

Helpful Home Inspection Report

123 Row House, Anytown, USA



Inspection Date:
Tuesday, January 5, 2010

Prepared For:
Sam and Janet Evening

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Introduction

THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING Helpful Home Inspectors, LLC

As one way of expressing our appreciation for the confidence that you have shown in us, we are pleased to include with this report a free copy of How to Operate Your Home by “Mr. Fix-It”, Tom Feiza. The book is offered as a supplement to the information provided verbally and in writing by your Helpful Home Inspector. It is a part of this report. It provides a wealth of information about the proper use and maintenance of your home and its systems. Specific references to the text may be made in the main body of this report. We recommend, however, that you read the book in its entirety and refer to it in the future to assist you in understanding and maintaining your home. Please visit www.helpfulhomeinspectors.com/links.htm for other helpful information. Thank you for choosing **Helpful Home Inspectors, LLC**.

CONVENTIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

For your convenience, the following conventions may be used in this report:

Material Defect: a problem with a residential real property or any portion of it that would have a significant adverse impact on the value of the property or that involves an unreasonable risk to people on the property. (The fact that a structural element, system or subsystem is near, at or beyond the end of its normal useful life is not by itself a material defect.)

Safety Issue: a condition that is judged to be a significant risk of bodily injury during normal, day-to-day use. The risk may be due to damage, deterioration, improper installation, or a change in accepted residential construction standards. You may choose to correct the condition or accept the risk. Safety Issues may or may not meet the legal definition of Material Defect.

Repair: a system or component which is missing or which needs corrective action to assure proper and reliable function.

Monitor: a system or component needing further investigation and/or monitoring to determine if repairs are necessary.

Improve: denotes improvements that are recommended but not required.

Normal for Age: a system or component that is functioning normally despite minor flaws that are typical for components of like age. Repairs are not essential, but may be undertaken as part of the home’s normal maintenance.

- For the purpose of this report, it is assumed that we are standing in front of the house facing the main entry door. From this perspective we may indicate locations as “Front”, “Rear”, “Right” or “Left”.

THE SCOPE OF THE INSPECTION

All components designated for inspection in the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI)® Standards of Practice are inspected, except as may be noted in the “Limitations of Inspection” sections within this report.

When defects are found, a qualified professional should be engaged, prior to the close of escrow, to evaluate our concerns and to inspect the remainder of the system or component for additional concerns that may be outside our area of expertise or the scope of our inspection.

A home inspection is intended to assist in evaluation of the overall condition of the dwelling. The inspection is based on observation of the visible and apparent condition of the structure and its components on the date of inspection.

The results of this home inspection are not intended to make any representation regarding the presence or absence of latent or concealed defects that are not reasonably ascertainable in a competently performed home inspection. No warranty or guaranty is expressed or implied.

If the person conducting your home inspection is not a licensed structural engineer or other professional whose license authorizes the rendering of an opinion as to the structural integrity of a building or its other component parts, you may be advised to seek a professional opinion as to any defects or concerns mentioned in the report.

This home inspection report is not to be construed as an appraisal and may not be used as such for any purpose.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of the inspection.

WEATHER CONDITIONS

Dry weather conditions prevailed at the time of the inspection.
The estimated outside temperature was 30 degrees Fahrenheit.

Structure

DESCRIPTION OF STRUCTURE

Foundation:	•Stone •Basement Configuration with Concrete Floor
Floor Structure:	•Wood Joist
Wall Structure:	•Masonry •Wood Frame at Porch and Bay
Ceiling Structure:	•Joist
Roof Structure:	•Rafters •Roof Joists •Solid Wood Sheathing

STRUCTURE OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

I found no major defects in the accessible structural components of the house except as noted below.

- **Monitor:** There is evidence of structural movement, including cracks at interior walls and ceilings. Absent further movement, only cosmetic repair should be needed.
- **Normal for Age:** There is common sagging, sloping and unevenness in the floor structure and associated distortion in interior door frames.
- **Repair:** Clean, prime and paint rusty metal lintels (a lintel is a beam supporting masonry above an opening in a wall), including over the old garage door opening at rear, with oil-based exterior metal paints to prevent further deterioration that could require costly repair. Maintain all metal lintels, including any that are capped in aluminum or are otherwise concealed.
- *See page 207 "Rusted Metal Lintels..." in How To Operate Your Home.*
- **Monitor:** Termites can do a substantial amount of damage to the wood structural components of a home. Take care to control dampness around the perimeter of the home and to avoid any form of wood/soil contact. Have a certified wood-destroying pests pesticide applicator inspect the property from time to time.

LIMITATIONS OF STRUCTURE INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- Structural components concealed behind finished surfaces or underground could not be inspected.
- Only a representative sampling of visible structural components are inspected.
- Engineering or architectural services such as calculation of structural capacities, adequacy, or integrity are not part of a home inspection.
- The roof space/attic was viewed from the access hatch only.
- Finished walls, ceilings and floors in the basement restricted access to some structural components.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Roofing

DESCRIPTION OF ROOFING

Roof Style:	•Shed •Low Slope
Roof Covering:	•Asphalt Shingle •Rubber Roofing
Roof Flashing and/or Valleys :	•Metal •Asphalt
Roof Drainage System:	•Metal Gutters and Downspouts •Metal Outlets and Downspouts •Downspouts discharge to sewer pipe
Chimneys:	•Masonry •Tile-Lined
Skylights:	•None
Method of Inspection:	•Walked on roof

