

1. INFORMATION

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

1.2 **Address of Property** -

1.3 **Local Taxes** - To be confirmed by the Notaire.

1.4 **Date of Inspection** - 18th September 2002

1.5 **Weather** - It was bright, sunny and dry at time of my inspection after a period of mixed weather including severe rain.

1.6 **Limits of Inspection** - The property was carpeted and fully furnished which therefore limited my inspection to those parts normally visible unless otherwise specified

1.7 **Tenure** – To be confirmed by the Notaire.

1.8 **Tenancies** - The property appeared in husband and wife occupation at the time of my inspection but your Solicitor must confirm that full vacant position on completion, which would seem to be of particular significance when considering that the vendors' family currently farm areas of the land which is to be conveyed and use some of the buildings.

2. DESCRIPTION

2.1 **Description of Property** - The property comprises the principle residence of a farm, which will, I understand, be conveyed with some 3 hectares of formal garden, paddock and land in this pleasant rural location approximately 26 km from the town of Coutances.

There is the main house which is laid out on two floors plus an extensive roof void with windows comprises an imposing chateau style residence of classic design with stone elevations under a deep slated roof and has a small adjoining chapel.

Across the courtyard from this is a further detached two-storey house of similar appearance and the courtyard is accessed from the main driveway via the double gates of the gatehouse, which incorporates further residential accommodation.

Adjacent to the gatehouse is a stone tower, which comprises a pigeon loft with a double garage adjoining. Finally there is the barn building, which comprises a series of workshops and stores, all of which are similarly constructed to the main house.

2.2 **Accommodation** - Dealing initially with the main house, there is a double width entrance porch which opens via imposing glazed doors to a fine entrance hall with doorway to concealed marbled well staircase rising to a galleried landing this area having it own independent door to the exterior.

A cloak room is accessed directly from the entrance hall, this having a wash basin with separate WC off, and there is a door from which one accesses what would appear to be a rear entrance lobby which also contains the boiler house and wine store.

There double doors to the rear of the living room which open to an imposing double ended living and dining room with a fire place either end and triple French windows opening to the rear terrace and gardens. To the Westerly end of the house there is a pleasant music room from which opens a separate study and at the opposite end there is the family / breakfast room beyond which is located the kitchen and domestic quarters.

The well staircase rises to a galleried landing with pleasant aspect of the courtyard to the front. The principle bedroom is located to the rear of the property with a full length balcony overlooking the grounds with magnificent views of the countryside to the rear. This is accessed via a small inner landing with two further bedrooms together with a bathroom, shower and bidet plus separate WC.

To the opposite side of this fine landing is a further inner hall way with a further 3 bedrooms together with a small dressing room and an airing cupboard/ wardrobe cupboard.

From the main landing, a staircase rises to the second floor which comprises an exceptional roof void spanning whole of property with dormer windows affording unparalleled views front and rear.

To the 'petite maison', there is a modest entrance area with stone spiral staircase rising to first floor, this forming part of the original chateau, and there are two reception rooms located to rear of the property, one being a dining room the other being a family room. The boiler house, with water pump and filtration system, together with the freezer room, with all the electric located to the ground floor and accessed externally.

The stairs lead to first floor, which has a very large bathroom, and separate WC together with two large double bedrooms and from half landing the spiral staircase leads up to yet another extensive roof void which covers whole area.

The gatehouse incorporates residential accommodation and to the westerly side of the central gated arch there is a storeroom with doors front and rear and a separate access to another store, whilst on easterly side front door opens to a family room and kitchen fitted with what would appear to be a wood-burning stove. There is a staircase rising to a bedroom with bathroom facilities over the downstairs storage area and the bedroom sits over the arched opening whilst there is a further slightly larger bedroom on the easterly side.

- 2.3 Outbuildings/Parking** - The garage is open fronted with a double arch and appears to have loft space over, although this was frankly not accessible and the oil tank for the main house is on the left hand side. It would seem that one could get a car in to each half without a major problem although this is presently used for storing wood.

The brick built structure on the opposite side of the courtyard, contains three or four stores, together with a good size central workshop and beyond this there is a block built barn beneath an asbestos roof. This was originally built for the cows with the runnels and channels and stone floor etc. I understand that the large open bay, which is semi-detached to the rear, is excluded from the sale. The barn is of block and steel structure with asbestos top.

