

HOUSTON HOUSECHECK REAL ESTATE INSPECTIONS

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PROPERTY INSPECTION REPORT

Prepared For: Dudley & Vanessa McCalla
(Name of Client)

Concerning: 1817 West 14 1/2 St.
(Address or Other Identification of Inspected Property)

By: George P. Szontagh, TREC Lic. #2212 03/15/01
(Name and License Number of Inspector) (Date)

(Name, License Number and Signature of Sponsoring Inspector, if required)

The inspection of the property listed above must be performed in compliance with the rules of the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC).

The inspection is of conditions, which are present and visible at the time of the inspection, and all of the equipment is operated in normal modes. The inspector must indicate which items are in need of repair or are not functioning and will report on all applicable items required by TREC rules.

This report is intended to provide you with information concerning the condition of the property at the time of inspection. Please read the report carefully. If any item is unclear, you should request the inspector to provide clarification.

It is recommended that you obtain as much history as is available concerning this property. This historical information may include copies of any seller's disclosures, previous inspection or engineering reports, reports performed for or by relocation companies, municipal inspection departments, lenders, insurers, and appraisers. You should attempt to determine whether repairs, renovation, remodeling, additions or other such activities have taken place at this property.

Property conditions change with time and use. Since this report is provided for the specific benefit of the client(s), secondary readers of this information should hire a licensed inspector to perform an inspection to meet their specific needs and to obtain current information concerning this property.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY INSPECTOR

Client Address: **1511 Arlington, Houston, TX 77006**
Date of Inspection: **3-15, 2001**. Time: **9 a.m.** Weather: **67°F, clear.**
Paid Check **#2353, \$325**. Property Occupied? **yes**. Realtor: **Harry Baxter**.

The following report is conditioned by the Important Notice located at the end of the report. This Notice is an integral part of the report, and must be attached to all copies.

Property is a one story wood frame single family house, with three bedrooms and two baths. It features fiber-cement shingle siding, central air and heat, carpeted floors, and a one car garage. The house is about 51 years old. Water, gas, and electricity were on. Client was present for the inspection.

All repairs should be performed, by licensed contractors as applicable.

Repairs and recognized hazards are called out in bold type.

Additional pages may be attached to this report. Read them very carefully. This report may not be complete without the attachments. If an item is present in the property but is not inspected, the "NI" column will be checked and an explanation is necessary. Comments may be provided by the inspector whether or not an item is deemed in need of repair.

I=Inspected	NI=Not Inspected	NP=Not Present	R=Not Functioning or In Need of Repair	Inspection Item
I	NI	NP	R	

I. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

A. Foundations (If all crawl space areas are not inspected, provide an explanation.)
Comments (An opinion on performance is mandatory.):

The foundation at this house is of the pier and beam type, in which rows of concrete block piers support 4x6 beams (sills), which in turn support the floor joist system and some of the load bearing walls.

In general foundation components at this house are in good condition. Out-of-levelness here is due to differential settlement of the piers, and not to outright component failure, and thus is an aesthetic judgement, which every homeowner must make for him or herself. At the time of original construction, builders were generally unfamiliar with the load-bearing qualities of our local soils, and instead relied on experience, and what worked in other locations. Client may wish to do minor adjustment to this foundation to make the floors more level. It is unlikely that perfect levelness can be achieved, however, as wood components have bent out of shape over the years and will not straighten back.

There has been very little foundation "work" done here in terms of releveling. There are a few shimmed areas under the main middle sill.

The north side sill, in the area of the newer bathroom exterior wall, was replaced at some point with pressure-treated material. **At two lap joints, there are no underlying piers, eventually this can lead to sagging at these joints.**

2, can do both?

The wall between the living room and the kitchen is in fact a load-bearing one, as the ceiling joists run north-south. **The original builder only added an extra joist under this wall, and no actual sill. Then someone added a pier under the middle, for support. Recommend adding two more piers, one on each side of the new pier.**

An informal elevation survey with an electronic level reveals a low area at the middle of the house, down around 1 1/2" from the front wall and from the old back wall near the kitchen peninsula. The rear rooms had experienced no unusual settlement.

Access under the house is fair. The eastern reaches of the back of the house are not readily accessible. Ventilation under the house is good.

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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B. Grading & Drainage

Comments:

can do

Clear signs of occasional ponding under this house. Grade of yard is slightly higher than the crawl space, and surface water and possibly water from a high water table accumulate under this house during wet weather. Some method for improving drainage should be considered, such as adding gutters to the house, and grading the side yards to channel water away from the foundation.

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C. Roof Covering (If the roof is inaccessible, report the method used to inspect.)

Comments:

The main roof is a 3-tab fiberglass composition strip shingle roof, apparently one layer over plank sheathing.

The main roof is generally in good condition. No signs of moisture penetration were noted.