ROOFING OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- Material Defect:** The roof coverings are in various states of disrepair. Some asphalt shingles are missing at the shed roof at front. Others are torn. Replace this roof covering now. Replace the old worn porch roof covering now. The main roof is not so old, but exhibits flaws typical of an older roof due to lack of maintenance. It may be possible to extend the life of this roof covering by repairing the damaged areas, resealing the edges and penetrations and providing a reflective coating. Consult a roofing contractor about the relative cost-effectiveness of repair versus replacement at the main roof.
- Repair:** Clear the congested roof drain at the main roof and maintain all drains free of debris to reduce roof damage and risk of leaks and to avoid spilling roof runoff around the building – a potential source of water entry or water damage.
- Repair:** There is a pipe at the main rooftop that is open into the attic. To eliminate this point of entry for water and vermin, replace the pipe with a proper rooftop attic vent.
- Repair:** Repair or replace the sagging gutters as necessary to avoid spilling roof runoff around the building – a potential source of water entry or water damage.
- Monitor:** The downspouts that discharge to the sewer should be monitored. If you ever suspect that they are clogged, the sewer line should be cleared, repaired or replaced as needed. If you ever notice foundation leakage adjacent to a downspout it may be an indication of a problem below grade.
- See page 106 "Check Gutters and Downspouts" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- Repair:** Seal cracks in the cement wash at the top of the chimney to prevent water penetration and further damage.

Main roof...damaged areas...



Shingles are missing...



Congested roof drain...



Pipe...open into the attic...



Seal cracks in the cement wash...
Install a rain cap and vermin screen...



- **Improve:** Install a rain cap and vermin screen atop the chimney flue to help keep rain and vermin out.
- *See page 213 "Inspecting a Masonry Chimney" in How To Operate Your Home.*
- **Safety Issue:** A single chimney flue serves a wood burning fireplace and the gas burning boiler and water heater. This is a potentially hazardous arrangement that is not permitted in modern construction. I am aware of at least two concerns with this arrangement. 1) In general, different fuels will require differently sized liners to help ensure the safe exhaust of flue gases. 2) Wood fires create creosote, which is highly combustible. Adding other openings to the chimney could allow a fire to spread outside of the chimney. Consult a fireplace and chimney expert.

LIMITATIONS OF ROOFING INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- Interior finishes may disguise evidence of prior leaks.
- Estimates of roof age and/or remaining roof life are approximations only and do not preclude the possibility of leakage. Leakage can develop at any time and may depend on rain intensity, wind direction, ice build up, and other factors.
- "Rubber Roofing" is a general term used above to describe one of a variety of roof coverings including EPDM, a lightweight synthetic membrane, and Modified Bitumen, in which plastic or rubber-like binders are added to asphalt.
- Not all of the underside of the roof sheathing is inspected for evidence of leaks.
- Chimney interiors cannot be fully observed from the top or bottom. The National Fire Protection Association recommends a Level II inspection by a qualified chimney expert whenever a house is sold. A Level II inspection includes an examination of the flue interior by video camera or other means and a determination that the flue is or is not properly sized for the connected appliance(s). Such an examination is beyond the scope of a home inspection.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Exterior

DESCRIPTION OF EXTERIOR

Wall Covering:	•Brick •Stucco •Plywood
Eaves, Soffits, And Fascias:	•Wood •Open Rafters
Exterior Doors:	•Wood
Window/Door Frames and Trim:	•Wood
Driveways:	•Concrete
Walkways:	•Concrete •Brick
Porches:	•Wood •Enclosed
Decks:	•Treated Wood
Steps and/or Stoops:	•Brick
Railings:	•Treated Wood
Garage:	•None
Surface Drainage:	•Grade Drain

EXTERIOR OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Repair:** Repoint (fill defective mortar joints with fresh mortar) the stone foundation walls at rear as needed to reduce the risk of water penetration and damage to the building. Conditions that may require repointing include: (1) mortar erosion more than ¼-inch, (2) crumbling mortar, (3) hairline cracks in the mortar, and (4) cracks between the stone and mortar. Visual observation in combination with light scraping with a metal tool can detect cracked, spalled and crumbly mortar joints.
- **Repair:** The exterior brickwork has been repointed. Some new mortar has come loose at rear. Replace loose and missing mortar as needed to reduce the risk of water penetration and damage to the building. The failure of the new mortar may be due to improper preparation of the mortar joints and/or improper preparation, placement and tooling of the new mortar. Ongoing maintenance may be required.
- **Repair:** Clean, prime and paint the exterior wood doors. Repair or replace the rear door at the basement. It is delaminating. Replace missing hardware and storm panels at storm door at main entry.
- **Repair:** Make painting, caulking and glazing (putty) improvements as needed at windows and window frames. Repair or replace rotted window frames, trim and sills, and replace broken glass, including at the fixed pane at the front porch. The detail at the exterior of the dining room window is poor. Repair or replace the sill and frame as needed to reduce the risk of water entry and damage to the building.
- **Repair:** Clean, prime and paint exterior wood surfaces. Repair or replace any rotted wood that may be found while preparing surfaces for paint. There is visible rot at the front porch, including at the eaves and siding. There

Rotted...frames, trim and sills...



Reduce the risk of water entry...



Rot at eaves...



Rot at siding...



is a risk of additional hidden damage in these areas.

- **Repair:** No flashing is visible atop the windows at the front porch. Install flashing to reduce the risk of water penetration and damage to the building. In the absence of flashing, caulk seals should be carefully maintained. A heightened risk of water entry and damage to the building will remain. Water damage can be difficult to detect without the use of invasive or destructive means that are beyond the scope of this inspection.
- See figure X010 on page 203 "Flashing Over Window" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Safety Issue:** Repair the concrete walkways at front and rear as needed to eliminate trip hazards due to damaged concrete and uneven settlement.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the deck as needed to conform to accepted construction standards. Consult a design professional and/or visit us on-line at www.helpfulhomeinspectors.com/links.htm for links to guidelines on building a safe and sound deck. Nails alone do not provide a sufficient connection between the deck and the house. Posts placed beneath individual joists do not provide proper support for the deck. The posts should support a beam or beams that, in turn, support the deck.
- **Safety Issue:** Add a rail at the lower set of front steps for improved safety.
- **Safety Issue:** The risers at the front steps are not all of equal dimension. To eliminate this trip and fall hazard, repair or replace these steps.
- **Monitor:** The driveway slopes toward the house. This condition can cause water entry in the building. Consider installing a grade drain across the area that was the old garage door opening to direct water into the sewer.
- **Monitor:** Keep the grade drain clear and monitor to ensure that sewer pipes are functional. If you ever notice foundation leakage adjacent to a grade drain, it may be an indication of a problem below grade.
- **Repair:** Trim tree branches away from the house to avoid damage to the building and to eliminate a pathway for wood destroying insects.