There is a chapel with alter set between the main and petite maisons and on the opposite site of the courtyard there is a circular tower which was, I understand, built as a pigeon loft. The pigeon loft and the garage buildings are seemingly all that is left of the original structure, which I believe to have dated back some 200 years.

- 2.4 Age of Property** - The garage and pigeon house date back, I am advised, some 200 years, whilst the remainder of the buildings were rebuilt some 40 years ago, the original structure having been a German field hospital in the war and totally demolished. This information must be confirmed.

- 2.5 Orientation** - The main house would seem to have an approximately westerly aspect to the rear although this must be confirmed.

- 2.6 Location/Amenities** - The property stands in a rural location approximately 26 kms north of Coutance amidst farmland and my report assumes that you will have satisfied yourselves in regard to the advantages and disadvantages of the location.

- 2.7 Summary of Construction** - Dealing with initially main house, I am advised that this is of cavity construction which has been stone clad externally and it was evident that the thickness of the walls to the petit maison, the gate house and the main workshop / cave building were of a thinner section which would indicate that these are probably a single skin, similarly faced.

The pigeon tower and garage block are clearly of stone construction. The chapel, however, seems to be formed in blockwork that has been rendered externally and the barn to the rear is block built.

All the structures are beneath slated roofing with wooden windows to the principle rooms, some limited sealed units set in UPVC double glazing second floor rear of the main house. Rainwater goods are in a pressed metal.

3. EXTERNAL CONDITION

3.1 Chimneys/Flues -

Main house - Two chimneystacks rise above each of the main roof slopes, front and rear, these being of block construction and having been rendered on their external fascias. They rise to vents on the upper surface in all cases some of these have degraded and I note some fracturing on face of stacks which indicates possible minor displacement and this should be monitored and attended to as it may lead to moisture penetration and problems. In this regard, it would be prudent to check in view of the extensive staining to the rendered surfaces.

Each of the stacks is flashed to the roof, the render being finished with a bell bead drip, and I imagine there will be some form of soaker dressed beneath the slates. Within the roofline adjacent to each of the stacks there is a skylight, which affords somewhat questionable access to a metal ladder, which rises on the face of each and in respect of which due care should be exercised, presumably to check and upgrade the capping.

Petite Maison - The property has a single chimney stack rising on the northerly slope of the roof it is similarly formed to those on the main house with block work concealed by a rendered surface I would suspect that there is moisture penetration to the face of this.

Only a limited inspection was available due to its location and the cawling on this was somewhat higher and in a somewhat mixed condition when inspected from ground level.

There would appear to be some degradation within the render, which I would strongly recommend, receives attention to obviate the potential for considerably greater future problems. The face is flashed to the roofline with soakers and a bellbead drip as per the main structure. I feel that a closer inspection would be both justified and prudent to look at this in more detail with the potential for an upgrade.

Gate House - The chimney stacks are similarly formed although you will have noted that a different style of cowl is fitted, beyond which comments on condition substantially apply as above. Some damage was noted at the easterly end.

3.2 Roof -

Main House - This has a hipped roof rising to a metal ridge with three small dormers on the rear slope and one somewhat larger dormer on the front elevation. The whole is covered with small slates and the hips are finished with mitred butt joints all rising to a central ridge with the rear roof slope, seemingly, being at a shallower angle than the front and there are also metal lined valleys in all areas.

A detailed inspection with binocular from ground level failed to indicate any serious areas misalignment or problems within the roof slopes generally. The dormers have cast concrete fascias set around UPVC double glazing to the rear and all of them have hipped roofs and tiled faced cheeks.

Petit Maison - The roof rises to a central point and was found to be in a similar form of construction and in much the same condition as the main house. Again I am pleased to say that I found no areas of distortion or problems when inspected from ground level.

There is a single dormer on its northerly face, which is again constructed as per the front dormer on the main house with a cast concrete face, and tile hung cheeks surrounding a wooden frame.

Gate House - Again the roof is of a hipped slate design rising to a metal ridge and similar comments apply including the mitred slates on the hip line.

3.3 Rainwater Goods -

The rainwater goods generally appear to be formed of zinc guttering set in bracketing which is damaged in places, and in one or two areas it is evident that you will find open joints, which would need attending too. In fact this would appear on the rear of the main structure to be two lengths of guttering, which have been butted at the centre with stop ends.

