

ACE INSPECTIONS INC.

***18 Sawyer Terrace, Boston, Ma 02134
(617) 782-9079***

**SUMMARY & FINAL REPORT FOR PROPERTY AT:
00 Lester St., Boston, Mass.**

CLIENT: Gladys Canby

This narrative report describes some of the defects and deficiencies that I observed on: 9/12/03

For a comprehensive list of these and others refer to the on site ratings report.

The property inspected is a newly constructed, 3 story, wood framed, 2 family house. The main gable roof was not visible or accessible. The 2nd roof at the rear was observed from a 3rd story window. It is clad with architectural asphalt shingles and has many exposed nail heads that need to be tarred over. The exterior walls are clad with plastic siding that appears to be well installed except for some sections over the rear roof. The structure rests on a cast in place concrete foundation. No major defects were observed in the foundation. Structural defects were observed and will be noted below.

OBSERVATION

Exterior stairways were constructed with un-galvanized nails, which are already rusted. No evidence of lag screws or bolts used to attach the front and rear stairways and landings to the house were seen. The fastening appears to be limited to small un-galvanized nails applied with a nail gun. No evidence of flashing was seen where the ledger boards meet the band or rim joists. The posts are fastened with small nails. The floor joists are not supported by the metal joist hangers where used. The Balustrades are poorly attached and weak and wobbly and some may not resist a 200 lb lateral force.

ANALYSIS

Ugly rust streaks always follow un-galvanized nails. Hot dipped galvanized or stainless steel nails should be used on pressure treated wood. The use of a minimal amount of small nails to fasten stairways and landings to a house engenders the possibility of a catastrophic collapse.

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Lag screws should be added after sections of wood are removed to install proper flashing under the plastic siding and over the ledger boards. There should be no textured plastic siding installed between the ledger and the exterior wall sheathing or rim/band joists.

RECOMMENDATION

A competent and independent construction professional should be consulted to conduct further evaluations and to either confirm or refute my observations and opinions.

OBSERVATION

The pull-down stairway is poorly installed. Its frame does not fully contact the stairwell opening on all sides. Contact is made on 2 trimmers and only 1 of the 2 header joists. Blocking is missing at one header joist. The stairway unit frame is weakly constructed with small nails that have allowed frame separation during the improper and poor installation. One of the 4 frame pieces is cracked and useless. No 16D nails or lag screws appear to have been used to attach the stairway. The base stringer appears to have been cut to short. Two jointed ends do not abut.

ANALYSIS

It is my opinion that the stairway unit should be removed and another unit installed by someone other than the person who conducted the original installation.

RECOMMENDATION

This is another item for a construction professional to inspect.

OBSERVATION

Wood trusses (Fink style?) constitute the major support for the above structures as seen from the cellar. The top cord and 2 web struts of a truss under the first floor bathtub was damaged. There is now a 32 inch span between competent trusses in an area that will bear a lot of weight.

No sistering of any joists was seen in the cellar. There are no means installed to keep the fiberglass insulation from falling onto the cellar floor.

ANALYSIS

There is an interior wall that bears on a joist just to the right of the compromised joist and a bath tub above the other uncompromised joist. Truss joists should never be compromised without the
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oversight of a structural engineer or approval by the manufacturer's expert. It is one thing to cut a truss under an area where there will never, ever be a heavy load imposed and another where a heavy load is imposed.

RECOMMENDATION

This is a third area where the opinion of an unbiased and neutral expert is needed.

OBSERVATION

I searched for foundation bolts on the right rear side and had no luck in locating any. I did find 3 bolts on the left rear side.

Two were within 12 inches of the corner and the ends of the foundation sills. The other was about 4-6 feet away (to the right.) I found no nuts or washer attached to the bolts. One bolt has its threads so badly damaged by hammering and is no longer straight that it would be impossible to attach a nut to it.

ANALYSIS

Removing insulation exceeds the standards of practice. It would take too much time to remove, inspect with a mirror and replace all of the insulation. It is a fair assumption that if 100% of the bolts that I found lacked nuts that there may be others as well. It is my understanding that foundation sills must be bolted to the foundation and that these anchor bolts must be spaced at 6 foot intervals. (UBC 1806.6) Good anchoring is especially important when trusses are used in lieu of dimensional lumber (2x??) for joists.

RECOMMENDATION

This is a 4th reason to seek the assistance of an unbiased and qualified and competent construction professional such as a structural engineer (PE) for further evaluations and recommendations.

A punch list that will not be complete or fully comprehensive will follow on the next page (4) You should verify that proper oversight was provided by the city of Boston inspectional dept. Also, check permits and sign-offs as explained during my inspection.

Thank you for choosing me as your inspector. Call me if you have any questions or concerns. My goal has been to provide you with the information that will assist you in making the decision to purchase or not to purchase. I hope my services have been helpful and informative.

Ken Bates

PUNCH LIST

1. Rebuild, strengthen stair guardrails with galvanized bolts and screws.
2. Lag screw all ledger boards to house after adding proper flashing.
3. Put wood filler in all holes where rusted and un-galvanized nails are seen.
4. Install waterproof gaskets on exterior electrical outlet boxes.
5. Properly attach rough frame and header and jambs of cellar entrance. Then weatherproof.
6. Replace main entrance door or whole unit. (1/2 inch gap between jamb and door stile.)
7. Repair loose siding at rear.
8. Seal exposed roofing nail heads with asphalt caulk.
9. Clean tracks of front-left cellar window.
10. Repair broken sashes of both rear cellar windows.
11. Downspouts discharge directly to foundation. Extend.
12. Flash roof vents for furnace and plumbing vent. (lots of daylight visible from attic)
13. Add code required vent for top bath thru roof and flash.
14. Secure Lally columns to main beam and floor. (consult engineer -- consider drilling with a masonry bit to confirm adequacy of footing for Lally columns.)
15. Screw and bolt the 3 2x's of the main beam together. (consult engineer)
16. Stringer for cellar stairs does not appear to be attached to foundation wall. (consult engineer)
17. Make engineer (PE) approved repair to compromised truss under bath tub. Also consult engineer regarding missing chords in nearby truss joists. (consult engineer)
18. Proper fastening of all foundation anchor bolts needs confirmation. (confirm this was done by checking yourself)
19. No handrail for cellar stairs.
20. No filters installed for furnace.
21. Debris seen in HVAC supply and return ducts. (Carefully vacuum)
22. AC compressor not level.
23. Both water heaters lack installed condensate pump.
24. One is missing vacuum breaker. Did a City of Boston inspector see and approve this? !!!
25. Cellar electric sub-panel appears to be inappropriately wired. See if a City inspector saw and approved this??? See my on-sight rating report. Consult me.
26. 3rd floor bath exhaust fan discharges to attic. Did a City inspector see and approve????!!!
27. Attic condensate overflow pan not attached or plumbed or wired for alert/shut-off.
28. Amateur install of 1st unit cabinets. Remove spacer and reinstall to eliminate gap on right side of exhaust hood over electric range. Needs reinstall of cabinets on left side.