



Davis Home Inspections

*Report of Inspection
456 Strawberry Lane
Morgantown, West Virginia*

Prepared For:

*Mr. & Mrs. John Q. Homebuyer
123 Main Street
Anytown, WV 26505*





DAVIS HOME INSPECTIONS
P.O. Box 2244
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WV 029027

February 14, 2003

Mr. & Mrs. John Q. Homebuyer
123 Main Street
Anytown, WV 26505

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Homebuyer:

As per your request, an inspection was performed February 9, 2003 on the residence located at 456 Strawberry Lane, in the First Ward section of Morgantown, WV. This inspection was performed by Jeffrey A. Davis, with John and Susan Homebuyer, the buyers, and James Realtor, the agent for the buyers, present.

This report is intended to inform the purchaser/new owner about conditions and other things that may be beyond those of immediate concern. Therefore, it is important to read this report fully and understand its contents.

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this report is to provide an understanding of the house you are considering purchasing. The intention of the inspection is to identify what would be considered major deficiencies. Generally, in the inspection field, a major deficiency is identified as requiring \$500.00 or more to correct. Minor deficiencies will occur in just about every house, old or new. The degree of certain minor deficiencies are strictly a matter of opinion, which can differ between inspector and purchaser. It is not the intent of this inspection to detail every minor defect or flaw that might be present, only ones of major concern.

The scope of this inspection does not include investigation of code compliance, inspection for mine subsidence, potential environmental hazards in the ground or structure (i.e., radon, asbestos, lead). Additionally, the inspection does not include the search of any public records, titles, or for special permits and approvals.

For descriptions in this report, terms that may be used and definitions follow. It should be noted that descriptions deal with whole systems, not individual parts and/or sections of the system. Descriptions are subjective and your opinion may differ from those found in this report.

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Terms used are:

- Excellent: New or nearly new.
- Good: Functioning properly. Normal wear and tear have occurred and minor maintenance/repair may be required.
- Fair: Evidence of improper previous repair, poor workmanship, obsolescence, or nearing the serviceable life. Repair or replacement will be required to prevent further deterioration or prolong the life.
- Poor: Failing, failed or no longer performs its original function due to exceeding its useful serviceable life. Conditions may cause deterioration, damage to adjoining elements or other systems. Replacement or repair is required.

This inspection is visual in nature, observing only those portions of the house that were readily accessible and could be visually inspected. No inspection was made in concealed, obstructed, closed off, or in areas requiring removal of materials to observe, i.e., floors, wall coverings, sidings, ceilings, and appliances.

No representation or warranty is made that during this inspection all defects have been identified, or that defects may surface at a later date. Only non-destructive/non-invasive testing was performed. This report is not to be considered a guarantee of condition and no warranty is implied. The inspection performed and this report should not be considered technically exhaustive.

DESCRIPTION

This is a one-story ranch style home with three bedrooms. The house is a National home. An addition was added to the rear of the house for a kitchen and a half-bath. The home is situated on a corner. The original windows have been replaced with aluminum replacement windows. The house has a one-car integral garage and an unfinished basement. The house was built in 1952 and is approximately 51 years old.

CONSTRUCTION

The house is a one-story wood frame structure, constructed on an eight (8) inch concrete block foundation. The rear foundation wall has two pilasters for additional support. The main floor is constructed using 2x8 floor joists on sixteen (16) inch centers. The main support of the floor joists is a wood beam constructed with three (3) 2x10's, supported by three (3) single width block piers and two (2) end wall pilasters. The piers are approximately eight (8) feet apart.

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The house is constructed with 2x4 wood framing. The interior walls are framed with 2x3 studding. The walls and ceilings are covered with drywall. The floors appear to be hardwood under the carpet.

The roof is constructed with 2x4 rafters on sixteen (16) inch centers. The roof deck consists of ½ inch plywood. The ceilings for the house are constructed with 2x6 ceiling joists.

EXTERIOR CONDITIONS

Roof The shingles appear to be fairly new and are in good condition. The underside of the roof was examined from the attic entry and no indications of leaking were found. Ventilation includes eave vents along with ridge vents. This attic area appeared to be well ventilated.

Where the addition roof attaches to the main roof, the original roof projects past the siding. This can be seen in photo 1. It is important to keep the union between the shingles and the siding sealed to prevent water entry under this wall.