Whilst these have obviously suffered from some damage during the property's lifetime, possibly caused by ladders being braced against them, they generally appeared in satisfactory order and discharge to matching down pipes to either side of the rear and either side of the forward portion of the front elevation. An inspection from ground level

failed to indicate that these are currently causing problems albeit aesthetically the irregularities leave a lot to be desired.

In regard to both the main and petite maison, I am advised, by the vendor, that outfalls run away towards the paddock at the rear to discharge the surface water. It is, however, worth noting in regard to the petite maison that the concrete pipework connecting the two downpipes is partially above ground and has been damaged towards the rear which may well be a contributory factor to the build up of moss in this area and the slight movement at the rear corner of the property which I shall refer to later.

The rainwater goods are in pretty much the same condition as other buildings. But the surface water drops via down pipes on the external elevation at either end of the property and these only have shoes that throw the water away from the wall. You should be aware that this is not entirely satisfactory and has caused a washout to the plinths which would indicate that some more appropriate means of disposing of surface water would not only be sensible but prudent.

3.4 Walls/DPC -

Main House - The lower walls rise to a cast concrete crease which surrounds the property at first floor window level in the form of a ring beam and nosings have been formed to obviate water running down the face and in fact forms a cills to the first floor windows.

A detailed inspection of the elevations generally failed to indicate any serious areas although a minor hair crack was noted on the front easterly end of the property, this running up through the stone facing, and similarly on the rear elevation at the westerly end a similar fracture manifests from the westerly French door opening along the window above on either side and then up to the roof line although I found no evidence of problems within the cornice above.

I am not entirely sure how this cornice was formed, this similarly forming a type of ring beam and probably helping to avoid roof spread in view of the loading and extent of the roof structure. It does have what would appear to be joints although there may just be additional fractures running up where it was cast in situ, as there is no expansion point, clearly this being a vulnerable area of the property.

Looking at the roofline above however I found no areas of misalignment in the slates and cannot therefore be convinced that this represents any serious form of problem, although you may feel it prudent to carefully match some pointing in this area to obviate moisture penetration.

The crease that surrounds the property and forms seals at first floor level has degraded at one or two points, exposing the underlying reinforcing rods and again this should be attended to, to avoid degradation within the rebars. Minor fractures were visible again on flank elevations adjacent to the arch window openings but I repeat that I am not convinced this represents problems at any level.

Stonework to the front and flank appear to sit over stone plinth before dropping to ground level and there is no evidence as to what form of damp proofing has been incorporated within the structure. This plinth extends partially along the rear elevation up to the stepped patio, which is in turn showing evidence of minor localised degradation.

To the rear there are seals and a jetted cast concreted balcony with wrought iron work. This is, in places, showing degradation on its upper and lower surfaces and I would suggest this be attended to in view of the potential problems of this type of structure once moisture penetrates the surface and there is a danger of it attacking the rebars internally. There is also evidence that the problem is also leading to water penetration at both ground and first floor level. Dealing with the degradation and providing a new weatherproof upper surface has to be an early requirement.

Petit Maison - I assume from my discussions with the vendor that the walls are of similar construction but a thinner section to the main house possibly being of single skin with brick facings to the external elevations and you will note over some of the windows there is wrought iron grills with reconstituted stone lintels and the same concrete crease surrounds the property with a drip edge.

An inspection of the elevation again manifested some minor hair cracking at a number of points of which it would be sensible to provide local attention. The principle fracture runs up the southerly elevation having caused a fracture in the ground floor cill.

Although I noted no problem in base of the property, the fracture has, however, run up through the cornice of the roofline although it does not appear to have had any adverse effect on the roof structure. The slates of all the roofing to the main house, chapel, petit maison etc are hung on wire springs. The rainwater goods have metal down pipes discharging to cast iron pipe work at the base.

Gate House - The walls appear to be similarly formed to the other buildings although to a lower specification with openings, instead of having the attractive stone arches, being finished with concrete lintels on upper surface.

There is a good deal more cast concrete work in this area and, for the first time, there is a visible damp proof course where the walls pass through the gateway. The walls are of a thin section and I would suspect this one may well be built of stone certainly on the inner elevation rather than stone faced block work. Ground levels are also high relative to the line of the dpc.

I can confirm however that an inspection of the elevations failed to indicate any areas of serious structural movement beyond some possible roof spread over the front first floor windows and there is a similarly crease plinth surrounding the property to incorporate window sills.

