# 74 Rivercrest Road, Toronto

## Inspection Report

**October 4, 2013**

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INSPECTIONS

## COMPANY INFORMATION

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- ☑ 27 years Inspection Experience
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- ☑ Over 11,000 Homes Inspected

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## Overall Condition:

This is a solidly constructed double-brick home that has had a number of renovations and some updated systems and is considered to be in better than average condition compared to similar homes.

## Roofing, Flashings and Chimneys:

The sloped roof is surfaced with asphalt shingles. The shingles are reportedly 13 years old. Unfortunately, general reductions in shingle quality combined with reduced ozone in the atmosphere means that modern shingles only last about 15 years. These shingles seem to be on schedule and are curling and losing granular material (especially on the roof slopes that get a lot of sun). The roof should be stripped and reshingled within the next year or two. A ballpark figure for that work would be $10,000 to $15,000, but consult several roofers for actual quotations. The flares at the bottom of the roof slope make the roof more prone to ice damming. Make sure that an extra wide strip of eave protection (ice and water shield) is installed under the edges of the roof when reshingling.

The 2-ply modified bitumen membrane at the southwest flat roof is newer and in good condition.

The masonry chimneys are in generally good condition. The rear chimney would benefit from mortar improvements - maintenance item.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-Roof inspected with binoculars, from the 3rd floor windows and by walking on the rear flat. Some areas of roof were obscured by neighbouring houses.
-The rear flat roof inspection was limited by the wood decking.

## Exterior:

The exterior brickwork is in good overall condition. The aluminum eavestroughs and downspouts are also in good repair.

The original wood overhead garage door struggles when in operation. Doors like this are not well suited to electric overhead openers. It the door is going to be used frequently, it may well be advisable to replace it with a lighter weight sectional door.

There is a retaining wall at the end of the backyard. Without a survey we cannot comment on ownership of the wall (and who is responsible for it) and access for inspection is limited (i.e. we had to look from above). Nonetheless, it appears to be in satisfactory condition at present.

**Minor Deficiencies:**

-Control the vines so that they are kept off windows and wood trim and out of eavestroughs.
-The short south entrance porch brick "railing" is not childsafe according to modern standards. In some cases, this can be an insurance issue (even though modern building codes are not retroactive).

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-Exterior inspection from ground level.
-Inspection of the interior of the garage was essentially prevented by the extent of storage.

-Vines and shrubs against the house also restricted the inspection of the walls and foundations.
-Sprinkler/irrigation systems are not inspected.

## Structure:

The masonry foundations support solid masonry exterior walls. The structure of the house appears to be in good overall condition.

**Minor Deficiencies:**
-Some basement joists in the laundry room have been improperly notched to accommodate newer kitchen waste plumbing. Fortunately, the notches (while contrary to Code requirements) are not that deep and probably not cost-effective to improve - monitor.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**
-The small upper attic was inspected from the attic access hatch. There is limited access to the kneewall areas and sloped ceilings on the 3rd floor.
-Walls were spotchecked only.

## Electrical:

The house has a 100-amp electrical service with a circuit breaker panel. The size of the service is typical and felt to be adequate.

The visible wiring is updated grounded copper. The original wiring appears to have been entirely replaced or deactivated – although its absence cannot be guaranteed, no *active* knob-and-tube wiring was visible or found during spotchecks of various outlet and switch boxes. There is still a fair amount of dead knob-and-tube wiring visible in the basement - this is not uncommon.

**Minor Deficiencies:**
-The rear exterior electrical outlet should be fitted with a GFCI safety receptacle - parts cost is less than $20.
-Undercounter lighting connections in the kitchen have not been made in proper, covered metal junction boxes and need improvement.
-The basement bathroom has no electrical outlet. Provide as required.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**
-Concealed electrical components cannot be inspected.
-Main disconnect switch not operated.

## Heating:

Heating is provided by a hot water system powered by a 225,000 BTU/hr gas-fired hot water boiler that is 23 years old. This is a good quality cast iron boiler that could last 35 years or more. It was found to be operable during a brief summer test procedure. The chimney has a metal liner as recommended. The owner reports that it is serviced regularly.

There is no heat supply in the rear sunroom. Also, there are many windows and unheated space above and below. This room will get quite cool in winter, but it is likely best to just keep the door to the living room closed as heating this room would create a lot of heat loss. There is also no heat source in the main floor powder room or basement bathroom. They may be OK without it - monitor.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**
-The heat exchanger is 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. The steel pipe emerging from the front wall behind the boiler is likely a former gas supply pipe dating back to before the meter was moved outside.
-Try not to operate the radiator valves as this can cause leakage at the valve stems.

## Air Conditioning:

Cooling is provided by two ductless (split-type) A/C systems (one mounted above the main stairs and the other on the 3rd floor). The units are reportedly 5 years old. Air conditioners have a typical life expectancy of about 15 years (statistically). The units could not be tested due to cold outside temperatures. It should be realized that units like these cannot evenly cool the whole house. They are intended to generally reduce ambient humidity and provide a degree of cooling to the 2nd and 3rd floors.

