

MOB: 07843726185

FAX: 02072438248

EMAIL: None

WEB: None

SECTION B – RECORD OF INSPECTION

DESCRIPTION OF DEFECT

Vertical and diagonal cracks have appeared in the plaster to Party Wall shared by 22 Kensington Park Road together with diagonal crack to ceiling on 1st floor landing.

The wall cracks appear in the basement kitchen area and rear basement utility room, the utility room is on the same level but accessed from the garden. The cracks were traced from the basement kitchen area to the 1st floor; there are no signs of them continuing onto the second floor.

Externally, the cracks are isolated to the base of the rear extension constructed, approximately, in 1935 – 1940, and do not exceed the height of 2 metres.

Crack Dimensions:

Basement: 0.45 millimetres
Ground Floor: 1.50 millimetres
First Floor: 1.50 millimetres

Moisture Content: No moisture was found in areas inspected and can be ruled out as a contributing factor.

The plaster was checked and was found to be loose either side of the crack up to the first floor where loose plaster was no higher than 400 millimetres from the dado rail.

DIAGNOSIS

The cracking was first noticed by the residents in approximately March 2006, given the winter drought experienced during 2005 – 2006 the likely cause is minor shrinkage and settlement of the ground clay below the utility room foundations and possibly the original rear section of wall, from the garden door to the Party Wall, directly behind the utility room, which is 2 metres in length.

There is a mature Ash tree to the rear of the property that is approximately 10 metres from the house and 8 metres from the utility room. The lack of ground water may have caused the roots to extend out further in the search for water. Following my visit I researched the safe distance of an ash tree to be 21 metres; they can grow up to 45 meters in height with a maximum root spread of 20 metres and live no longer than 200 years.

REMEDY

I recommend that no cosmetic remedial works are carried out over the period of six months. If no further movement is evident then the loose plaster should be removed and cut back a minimum distance of 100 millimetres, either side of the cracks.

Once the plaster has been removed the brickwork behind should be checked for defective bricks. Bricks that have cracks should either be replaced or resin injected. The wall should then be re-plastered using British Gypsum renovating plaster or a lime plaster which will move at the same rate as the surrounding plaster to avoid future cracking caused by differential movement. Advice should be sought from British Gypsum prior to choosing a suitable product, contact details as below.

Email: bgtechnical.enquiries@bpb.com
Tel: 08705 456 123
Fax: 08705 456 356

SECTION C – CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF CONDITION

Although the property is good condition for its age, there are superficial cracks in the plaster that have appeared recently, which is to be expected from time to time with a property of this age.

Section B identifies the defect, the cause and remedy, to enable resolution to this problem, however, the residents should be made aware that the cracks are to be left exposed over a period of six months to ascertain whether any further movement is evident.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

If after a period of 6 months, the cracks significantly increase in size, the problem could be more serious than currently thought, If this occurred I recommend that a trial hole is dug to ascertain whether there is interference from tree roots or whether it is a problem due to shrinkage of the clay caused by the recent winter – summer drought. At this stage a Structural Engineers report will be necessary to obtain the cause and remedy.