- 3.5 External Joinery** - This is very limited in form of the building construction to both the main house and petite maison and principally applies to the shutters, which you will have undoubtedly seen, all in mixed condition with areas of insipient decay due basically to a lack of regular decoration.

The front door to the main house is a substantial wooden structure set with reinforced glazed panels having been metal rods. This is a double door and particularly attractive, there is also a small wooden door to the rear lobby referred to off the cloakroom together with a door to the bottom of the stairwell all of which appeared in satisfactory order at the time of my visit. I noted no door to the domestic part of the property, which is presumably accessed via the French window in the family room.

- 3.6 Windows** - The windows are principally side hung sashes formed in soft wood and a general inspection from the exterior failed to indicate any problems, although localised re-puttying will be required during the next programme of redecoration to preserve the fabric of the wood.

There are five sets of French windows spanning the rear of the main property at ground floor level with three sets at first floor level onto the balcony, again it would be said that these are in similar condition and would benefit from proper preparation and redecoration.

Within the roof void there are double glazed units set within UPVC frames to the rear dormers and standard softwood frames set within the front dormer all of which would be similar.

- 3.7 Decorations** - In regard to both the main residential properties, you can be under no illusion that the property is in need of a comprehensive programme of preparation and redecoration to preserve the fabric of the windows and external joinery which should as previously noted included a degree of reputtying.

- 3.8 Garage/Outbuildings -**

Workshop / Store Building

The caves and workshop, showed no major evidence of a different form of construction to the Gate House, relating to the walls, roofing, chimneystacks and rainwater goods. I assume that the dormer at the front set into the front elevation was for first floor loading access. First floor is vented and again I suspect the construction is going to turn out to be entirely similar.

This has got more external joinery in the form of woodwork because there are doors and sliding doors. The rear elevation is rendered; some horizontal fracturing was noted in the rendering nothing seemingly of any great moment.

The windows are in poor shape, some broken, some poorly repaired, there is warping in the doors and the whole is simply altogether less satisfactory. There is a horizontal fracture running across the back and I am not entirely sure has caused this but it is certainly a deflection to the block work.

The Open Barn

This is a block structure, un-rendered rising within a steel frame and it is to a steel frame roof structure with the roofing in asbestos, as are the gables and this must be viewed for what it is.

There is a fracture indicating some movement at the rear left hand corner and you should note that the steel work is rusting to very considerably at base level which will leave vulnerability in the blockwork. I note that the leanto structure at the rear is excluded from the sale although you have obligations to offer support to this structure.

I think it is possible that the poplar trees adjacent might be contributing to the movement in that face and to the sliding doors part of the workshop but it is basically what it is. In regard to this barn the underside has washed out along the flank, which again could be cause of the movement as it is all built off a brick slab.

The Garage Block

I am advised, by the vendor, that this is original, dating back some 200 years, and is of solid stone construction to a depth of about 500 mm. There is degradation in the pointing to the stonework, which would benefit from attention but this is a relatively minor comment.

The roof is similar I would suspect it might have been renewed when the remainder of the work was done on the estate. Some localised damage was noted in the slate work, but nothing I felt should give cause for concern. There are two dormers in the front surface with shuttered windows with slated cheeks. Hipped roofing in the dormers all rising to metal ridges. Rainwater goods are also similar to main structure, I suspect this upgrade took place when the other work was done and I have to advise you that I was unable to inspect the rear elevations.

Looking internally, this contains the oil cylinders and water storage. There is a hatch to the roof void but this was inaccessible and the area would therefore be beyond the scope of my advice. Looking at the roof construction, an oblique view of which was possible through the loft access, it has obviously been reformed when the main roof was built and would seem to be in similar condition.

The mezzanine floor is clearly manifesting attack by wood boring insect but nothing, which seemed particularly serious, but there is some degradation noted in the joisting.

There is evidence of fracturing within the structure at a number of points, but, as noted the walls are variable in depth up to a level of about 500 mm and have had some modification and reinforcing to the verticals supporting the arch. This is an area where you will have to take a view.

The Round Tower/Pigeon Loft

There is a good deal of fracturing in the stonework which is original, there are vents/ access points in the fascias, the internal skin having seemingly been built separately. Severe attack by wood boring insect was noted in the internal timberwork of the beams. The conical roof appeared in average order for its age, again seeming to have been overhauled.

