

1. INFORMATION

1.1 Name and Address of Client - M.....

1.2 Address of Property -

1.3 Local Taxes - To be confirmed

1.4 Date of Inspection - 27th February 2003

1.5 Weather - It was dull overcast and cloudy at the time of my inspection after a long period of mixed weather including some severe rain.

1.6 Limits of Inspection - The property had to be viewed as it stood, the exterior was inspected at the time of my visit but clearly it is difficult to comment on the whole and the area of the light well was also look at only from the landings.

The vendor made arrangements for me to visit a neighbouring apartment which extended across the whole of the floor as was originally designed and this has been taken into consideration in my comments.

The property was fully furnished which therefore limited my inspection to those parts normally visible unless otherwise specified and it cannot therefore be assumed that any area not referred to is necessarily free from problems.

1.7 Tenure – Details of the reciprocal rights and liabilities in regard to the property as a whole will no doubt be provided through your Notaire. I understand from my discussions with the vendor that there is a fairly nominal amount paid each month in regard to the communal areas and block insurance although he effects his own insurance on the subject apartment and full details in this regard must be sought.

In regard to maintenance, it is my understanding that there is a joint liability for maintenance, which is shared by the various owners, and, in this regard, there is to be a meeting nearer to the middle of the year at which it is anticipated there will be discussions with particular regard to the stairwell and communal areas. It would seem advisable for you or a representative to be present at this meeting as there is clearly going to be the need to discuss projected expenditure and from my discussions it would seem that there is currently no reserve fund to set against these.

1.8 Tenancies - The property appeared in single-family occupation at the time of my inspection but your legal advisors must ensure that full vacant possession will be available on completion.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 Description of Property - The property comprises a second floor apartment situated in a block, which would appear to be some five storeys high and situated in this historic road, which rises sharply with steps and forms one of the oldest parts of the City.

The accommodation is located in the forward portion of the second floor, having been sub-divided from the original whole as evidenced by the apartments immediately above and below, and is accessed from a communal entrance hall with a stairwell rising to the righthand side of the light well and ventilation area which runs up through the core of the building.

2.2 Accommodation - A communal entrance hall with sharply rising staircase access each landing and there is a private door to the inner entrance hall, which is a fairly substantial affair.

A double width opening runs to the main reception area, which is very extensive and opens to a particularly well-fitted kitchen to the rear in addition to which there are

two double bedrooms with a steep staircase rising within the second to what might reasonably be described as a mezzanine level.

This is located above the entrance hall and bathroom and makes a useful additional room and I understand from the vendor that it would be possible to open out to the light well to provide natural light and ventilation although it has to be acknowledged that there is very limited headroom. He has the documentation, which confirms this work with reference to opening through at the head of the stairs was carried out in accordance with calculations prepared by an "expert de geometre".

The windows are double glazed in replacement UPVC and the central heating is by way of electric convector heaters. The double rooms are intercommunicating, and you will have noted the fresco on the living room ceiling which I understand dates from the 1750's. The whole has laminate flooring overlaid over the original structure tiling with the exception of the bathroom and WC, which have a modern tiled surface.

2.3 Outbuildings/Parking - The building fronts directly onto the street and I understand it immediately abuts both the neighbouring properties and the properties to the rear so with no associated land. Rights and liabilities relating to the communal areas will no doubt be established.

2.4 Age of Property - I understand the property dates from around 1700, although obviously works have been carried out in regard to the sub-division of various floors in the interim period and the fresco above the living room area was, I understand, confirmed by the local museum where an expert indicated it dates from 1750. The renovation and upgrade of the subject property was, I am advised, carried out in the 1990's.

2.5 Orientation - I am advised, by the Vendor, that the property is orientated with the southerly elevation to the front although this must be confirmed if it is significant to your purchase.

2.6 Location/Amenities - The property stands in the heart of the old town within short walking distance of the market and other amenities. Although I am assuming that this is an area where you will have satisfied yourselves as to the advantages and disadvantages

2.7 Summary of Construction - The external elevations appear to have been formed in an assortment of materials to a depth of approximately half a metre with the external surface rendered and the whole rises to what appears to be tiled roofing on a double pitch although this may well incorporate a degree of flat roofing in part.

The windows have been replaced with sealed unit double-glazing set in substantial UPVC frames and there is a limited amount of external joinery by way of shutters and doors.