Posts...do not provide proper support...



LIMITATIONS OF EXTERIOR INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- A representative sample of exterior components was inspected rather than every occurrence of components.
- The inspection does not include an assessment of geological, geotechnical, or hydrological conditions, or environmental hazards.
- Screening, shutters, awnings, or similar seasonal accessories, fences, recreational facilities, outbuildings, seawalls, break-walls, docks, erosion control and earth stabilization measures are not inspected unless specifically agreed-upon and documented in this report.
- Access below the front porch was not possible. The doorway to the front of the basement has been blocked by an interior partition and paneling.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Electrical

DESCRIPTION OF ELECTRICAL

Size of Electrical Service:	•120/240 Volt Main Service - Service Size: 100 Amp
Service Drop / Lateral:	•Overhead
Service Entrance Conductors:	•Copper
Main Disconnect(s):	•100 Amp Breaker •Located at Main Service Panel
Service Grounding:	•None Visible
Service Panel:	•Breakers •Located in Basement
Sub-Panel(s):	•Fuses •Located in Kitchen
Solid Conductor Branch Circuit Wiring:	•Copper
Wiring Method:	•Non-Metallic Cable •Fabric-Covered •Knob-and-Tube
Receptacles:	•Grounded
Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter Protection:	•None Found
Arc Fault Circuit Interrupter Protection:	•Absent (See "Information re: AFCI Protection" Below)
Smoke Detectors:	•Present

ELECTRICAL OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

There are approximately 14 connections at circuit breakers within the service panel. The panel is listed and labeled to safely accommodate a maximum of 20 installed circuit breaker poles, allowing some room for additional circuits if needed.

➤ See page 61 "Utility Systems – Electrical" in *How To Operate Your Home*.

- **Material Defect:** I suspect that an amateur, rather than a professional electrician, has done much of the electrical work. Electrical defects may pose a shock and/or fire hazard. Have a registered electrician evaluate the entire electrical system and make all necessary repairs including those recommended in the Electrical section of this report.
- **Safety Issue:** Replace the damaged / frayed service entry cable for improved safety.
- **Safety Issue:** Rewire the service panel as needed for improved safety. There are a number of defects, including the lack of a grounding electrode system, the lack of a bonding jumper to connect the neutral terminal bars to the enclosure, conductors wrapped in tape in lieu of conduit and equipment grounds improperly terminated. Also, white wires may be improperly used as hot conductors and black wires as neutrals.
- **Safety Issue:** Replace the missing and/or pointed screws in the panel cover with blunt-ended screws designed for this application.
- **Safety Issue:** Install a jumper wire across the water meter and bonding as needed at other metal components to help ensure sufficient grounding/bonding of the electrical service.
- **Safety Issue:** Circuits within the sub-panel that are doubled up (referred to as "double taps") should be separated. Too many wires at a terminal can lead to loose connections and/or overheating.
- **Safety Issue:** Extension cords and/or lightweight lamp cords should not be used as permanent wiring. Remove all such wiring for improved safety.
- **Safety Issue:** Repair all improper electrical connections, including at the lighting fixtures in the basement ceiling. All electrical connections should be made inside junction boxes fitted with cover plates.
- **Safety Issue:** Loose junction boxes should be properly secured.
- **Safety Issue:** Install cover plates at all junction boxes, in order to protect the wire connections.
- **Safety Issue:** Knob-and-tube wiring is present. Repairs are needed. It may be most practical to replace the knob-and-tube wiring, rather than invest in repairing this old and obsolete system. Reportedly, some insurance companies are refusing to insure homes where knob-and-tube wiring is present. At a minimum, the following conditions require immediate attention:
 - Knob-and-tube wiring is designed to dissipate heat to free air. Insulation should not envelop the wire. In the attic, replace the wiring that has been subject to overheating due to contact with insulation.
 - Repair poor connections, including several in the attic, between newer wiring and the old knob-and-tube wiring. All connections of this type should be made within junction boxes, fitted with cover plates.

- The presence of 30-amp fuses and a scorch mark in the sub-panel may be an indication that wires serving these circuits have been overloaded. Have an electrician investigate and replace this wiring if deemed necessary.
- **Safety Issue:** Paint filling the slots of receptacle outlets can prevent good contact, creating resistance, which can produce heat and a risk of fire. Replace the affected outlets.
- **Safety Issue:** Investigate the receptacles with reversed polarity (i.e. wired backwards) and repair the circuits as needed.
 - See page 66 "Electrical Polarity" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Safety Issue:** Repair ungrounded 3-slot receptacle outlets. In some cases a ground wire may be present in the electrical box and simply needs to be connected. If no ground is present, "repair" can be as simple as replacing the 3-slot receptacle with a 2-hole non-grounding type receptacle and using this receptacle only for appliances with 2-prong plugs. Better yet, a new grounded circuit could be provided to supply the outlet. As an alternative, a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) may be installed where grounding is not provided. In this case the outlet cover should be marked "no equipment ground".
 - See page 67 "Electrical Grounding" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Safety Issue:** Provide ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) protection for increased protection from shock or electrocution.

Although we are not required to meet current standards in older buildings, our homes are made safer when we do so. Ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) provide protection against shock or electrocution. They are inexpensive devices that make us so much safer that I recommend installing them wherever they would be required today. Current standards would require GFCI protection for receptacle outlets serving kitchen counters and receptacles installed in bathrooms, as well as receptacle outlets located within 6-feet of laundry, utility and bar sinks and at exterior, unfinished basement, crawl space and garage receptacle outlets.

