

An outbuilding containing an oil fired boiler and a fuel oil tank is attached to the south west corner of the house, and on the south side of the drive (adjoining the parking area) there is a detached garage designed to accommodate one car and gardening equipment, motor cycles etc.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

At the time of my survey it was cool and mostly overcast.

EXTERIOR OF HOUSE

EXTERNAL WALLS

The overall thickness of the external walls varies around the house because most (and virtually all at ground floor level) have been panelled out internally either with plasterboard or blockwork as noted later in this report. This is commonly done in older French houses at ground floor level to conceal dampness in old stone walls but it also provides a good internal surface and a degree of thermal insulation. Whereas the overall thickness of the external walls varies from about 440 - 690mm around the building the original masonry walls are thought to have a thickness of approximately 510mm at ground floor level, and slightly less at first floor level, as commonly found in buildings of this type and age. The stone walls are taken to be of solid construction, which in practice is invariably two faces of stonework with rubble infill.

There has no doubt been some structural movement in the past in the east wall of the former barn, where it appears that a number of fractures in and adjoining the east wall have been repaired and faced up with cement mortar: Metal plates on the external face of the north and south walls at this end of the building indicate that steel tie bars have been introduced for lateral restraint of the north and south walls: These bars are not visible inside the house where I assume they are concealed by the internal linings.

Although all three walls of the former barn on the east side of the house have a rough appearance externally I did not notice any signs of any recent movement in these, or indeed in any of the other external walls, and I found nothing to suggest that the foundations of any part of the house are in any way defective or inadequate.

It appears that a number of alterations and repairs have been undertaken to the west wall of the shower room and the ground floor bedroom - including where a former door opening has been partly blocked up beneath the shower room window. A vertically aligned crack through the masonry near the south west corner of the shower room is thought to have resulted from a small amount of differential movement between the south and west walls at this point, and where a mortar facing has been applied as part of the refurbishment works. I suggest you have the cracked and loose facing hacked off and have the crack filled and the facing reinstated in order to keep the structure weathertight. This single-storey (west) wall is slightly out of plumb and, should any further movement occur in future years, you may need to consider the provision of steel straps, and/or the provision of a small masonry buttress, and/or a limited amount of reconstruction of the masonry at this point.

The external surfaces of the west wall, and most of the south wall, have been faced up in what I take to be a lime mortar and apart from where a relatively small area of this has lifted and cracked away at the south west corner of the shower room, as noted above, these surfaces are generally in good condition.

The stone lintel immediately above the living room window is damaged where it appears that the former top fixing of the shutters has corroded and caused a section of stonework to break away; this should be repaired (perhaps using one of the modern epoxy resin materials designed for the purpose) at some convenient point in the future.

The external surface of all three walls of the former barn on the east side of the house are in need of refurbishment and facing up in a similar manner to those elsewhere and as part of this work you will need to consider minor repairs to the stonework at low level across the north side of the billiards room.

In any event you should allow for the provision of a proper sill outside the *portes fenêtres* on the east side of the billiards room, and repair of the masonry around those *portes fenêtres* and around all four windows on the south side of this part of the house, and I suggest you consider renewal of the small timber lintels above the two windows in the south wall of the main bedroom with concrete lintels.

Although difficult to see from ground level the upper part of the gable wall on the west side of the former barn (i.e. on the west side of the main bedroom) appears to be in need of repair and I suggest you accommodate this when other masonry repairs are undertaken.

Although a section of black polythene sheet visible below the *portes fenêtres* in the east wall of the billiards room indicates that a damp proof membrane has been incorporated in the floor of the billiards room (and perhaps throughout all of the ground floor accommodation) I found no evidence of a damp proof course in any of the external walls: I doubt very much if a damp proof course exists in any of the walls.

Windows and Doors

The two-casement window and the 1½ leaf entrance doors in the south wall of the living room, together with the single casement windows to the two bedrooms above and that to the kitchen, are of some age; all are excessively weathered, and with old woodworm infestation evident in places, nevertheless all are in reasonable condition having regard to their age.