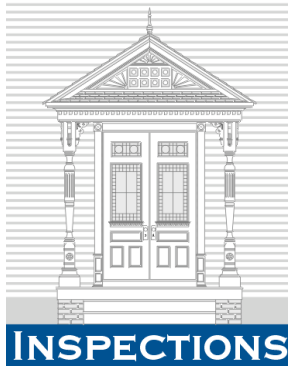


# 213 Riverside Drive, Toronto

## Inspection Report

February 16, 2010

PETER YEATES



INSPECTIONS

### 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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**213 Riverside Drive, Toronto**

## **Inspection Report**

### **Overall Condition:**

This is a very well-built home that needs some updating.

### **Roofing, Flashings and Chimneys:**

The roof is surfaced with premium grade asphalt shingles. The shingles are older and beginning to show their age. It is felt that with good maintenance, up to 5 years of life remain in the main roof shingles. While the garage shingles appear to be the same vintage, they are lower-sloped and get more sun. They are particularly worn on the south and west sides and should be replaced within the next year or two - \$3,000 and up (ballpark). The main floor sunroom has a modified bitumen membrane roof that is in good condition.

The masonry chimney is in good repair. The top concrete cap would ideally have a better drip channel on the underside, but one could be fashioned out of silicone caulking if it was found that the bricks were being overly wetted from cap runoff.

### **Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-Roof inspected with binoculars (too steep to safely access directly).

### **Exterior:**

The exterior brickwork is in very good condition. The eavestroughing is a combination of aluminum and steel (and plastic on the garage) and is considered to be in serviceable to good overall condition.

The garage is an above average quality structure that is in good overall repair.

The wood siding on the main floor sunroom is rotting near grade level and should be repaired/replaced. This is part of a perimeter (non-structural) skirt. The structure is actually supported on two concrete columns at the outboard corners.

The upper and larger rear yard retaining wall is in good overall condition. The shorter retaining walls partway down the hill are in disrepair. Because they are so short, repair is not a high priority. In fact, they could probably be eliminated altogether, but if rebuilding was desired, the cost would likely be in the \$10,000 and up range.

The driveway is cracking in many areas. Although it is only a secondary inspection item and is still serviceable at this point, you may want to consider getting some resurfacing quotes.

There are a number of dead or damaged trees on the property. Consult an arborist for advice and cost estimates.

### **Minor Deficiencies:**

-The northwest and west downspouts should be modified so that they discharge onto ground level several feet away from the house rather than below grade.

-The exterior stairs leading to the main floor sunroom need a railing (up the stairs and around the perimeter).

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Exterior inspection from ground level.
- The garage inspection was limited by storage and the garage attic was not accessed.
- A detailed analysis of the rear slope stability is beyond the scope of this report.

**Structure:**

The foundations support solid masonry exterior walls. The house is in good structural condition.

The basement floor is very thin, uneven and has heaved/broken up in the south basement in particular. This is not a structural problem at all, but a new thicker floor would ideally be poured.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- The upper attic was inspected from the access hatch, but there is no access to the sloped ceilings or kneewall attic spaces.
- Walls were spotchecked only.

**Electrical:**

The house has a 100-amp electrical service with an older circuit breaker panel. While there is no *requirement* to upgrade the service size, 100-amps is considered to be a little light for a house of this size. Also, the number of circuits in the panel is limited, particularly in terms of handling new wiring relating to renovations. We recommend upgrading to 200 amps for roughly \$3,000.

The wiring in the house is a type of ungrounded cloth-covered loomex wiring that immediately succeeded knob-and-tube wiring. The hot and neutral wires are bundled together in the same exterior sheathing and there are no knobs and no tubes used in the installation. Within less than 15 years, this wiring was supplanted by plastic-coated wires wrapped in a cloth covering. We are not aware of any insurance discrimination against this type of wiring as it certainly isn't knob-and-tube wiring. Nonetheless, there is no grounding so it is not ideal with all modern appliances and a number of ungrounded outlets were noted. Where the ends are exposed for connections in electrical boxes, at switches and outlets, the insulation can get frayed and brittle. Heat shrink electrical tubing can be used to good effect here. If extensive renovations are planned, you might consider upgrading the wiring (or at least the electrical outlets) – a very ballpark estimate would be \$20,000 and up.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

- The wiring leading to the former dryer location in the basement is overfused at the main panel and the disconnect switch bypasses one of the fuses. This circuit needs to be rewired.
- Some wires in the basement need more staples.
- Improve the open wire connections above the main floor sunroom door.
- The main service wires run across the front corner of the roof. While they are not supposed to be run this way, this is a pre-existing installation that was wired by Hydro so it is unlikely that improvement will be required unless the service is upgraded.
- The electrical outlet to the north of the basement fireplace has reversed polarity. It is a simple matter for an electrician to switch the black and white wires at the outlet.
- If the wiring is not replaced in the near term, ungrounded electrical outlets should be fitted with GFCI safety receptacles.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Concealed electrical components cannot be inspected.

**Heating:**

The house is heated by a 16-year-old mid-efficiency gas-fired hot water boiler rated at 200,000 BTU/hr. This is a high quality cast iron unit that could last 35 years or more.