The Chapel

This appears to be of block construction that has been rendered externally, and it has been rendered up with a parapet at the westerly end incorporating a bell turret and the

roof conforms pretty much to the remainder of the building, as do the rainwater goods generally.

The block construction has been rendered and marked with lining but the rendering has degraded badly due in part at least to rising dampness, as there is no evidence of any damp proofing.

The windows are metal frames and set with stained glass whilst there is only limited joinery externally, this being principally in the doors. The west doors are in poor condition but the side access door is reasonable.

Internally, again the walls are rendered and there is a deep vaulted roof. Whilst there is very little evidence of structural movement, there is little doubt that there is water penetration through the roof line behind the parapet which is getting into the wooden lining of the arched vaulted roof. This must be checked in view of the vulnerability and the potential for dry rot, which is a consideration and I am not entirely sure it hasn't already gotten into the roof structure, there being no evidence of flashing.

- 3.9 Site** - I am unclear as to extent of plot and have to say that this really would be beyond scope of my advice. From our conversations it would seem that you are currently experiencing some problems in resolving the extent of land to be conveyed.

In regard to the various trees, you will no doubt have noticed how heavily the area is of trees and the proximity of some of these trees to the various structures. Whilst I do not currently consider they are having a seriously adverse effect, I suspect this may well be because many of the trees pre-date the associated structures.

I assume this to be an area where you will have satisfied yourself but with particular regard to dealing with the tree adjacent to the petite maison, this should be removed or cut back over a period of time to obviate problems of heave.

- 3.9 Drains** - I gather there is a single septic tank, which deals with the properties as a whole, and this is located at the northeasterly corner of the main house with a sump and soakaway area running away via outfalls into the various adjoining woodland. The only comment I can make in this area is that the vendor has advised me that he has had absolutely no problems with this whatsoever and I am unable to run checks on such a system, you will have to take a view on his advice.

It would, however, be prudent to check that the outfalls discharge within your own land, whilst this is probably not a short term problem it could present problems in the longer term, particularly if there are questions on the title.

Similarly in regard to surface water, there is in fact not, as I had anticipated, any collection point or sumps. It simply discharges direct to outfalls in the surrounding areas and again this is where you will have to satisfy yourself.

4. INTERNAL CONDITION

4.1 Roof Space -

Main House - The property has a single roof void accessed via a wide staircase from the main landing and this exposes the roof chamber in its entirety. The roof is formed of substantial trusses, which in turn bear the load of purlins at three levels on each roof slope. Onto these bear the rafters which then support the battens over which the slates have been clipped directly without any form of felting.

The whole of the roof structure appears substantially formed and sits on wall plates above the surrounding walls with more than adequate timbers throughout and a detailed inspection failed to indicate any areas of problem or distortion within the roof timbers or slates.

It is clear that the dormers front and rear are well formed and supported in reinforced concrete surrounds, which form the face frames into which the UPVC and wooden frames have been seated.

The floor to the roof void is of concrete construction, probably a pot and beam formation and the electric conduits are visible embedded in the surface together with extensive

plumbing which surrounds at all points and has vents set in. You should note that some of this plumbing appears to be redundant.

Four chimneystacks rise through the roof void to the stacks above the roofline and the skylights adjacent to same afford access, as previously described, with the metal ladders lying on the faces immediately above the skylights.

There has been some form of water penetration through the roof to the southerly face of the forward southeasterly stack, which has penetrated the roof void and caused problems in the ceilings below. Whilst the vendor assures me that this has been rectified, I feel this would be worthy of further investigation and rectification.

In regard to the matter of water penetration into the roof void, it is worth noting that there are no hip tiles or any form of flashing to the hips where the slates have simply been mitred and light grins through. Whilst I found no evidence of water penetration problems in these areas, I would suggest the situation should be monitored.

Petite Maison - This is accessed via the upper spiral staircase and again the roof is of similarly substantial construction with a central crucifix truss running out to the corners and spanning the central roof voids. Again, this supports purlins, which in turn carry the rafters, and battens on which the tiles hang. There is also a similarly formed dormer and skylight and again I would draw your attention to the slight openings at the mitred slates to the hips.

The stair well is separated from the roof void by way of a terracotta block wall and again the floor to the roof void would appear to be terracotta blocks bearing onto beams.