 - See page 67 "Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Safety Issue:** Replace missing outlet and switch cover plates to avoid a shock hazard.
- **Safety Issue:** A receptacle outlet in the front bedroom shows signs of overheating. Investigate the circuit and repair as needed.
- **Improve:** Additional receptacle outlets in some areas of the home may be desirable.
- **Monitor:** One or more switches were tested without apparent effect. It is not uncommon for switches to have been abandoned during repairs or renovations. Further investigation may be required to determine if repairs are necessary.
- **Safety Issue:** Old ceiling fixtures that hang by the same wire that carries electricity to the fixture may present a fire hazard. Replace the fixtures in the rear bedroom.
- **Improve:** Overhead lighting in the basement may prove inadequate.
- **Monitor:** The ceiling fan in the kitchen wobbles.
 - See page 163 "Wobbling Ceiling Fan" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Safety Issue:** Install more smoke detectors in the home to increase the occupants' chance of survival in case of fire. See "Important Information re: Smoke Detectors" below.

LIMITATIONS OF ELECTRICAL INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- Electrical components concealed behind finished surfaces are not inspected.
- Only a representative sampling of outlets and light fixtures are tested.
- The inspection does not include remote control devices, alarm systems and components, low voltage wiring systems and components, exterior landscape lighting or ancillary wiring systems and components not part of the primary electrical power distribution system.
- The inspector reports only on the presence or absence of smoke detectors. The building's occupants are responsible for periodic testing and battery maintenance. See "Important Information re: Smoke Alarms and Carbon Monoxide Alarms" below.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RE: SMOKE ALARMS AND CARBON MONOXIDE ALARMS

- **Smoke alarms save lives.** In new construction, the International Residential Code 2009 Edition requires that smoke alarms shall be installed in the following locations: a) in each sleeping room, b) outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms, and c) on each additional story of the dwelling, including basements and habitable attics but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. When more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling unit the alarm devices shall be interconnected in such a manner that the actuation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. To satisfy these requirements, new homes have hard-wired smoke alarms with battery backup. When one alarm is activated, all alarms will sound so that no matter where the smoke is first detected, occupants throughout the home are made aware. Wireless interconnected smoke alarms are available for installation in older homes. Although we are not required to meet current standards in older buildings, our homes are made safer when we do so. Owners of older homes should consider making improvements to bring their homes into closer compliance with current safety standards.
 - Place detectors on the ceiling at least 4 inches from the nearest wall. If wall mounted, place them not less than 4 inches or more than 12 inches from the ceiling. This 4-inch minimum is important to keep detectors out of possible "dead air" spaces. Installing detectors near a window, door or fireplace is not recommended because drafts could blow smoke away from the unit. In rooms where the ceiling has an extremely high point, such as in vaulted ceilings, mount the detector at or near the ceiling's highest point.
 - The National Fire Safety Association (NFPA) recommends replacing smoke alarms that may be 10 years old or older. Visit us on-line at www.helpfulhomeinspectors.com/links.htm for a video entitled "Home Smoke Alarm Basics" and for links to the NFPA web site.
 - In new construction, the International Residential Code 2009 Edition requires that a carbon monoxide alarm be installed outside each sleeping area, in the immediate vicinity of the bedrooms, in dwelling units within which fuel-fired appliances are installed and in dwelling units that have attached garages. Install alarms in accordance with the alarm manufacturer's installation instructions. Select alarms listed as complying with UL 2034-2008.
 - Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that can be produced from a faulty fuel-fired appliance or from automotive exhaust. Proper maintenance of these appliances is the best way to reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning, a serious health risk. Further guidance is available from the EPA. Visit us on-line at www.helpfulhomeinspectors.com/links.htm for links to the EPA web site.
- See page 31 "Carbon Monoxide" in *How To Operate Your Home*.

INFORMATION RE: ARC FAULT CIRCUIT INTERRUPTER (AFCI) PROTECTION

- Arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCI) provide protection from fire caused by arcing faults (sparks) in electrical wiring. They were first required in new homes, on or about January 2002, to protect circuits with outlets in bedrooms only. In new homes today, UL approved "combination type" AFCI protection is required for all 120-volt, 15 and 20 amp branch circuits with outlets in family rooms, dining rooms, living rooms, parlors, libraries, dens, bedrooms, sunrooms, recreation rooms, closets, hallways and similar rooms and areas. As is typical of a home of this age, this home has no AFCI protection.
- See page 69 "Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI)" in *How To Operate Your Home*.

Heating

DESCRIPTION OF HEATING

Energy Source:	•Gas
Heating System Type:	•Forced Hot Water Boiler •Approximate Date of Manufacture: Not Determined •Manufacturer: American Standard •Boiler Number: G-25 •Series Number: 7BNJ6
Vents, Flues, Chimneys:	•Metal-Single Wall •Masonry-Lined
Heat Distribution Methods:	•Baseboard Heaters

HEATING OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- *See page 46 "Hydronic(Hot Water)Heat" in How To Operate Your Home.*
- **Repair:** The age of the boiler was not determined. It is at least 23 years old, judging by the date on the pressure relief valve. It may be older. Typical life expectancy is 30 to 50 years. One cannot predict with certainty when replacement will become necessary. The boiler did not respond to the thermostats. It did fire intermittently during the inspection. The circulator never turned on and I felt no heat at the baseboard heaters. The wiring serving the controls has been installed in a non-workmanlike manner. Have a qualified plumbing and heating technician evaluate the system, make any and all needed repairs or replacement and confirm safe and efficient operation and exhaust.
- **Safety Issue:** Remove the threads from the bottom of the discharge piping that serves the pressure relief valve (PRV) for the boiler. The PRV valve is an important safety feature that keeps the boiler from exploding if the pressure in the boiler builds beyond what it can safely contain. This PRV valve needs an extension pipe, which will divert pressurized scalding water to the floor in case of a discharge. It should be metal pipe terminating within 18 inches of the floor. The end of the pipe should be visible and should not be threaded or capped.
- **Safety Issue:** For improved safety, install three screws at every joint in the flue piping serving the boiler.
- **Safety Issue:** Refer to the Roofing section of this report for information about the chimney serving the boiler and the water heater.