The chimney has a metal liner. The boiler was found to be functional when tested.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

-The flue damper is stuck in the open position (reducing heating efficiency). Have the boiler serviced.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Heat exchanger not visible.
- Safety devices not tested.
- Radiator valves not tested.

**Insulation:**

A minimal amount of mineral wool insulation (R-9) was found in the upper attic. This should be upgraded to at least R-40 (\$1,500 and up). It should be noted though, that there will still be a significant amount of attic area with minimal insulation (sloped ceilings and kneewalls in particular). The sloped ceiling are harder to insulate without removing the plaster and this should really only be contemplated if major 3<sup>rd</sup> floor renovations are planned. It would be possible to inject cellulose or mineral wool into the roof cavities, but the energy savings to cost ratio is low.

The solid masonry walls were built without insulation and with no space to add more insulation. This is typical for the era. Since adding more insulation is not easily done, it is best to concentrate on reducing air infiltration through caulking/sealing and weatherstripping as much as possible.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- The upper attic was inspected from the access hatch, but there is no access to the sloped ceilings or kneewall attic spaces.
- 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. It is recommended, however, that any loose sections be taped up. More information can be found at the Health Canada website – [http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/iyh-vsv/environ/asbestos-amiante\\_e.html](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. There is also a small amount of asbestos paper in the vicinity of the waste piping below the main 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom.

**Plumbing:**

The incoming City supply pipe appears to be a large diameter steel pipe. The visible supply piping *within* the house is a combination of steel and copper. Water pressure is considered to be good for the age of the house, but rust deposits in the steel pipes are reducing water flow. In the long term, the City supply pipe should probably be upgraded, but it appears to be functional at present.

The interior steel pipes need to be replaced for insurance reasons as there is a real risk of rust-through leakage. The piping can be found in the vicinity of all the bathrooms as well as by the north hose faucet. Past steel pipe leakage is the reason that the master ensuite water supply has been turned off. Since all of the above-grade bathrooms need to be renovated anyway, the pipes can be replaced in conjunction with these renovations. Assuming that this is the approach taken, add \$6,000 to \$10,000 on top of bathroom renovations for steel pipe replacement. Old lead waste plumbing (such as the actively leaking pipe below the main 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom) should be replaced at the same time.

The bathrooms are original and need to be completely renovated. Consult contractors for quotes. Prices are highly variable depending on finishes and fixtures, but would likely be in the range of \$60,000 and up for all three above-grade bathrooms.

The waste plumbing is a combination of copper, cast iron, steel, lead and ABS Plastic. The 151-litre gas water heater is an 11-year-old rental unit.

There used to be a galvanized pipe sprinkler system with some valve controls located in the driveway. It developed serious leakage issues and has been abandoned.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

- The discharge location for the main 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom exhaust fan should be verified during bathroom renovations.
- The cold water handle for the main 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathtub is not functioning properly.
- The third floor bathroom sink waste is in suspect condition – see above.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Concealed plumbing not inspected.
- Tub/sink overflows not tested.
- Isolating/relief valves and main shut-off valve not tested.
- Water turned off to the master ensuite bathroom – couldn't test.
- The shower faucets for the main 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bathroom are stuck and couldn't be tested.

**Interior:**

- Interior finishes are in good overall condition (particularly considering their age).
- Evidence of past water staining was visible in the southeast 2<sup>nd</sup> floor bedroom and on the ceiling of the maid's stairs. This is likely from past dormer flashing leakage. Provide downspout extensions on both front and rear dormers to carry water from the dormer eavestroughs directly down the roof into the lower troughs.
- There is some water damage to the plaster that is directly applied to the chimney in the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor southwest closet. This may just be from capillary action (wicking moisture from the chimney into the plaster) as the flashing appears to be in good condition. Monitor for now. Installing a moisture barrier on the existing plaster and drywalling over top may be the best way to eliminate the capillary action.
- The windows are mostly original with storms in most locations (exception: 2<sup>nd</sup> floor office and some basement windows). They are considered to be functional, for the most part, but modern windows are easier to operate and clean and are more energy-efficient. Some consideration should be given to replacing them – consult a specialist for quotes. There are many windows in this house, so the cost would be significant.
- The living room fireplace appears to be in good condition, but needs cleaning. The basement fireplace is decorative only.
- The rear basement stairs are tight – probably because they were relocated from their former location by the entrance to the main floor sunroom.
- The basement was dry at the time of the inspection. No evidence of serious or unusual water penetration issues was visible. 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. The basement family room wall finishes consist of plaster applied directly to the foundations. This type of arrangement can easily lead to wall flaking if there is any moisture in the foundations at all. In the long term, we would recommend installing a moisture barrier on the walls and then building an insulated, drywalled stud wall in front (to make the family room warmer and to create some moisture resistance in the wall system).

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- No comment made on cosmetic aspects of interior finishes.
- CO/smoke detectors and appliances not inspected. Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are required on every level of the house.
- New paint on interior finishes tends to obscure historical evidence.
- 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 213 Riverside Drive, Toronto – performed on February 16, 2010. For the purposes of this report, the front of the house is considered to be facing west (although it actually faces southwest). 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](http://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.