The movement noted on external elevations penetrates into the roof void but only on the southerly south westerly face. It has fractured through the head beneath the wall plate and into the ceiling of the first floor and the floor of the roof void itself. A fracture spans through the middle of the roof void but again I do not consider this is an area, which should give undue cause for concern at the present time. You should, however, reflect on my comments in regard to the variable water levels at this point in the surrounding subsoil.

The Gate House - I was unable to access to roof void and it will, again, be necessary for you to take a view as it has clearly reformed and almost certainly along the lines of the other buildings, as was confirmed by a limited view of the area through the roof hatch.

- 4.2 Ceilings** - In all three residential parts of the property, it was evident that the ceilings are formed directly on the underside of the terracotta pot and beam inter floor areas and when inspected throughout, I am pleased to be able to confirm no evidence of serious cracking or structural distortion.

Notwithstanding this, it is worth noting my comments in regard to the first floor rear corner of the petite maison and there is a good deal of hair cracking within the ceilings of the gate house in respect of which you will recollect my comments in regard to some possible roof spread.

Apart from the points raised above I would reiterate my earlier comments in regard to the ceilings in the main house where water penetration has caused problems at first floor level in regard to the ceilings below the chimney stack. Similarly there is staining, albeit minor damage where there has been water penetration due to slight movement in the rear upper balcony.

Of lesser concern is the poor way the ceiling to the music room has been repaired and made good in the light of the modifications to the internal walling and some of the electrics.

4.3 Walls/Partitions -

Main House - The walls are similarly formed in brick or block work throughout the property, these having been plastered to a finish beneath the surface of the decorations and again I found no evidence of serious distortion or deflections where it was possible to inspect.

You can take comfort from the fact that many of these decorations have been in place for many years and I would expect such to manifest one or two areas of cracking at corners but again nothing of major concern. It is also noteworthy that where checked the plaster surface to the walls was also in good shape.

Slight haircracking was noted in the ceiling plaster at ground floor level nothing of major consequence, there was slight movement in some of the walls between the main structure and forward part within the lobby area adjacent to the ground floor cloakroom the terracotta pots were visible, the area not having been plaster, again no evidence of problems, however.

It is not entirely clear as to why the track runs across the sitting room ceiling, there is also evidence of a minor internal fracture but nothing of consequence. As there is an old doorway between the hall and one end of the sitting room I suspect it was used occasionally used in separate halves.

Petite Maison - An old fracture appears to run up the northerly face through the stair well and the walls at this point must be 750 mm deep due, as you pointed out to the fact that this is one of the remaining parts of the original chateau.

Apart from the minor area of movement, which we have already covered, I found no evidence of problems, nor indeed structural movement, which I felt, could be deemed important. Again, the decorations are clearly mature and there is no sign of problems taking place since said time or indeed within the flooring.

The Gate House - The walls in this area were again found to be consistent with the other buildings although, as we discussed at the time of our meeting, the horizontal fracturing within the upper wall of the main bedroom would be consistent with some localised roof spread and it may well prove prudent to tie the rafters together with a 150 x 50 binder on every other rafter for additional security.

Areas of dampness will also require some replastering and, subject to any specialist advice perhaps some form of tanking might be appropriate.

4.4 Fireplaces/Chimney Breasts –

Main House - There are a number of fireplaces within the property. I would hesitate to encourage the use of any without first checking. Some appear never to have been used with the flues blocked with paper which should be replaced with a breathing material to allow the flues to be vented. Similarly I would recommend that any sealed flue should be vented. There will also be a need to modify several of the hearths if intending to use them.

The vendor tried to explain to me why the flues have been insulated where they pass through the roof void, which apparently involved condensation, but I remain unclear and can offer no reasonable explanation so would recommend further discussions in this area.

Petite Maison - There are two back-to-back fireplaces, one in each of the ground floor rooms, both appear to have been used in the past but not recently and again they should be swept and checked prior to use.

The Gate House - There is a single wood burning stove which exhaust via flue through the roof void and, again, I would recommend this be checked for free exhaust.

4.5 **Floors** - In all three of the residential properties, the flooring is substantially solid from the roof void through the ground floor. Whilst minor deflections were noted in a number of places, I found nothing, which I felt, should give undue cause for concern and you will have noted, in the main house, some form of parquet wood seems to have been overlaid on the solid interfloor structure. Some damage was noted to the marble on the staircase.