LIMITATIONS OF HEATING INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- The adequacy of heat supply and distribution balance is not inspected.
- Refer to the Roofing section of this report for limitations of chimney / flue inspection.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Insulation / Ventilation

DESCRIPTION OF INSULATION / VENTILATION

Method of Inspecting Attic:	•Viewed from Opening
Attic Insulation:	• \pm 0 to 3" •Fiberglass Blankets/Batts •No Visible Vapor Retarder
Exterior Wall Insulation:	•Not Visible
Basement Wall Insulation:	•Not Visible
Roof Ventilation:	•Soffit Vents
Exhaust Fan and Vent Locations:	•Bathroom •Dryer

INSULATION / VENTILATION OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

Most older homes have relatively low levels of insulation. The down side, of course, is that heating and/or cooling costs are higher. The up side is that these homes tend to be fairly well ventilated. Their natural ability to allow infiltration of outside air actually improves indoor air quality and reduces damaging moisture accumulation. Done right, improving insulation levels will reduce energy costs and increase comfort. If done incorrectly however, additional insulation can actually do damage to your home. Additional insulation may require additional ventilation. You may also want to weigh the potential benefit against the cost of improvements. Homes are complex systems. If you are planning insulation improvements, seek professional advice.

➤ See page 118 "Insulation and Ventilation" in *How To Operate Your Home*.

- **Repair, Safety Issue:** Replace the missing cover and backdraft damper at the dryer vent termination at the exterior wall. Keep the vent line clean as a blocked vent line can cause a fire in the dryer.

LIMITATIONS OF INSULATION / VENTILATION INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- Insulation/ventilation type and levels in concealed areas are not inspected. Insulation and vapor barriers are not disturbed and no destructive tests (such as cutting openings in walls to look for insulation) are performed.
- Potentially hazardous materials such as asbestos and urea formaldehyde foam insulation (UFFI) cannot be positively identified without a detailed inspection and laboratory analysis. This is beyond the scope of the inspection.
- An analysis of indoor air quality is not part of our inspection unless explicitly contracted-for and discussed in this or a separate report.
- Any estimates of insulation R values or depths are rough average values.
- The attic was viewed from the access hatch only.
- No access was gained to the wall cavities of the home.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Plumbing

DESCRIPTION OF PLUMBING

Water Supply Source:	•Public Water Supply
Service Pipe to House:	•Copper
Main Water Valve Location:	•At Water Meter
Interior Supply Piping:	•Copper
Waste System:	•Public Sewer System
Drain, Waste, & Vent (DWV) Piping:	•PVC •Cast Iron
Water Heater:	•Gas •Approximate Date of Manufacture: 2002 •Approximate Capacity (in gallons): 30 •Manufacturer: GE
Fuel Shut-Off Valves:	•Natural Gas Main Valve At Meter in Basement

PLUMBING OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

The water pressure supplied to the fixtures is good. Only a slight drop in flow was experienced when two fixtures were operated simultaneously. Drainage at the fixtures is functional. Water drains fast enough and completely except as noted below.

- See page 71 "Water Service - Municipal" in How To Operate Your Home.
 - See page 90 "Drainage, Waste and Vent System" in How To Operate Your Home.
 - See page 98 "Natural Gas" in How To Operate Your Home.
- **Monitor:** There is corrosion on the exterior of the supply piping, including at the basement ceiling above the laundry. Watch for leaks.
 - **Repair:** Repair or replace the leaking trap under the kitchen sink. Secure the loose fitting traps beneath the kitchen sink and the laundry tub to reduce the risk of sewer gases entering the home.
 - See page 195 "Sewer Smell in Home" in How To Operate Your Home.
 - **Repair:** To encourage proper drainage, replace the flexible hose under the bathtub with an approved trap.
 - **Normal for Age:** "S" traps have been used. Although no longer used in new construction due to the possibility of siphoning problems, "S" traps are extremely common in homes in our area and most perform with no reported problems. If you ever smell a sewer odor at one of the fixtures, run a little water to "prime" the trap. Consider replacing "S" traps during any new plumbing work or if you experience recurring problems.
 - See figure P037 on page 91 "S Trap – Not Allowed" in How To Operate Your Home.
 - **Monitor:** There are rust stains on the waste piping. Watch for leaks. Sections of the old cast iron waste piping have been replaced. Due to age, remaining sections may be prone to problems. Improvement is recommended on an as needed basis.
 - **Monitor:** The water heater is approximately 8 years old. Typical life expectancy is 8 to 14 years. One cannot predict with certainty when replacement will become necessary.
 - See page 77 "Water Heaters" in How To Operate Your Home.
 - **Safety Issue:** Refer to the Roofing section of this report for information about the chimney serving the boiler and the water heater.
 - **Safety Issue:** For improved safety, install three screws at every joint in the flue piping serving the water heater.
 - **Repair:** Access to the main gas shut off valve is obstructed. Provide access in case of emergency.
 - **Repair:** Add a "drip leg" at the gas connection serving the boiler to prevent clogging of the gas valve.
 - **Repair:** Repair the loose toilet on the 2nd floor. A new wax seal may be needed to prevent leaking.
 - See figure P027 on page 207 "Toilet Leak at Floor" in How To Operate Your Home.
 - **Repair:** Replace bathtub caulking with a "Kitchen and Bath" caulk that resists mildew growth.
 - **Repair:** Repair or replace the inoperative stopper mechanism at the bathtub.
 - **Monitor:** There was no hot water at the bathtub during the inspection. Have a plumber open the valve behind the tub and check for leaks.