3. EXTERNAL CONDITION

3.1 Chimneys/Flues - There is a central chimney, which rises through the various floors and is located within the walls between the living room and adjacent bedroom although I am unable to advise as to how this is finished above the roofline. Within the subject property the fireplaces have been sealed although I believe they are still operative at some levels.

A light well and ventilation shaft runs up through the core of the building providing air and light to each of the apartments, which as noted these, were previously built around it. This has a glazed top although I do believe from what I was able to see and as confirmed by the vendor that this is open in the cheeks to provide ventilation to the various apartments.

3.2 Roof - I understand from the vendor that the property has a pitched roof finished with tiling, but have to acknowledge that it was very difficult to get far enough away to obtain a view of the roof slopes. It is my opinion that there may well be an area of

flat roofing towards the front, possibly a modification carried out during the property's earlier life. I believe you can, however, take some comfort from the fact that maintenance has been carried out on a regular basis and there is no projected work in the immediate future.

I would suggest that if this is an area for concern you may well feel that it would be prudent for you to request that approaches be made to the management company for details of their most recent inspection.

3.3 Rainwater Goods - These appear substantial overhang with a cornice to the front and a wide section metal gutter, well supported and draining to what would appear to be two downpipes in a mixture of metal and plastic. These enter the front elevation of the property and before exiting at ground level where surface water runs out onto the street line. There is some staining on the cornice adjacent to the right hand down pipe, which may indicate localised attention would be beneficial to the rainwater goods. Again I have to advise the rear of the property was not visible and it is unclear as to how the rear roof slope is dealt with.

3.4 Walls/DPC - The structure is substantially formed with external walls to a depth of almost half a metre and certainly stone work was visible in parts although the majority of the elevations have been rendered with some coursing detail and a comprehensive inspection of the only visible elevation to the front of the property failed to indicate any areas of serious structural distortion. These surfaces having been painted on what would appear to be a fairly regular basis.

Hair cracking was noted in a number of points running notably between window and door openings which are notoriously weak parts of any construction, but nothing, I felt should give undue cause for concern.

There is a porticoed entrance in reconstituted stone and also decorative mouldings to the upper part and is degrading.. Whilst there is some stone work at the lower level there is clearly some form of basement area which was not accessible and the pavement which is stepped runs tight across the front of the building.

3.5 External Joinery - The external joinery is principally limited to the eaves, which currently suspend the gutters, and these were viewed from ground level with binoculars. I am pleased to note that although there is some localised decay, which will require periodic attention during further programmes of maintenance, I noted nothing of any great moment.

The property has matching shutters at all levels and whilst tired they generally appeared in what may be described as reasonable order although should be checked as many of the joints have been bracketed to provide bracing at corners.

3.6 Windows - Certainly the windows to the upper apartments generally appear to have been replaced with sealed unit double glazing set in UPVC frames and it would be sensible to establish it is part of the general liability or if it is of individual responsibility as I assume will be the decoration of the external joinery. These appeared to be of a good standard and in satisfactory order.

3.7 Decorations - The exterior has clearly been the subject of programmes of redecoration. Some localised decay was noted in a number of areas, which will require new wood to be let in prior to the next programme of decorations. It would be sensible to seek details as to when this next programme is to take place, which information will no doubt be available from the vendor based on details from the management company.

3.8 Garage/Outbuildings - not applicable

3.9 Site - This would not be applicable, beyond commenting on the light well and the basement area although the subject property apparently has no basement rights.

- 3.10 Drains** - The surface water drainage has been covered externally on the front elevation and I assume something relevant on the rear as I found no evidence that this was causing problems.

Soil drainage runs via communal stack pipes in the light well in the centre of the property and again details must be obtained as maintenance rights and liabilities in this regards. Certainly I found no obvious evidence of problems within the drainage system at the time of my visit nor was the vendor aware of any.

- 3.11 General** - Front door is showing a severe termite attack but this is a quite common with the property but this is historically preserved, looking at the stairwell itself, to the lower level this is quite substantial with the formation of arching having taken place, I could not, however, get access into the light well at the time of my visit.

There is a lot of rather dubious timber visible in the lower part of the light well but again this will form part of the common maintenance in respect of which enquiries will no doubt be made.

The stairs to the first floor level are well formed and there is a tiled base with marble plinth at this point, but it has to be said that as you go up the stairs from here it does rather deteriorate and some degradation was noted within the balustrading, which is unstable in places.

There was a good deal of deflection within the stairwell which was also noted in the property itself, but with a property of this age this is an area where you will no doubt wish to take a view.