At vertical wall/roof joints, recommended practice is to leave 1" clearance under the siding, so the material can dry out, and to keep debris from accumulating here and causing leaks. **At the driveway side roof/ upper gable joint the roof is tight against the siding.**

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East side upper roof peak is damaged from the tree trunk rubbing there.

lean fix this

Flashing at the back of the house over the bathroom window is poorly executed.

✓

Leaves and tree debris should be cleared from valleys.

✓

Trees and branches should be trimmed back from roof.

✓

Gutters full of debris, clean.

Roof was walked.

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D. Roof Structure & Attic (If the attic is inaccessible, report the method used to inspect.)

Comments:

NCD

Attic ventilation is poor. Some method for improving ventilation should be considered, such as adding more soffit vents, more turbine vents, or ridge vents.

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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can do

Gable vent screens are damaged, this can allow vermin into the attic.

Roof structure at the older parts of the house consists of 2x4 rafters, which was not unusual at time of construction but is considered inadequate today, unless properly braced. Purlin bracing at this location is intact, and should not be removed for any reason unless other measures are taken to brace the rafters.

Front attic was accessed, and most areas visible. Attic over the kitchen area and the back bedrooms was not accessed.

Attic insulation consists of approximately 3" of blown material. **Recommend that more insulation be added after all other mechanical repairs and improvements are finished in the attic.**

*Can do most except **

Attic stairs: OK.

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E. Walls (Interior & Exterior)

Comments:

Slight drywall cracks around windows and doors, repairable in routine painting.

can do

Vegetation and soil in the flower box at the front of the house can trap moisture in this area, and in fact there is minor water damage to floor joist ends at this part of the house. This can also allow undetected entry by wood destroying organisms.

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F. Ceilings & Floors

Comments:

Miscellaneous small cracks at ceilings, repairable in routine painting. Patch at the living room ceiling has no readily discernible cause. It appears that a second layer of rock was added under the original rock in the living room.

Interior of house is 1/2" drywall over studs.

Ceiling joists are 2x4 material, which was typical of the time of construction. 2x4 ceiling joists are given to sagging, even without unusual loads placed on them. At this location the ceilings did not look like they were sagging noticeably.

Floor appears to be a 3/4" finish layer of tongue and groove oak over a diagonal shiplap subfloor.

Minor water damage to joist ends east of the front door area.

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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G. Doors (Interior & Exterior)

Comments:

- ✓ **Door at master BR sticks in its jamb.**
- ✓ **French doors water damaged at bottom rail. Doors should be kept well painted, including painting the bottoms, and recommend adding an aluminum drip cap at the lower rail to channel water away from the bottoms of the doors.**
- ✓ **Note that a bedroom should have a door. Second room at the back does not have a door.**

Note: Door lock operation is not inspected for this report.

H. Windows

Comments:

- ✓ **Recommend having at least one window at every sleeping area operable for egress. (painted shut)**

I. Fireplace/Chimney

Comments:

J. Porches, Decks and Carports (Attached)

Comments:

No unusual problems noted.

II. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS

A. Service Entrance and Panels

Comments:

Main entrance consists of an aerial drop to a modern breaker panel, with a main means of disconnect. Deadfront, grounding electrode, and apparently correct breakers present in main panel.

- ✓ **All breakers should be labeled.**

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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B. Branch Circuits - Connected Devices and Fixtures (Report as in need of repair the lack of ground fault circuit protection where required.):
Comments:

Visible house branch wiring is a mixture of the original ungrounded nonmetallic sheathed ("romex") wiring, with some additions of modern grounded type romex.

Grounded type outlets with open ground at most such outlets in the house. There is nothing inherently wrong with ungrounded romex wiring. However it should have the two prong receptacles, not the three prong grounded type, as this promises a level of safety that is not present.

Andrew?
Andrew?

Reversed polarity at outlets at west wall of breakfast room.

GFCIs not present at garage. GFIs in the bathrooms and kitchen have open ground, and should be labeled as such.

47 apiece

GFCI's (Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters) are microprocessor devices built into designated outlets, which trip automatically when they sense an imbalance in the circuit. This imbalance is interpreted by the device as current potentially going through a person to ground, which would be an electrical shock situation. GFCI's are not expensive, and today are credited with a reduction in the numbers of home electrocutions over the past 20 years.

GFCI's will work on ungrounded circuits (outlets should be labeled "No Equipment Ground"), and they should be tested regularly, as some are known to deteriorate and lock in the hot position. They are most important around wet areas, such as kitchens, bathrooms, garages, and the exterior. Appliances such as refrigerators should not be put on GFCI's, as a nuisance trip of the device will cause the loss of food.

Small cage ✓
hot? —
no

Master closet light is not an enclosed type fixture. This is a fire hazard.

Unfinished wiring in the second BR closet, and in the garage.