The gutters and downspouts are aluminum. The rear gutter appears to be coming off due to the weight of the ice. This can be seen in photo 2. This will have to be leveled to provide for proper slope to the downspout. The front gutter is in good condition. The downspouts are collected, that is, do not discharge onto the ground adjacent to the foundation.

Siding/Exterior Covering

The exterior of the house is covered with aluminum siding. The siding for the addition, which is over the roof of the original house, has come loose. This can also be seen in photo 2. The remainder of the siding appears to be in good condition. The soffit and fascia are aluminum and in good condition as well. The eave vents are covered with screen fabric.

The foundation wall on the front has been covered with brick. The brick has mortar joint cracks around the garage door, behind the gas meter, and on the front porch. Behind the gas meter can be viewed in photo 3. The cap brick needs to be caulked along the siding to prevent water intrusion. Photo 4 shows that the brick has settled on the right half of the front starting at zero at the porch to approximately one (1) inch at the corner. This has exposed the wood plate behind. The plate needs to be protected from the weather and possible insect entry.

The brick over the garage door is supported by a steel angle. This angle is currently rusting and needs to be painted. The brick which is cracking should be re-pointed to prevent water entry behind the brick.

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Windows/Doors

The windows in the house are aluminum double-hung replacement windows. All windows were opened and most were found to be functioning properly. The windows in the front wall of the living room were stiff. The top pane of the center window, when unlatched, quickly dropped. The spring mechanisms in this window need to be repaired or replaced. This would enable the window to remain open.

Three (3) windows have broken seals allowing for the creation of condensation between the panes. These are the top pane in the end wall window of the front bedroom, the top pane of the side window in the living room, and both panes in the dining room. These should be replaced to provide the maximum insulation capabilities and allow for clear view. The windows in the addition are lower quality aluminum horizontal slider windows. These single pane windows do not insulate well and sweat during cold weather.

The exterior doors are wood. Both were opened and found to be functioning properly. The interior doors were in good condition, operating smoothly as well. Only the door for the bathroom off the kitchen would not close. The door is hitting the jamb at the bottom and may need trimmed.

Foundation

The foundation is constructed using eight (8) inch concrete block. Being an older foundation, it not uncommon for there to be mortar joint cracking as is present in this foundation. The addition is constructed on a block crawlspace foundation. The brick facade is exhibiting mortar joint cracking, however, this is not an integral part of the foundation. The majority of the foundation wall is below ground level. The most noticeable mortar joint crack on the exterior is located on the right between the front corner and the window. This can be seen in photo 5. Visible cracking was minimal.

Interior examination of the foundation found similar conditions. On the front wall, there is an area of stair-step mortar joint cracking five blocks from the corner. This can be seen in photo 6. There is a vertical hairline mortar joint crack approximately two blocks from the corner. This can be seen in photo 7. Additionally, there is a mortar joint crack adjacent to the garage door opening. This wall is plumb and does not have any bowing or bulging present. The cracks do not appear to be structurally significant.

The left foundation wall has a mortar joint crack to the right of the electric panel. This can be seen in photo 8. This crack does not appear to be structurally significant. There are indications of previous water entry along this wall. Efflorescence is present under the paint on the bottom four courses of block. There are indications that a perimeter drain has been installed along the wall. The floor cut and patch can be seen in photo 9. There were no indications of active water entry along this wall.

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The rear wall has two pilasters constructed to provide additional support. Between the pilasters, behind the shelving, there is a horizontal mortar joint crack occurring three block courses from the top. This can be seen in photo 10. The wall in this area is exhibiting a bow in the middle which is ½ inch out of plumb. The crack should be caulked. The pilasters should provide adequate reinforcement to this wall. Additionally, the concrete patio should reduce the water entering the soil reducing the possibility of soil expansion.

The right foundation wall has a bow in the middle of approximately ¾ to 1 inch out of plumb. This indicates pressure against the wall. Whether the pressure is active or passive could not be determined and is beyond the scope of the inspection. The wall has been coated with B-Bond and no cracking is showing through the coating. There are indications of previous cracks which have been patched, namely under the front window. Without a history of the activities of this wall, it is hard to determine whether the bowing present is active movement. Based on the visual properties present, namely the surface, the movement does not appear to be active. However, it is recommended to monitor this wall for changes, especially after long periods of precipitation, to create a history. It is not uncommon for a wall in this condition to move slightly during a wet period then to return to its previous location. The expansive soils native to this area will swell and contract as moisture content changes.

