70 Hewitt Avenue, Toronto

Inspection Report

February 12, 2010

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INSPECTIONS

COMPANY INFORMATION

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Overall Condition:

This is a solidly built older home that has had several mechanical system updates and renovations in the last 9 years.

Roofing, Flashings and Chimneys:

The roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. The shingles are near the end of their life (curled and surface granular loss). The roof will likely have to be stripped and reshingled within the next 2 or 3 years. Due to the height and steepness of the roof, there is somewhat of a premium on the roofing job. A ballpark estimate would be $10,000 to $12,000 (not including the upper rear membrane roof (which was in decent condition where visible).

The east chimney is in good condition. The west chimney has been partially dismantled, but is now used for the bathroom exhaust fan.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

-Roof inspected by binoculars.
-Portions of the rear roof were obscured by snow and some of the east roof was not visible due to the neighbouring house.
-No direct access was gained to the porch roof membrane.

Exterior:

The exterior brickwork/siding is in good overall condition. The aluminum eavestroughs are in satisfactory repair.

Minor Deficiencies:

-Disconnect the northeast downspout near grade level and redirect to discharge into the backyard. The southwest downspout should also be extended further away from the house.
-Extend the northwest downspout and remortar a couple of loos bricks at the nearby column.
-The rear deck steps are supposed to have a railing.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:

-Exterior inspection from ground level.
-Sheds are not inspected.

Structure:

The stone foundations support solid masonry exterior walls. Overall, the house is in good structural condition.

Minor Deficiencies:

-The window frame and brick arch at the northeast basement window (leading into the northeast crawlspace) has been cut into to accommodate piping and there has been some resultant movement. It would be fairly easy to add a support brace in the window frame.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:
-The east and northwest kneewall attic areas were inspected from their access doors. There is no access available to the southwest kneewall area or very small upper attic area.
-There is no access to the sloped ceiling areas.
-The insulated and vapour barriered basement ceiling restricted the inspection.
-40% of the interior foundation wall not visible due to storage.
-Walls were spotchecked only.

Electrical:

The house has two 60-amp electrical services (from when it was a duplex). The current standard is 100-amps so this is considered to be an adequate service size.

The wiring appears to have been entirely replaced – although its absence cannot be guaranteed, no *active* knob-and-tube wiring was visible or found during various spotchecks of various outlet and switch boxes.

Minor Deficiencies:
-Any electrical outlets within 1 metre of the kitchen sink should be fitted with GFCI safety receptacles (parts cost is less than $20 each).
-The main floor washroom GFCI outlet is improperly wired (to the wrong terminals) and needs to be fixed.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:
-Concealed electrical components cannot be inspected.

Heating:

The house is heated by a 7-year-old mid-efficiency gas-fired hot water boiler rated at 164,000 BTU/hr. This is a good quality cast iron unit that could last 35 years or more. The chimney has a metal liner (as recommended). The boiler was found to be functional when tested. No radiator was found in the rear 2nd floor walk-in closet, but it is likely acceptably warmed on most days by the adjoining room.

The house used to have a buried oil tank at the front of the house. The current owners had it professionally removed and likely have the appropriate documentation (environmental reports etc.) regarding its removal.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:
-Heat exchanger not visible.
-Safety devices not tested.
-Radiator valves not tested.

Insulation:

The floors of the accessible kneewall attics are insulated with fibreglass insulation (R-24) while the kneewalls are insulated with R-12-valued fibreglass. Although slightly below current standards, this is considered to be a good amount and further upgrading would probably not be cost-effective (particularly in the short term). Seal the kneewall access doors better.

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 (e.g. improve the fit and weatherstripping at the 2nd floor single-pane porch door).

A lot of cold air comes into the basement via the front floor drain (via the downspout feeder). It would be a good idea to provide a draft-proof cover.

The exposed brick exterior wall in the dining room is not a generally recommended practice, but despite cold outside temperatures, no obvious drafty areas were found.

Inspection Methods and Limitations:
-The east and northwest kneewall attic areas were inspected from their access doors. There is no access available to the southwest kneewall area or very small upper attic area.
-There is no access to the sloped ceiling areas.
-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 possible that the basement radiator pipe wrapping in 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. Most of the pipe wrap has been re-wrapped to reduce the potential for insulation damage/disturbance. More information is available from 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 copper where visible at the south wall of the basement. The visible supply piping *within* the house is mostly copper with some plastic (PEX) piping. Water pressure is considered to good for the area.

The waste plumbing is a combination of cast iron, copper, steel and ABS plastic. The 270-litre electric water heater is 9 years old. Typical life expectancy is closer to 15 years.

Minor Deficiencies:
-There is a small section of steel pipe present at the rear garden house faucet. Some insurance companies might want it replaced with copper.
-The laundry tub discharges into the north floor drain. While not ideal, this is fairly common. Make sure that the drain does not get blocked.

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 good condition.
-The gas fireplace in the living room was operable at the time of the inspection. The second floor fireplace has a metal wood-burning insert. It is strongly suspected that there is supposed to be a longer hearth extension to protect the floor in front of the fireplace from hot embers, but the manufacturer's instructions were not available. Have the unit inspected by a WETT-certified specialist. The basement fireplace is strictly decorative.
-Most of the windows have been replaced in the last 9 years with good quality vinyl units.
-The basement was dry at the time of the inspection. There was some efflorescence and slightly damp-looking areas on the foundations/floor, but no evidence of serious/unusual leakage problems was visible. Naturally, with an unfinished basement minor moisture infiltration is much less of a concern). If the basement is ever finished, certain simple damproofing precautions could be incorporated into the interior finishing process.
In all houses, it is important to keep eavestroughs and downspouts well maintained (see "exterior") and to prevent 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 beyond the scope of the inspection and the Ontario inspection standards.

Notes:

This is the inspection report for 70 Hewitt Avenue, Toronto – performed on February 12, 2010. For the purposes of this report, the front of the house is considered to be facing south. 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.