- **Repair:** Several fixtures drain slowly, including at the kitchen sink, the laundry tub and the bathtub. This is most likely the result of minor obstructions, but may be evidence of a more serious problem. Consult a plumber.
- **Improve:** Install braided metal hoses at washing machine connections to reduce the risk of leaks due to burst hoses.

LIMITATIONS OF PLUMBING INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions:

- The inspector is not required to determine whether water supply and waste disposal systems are public or private. If described above, the inspector has made an assumption, not verified, about these systems.
- Portions of the plumbing system concealed by finishes and/or storage (below sinks, etc.), below the structure, or beneath the ground surface are not inspected. To learn the condition of the underground sewer line, you may have it inspected by a plumbing and sewer contractor using a video camera. Such an examination is beyond the scope of a home inspection.
- Water quantity and water quality are not tested unless explicitly contracted-for and discussed in this or a separate report.
- Clothes washing machine connections are not inspected.
- Shut-off valves and relief valves are not operated during the inspection.
- Interiors of flues or chimneys that are not readily accessible are not inspected.
- Water conditioning systems, solar water heaters, fire and lawn sprinkler systems, wells and private waste disposal systems are not inspected unless explicitly contracted-for and discussed in this or a separate report.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Interior

DESCRIPTION OF INTERIOR

Wall And Ceiling Materials:	•Plaster/Drywall •Paneling •Wood •Suspended Tile
Floor Surfaces:	•Carpet •Tile •Vinyl/Resilient •Concrete
Window Type(s):	•Double/Single Hung •Fixed Pane
Window Glazing:	•Double Glazed •Single Pane •Single Pane with Storm Window
Doors:	•Wood •Molded Panel
Kitchen Appliances:	•Gas Range •Dishwasher •Refrigerator •Non-venting Range Hood and Fan
Laundry Facility:	•Clothes Washer •Clothes Dryer •Gas Piping for Dryer •Dryer Vented to Building Exterior •120-Volt Circuit with GFCI for Washer •Hot and Cold Water Supply for Washer •Washer Discharges to Laundry Tub/Sink
Fireplaces:	•Masonry Firebox
Vent Systems, Flues, Chimneys:	•Masonry Chimney – Lined

INTERIOR OBSERVATIONS / RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Normal for Age:** There are typical minor cracks and imperfections in the walls and ceilings.
- **Monitor, Repair:** There is water damage at the living room ceiling, beneath the bathroom. This may be the result of an existing or a corrected condition. The area was dry during the inspection. If the area remains dry, repair the ceiling. Otherwise, consult a plumber. Refer also to the Plumbing section of this report.
- **Improve:** The tile floor in the bathroom has been patched with concrete.
- **Repair:** At least one insulating glass pane, in the rear bedroom, has lost its seal. This has resulted in condensation developing between the panes of glass. To improve, replace the glass.
- **Repair:** Adjust, repair or replace windows as needed for proper fit and function. Some windows have broken or missing sash locks or locks that cannot be engaged. When engaged, sash locks provide an improved weather seal. Balances (the hardware that holds up the windows) are not functioning properly on some windows. Others are showing signs of age and wear on some windows. Some window glass is broken. At a kitchen window, there are two storm window frames and no primary window.
- **Repair:** Provide weep holes at the bottoms of storm windows to allow water to drain to the exterior and to prevent rot at window sills.
- **Repair:** Trim or adjust interior doors as necessary for proper fit and function. Repair or replace the damaged accordion closet doors.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the damaged kitchen counter top. It is delaminating in places and there are gaps between the counter top and the backsplash.
- **Safety Issue:** The handrail at the main stairway lacks rigidity and at least one spindle is broken. Repair the rail for improved safety.
- **Safety Issue:** For improved safety, provide a handrail for the entire length of the basement stairway. Alter or replace the existing basement stairway railing for improved child-safety. By today's standards, a "child-safe" stairway railing is one with no openings through which a four-inch sphere will pass, except that the triangular openings formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail may be of such size that a six-inch sphere cannot pass. Wall-hung stairway handrails should return to the wall or to a newel post to reduce the risk of accidents caused when clothing, handbags, etc. get caught around the rail.
- **Safety Issue:** The risers at the basement steps are not all of equal dimension. To eliminate this trip and fall hazard, repair or replace these steps.
- **Safety Issue:** Low headroom at the basement stairway poses a risk of injury.
- **Monitor:** I found no visible evidence of moisture penetration in the basement at the time of the inspection. Finished walls and floors may hide evidence of moisture penetration. Virtually all basements may leak at some point in time. Most basement leakage problems are the result of insufficient control of storm water at the surface. The ground around the house should be sloped to direct water away from the foundations. Likewise, hard surfaces such as walkways,

porches, driveways, etc. should slope away from the house. Seals should be maintained, where hard surfaces meet the walls of the house. Gutters and downspouts should act to collect roof water and drain the water at least five (5) feet from the foundation or into a functional storm sewer. Downspouts that are clogged or broken below grade level, or that discharge too close to the foundation are a common source of basement leakage. Please refer to the Roofing and Exterior sections of the report for specific recommendations.

- See page 285 "Keep Your Basement Dry" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Monitor:** Lead based paint was in use until approximately 1978. According to the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, a lead hazard can be present in a house of this age. An evaluation of lead in paint is beyond the scope of this inspection. Further guidance is available from the EPA. Visit us on-line at www.helpfulhomeinspectors.com/links.htm for links to the EPA web site.
- See page 29 "Lead" in *How To Operate Your Home*.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the inoperative gas range and dishwasher. Check first to see that the water and gas supplies to these appliances are on.
- **Safety Issue:** Install an anti-tip bracket to prevent the gas range from tipping over if too much force or weight is placed on an open oven door.
- **Safety Issue:** Repair the damaged fireplace firebox mortar for improved safety. Have the fireplace chimney and the ash pit cleaned and inspected. Refer also to the Roofing section of this report.