This wall, too, appears to have a perimeter drain installed, leading to a floor drain next to the wall. Holes have been drilled in the floor along this apparent drain. Whether these holes are to allow surface water to drain or relieve pressure under the floor could not be determined, however it appears to be the former. There is water staining present on the concrete, indicating previous water, however, the area was dry during the inspection. Overall, the foundation appears to be in good condition.

Wood-Destroying Insect Activity

There is no indication from exterior examination of wood destroying insects entering the home at the time of this inspection. The house was examined, where possible, and there was no sign of insect damage at this time. The termite shield has been removed from above the garage door on the front wall, along the left wall, and to the pilaster on the rear wall. These areas should be periodically monitored since the termite protection has been removed. This was by no means a full scale pest inspection, as would be performed by an extermination service and is merely included for informational purposes only.

Drainage

The front yard slopes away from the house. The right side is fairly level and the left yard slopes away from the house. The rear yard slopes slightly toward the house. Drainage around the house appears to be good to fair. Since the ground was snow covered during the inspection, the yard could not be examined for areas which collect water. This should be checked after a sustained rain.

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Sidewalks

The front walk from the street to the front porch is constructed with concrete. The stairs to the walk and porch are precast concrete. The sidewalk is in good condition. The top step of the lower stairs is cracked near the edge. On the upper stairs, the bottom step is wobbly. The crack should be sealed and the step monitored, for it may need replaced. The loose step should be shimmed to firm-up the step. The stairs are in good to fair condition, with weathering occurring.

The walk from the patio to the front is concrete and in good condition. A concrete “curb” has been installed along the foundation. This is most likely to divert surface runoff away from the foundation. The stairs to the front are precast concrete and in good to fair condition.

Porches/Decks

The front porch is a concrete stoop. The concrete is covered with outdoor carpet and could not be directly examined. The porch appears to have settled slightly, as is common on an older house. The porch is covered with an aluminum awning which appeared to be in good condition.

On the rear of the house, there is a concrete patio. The concrete has an expansion crack extending from the stairs to the edge of the slab. This is a common occurrence. The concrete is level. To help keep surface water from getting under the patio, it is recommended to caulk along the slab and wall. The patio is covered by an aluminum awning. A leak is present directly above the rear door. This can be seen in photo 11.

Driveway

The driveway is constructed of concrete. There are expansion cracks extending from the drains, as is common on a slab of this type. These should be cleaned and sealed. The surface is in good condition. A trough drain and a drain in the center appear to be providing adequate relief for the driveway. Overall, the driveway appears to be in good condition.

Retaining Walls

Along the driveway and the front of the property there are retaining walls. The right retaining wall along the driveway is bowing in the middle. This can be seen in photo 12. This does not appear, however, to be a major concern at this time.

The front retaining wall is jointly owned with the neighboring property. This property owns the wall to approximately seven (7) feet from the right side of the house. The wall is bowing, mainly the top three (3) courses of block. This can be seen in photo 13.

The wall belonging to this property is not bowing as much as the neighbors portion, only approximately two (2) inches out of plumb. The neighbor’s portion of the wall is

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breaking loose at the corner with their driveway wall, being more than six (6) inches out of plumb. This can be seen in photo 14. It appears that the movement on the neighboring portion of the wall is contributing to the movement on this property's portion. This is being caused by expansive soils and water collecting behind the wall. There are no weep holes present to release the water. Eventually, this wall will need to be repaired and weep holes should be installed at that time.

INTERIOR CONDITIONS

Basement

The basement is unfinished. The foundation walls are discussed in the foundation section above. As mentioned above, the right wall has what appears to be a drain around the perimeter under the floor. Since the inspection, the snow has melted and there has been precipitation. On the date of this report, Saturday February 12, I returned to the house to check the basement. Water was present along the right wall, as can be seen in photo 15. It appears that the water is seeping through the wall and exiting where the B-bond ends. This can be seen in photo 16. This was the only location where water was entering the basement at this time.

The floor joists were examined for cracking and bowing. No defective joists were found. The beam appears to be solid, with no apparent sagging. The piers are in good condition, supporting the beam soundly.

The floor for the basement is concrete. There is cracking present, as is normal in a slab of this size. As mentioned above, the edges of the floor have been cut and what appears to be a drain installed. The area was then repaired. There are no indications of water seeping through the floor, i.e., efflorescence in the cracks.

