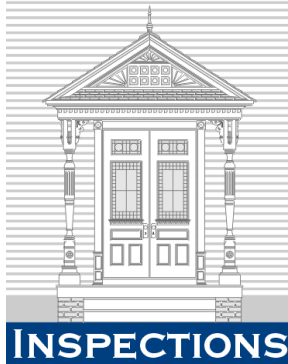


41 Birchview Crescent, Toronto

Inspection Report

May 18, 2010

PETER YEATES



COMPANY INFORMATION

- Professional Engineer (Professional Engineers of Ontario)
- B.A.Sc. - Civil Engineering (University of Toronto)
- 25 years inspection experience
(14+ years with *Carson, Dunlop & Associates*)
- Over 10,000 homes inspected

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Overall Condition:

This is a typical, good quality home for the area that has been well-maintained over the years.

Roofing, Flashings and Chimneys:

The roof is surfaced with premium grade asphalt shingles. The shingles are in good condition – likely about middle-aged.

The chimney shows some slight brick deterioration near the top, but is in satisfactory condition.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

-Roof inspected with binoculars.

Exterior:

The exterior brickwork is in good overall condition. The aluminum eavestroughing is also in good repair.

The garage is a better than average quality concrete block structure. Despite the fact that it is built into the rear hill, there is relatively little movement of the rear wall. In general, there can be some leakage through the rear wall in cases like this, but that does not appear to have been much of an issue so far either.

The various types of retaining walls are performing well, but between these tall walls and the stairs leading up the hill, there are some child safety concerns. Add railings or other barriers as appropriate.

The steep hill behind the house can generate significant water runoff in general, but in this case, no evidence of unusual related water penetration issues was visible at the rear of the basement. It is suspected that free-draining sandy soil is probably of great benefit in this instance.

The front porch has settled several inches away from the house. The resultant gap has obviously been patched several times. The front porch steps have settled as well. For now, we suggest just monitoring the situation. There have been many decades of settlement and the porch is still quite functional, so there's not a lot of point in rebuilding it – just patch the crack as an ongoing maintenance item.

Minor Deficiencies:

- The glass panels should be removed from the front porch railing. The railing is short by current standards. The front porch stairs may require a railing for insurance reasons.
- The rear downspout should be cut off above grade level and be redirected to discharge onto the ground several feet away from the house.
- Some maintenance repointing of the brickwork is required in a few areas.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- Exterior inspection from ground level.
- The garage inspection was somewhat limited by storage and the car parked inside.

Structure:

The concrete block foundations support solid masonry exterior walls. The house is considered to be well built, but this localized neighbourhood used to be a series of ponds up until the time that fill was brought in and new houses were constructed on top. Like many other houses in the area, there was a more than typical amount of settlement shortly after construction as the fill compressed under the weight of the home. Fortunately, this house settled entirely as a whole with very little exterior brick cracking. At this point, the front of the house is 2-1/2 inches lower than the back, but it has likely been this way for at least 80 years. No remedial action is considered necessary or even possible. There has been virtually no settlement from side to side.

Minor Deficiencies:

- The roof rafters are a little saggy as a result of the thin collar ties compressing and bowing over time. New collar ties *could* be installed relatively inexpensively, but this is not a priority.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- The attic was inspected from the access hatch.
- Walls were spotchecked only.

Electrical:

The house has a 200-amp electrical service with a circuit breaker panel. This is a more than adequate service size (the house *used* to have an electric boiler).

The wiring is a combination of newer grounded copper and the original knob-and-tube wiring. There is new wiring going to various lights and outlets (particularly in the basement), but there is still knob-and-tube wiring powering many other lights and electrical outlets in the rest of the house. Although knob-and-tube wiring is very common in older houses and is considered by most experts to be safe unless tampered with, it can be difficult to get insurance. Consult your insurance company.

We would also suggest contacting Dave Slack at Aero Insurance Brokers (1-800-971-1363 or 416-992-6695) as they will typically insure homes with knob-and-tube wiring provided that they have been inspected by us and the wiring is found to be in good condition (as is the case here). A few other insurance companies will also insure knob-and-tube wiring (typically at a premium).

Particularly in the long term or if major renovations are planned, we recommend replacement of the older wiring. Replacement costs are highly variable, but would likely be in the \$8,000 to \$10,000 range.

Minor Deficiencies:

- Various 3-prong electrical outlets are not actually grounded as a result of being directly or indirectly connected to the ungrounded knob-and-tube wiring. If the wiring is not going to be replaced in the near term, these outlets should be fitted with GFCI safety receptacles (parts cost is less than \$20 each). The old, two-prong plugs don't need GFCI's because a 3-prong plug won't fit anyway.
- Install a GFCI safety receptacle on the exterior outlet.
- Panel access is restricted due to the presence of the dryer in front.
- The metallic sheathed (BX) cable running up the wall at the southwest corner of the house is suspected to be for a former 2nd story kitchen from long ago and could probably be removed – consult an electrician.