LIMITATIONS OF INTERIOR INSPECTION

As we have discussed and/or as described in your Inspection Agreement, this is a visual inspection limited in scope by (but not restricted to) the following conditions

- Description of interior finishes may be limited to predominant materials rather than an exhaustive list of materials used.
- Furniture, storage, appliances and/or wall hangings are not moved to permit inspection and may block defects.
- Carpeting, window treatments, central vacuum systems, household appliances, recreational facilities, paint, wallpaper, and other finish treatments are not inspected.
- Inspection of household appliances is beyond the scope of this inspection. If appliances are turned on during the inspection, this is done as a courtesy to confirm basic operation only. No report is made as to the adequate function of household appliances. Appliances present in the home at the time of the inspection may or may not be included in the sale. Please refer to your agreement for sale and the seller's disclosure.
- Condensation or "fogging" between the panes of glass is an indication of failed seals in insulating glass units. Not all windows with failed seals exhibit these symptoms at all times. Also, dirty windows, window treatments, furniture, storage, etc. may hide evidence of failed seals in insulating glass.

Please refer to the Inspection Agreement for a detailed explanation of the scope, limitations and exclusions of this inspection.

Summary

IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATION HIGHLIGHTS / SUMMARY

The following is a synopsis of the Material Defects, Safety Issues and other potentially significant improvements that should be budgeted for over the short term. Refer to the body of this report for further details on these and other recommendations. Beware that issues that are important to you may be discussed in the main body of the report but omitted in the Summary. Please note that significant improvements, outside the scope of this inspection, may also be necessary.

- **Repair:** Clean, prime and paint rusty metal lintels (a lintel is a beam supporting masonry above an opening in a wall), including over the old garage door opening at rear, with oil-based exterior metal paints to prevent further deterioration that could require costly repair. Maintain all metal lintels, including any that are capped in aluminum or are otherwise concealed.
- **Material Defect:** The roof coverings are in various states of disrepair. Some asphalt shingles are missing at the shed roof at front. Others are torn. Replace this roof covering now. Replace the old worn porch roof covering now. The main roof is not so old, but exhibits flaws typical of an older roof due to lack of maintenance. It may be possible to extend the life of this roof covering by repairing the damaged areas, resealing the edges and penetrations and providing a reflective coating. Consult a roofing contractor about the relative cost-effectiveness of repair versus replacement at the main roof.
- **Repair:** There is a pipe at the main rooftop that is open into the attic. To eliminate this point of entry for water and vermin, replace the pipe with a proper rooftop attic vent.
- **Repair:** Seal cracks in the cement wash at the top of the chimney to prevent water penetration and further damage.
- **Safety Issue:** A single chimney flue serves a wood burning fireplace and the gas burning boiler and water heater. This is a potentially hazardous arrangement that is not permitted in modern construction. I am aware of at least two concerns with this arrangement. 1) In general, different fuels will require differently sized liners to help ensure the safe exhaust of flue gases. 2) Wood fires create creosote, which is highly combustible. Adding other openings to the chimney could allow a fire to spread outside of the chimney. Consult a fireplace and chimney expert.
- **Repair:** Repoint (fill defective mortar joints with fresh mortar) the stone foundation walls at rear as needed to reduce the risk of water penetration and damage to the building. Conditions that may require repointing include: (1) mortar erosion more than ¼-inch, (2) crumbling mortar, (3) hairline cracks in the mortar, and (4) cracks between the stone and mortar. Visual observation in combination with light scraping with a metal tool can detect cracked, spalled and crumbly mortar joints.
- **Repair:** The exterior brickwork has been repointed. Some new mortar has come loose at rear. Replace loose and missing mortar as needed to reduce the risk of water penetration and damage to the building. The failure of the new mortar may be due to improper preparation of the mortar joints and/or improper preparation, placement and tooling of the new mortar. Ongoing maintenance may be required.
- **Repair:** Clean, prime and paint the exterior wood doors. Repair or replace the rear door at the basement. It is delaminating. Replace missing hardware and storm panels at storm door at main entry.
- **Repair:** Make painting, caulking and glazing (putty) improvements as needed at windows and window frames. Repair or replace rotted window frames, trim and sills, and replace broken glass, including at the fixed pane at the front porch. The detail at the exterior of the dining room window is poor. Repair or replace the sill and frame as needed to reduce the risk of water entry and damage to the building.
- **Repair:** Clean, prime and paint exterior wood surfaces. Repair or replace any rotted wood that may be found while preparing surfaces for paint. There is visible rot at the front porch, including at the eaves and siding. There is a risk of additional hidden damage in these areas.
- **Repair:** No flashing is visible atop the windows at the front porch. Install flashing to reduce the risk of water penetration and damage to the building. In the absence of flashing, caulk seals should be carefully maintained. A heightened risk of water entry and damage to the building will remain. Water damage can be difficult to detect without the use of invasive or destructive means that are beyond the scope of this inspection.
- **Safety Issue:** Repair the concrete walkways at front and rear as needed to eliminate trip hazards due to damaged concrete and uneven settlement.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the deck as needed to conform to accepted construction standards. Consult a design professional and/or visit us on-line at www.helpfulhomeinspectors.com/links.htm for links to guidelines on building a safe and sound deck. Nails alone do not provide a sufficient connection between the deck and the house. Posts placed

beneath individual joists do not provide proper support for the deck. The posts should support a beam or beams that, in turn, support the deck.