## Insulation:

The small upper attic is insulated with a minimal amount of cork chips and cellulose. It is almost certain that insulation levels in the sloped roof space and inaccessible kneewall areas is below current standards because there just isn't enough space in the roof cavities. Nonetheless, this is very typical of older 3 storey homes. Due to difficulties and costs associated with bringing insulation to current standards, it is not very common to upgrade roof insulation in older homes like this unless extensive 3rd floor renovations are planned for other reasons. Kneewall attic and upper attic insulation can be improved more easily, but might not have a significant impact on energy bills (i.e. the cost savings to capital cost ratio tends to be quite low).

The original solid masonry walls were built without insulation and with no space to add more insulation. This is typical for the era. Since adding more insulation is not easily done, it is best to concentrate on reducing air infiltration through caulking/sealing and weatherstripping as much as possible.

Most of the basement walls are uninsulated, but it is possible (but perhaps unlikely) that there is insulation behind the basement family room panelling.

The presence of insulation in the ceiling of the room over the garage could not be verified. Rooms over unheated spaces (like garages) tend to be cooler than those over heated spaces.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**

-The small upper attic was inspected from the attic access hatch. There is limited access to the kneewall areas and sloped ceilings on the 3rd floor.

-Continuity of air/vapour barrier not verified.

-Although checking for asbestos (which may be present in many products and materials) is not included in the inspection or the Standards of Practice, it is quite likely that the radiator pipe wrapping in the basement has an asbestos component. This is very common in older houses. This old pipe insulation is not considered to be a hazard in the home (if left undisturbed) and there is no requirement to remove it. It is a good idea, though, to secure/encapsulate loose sections. More information can be found at the Health Canada website: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/environ/asbestos-amiante-eng.php. If asbestos removal is desired at some point in the future, the work needs to be professionally done – consult contractors for quotes.

## Plumbing:

The incoming City supply pipe is copper where visible. Water pressure does tend to drop noticeably with more than one fixture flowing simultaneously. This may be due to the galvanized steel pipe in the basement that the incoming water is forced to travel through before continuing on to the various fixtures. Galvanized steel piping tends to corrode from the inside out - reducting pressure and increasing the potential for unexpected leakage. It is also an insurance issue. It will have to be replaced, but appears to be restricted to the basement - likely about $1,000 ballpark.

The visible waste plumbing is a combination of cast iron, ABS plastic, copper, lead and galvanized steel. Cast iron waste plumbing is currently an issue for some insurance companies – replace cast iron stack sections found during any potential renovations with plastic (e.g. basement renos). Also, there are still a number of insurance companies without this particular bias. We did note that the vertical cast iron stack near the basement laundry tubs is cracked

and there has been some leakage. It will likely be necessary to replace the damaged section in the basement. A ballpark estimate would be $1,500 and up.

The 189-litre direct-vent gas water heater is a 5-year-old rental unit. They have a typical life expectancy of about 15 years.

**Minor Deficiencies:**
-The location of the mechanical air vent on the waste plumbing below the main floor powder room sink is non-standard and it should be extended upwards if any leakage or functionality issues are encountered.
-The Jacuzzi tub switch is supposed to be a timer (according to Code) - not a simple on-off switch.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**
-Concealed plumbing (e.g. below the front yard, below the floors and behind walls) cannot be inspected.
-Tub/sink overflows not tested.
-Isolating/relief valves and main shut-off valve not tested.

## Interior:

-The interior finishes are in good overall repair. Original plaster in some areas shows typical minor imperfections.
-The windows range from original to about 5 years old. Many of the front-facing windows have been replaced while the majority of the other windows are older. Some of the older windows need maintenance (putty repairs, screen repairs or are missing storm windows). In the longer term, it would be desirable to replace non-architecturally significant windows - as much for improved operability and maintainability as for improved energy efficiency - $70 and up per square foot.
-Provide a better railing/guard for the basement stairs if child safety is a concern.
-The gas log set located in the living room fireplace was found to be operable. The former wood-burning fireplace in the basement now has an electric insert. The fireplace does provide heat but is more expensive to run than a gas insert. Formal basement heat sources are very limited. If the basement is ever renovated, additional radiators should be provided.
-For an older home, the basement seemed reasonably dry. Obviously, the house was built long before the invention of modern waterproofing and perimeter drainage systems, so it is very important to prevent surface water accumulations near the house by keeping eavestroughs and downspouts well maintained and by promoting good drainage next to the foundations. If the basement is ever renovated, we recommend installing a watertight, drainage membrane such as Delta MS on the interior foundations prior to reframing, insulating and drywalling. This would lead to perimeter drainage tiles at floor level and ultimately to the floor drain or a sump pump.

**Inspection Methods and Limitations:**
-No comment made on cosmetic aspects of interior finishes.
-CO/smoke detectors, alarm systems and appliances not inspected.
-Storage/furniture in some parts of the house restricted the inspection.
-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.

## Notes:

This is the inspection report for 74 Rivercrest Road, Toronto – performed on October 4, 2013. For the purposes of this report, the front of the house is considered to be facing east. 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.