- The final connectors were never installed for the service wires at the top of the masthead. Call Hydro to have this done. Cost should be minimal to none.
- Disconnect the former electric boiler wire at the panel.
- There is no bathroom electrical outlet. Provide one as required - \$350 and up.
- Replace the defective basement bathroom GFCI outlet.
- One of the outlets by the laundry tub has reversed polarity – it is a simple matter for an electrician to reverse the black and white wires at the outlet.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- Concealed electrical components cannot be inspected.
- Main disconnect switch not opened or operated

Heating:

The house is heated by a 14-year-old mid-efficiency gas-fired hot water boiler rated at 105,000 BTU/hr. This is a high quality cast iron unit that could last 35 years or more. The chimney has a metal liner as recommended. There is also a combustion air intake from the exterior. The boiler was found to be functional when tested (summer test procedure).

Minor Deficiencies:

- The basement bathroom has no heat source – may be OK without, but add an electric heater if necessary.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- Heat exchanger not visible.
- Safety devices not tested.
- Although we have no reason to suspect that one is present, it should be noted that checking the premises for buried oil tanks is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice.

Air Conditioning:

Cooling is provided by a 12,200 BTU/hr ductless (split-type) A/C system that appears to be 8 years old. The unit was found to be operable. Air conditioners have a typical life expectancy of about 15 years (statistically).

Insulation:

The attic is insulated to a level of about R-32 with blown-in fibreglass and mineral wool. This is considered to be a reasonable amount that is not worth upgrading.

The solid masonry walls were built without insulation and with no space to add more insulation. This is typical for the era. At this point, it would be most cost-effective to concentrate on reducing air infiltration through caulking/sealing and weatherstripping as much as possible.

Minor Deficiencies:

- Improve the attic access hatch for a better seal and insulate it.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- Attic was inspected from the access hatch.
- Continuity of air/vapour barrier not verified.
- Although checking for asbestos (which may be present in many products and materials) is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice, it is quite likely that the radiator pipe wrapping in some of areas of the basement has an asbestos component. This is very common in older houses. This old pipe insulation is not considered to be a hazard in the home (if left undisturbed) and there is no requirement to remove it. In this case, the asbestos is quite well covered and not very likely to be disturbed. More information can be found at the Health Canada website – http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/environ/asbestos-amiante_e.html. If asbestos removal is desired at some point in the future, the work needs to be professionally done – consult contractors for quotes.

Plumbing:

The incoming City supply pipe is upgraded ¾" copper where visible. Supply plumbing within the house is also copper. Water pressure is considered to be typical.

The visible waste plumbing is a combination of cast iron, copper, steel, lead and ABS plastic. The 175-litre electric water heater is a 10-year-old unit. It appears to run on only 120 volts. This might make it slow to heat up the water. It could likely be converted to 240 volts – consult an electrician (or switch to a gas unit).

There is some evidence that all or part of the waste piping below the front yard has been replaced, but it is impossible to comment on the extent since none of it is visible. Perhaps the owner or agent has more information.

The basement bathroom appears to be a bit of a DIY venture. At this point, the shower grouting and caulking needs to be cleaned or redone. The hot and cold water are reversed at the shower.

Minor Deficiencies:

- As is typical in houses this age, the bathtub enclosure is not tiled very far up the wall. Many people tile over the plaster above in order to protect it from moisture.
- Evidence of past water leakage was visible in the cabinet below the 2nd floor bathroom sink – monitor.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- Concealed plumbing not inspected.
- Tub/sink overflows not tested.
- Isolating/relief valves and main shut-off valve not tested.

Interior:

- Interior finishes are in original (but good) overall condition. What appears to be old water damage was noted on the ceiling plaster in the northwest bedroom. This does not seem to be active and is likely from the *former* roof (chimney flashings to be specific). The living room ceiling was patched when the supply pipes to the bathroom above were replaced.
- The majority of the windows were replaced in the late 1970's and 1990's and are in good overall condition. A few older windows are present (with storms), but replacement is not seen as a priority.
- Some cracked glass was noted in the living room French door and front hall window.
- The living room fireplace has a lot of brick debris on the damper so it couldn't be opened (or the flue examined). It is possible that the fireplace has never been used. Have the fireplace checked by a WETT-certified specialist before use.
- The basement stairs are supposed to have a handrailing.
- The basement was dry at the time of the inspection. Some localized efflorescence was visible on some areas of the foundation, but doesn't appear to be any more than typical. As with all homes, basement dampness can be minimized by keeping eavestroughs and downspouts well maintained and preventing surface water accumulations near the house by promoting good drainage next to the foundations.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

- No comment made on cosmetic aspects of interior finishes.
- CO/smoke detectors and appliances not inspected.
- Drainage tile not visible.
- In all houses, moisture problems may result in visible or concealed mold growth. Environmental Consultants can assist if this is a concern as inspection for mold is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice.

Notes:

This is the inspection report for 41 Birchview Crescent, Toronto – performed on May 18, 2010. For the purposes of this report, the front of the house is considered to be facing north (although it actually faces northeast). The inspection was performed according to the standards of the Ontario Association of Home Inspectors – see Limitations and Conditions at www.yeatesinspect.com/lim&cond.htm.

Telephone consultation regarding this report is available free of charge – call 416-422-1571. Walkthroughs with the inspector can also be arranged at a typical cost of \$150.