- **Safety Issue:** Add a rail at the lower set of front steps for improved safety.
- **Safety Issue:** The risers at the front steps are not all of equal dimension. To eliminate this trip and fall hazard, repair or replace these steps.
- **Repair:** Trim tree branches away from the house to avoid damage to the building and to eliminate a pathway for wood destroying insects.
- **Material Defect:** I suspect that an amateur, rather than a professional electrician, has done much of the electrical work. Electrical defects may pose a shock and/or fire hazard. Have a registered electrician evaluate the entire electrical system and make all necessary repairs including those recommended in the Electrical section of this report.
- **Repair:** The age of the boiler was not determined. It is at least 23 years old, judging by the date on the pressure relief valve. It may be older. Typical life expectancy is 30 to 50 years. One cannot predict with certainty when replacement will become necessary. The boiler did not respond to the thermostats. It did fire intermittently during the inspection. The circulator never turned on and I felt no heat at the baseboard heaters. The wiring serving the controls has been installed in a non-workmanlike manner. Have a qualified plumbing and heating technician evaluate the system, make any and all needed repairs or replacement and confirm safe and efficient operation and exhaust.
- **Safety Issue:** Remove the threads from the bottom of the discharge piping that serves the pressure relief valve (PRV) for the boiler. The PRV valve is an important safety feature that keeps the boiler from exploding if the pressure in the boiler builds beyond what it can safely contain. This PRV valve needs an extension pipe, which will divert pressurized scalding water to the floor in case of a discharge. It should be metal pipe terminating within 18 inches of the floor. The end of the pipe should be visible and should not be threaded or capped.
- **Safety Issue:** For improved safety, install three screws at every joint in the flue piping serving the boiler.
- **Repair, Safety Issue:** Replace the missing cover and backdraft damper at the dryer vent termination at the exterior wall. Keep the vent line clean as a blocked vent line can cause a fire in the dryer.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the leaking trap under the kitchen sink. Secure the loose fitting traps beneath the kitchen sink and the laundry tub to reduce the risk of sewer gases entering the home.
- **Repair:** To encourage proper drainage, replace the flexible hose under the bathtub with an approved trap.
- **Safety Issue:** For improved safety, install three screws at every joint in the flue piping serving the water heater.
- **Repair:** Access to the main gas shut off valve is obstructed. Provide access in case of emergency.
- **Repair:** Add a "drip leg" at the gas connection serving the boiler to prevent clogging of the gas valve.
- **Repair:** Repair the loose toilet on the 2nd floor. A new wax seal may be needed to prevent leaking.
- **Repair:** Replace bathtub caulking with a "Kitchen and Bath" caulk that resists mildew growth.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the inoperative stopper mechanism at the bathtub.
- **Monitor:** There was no hot water at the bathtub during the inspection. Have a plumber open the valve behind the tub and check for leaks.
- **Repair:** Several fixtures drain slowly, including at the kitchen sink, the laundry tub and the bathtub. This is most likely the result of minor obstructions, but may be evidence of a more serious problem. Consult a plumber.
- **Monitor, Repair:** There is water damage at the living room ceiling, beneath the bathroom. This may be the result of an existing or a corrected condition. The area was dry during the inspection. If the area remains dry, repair the ceiling. Otherwise, consult a plumber. Refer also to the Plumbing section of this report.
- **Repair:** At least one insulating glass pane, in the rear bedroom, has lost its seal. This has resulted in condensation developing between the panes of glass. To improve, replace the glass.
- **Repair:** Adjust, repair or replace windows as needed for proper fit and function. Some windows have broken or missing sash locks or locks that cannot be engaged. When engaged, sash locks provide an improved weather seal. Balances (the hardware that holds up the windows) are not functioning properly on some windows. Others are showing signs of age and wear on some windows. Some window glass is broken. At a kitchen window, there are two storm window frames and no primary window.
- **Repair:** Provide weep holes at the bottoms of storm windows to allow water to drain to the exterior and to prevent rot at window sills.
- **Repair:** Trim or adjust interior doors as necessary for proper fit and function. Repair or replace the damaged accordion closet doors.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the damaged kitchen counter top. It is delaminating in places and there are gaps between the counter top and the backsplash.
- **Safety Issue:** The handrail at the main stairway lacks rigidity and at least one spindle is broken. Repair the rail for improved safety.

- **Safety Issue:** For improved safety, provide a handrail for the entire length of the basement stairway. Alter or replace the existing basement stairway railing for improved child-safety. By today's standards, a "child-safe" stairway railing is one with no openings through which a four-inch sphere will pass, except that the triangular openings formed by the riser, tread and bottom rail may be of such size that a six-inch sphere cannot pass. Wall-hung stairway handrails should return to the wall or to a newel post to reduce the risk of accidents caused when clothing, handbags, etc. get caught around the rail.
- **Safety Issue:** The risers at the basement steps are not all of equal dimension. To eliminate this trip and fall hazard, repair or replace these steps.
- **Safety Issue:** Low headroom at the basement stairway poses a risk of injury.
- **Monitor:** I found no visible evidence of moisture penetration in the basement at the time of the inspection. Finished walls and floors may hide evidence of moisture penetration. Virtually all basements may leak at some point in time. Most basement leakage problems are the result of insufficient control of storm water at the surface. The ground around the house should be sloped to direct water away from the foundations. Likewise, hard surfaces such as walkways, porches, driveways, etc. should slope away from the house. Seals should be maintained, where hard surfaces meet the walls of the house. Gutters and downspouts should act to collect roof water and drain the water at least five (5) feet from the foundation or into a functional storm sewer. Downspouts that are clogged or broken below grade level, or that discharge too close to the foundation are a common source of basement leakage. Please refer to the Roofing and Exterior sections of the report for specific recommendations.
- **Repair:** Repair or replace the inoperative gas range and dishwasher. Check first to see that the water and gas supplies to these appliances are on.
- **Safety Issue:** Install an anti-tip bracket to prevent the gas range from tipping over if too much force or weight is placed on an open oven door.
- **Safety Issue:** Repair the damaged fireplace firebox mortar for improved safety. Have the fireplace chimney and the ash pit cleaned and inspected. Refer also to the Roofing section of this report.

THANKS, AGAIN.

If you have any questions, now or in the future, please call our office.
Once again, we thank you for choosing **Helpful Home Inspectors, LLC**.