4.6 **Dampness** - Readings were taken throughout the property at relevant points using a moisture detecting meter and I am pleased to confirm that within accessible areas of the main house, these were all within acceptable tolerances at time of my visit.

Petite Maison - Above average readings were recorded in both external and internal walls, which will clearly require investigation and remedial treatment. Whilst I can offer no obvious solution by way of a horizontal damp proof course, in view of the thickness of the walls, I would suggest the lower plaster be struck off to a height of approximately 1.2m and re-plastered in strong sand and cement including some form of moisture inhibitor, such as Sika, prior to redecorating to provide some form of tanking.

The Gate House - A similar situation prevails as to that in the Petite Maison in a number of areas despite there being evidence of a damp proof course although, it has to be said, that this was far too close to the ground level which will have led to bridging. Also the rainwater goods do not throw the surface water far enough from the walls in their present format. Clearly treatment is required and, again, tanking may prove the most effective long term solution.

4.7 Timber Defects - This is an area where attack by wood boring insect is by no means unusual and, whilst I can confirm that, at the time of my inspection, in the residential areas there was very little obvious evidence of major problems, it is clearly widely evident in all the other buildings. The vendor should provide you with certification in regard to termite attack.

4.8 Internal Joinery -

4.8 Main House - It would be reasonable to say that the standard of workmanship to the majority of areas in the main house is acceptable to high although some of the cupboards etc at first floor level are a bit utilitarian. I would, however, remind you to bear in mind the potential hazards of glazing to doors, which has been carried out in underweight glass.

Petite Maison/Gate House - This is an area where the standard of joinery has to be deemed somewhat basic and you will no doubt take a view in this regard. In regard to the Gate House, again, I would feel this might best be described as pretty basic

4.9 Windows -

Main House - These were covered fairly substantially under the external condition comments. I can confirm, however, that where checks were made internally these were found to be in reasonable order. Some localised attention by way of a general overhaul would be beneficial in many areas with opening casement requiring easing throughout. You should also note that seals have been placed around various of the casements to facilitate draft exclusion.

Petite Maison/Gate House - Again these were checked and a programme of easing and adjustment would be sensible although not to quite the same extent as those in the main house. This would also apply to the gate house where the quality is not so high.

4.10 Kitchen - As with so many French properties, this is an area where the description basic can take a whole new meaning relative to what one would expect of houses of the quality and standard of each of these.

4.10 Sanitary - Within the main house these comprise the cloakroom at ground level with a somewhat dated suite and a cold supply only to the basin. There is a bathroom and separate WC at first floor level both of which are somewhat dated and stained. I do not check showers for obvious reasons. The WC does however flush. I would imagine that the upgrading and general enhancement of sanitary arrangements at the property would be a priority.

Petite Maison/Gate House

Both might reasonably be described as fairly basic and at best probably functional.

4.12 Decorations - As an area where I assume that you will have satisfied yourselves in all respects.

4.13 Cellars - I found no evidence of cellars at the time of my inspection.

4.14 Thermal Insulation - In none of the properties could this be described as what we might be used to in the UK but probably generally acceptable for the area.

5. SERVICES

- 5.1 Electricity** - All there electrics are in Petit Maison, recommend some formal electrical test of all aspects of the electric supplies to all areas of the property as some will urgently require an upgrade.
- 5.2 Gas** - I found no evidence of gas at the property and heating would appear to be provided by oil stored in the garage area. Advice in this regard would be beyond the scope of my report.
- 5.2 Plumbing** - Hot water for the domestic appears to be in supplied by the chauffage in the reception area of the main house and this, as with the ancillary properties should form part of any electric test.
- 5.4 Central Heating** - There is a substantial oil fired boiler located off the utility area in the main house and this must be check by an appropriately qualified plumber who should also look at the heating system generally. Within the Petite Maison, there are electric heaters, which would for part of an electrical test.

