

# 63 Brentwood Road South, Toronto

## Inspection Report

August 25, 2010

PETER YEATES



INSPECTIONS

### COMPANY INFORMATION

- Professional Engineer (Professional Engineers of Ontario)
- B.A.Sc. - Civil Engineering (University of Toronto)
- 25 years inspection experience  
(14+ years with *Carson, Dunlop & Associates*)
- Over 10,000 homes inspected

**PETER YEATES**



**INSPECTIONS**

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## **Inspection Report**

### **Overall Condition:**

This is a very solidly built home that has been well-maintained and is in better than average condition compared to similar homes in the area.

### **Roofing, Flashings and Chimneys:**

The roof is surfaced with premium-grade asphalt shingles. The shingles are 4 years old and are in good condition. The dormers are surfaced with a 2-ply modified bitumen membrane that is the same age and also in good repair. The garage roof shingles have also been replaced.

The chimney has been rebuilt above roof level and is in good condition.

### **Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-Roof inspected with binoculars and direct access to the upper dormer roof.

### **Exterior:**

The exterior brickwork/stonework is in good overall condition. The aluminum eavestroughing is also in good overall repair.

The garage is like most of the older garages in the area: the wood walls are in contact with the soil and prone to rot, but it is considered to be quite serviceable at this point. One of the garage door guide wheels needs to be properly secured and the door locking mechanism needs repair/adjustment.

### **Minor Deficiencies:**

-The south eavestrough would benefit from additional clips/nails to keep it from getting too loose.

-Downspouts should be redirected to discharge onto grade level several feet away from the house.

### **Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-Exterior inspection from ground level.

-There is no access below the front porch.

-Garage inspection limited by storage.

### **Structure:**

The concrete block foundations support solid masonry exterior walls on the main floor. The house is in good overall structural repair.

The wall between the kitchen and dining room is supported by a couple of long-spanned basement joists in the laundry room. Over time, these two joists have sagged. While some steel posts have been installed, they don't fully pick up the loads from above. Either posts should be added just south of the existing posts or a crossbeam could be bolted to the existing posts to pick up loading from the adjacent south and north joists and transfer the weight to the existing columns. The latter approach would be relatively inexpensive.

Although not strictly a structural issue, we noted that the subfloor supports at the south end of the basement family room are not performing properly and the floor is very springy. This is suspected to be due to 70+ years of moisture rotting the wood sleeper arrangement. Because there is absolutely no access for inspection, it is difficult to see what is underneath the floor and its support sleepers. Probing with a screwdriver in one location suggested that there is some concrete present below the wood floor, but the thickness and continuity is unknown. In order to effect repairs, some of the flooring will need to be pried up so that new sleepers can be installed. Cost will depend on the repair approach and the extent of the rot in the supports. A short term solution would be to place a sheet of reasonably thick plywood between furniture and the floor to even out and spread the load.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

- The hole for the kitchen waste plumbing cut through the basement joist in the laundry room is a little too close to the bottom of the joist, but if the resupporting (suggested above) is done, this should be of little consequence.
- Some of the boards below the living room fireplace hearth (in the basement) are loose, but this is not causing any obvious problems above.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- The front and rear attics were inspected from the hatch in the master bedroom closet and the hatch in the rear main floor bedroom closet. The inspection of these areas was somewhat limited by ductwork and insulation.
- There is no access to the upper roof over the master suite.
- Walls were spotchecked only.

**Electrical:**

The house has a 100-amp service with a circuit breaker panel. This is considered to be an appropriate service size. The wiring is newer grounded copper (reportedly dating back about 4 years). Although we can't comment on hidden wiring, it would certainly appear that all of the original wiring has been replaced and no active knob-and-tube wiring was visible or found during various spotchecks of various outlet and switch boxes.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Concealed electrical components cannot be inspected.
- Main disconnect switch not opened or operated.

**Heating:**

The house is heated by a hot water radiant system powered by a high-efficiency condensing boiler. The unit is 4 years old and was found to be operable when run through a summer test procedure. The PEX piping for some 2<sup>nd</sup> floor "radiators" runs through the cold attic space. This type of piping is resistant to freezing and will typically contain hot water during the winter months. If the attic insulation is upgraded (on top of the existing insulation and pipes), this will provide a further measure of protection against potential freezing.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

- One of the steel pipes for the basement family room radiator is embedded in the basement floor concrete. As such, it is prone to corrosion. Monitor the system pressure for unexpected drops that might indicate leakage below the floor. This section of piping might eventually have to be replaced.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Heat exchanger not visible.
- Safety devices not tested.
- Although we have no reason to suspect that one is present, it should be noted that checking the premises for buried oil tanks is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice.