Crawlspace

Under the kitchen, there is a crawlspace. Currently, the area is dry. The insulation is coming loose in a few areas and needs to be reattached. There is currently no vapor barrier present in the crawlspace. This is necessary to prevent moisture from entering the insulation. Additionally, it appears that the dryer in the past has been vented into the crawlspace area. This creates a moist situation which can become unhealthy. The dryer should be vented outside.

Garage

The garage is located in the left half of the basement. The four-section wood door is equipped with a Genie® opener. The opener was operated and functioned properly. The opener is equipped with a pressure reverse feature but not safety reverse sensors. This reverses a closing door when the path is obstructed. This is an important feature when

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small children and pets are present. The current setting requires too much pressure to reverse the direction.

Walls/Ceilings/Floors

The walls and ceilings in the house are constructed with drywall. Joint cracking is present in the dining room on the kitchen side wall and in several corners. This is expected as minor settlement occurs in a house of this age. There are no occurrences in the house to indicate any major concerns with the cracking. These cracks are cosmetic and can be patched. No areas of the ceiling appeared to be sagging. The walls appeared to be in good condition. Overall, the drywall is in good condition.

Most of the floors in the house are carpeted. However, it is apparent that hardwood floors exist beneath the carpet. The kitchen, bathrooms, and entry to the living room have vinyl floor covering. The remainder of the floors are carpeted. The floor covering in the house is in good condition.

Attic The attic is accessed through a scuttle opening in the rear corner bedroom. The underside of the roof was examined for leaks or weak spots and none were found. The rafters are in good condition. The ridge vents in combination with the eave vents appeared to be adequately ventilating the attic, thus prolonging shingle life.

Insulation

The existence of insulation in the exterior walls could not be confirmed, however, it appears that there is none. There is an insulation blanket present in the attic, however, it appears to be rock wool, approximately two (2) inches thick. The underside of the crawlspace has insulation. A few pieces need to be reattached. With the framing present, it would be easy to insulate the house.

Appliances

The kitchen is equipped with an electric range, a disposal, a dishwasher, and a refrigerator. All of the appliances appeared to be fairly new. All appliances operated properly when tested. The cabinets are in good shape, with the doors and drawers functioning properly.

MECHANICAL CONDITIONS

Electrical

The home has a 100-amp service. The electric panel is in the front corner of the basement. A total of 15 circuits are present and appear to be fairly well distributed for an older house.

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All of the regular three (3) prong receptacles in the house were tested and found to have open grounds. The majority of the receptacles present are the older two prong type. These could not be tested.

The kitchen, bathrooms and basement have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) receptacles installed, as required. All were working properly when tested. GFCI's disconnect the electric circuit when an electric device comes in contact with water, preventing electrocution of the operator .

The smoke detectors were tested with a smoke detector canned tester. All were found to be functioning. The National Fire Prevention Association recommends having smoke detectors on each living level, in every sleeping area, and in every bedroom. Currently, there is one on each level. Therefore, it is recommended to install additional smoke detectors in the bedrooms. Additionally, it is recommended to install a carbon monoxide detector in the basement.

Plumbing

The plumbing in the house is copper pipe for the water supply, and copper and some PVC pipe for drains. All fixtures were tested and examined for signs of leaks. All fixtures tested were found to be functioning properly with no indications of leaking.

The house has a 40 gallon gas hot water heater by Mor-Flo™. This heater was installed on August 5, 1992, according to the writing on the heater. The heater is a 1992 model, making it approximately 8 years old. Most manufacturers warrant their heaters for 5 years. The heater was operating properly at the time of the inspection, and appears to be vented properly. The pressure relief valve has a proper discharge pipe. Outward appearance indicates that there are no leaks.

Heating/Cooling

The heating system for the house is provided by a gas forced air furnace. The furnace, a Whisper Heat™ by Lennox™, was tested and found to function properly during this inspection.

The air-conditioning is distributed by the furnace. The Lennox™ condenser was covered with snow during the inspection. The unit is a 1996 model. Due to the extreme cold, the air-conditioning was not tested. This should be checked by qualified service personnel prior to closing.

The vent pipe for the furnace and hot water heater is made from asbestos cement. It does not appear to be breaking down, however, in the exposed areas, the pipe should be painted to encapsulate the asbestos. This includes the basement and main hall closet.