In regards to the stairwell, which is the oldest part of the property, this has a specific listing, which means that the woodwork cannot be dealt with in any other way than treated, and there is a programme in hand to carry out a recommended decoration.

The standard construction of the stairwell tends to deteriorate the higher you go and I went up to the roofline. There is in fact another floor of apartments up here and shows the roof to be pitched and extending out to what I expect to be a flat roof. There was no access to the roof internally.

As noted under an earlier heading, this part of the property is likely to be discussed and budgeted for during the forthcoming meeting between the residents and the management company, which is why I feel it important for either yourselves or a representative to be present.

4. INTERNAL CONDITION

- 4.1 Roof Space** - The roof void of the main building was inaccessible at the time of my visit although it would appear, in part at least, that the top floor accommodation has probably been formed in this area.

The subject apartment has no formal roof void although a steep staircase rises to the mezzanine area formed above the hallway, bathroom and wc. Prior to carrying out the work to form this space, the vendor obtained the relevant documentation with regard to opening out the wall with the calculations for the provision of a beam where he cut through.

This area has been formed with a proper wooden floor and contains the water-heating tank, which has recently been installed. The documentation relating to these works will be made available through your notary on request.

There is a vent in the rear wall of this area, which I am advised could be the location for a window although I would personally feel inclined to see if this is permissible before doing so. The sliding door functions normally and there is a substantial timber beam running through which supports the upper levels.

- 4.2.1 Ceilings** - The ceiling throughout the property are, with the exception of the entrance hall, which has been reformed with a suspended ceiling that provides the

space for the mezzanine floor, plastered onto the underside of the interfloor structure and a good deal of misalignment was noted. None of this movement, however, would appear to me to be recent nor does it evidence obvious instability.

In the second bedroom exactly the same comments apply although this is slightly less misaligned and it is evident that the property has dropped towards the centre during its lifetime but, again, it is my view that this probably dates back to a much earlier time.

The suspended ceiling extends through the entrance hall into the cloakroom where there is a hatchway I couldn't open as it comes up under the mezzanine floor. The bathroom ceiling is also plasterboard with a small decorative moulded cornice, which appears to be polystyrene, something you will have to take a view in respect of fire.

The main reception area has suspended ceiling, which has been reformed, above the kitchen area and it is not clear as to what might be above it although this would seem fairly academic.

As previously described, the main living room ceiling is original with a fine Fresco painted on it which I understand the local museum estimates to date from around 1750. It is also comforting to note that, assuming this is original as we are lead to believe, there is not evidence that any movement within the structure generally has had a detrimental effect on the area.

- 4.3 Walls/Partitions** - The internal walls are substantially formed and in block or stonework providing partitions. There are also blockwork sub divisions to provide the bathroom area, these being of a relatively narrow section.

All in all, these seem fairly regular and are plastered over the block work, no evidence of serious cracking. The vendor advises me that during his programme of refurbishment, all cracks and damage were filled and overlaid with a fibreglass mat prior to the surface being prepared and redecorated.

There is obvious distortion, which is visible around door openings, but, again, my opinion is that this dates back many years and should not be considered an area of concern. Intercommunicating doors as noted run between the various rooms.

- 4.4 Fireplaces/Chimney Breasts** - The original fireplace is set I understand within the wall between bedroom and the living room area. This is sealed and capped and the vendor advises me that he is unaware of anyone in the building who actually uses an open fireplace.

- 4.5 Floors** - The flooring is concealed by the laminate surface, which is placed on it and within the bathroom, and WC there is tiling. I cannot advise as to what the inter-floor structure is, but it appeared solid, the laminate lifts in places but there is no evidence of instability in this area.

I am advised, by the vendor, that the whole has been laid over an original tiled surface, which would be consistent with the neighbouring property, which I was able to inspect at the time of my visit for comparison purposes.

- 4.6 Dampness** - General checks in regards to dampness were made which would, in this property, have been evidenced by lateral penetration of which I found none at the time of my visit.

- 4.7 Timber Defects** - I have already commented in regard to the fact that there is evidence of attack by wood boring insect at various points in the building. I imagine that a termite certificate will be issued with the documentation but, certainly, there is a need for treatment in many parts of the building and I anticipate this would also apply to the beam at mezzanine level if it has not already been attended to.

- 4.8 Internal Joinery** - This is mixed but generally well formed with not a lot of consistency in the various parts. I found no evidence of serious problems, although

some of the doors might benefit from minor adjustment but nothing I felt should give cause for concern.