**Air Conditioning:**

Cooling is provided by an independent ducted system that is powered by a 4-year-old 30,000 BTU/hr A/C unit. The system was found to be operable when tested. Air conditioners have a typical life expectancy of about 15 years (statistically). As a general note, the front hall thermostat controls the cooling system and the dining room thermostat controls the heating system.

**Insulation:**

The front and rear attic insulation has been compressed/disturbed in the process of installing the air conditioning system. We recommend upgrading the current fibreglass and mineral wool insulation to a level of roughly R-40 to R-50. Attic venting should be improved at that time. A ballpark estimate for the work would be about \$1,500.

There is no access to the master bedroom roof area. It is likely that there is some insulation present, but it is probably not up to current standards. It should be realized, however, that the space between the rafters is limited and the cost of upgrading likely far exceeds potential short term energy savings.

The solid masonry walls were built without insulation and with no space to add more insulation. This is typical for the era. At this point, it would be most cost-effective to concentrate on reducing air infiltration through caulking/sealing and weatherstripping as much as possible.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- The front and rear attics were inspected from the hatch in the master bedroom closet and the hatch in the rear main floor bedroom closet. The inspection of these areas was somewhat limited by ductwork and insulation.
- Walls were spotchecked only.
- Continuity of air/vapour barrier not verified.
- Checking for asbestos (which may be present in many products and materials) is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice.

**Plumbing:**

The incoming City supply pipe is upgraded ¾" copper where visible. Supply plumbing within the house is a combination of copper and PEX plastic piping. Water pressure is considered to be good for the area.

The waste plumbing is a combination of cast iron, steel, copper, ABS plastic and some lead piping used for air venting around the main floor bathtub.

The 151 litre direct-vent gas-fired water heater is a 1-year-old rental unit. There is a recirculating system on the hot water plumbing to ensure that there is minimal wait time for the hot water to reach the fixtures.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

- The south basement plumbing stack has been epoxied in the past to stop/prevent leakage. Monitor for now. Further repairs may be required at some point in the future.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

- Concealed plumbing not inspected.
- Tub/sink overflows not tested.
- Isolating/relief valves and main shut-off valve not tested.

**Interior:**

-Interior finishes are in good overall condition. Floor unevenness on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is not considered to be unusual or a serious concern.

-Most of the windows have been replaced, several as recently as 2 years ago. The living room, dining room and foyer windows are architecturally significant and have been retained. Storms for the living room windows are in the garage.

-The fireplace is an operable unit, but there is debris above the damper that needs to be cleaned. We generally recommend cleaning the flue before initial use of the fireplace - \$150 and up. The fireplace chimney flue is not lined - this is typical for the area and age of the house. Strictly speaking, a metal liner is not *required* for fireplaces unless there is a specific flue problem like smoke leakage. In fact, installing a liner actually reduces a fireplace's draw and can make it smoky. Nevertheless, some overly conservative insurance companies may want a liner installed. We suggest that finding another insurance company may be a preferable alternative. Loose hearth tiles in the firebox need to be resecured.

-Basement stair headroom is restricted (typical).

-The kitchen range hood is a recirculating type that does not vent outside. It should be noted that this is considered to be acceptable even by current Codes and there is no *requirement* to alter it.

-The basement was dry at the time of the inspection. As with all 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.

#### **Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-No comment made on cosmetic aspects of interior finishes.

-CO/smoke detectors and appliances not inspected. Smoke and C/O detectors are required on every level of a house.

-Absence of historical clues in some areas due to new paint finishes.

-Drainage tile (if any) not visible.

-In all houses, moisture problems may result in visible or concealed mold growth.

Environmental Consultants can assist if this is a concern as inspection for mold is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice.

#### **Notes:**

This is the inspection report for 63 Brentwood Road South, Toronto - performed on August 25, 2010. For the purposes of this report, the front 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](http://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.