6. MATTERS FOR SOLICITORS

- 6.1 Roads and Footpaths** - Rights and liabilities in regard to the access road up to the gateway must be confirmed particularly in view of the fact that the vendors' family will be retaining the surrounding land and there would also appear to be a neighbouring house/houses which share the roadway.
- 6.2 Rights of Way/Easements** - Again this could prove to be an important matter bearing in mind my comments under 6.1 above.
- 6.3 Road Agreements** - Not applicable.
- 6.4 Drains and Sewers** - Whilst the drainage system would appear to be self-contained, I would reiterate my advice that you ensure rights of usage in regard to the various outfalls.
- 6.6 Planning/Building Regulations** - Once you have established the extent of your short, medium and longer-term proposals, it would be prudent to establish their viability with the Marie. It goes without saying that your legal advisors will ensure the Vendors' rights to sell to you and none of the neighbouring owners have any rights of pre-emption, bearing in mind that it is an agricultural property.
- 6.7 Planning/Highway Proposals** - Again this is something, which your Notaire should be able to advise on.

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. Ensure stability of ladders to chimney faces prior to use.
 2. Ensure stability of rear balcony to the main house.
 3. Ensure stability of the mezzanine flooring to the garage block prior to use.
 4. Check free exhaust via all flues prior to use.
 5. Carry out a formal electric test to all areas of the property and implement a programme of upgrading.
 6. Have both the domestic and central heating systems formally checked and overhauled to ensure they are working satisfactorily and safely.
- 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. Check render on chimneystack, make good unkeyed areas and seal cracks to obviate moisture penetration, which will cause a loss of key.
2. Replace defective vents in the upper surfaces of the chimneystacks.
3. Note water penetration into the roof void adjacent to the southeasterly stack and ensure this has been properly rectified.
4. Similar advice relates to the render and vent on the stack to the petite maison and gatehouse.
5. Carry out a comprehensive overhaul of the rainwater goods generally to all the properties, ensuring joints are properly sealed, levels are appropriate and there is adequate free discharge.
6. Note damage to the underground piping in regard to the petite maison.
7. Upgrade the present form of surface water disposal in regard to the gatehouse.
8. Ensure that hair cracking and fractures to the main structure are properly sealed to obviate moisture penetration, which will lead to loss of key in the wall surfaces, similarly upgrading pointing where appropriate.
9. Make good damage to the plinths and patio steps to the rear.
10. Ensure water penetration to rear balcony has not lead to degradation in the underlying materials and make good as required to ensure stability then resurface the whole with an appropriate waterproof material rectifying the water penetration problems.
11. Similarly seal cracks and pointing to the petite maison walls.
12. Make good lower levels of walling to the gatehouse and ensure the ground levels are lowered as required in regard to the line of the damp proof course.
13. Carry out a comprehensive overhaul of the windows generally to the all the buildings, cutting out and renewing are defective wood and raking out and renewing the areas of defective puttying prior to redecoration. These comments also apply to the shuttering generally.
14. Carry out an early programme of preparation and redecoration to the buildings generally.
15. In regard to the Workshop and Store, the majority of the points raised above will also apply.
16. Note advice in regard to the degradation of the steel framing to the open barn and the structural movement, which has led to fracturing in the block wall to the northerly end.
17. Make good pointing and ensure stability of the stonework to the garage block in addition to which the roof slopes would benefit from a general overhaul. The remainder of this structure requires attention to the rainwater goods and joinery in line with the comments to the main building.
18. Note attack by wood boring insect to the garage block and the instability of some of the joisting to the mezzanine floor above.
19. Attend to the walls of the chapel to arrest the degradation seemingly due to rising dampness in the outer surfaces, taking same back to a stable level and rerendering.
20. Overhaul roof slopes of chapel, checking stability of the parapet wall and upgrading the associated flashing to obviate further water penetration into the into lining to the timbers and ceiling.
21. Check degradation to the roof timbers and wood lining, cutting out and renewing defective areas.
22. Overhaul and preserve external joinery and metalwork to the chapel.
23. Note recommendations in regard to the onsite trees.
24. Note early comments in regard to the water penetration through the roof void and repair associated lower ceilings.
25. Be aware of possible roof spread in the gatehouse and monitor, making good damaged areas internally. It may prove necessary to upgrade the roof structure with binders between the rafters to arrest the problem.
26. A general overhaul of ceilings to all properties would be beneficial as a rolling programme in view of penetrating dampness, localised movement and internal modifications.
27. Areas of unkeyed wall plaster were noted in a number of areas to all buildings, which will require attention, and there will be a need to replaster in conjunction with any damp proofing works, which are carried out.
28. Note advice generally in regard to dampness.
29. Be aware of various attacks by wood boring insect in respect of which certification should be provided as part of the conveyance. Attention is clearly required in many areas.
30. Note comments in regard to the sanitaryware generally.

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