- 4.9 Windows** - These, as noted, were in replacement UPVC with sealed unit double-glazing and seem to have been formed to an above average standard without obvious evidence of problems.
- 4.10 Kitchen** - The kitchen is comprehensively and attractively fitted but this is an area where I assume you will have satisfied yourselves.
- 4.11 Sanitary** - The suites appeared modern and in generally acceptable order with supplies and wastes seemingly functioning normally at the time of my visit. I would recommend checking and upgrading the seals and grouting to obviate problems.
- 4.12 Decorations** - Again, I assume this is an area where comment by me would be superfluous.
- 4.13 Cellars** - Although there is clearly some form of cellar to the building, I understand from the vendor that this has no relevance to his apartment I would, however, imagine that it will have some significance from a general maintenance standpoint, which your Notaire will hopefully be able to advise on.
- 4.14 Thermal Insulation** - Clearly the walling is dense and the windows a distinct plus beyond which I would be unable to advise.

5. SERVICES

- 5.1 Electricity** - The electric meter and distribution unit, which, I am advised, was installed some seven years ago, is located in the cloakroom. Whilst I found the wiring to seem to have been acceptably formed, within the limits of my expertise, you may well be it would be prudent to have the electrics tested, something which I normally recommend be done on a 5 yearly cycle
- 5.2 Gas** - There is town gas, which is provided by way of a meter on the landing, and any checks regarding same should be carried out professionally.
- 5.3 Plumbing** - I can only advise that, within the limits of my inspection this appeared to be well formed and supplies and wastes generally function normal where looked at. The water heating system is by way of a recently installed water-heating cylinder within the mezzanine and the relevant documentation regarding same is available.
- 5.4 Central Heating** - Heating to the property is provided by way electric convector heaters and these should form part of any electrical test.

6. MATTERS FOR SOLICITORS

- 6.1 Roads and Footpaths** - I would assume that maintenance of the roadway to the front would devolve to the City of Nice but this should be confirmed.
- 6.2 Rights of Way/Easements** - This would not appear to have significance to the property beyond such provisions, as services but your Notaire will advise.
- 6.3 Road Agreements** - I would not imagine this will have relevance.
- 6.4 Management Companies** - I have touched on this at various points within my report and your Notaire must advise on this matter. I would reiterate my earlier comments in regard to the upcoming meeting.
- 6.5 Drains and Sewers** - The property is on some form of town drainage and I can advise that I found no evidence of problems at the time of my visit, nor was the vendor aware of any.

6.6 Planning/Building Regulations - In this regard, I would recommend that you satisfy yourselves as to possible liabilities in regard to the communal areas from a "historic consent" standpoint.

6.7 Planning/Highway Proposals - I noted nothing obvious at the time of my inspection but you must bear in mind that this is a conservation area with all that implies.

7. GENERAL ADVICE

7.1 Schedule of Hazards - I would stress that the following Schedules are for your convenience and must not be treated as definitive lists of works or other matters requiring attention/consideration. It is important that the report be considered as a whole and all points raised under 7.1 and 7.2 must be read in conjunction with the overall report.

1. Be aware of the instability and insecurity of the handrails to the stairs.
2. Note the degradation in the steps to the communal staircase, which, I understand, have to be renovated with the historic elements of the property being considered. This will have particular significance in the event of you letting the property.
3. Note my advice in regard to the formal testing of services.

7.2 Schedule of Repairs - I would draw your attention to the advice given at the commencement of paragraph 7.1, which is equally applicable to the following Schedule.

1. Establish the history of roof maintenance from the management company with any information on projected future expenditure.
2. Be aware of potential future expenditure in regard to the rainwater goods.
3. Some expenditure can be anticipated in regard to the porticoed entrance and the associated front door.
4. Some localised decay was noted in the external joinery with reference to the shutters, which should be attended to prior to redecoration.
5. As there is no reserve fund against decorations this is clearly an area of potential expenditure.
6. There is anticipated expenditure in regard to the upgrade and maintenance of the common stairwell where much of the joinery is suffering.
7. Seek information and certification in regard to treatment in respect of wood boring insects etc.
8. Note my recommendations in regard to seals and grouting associated with the sanitary ware.

I trust that you find the foregoing report provides you with the information you were seeking, but hope that you will feel free to contact me with any queries or should there be other areas in respect of which you feel I may be able to assist. In the meantime, I remain

Yours sincerely,

Ian Graham FRICS
Chartered Surveyor