

211 Sorauren Avenue, Toronto

Inspection Summary

April 16, 2007

PETER YEATES



INSPECTIONS

1237 AVENUE ROAD
UNIT 1
TORONTO, ON
M5N 2G5

(416) 422-1571

WWW.YEATESINSPECT.COM

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Inspection Summary

Overall Condition:

This is a well built 100-year-old home. The rearmost roof requires reshingling and various maintenance items are suggested. Some of the methods/materials used for improvements to the house in the past are non-standard – which could potentially increase the cost of future changes/renovations.

Roofing, Flashings and Chimneys:

The main roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles that are in good condition. The modified bitumen membrane over the kitchen extension is also in good repair. The rearmost roof is in need of reshingling – roughly \$1,000. The main masonry chimney is in good condition. The abandoned north chimney is in poor repair, but could be removed altogether for about \$1,000 to \$1,500 (the main floor kitchen exhaust will have to be redirected from the chimney though).

Exterior:

The exterior brickwork is in good overall condition (good quality brick). Localized spalling, such as on the north side, is typical and does not necessitate immediate repair. The eavestroughs on the rear dormers and back extension need repair - \$400 and up. The electric garage door opener is currently being operated manually (unplugged) and is presumably inoperable - \$350 and up. The swimming pool, hot tub, sauna and associated plumbing/wiring are not included in the inspection. Nevertheless, two safety-related items should be mentioned: a sauna heater should not be in the same room as a hot tub and the fence around the pool is not secure at all. Consult a specialist.

Structure:

The stone foundations support solid masonry exterior walls. The structure is in good condition for its age.

Electrical:

The house has a 200-amp electrical service with circuit breakers. This is an appropriate service size.

While much of the house has been rewired over the years, there is still some original knob-and-tube wiring present (primarily some overhead lights on the first and second floor).

Although knob-and-tube wiring is very common in older houses and is considered by most experts to be safe unless tampered with, it has become an insurance issue (can be very difficult to get insurance). Consult your insurance company. We would also suggest contacting Dave Slack at Aero Insurance Brokers (1-800-971-1363 or 416-992-6695) as they will typically insure a home with knob-and-tube wiring provided it has been inspected by us and been found to be in good condition (poor connection at the front of the basement would have to be redone for about \$200). A few other insurance companies will also insure knob-and-tube wiring (at a premium). Even if insurance is available, we would recommend eventual replacement of the older wiring in order to enhance future saleability. Replacement costs are highly variable, but would likely be \$2,000 and up.

Various loose and abandoned wires were noted in the basement (in particular) and these should be cleaned up.

Heating:

Heated by a 107,000 BTU/hr gas-fired hot water boiler that is 18 years old. The chimney appears to be lined. The system was functioning at the time of the inspection. Typical life expectancy is in the 20 to 25 year range. Monitor for now and budget for replacement – timing unpredictable – roughly \$4,000 to 5,000. One of the circulating pumps has been disconnected – its purpose was not verified. The system should be checked over by a specialist.

Insulation:

Fibreglass insulation was noted in the attic. The amount of insulation ranges from about R-24 to R-30. Adding more insulation would probably not be cost-effective at this point.

As is typical, the solid masonry walls are uninsulated and there is no space to provide additional insulation. Concentrate on reducing drafts/air infiltration through caulking, weatherstripping and air sealing improvements

Plumbing:

The incoming water supply pipe is copper where visible. Water pressure is fairly low. This may be due to the filters located by the main valve, the number of elbows and T's in the system or poor pressure from the street. Consult with the City to see if the supply pipe has been replaced between the house and the street. There may be City assistance available to help pay for upgrading the main water supply pipe from the street to the house (for more pressure and to eliminate the lead pipe). More information is available at http://www.toronto.ca/water/supply/water_pressure/pressure.htm. Typical cost to the homeowner is about \$1,500 and there is a long waiting list.

The visible supply piping within the house is mostly copper. There is a small amount of steel pipe at the southwest hose faucet. The visible waste plumbing is a combination of copper, cast iron and plastic.

There are two water heaters: a 6-year-old 175 litre electric unit and a small (25 gal/23 year old gas unit). The flue connections for the gas unit are in poor shape and a new unit should be bought or rented ASAP.

Interior:

- While the original plaster is prone to some cracking/bulging, this is very typical for the house age and area. Some kitchen ceiling tiles are missing.
- Many of the windows have been updated in the past. Some are foggy between the panes (lost their seal) – this is more of a cosmetic than functional issue. Various damaged screens need repair.
- The living room gas log appears to be too big for firebox and the damper needs to be wired open. The unit should be safety-checked over by a specialist. An unusual basement wood stove has been sealed shut – keep it that way.
- No comment is offered on Fire Code/Retrofit compliance.
- Appliances are not included in the inspection.
- Evidence of past mouse activity was noted in several areas – consult a specialist as necessary.
- Old water damage to the 2nd floor bathroom ceiling was dry when tested with a moisture meter. Could be a leak through the previous roof shingles – monitor.
- The basement shows a fair bit of efflorescence and obviously had an issue with water penetration at the rear (where a drainage system with associated sump pump has been installed). Consult the vendor/agent regarding warranties/maintenance. As with all older homes, basement dampness can be minimized by keeping eavestroughs and downspouts well maintained and preventing surface water accumulations near the house by promoting good drainage next to the foundations.

Notes:

This is a summary of the inspection report for 211 Sorauren Avenue, Toronto – performed on April 16, 2007. Refer to the HOME REFERENCE BOOK report (#419611C) for this property to view the complete inspection results. For the purposes of this report, the front door of the house is considered to be facing west. 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.