CONCLUSION

The house inspected is in good condition, overall, with no major structural defects found. The majority of the items found are maintenance items which need to be done. The majority of the photographs are included for future reference. Items identified in the report which need to be addressed include:

- C Re-attaching the loose siding on the rear addition.
- C Straighten the rear gutter.
- C Repair the leak in the rear awning.
- C Re-attach the loose insulation in the crawlspace.
- C Install a plastic vapor barrier in the crawlspace.

Safety concerns found during the inspection include:

- C Encapsulating the asbestos vent pipe by painting.
- C Consider installing additional smoke detectors in the bedrooms.

As an additional service, the following is a list of suggested maintenance items which were observed during the inspection. None of the listed items affect the overall condition of the house. These suggestions are listed for the buyer's information, and are to be done by the buyer, at the buyer's discretion in the future. These include (in no particular order of importance):

- C Repair the three windows with broken seals.
- C Repair the front window with the faulty spring.
- C Repair the rear window which will not close.
- C Vent the dryer to the exterior.
- C Seal the mortar joint cracks in the foundation.
- C Seal the gap along the rear concrete patio slab and house.
- C Point the mortar joint cracks in the brick, to prevent weather entry.
- C Caulk along the top of the brick to prevent weather entry.
- C Seal the cracks in the driveway to prevent water and salt entry.
- C Seal the cracks in the basement/garage floor to prevent water and salt entry.
- C Paint the steel lintel over the garage door opening.
- C Shim the loose precast step, to prevent wobbling.
- C Seal the cracked precast step, to prevent weather entry.

CLOSING

As a home inspector and an engineer, it is my responsibility to evaluate available evidence relevant to the purpose of this inspection. I am not, however, responsible for conditions that could not be seen or were not within the scope of this inspection.

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In summary, I consider this house in good condition when compared to others of similar age and construction type that I inspect. Further, the overall structural stability of the house can be described as good as well.

This report is furnished at your request in strict confidence by Davis Home Inspections, as your agent, for your exclusive use in determining the overall condition of the subject premises. No reproduction or re-use is permitted without your express written consent.

If you should have any questions about this report or the conditions described in this report, please do not hesitate to contact me at (304) 292-5871 or e-mail me at DavisHome9@aol.com.

Respectfully Submitted,
DAVIS HOME INSPECTIONS

Sample

Jeffrey A. Davis, EI
Civil Engineer

Attachments

Report



Photo 1, Roof line where addition adjoins the house.



Photo 2, Gutter on rear of addition coming loose. Siding loose over roof as well.



Photo 3, Mortar joint cracking in brick behind gas meter.



Photo 4, Brick settled between porch and corner. Note exposed wood header board.



Photo 5, Mortar joint crack in foundation, right side between corner and window.



Photo 6, Stair-step mortar joint crack on front wall in basement.



Photo 7, Vertical hairline mortar joint crack adjacent to receptacle on front wall, near corner.



Photo 8, Mortar joint crack to the right of the electric panel, left wall.



Photo 9, Example of where concrete was removed and drain was installed.



Photo 9, Horizontal mortar joint crack on rear wall between pilasters.



Photo 11, Leak in rear awning above door.



Photo 12, Bow in driveway retaining wall.



Photo 13, Front retaining wall, leaning approximately two inches out of plumb.



Photo 14, Neighbors end of retaining wall.



Photo 15, Water along right foundation wall, taken 2-12-00.



Photo 16, Showing water exiting the wall at the bottom of the B-bond.

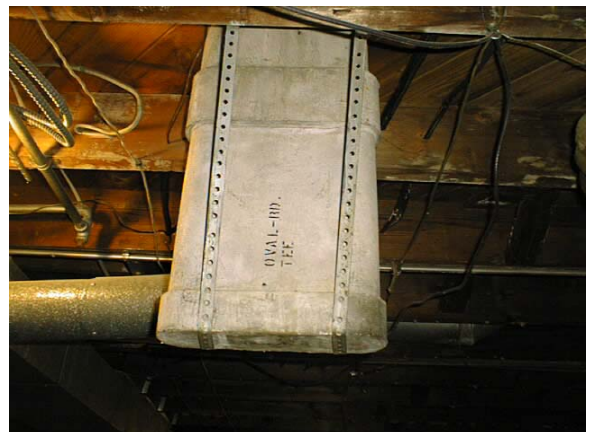


Photo 17, Asbestos cement vent pipe in basement.