Smoke alarms: The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends one smoke alarm on every floor, in every sleeping area, and in every bedroom. For additional coverage, it is recommended that you install a smoke alarm in all rooms, halls, storage areas, and finished attics, where temperatures remain between 40 and 100 degrees F.

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III. HEATING, VENTILATION AND AIR CONDITIONING SYSTEMS

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A. Heating Equipment

Type And Energy Source:

Comments:

Heat is provided at this house by a central gas-fired fan-assisted draft forced air furnace, located in a hall closet. The unit cycled properly when the call for heat came, and no operational problems were noted with this unit.

Burner compartment is not readily visible with this type of furnace. No opinion is given here as to the integrity of the heat exchanger. Only a complete disassembly of the unit will reveal breaks, and such disassembly is beyond the scope of this inspection.

Very important!!

In general, return air is supposed to be 10' or more from combustion air for a furnace (IRC 2440.5). At this location, the combustion air grille is right above one of the return air feeds. Ideally this furnace would get its combustion and draft air from the outside, that is, from the attic, and the door vent could then be sealed. If all the doors to this hallway were closed, it likely would become a confined space for purposes of a gas appliance, and the furnace would require an alternative source of combustion and draft air.

Vent pipe should penetrate roof with proper jack, storm collar, and cap. Present installation, with the vent pipe ending inside a one-piece roof jack, is no longer acceptable.

Unvented gas heater noted at this house, in bathroom. The use of such unvented heaters is not recommended, as they do not properly vent the products of combustion to the atmosphere. This heater was not inspected for this report.

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B. Cooling Equipment

Type And Energy Source:

Comments:

Cooling is provided at this location by an electric split-freon central forced air system, rated at 4 tons. The system cycled properly when the call for cooling came, and no operational problems were noted with this system. Temperature drop across the coil was 21°F, from 66°F to 45°F.

Primary condensate drain runs to the exterior east side away from the foundation.

do soon!

Both coils, evaporator housing, condensate pan and drain should be cleaned professionally. A clogged condensate line can overflow and cause damage to ceilings, walls, and floors.

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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The prudent homeowner will have regular service to such a system, to maintain peak performance and to help prevent costly repairs or replacement of equipment.

Small machine screws

Outer cover over the controls is loose on the condenser and should be secured.

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C. Ducts and Vents

Comments:

Air flow detected at all registers.

Can do!

One duct has separated at the main distribution plenum in the attic.

IV. PLUMBING SYSTEM

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A. Water Supply System and Fixtures

Comments:

can do!

Copper gas line noted at dryer and at water heater. Copper is not an appropriate material for gas service, and should be replaced.

Visible water supply lines are steel.

can do

Hose bibs lack proper backflow preventers. These are inexpensive screw-on products, which prevent contaminated water from being siphoned back into the potable water lines during city water pressure outages.

Flow adequate when two fixtures run simultaneously. No supply leaks noted.

PLUMBER!

Main feed to house comes into the crawl space under the front bedroom as a steel 3/4" pipe. There was moderate corrosion noted at this pipe, however such lines are known to corrode through over time at the area of the surface of the soil, where there is both moisture and oxygen. Recommend considering replacing this feed before the line breaks.

can do

Under the kitchen, just northeast of the water heater, there is a steel elbow that is leaking slightly.

Front bath:

So what?

Lavatory faucet levers turn the wrong way to actuate water flow.

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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B. Drains, Wastes, Vents

Comments:

Visible water drain and vent lines are cast-iron and steel, with some additions of PVC used in remodeling and repair.

Both bathtubs have older drum traps, which are acceptable but may eventually leak and require replacement.

Rear bath:

4" cast iron soil line has been jammed into newer PVC pipe without benefit of a proper rubber connector. This was not leaking at time of inspection but is an improper installation.

No ready access to tub overflow and supplies. Access panel is caulked shut.

Tub drainstop not working properly.

Front bath:

No ready access to tub overflow and supplies.

Tub drainstop not working properly.

can do

— Lavatory not well secured to the wall.

C. Water Heating Equipment (Report as in need of repair those conditions specifically listed as recognized hazards by TREC rules.)

Energy Source:

Comments:

Water heater is a natural gas fired model, located in a kitchen closet.

can do

{ T&P (temperature and pressure safety) valve drain not correctly installed, must run to the outside, not just under house, and must be a full 3/4".

(T&P valve was not operated as per TREC rules.)

The T&P valve is a safety device that releases water from the heater (ideally to the outside of the dwelling) if the temperature of the water, or the pressure in the tank, reaches certain preset levels. This is so that water that may have exceeded the boiling point (because of a runaway burner or electric element

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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control) does not cause a steam explosion should be tank burst. T&P valves should be tripped regularly, and replaced every few years.

Can do?

Flexible gas supply line to heater is copper, which is an inappropriate material for such service. Replace with listed material.

? Gas stop is not readily accessible.

Can do?

Vent pipe is proper double wall type B, but does not properly penetrate roof with modern jack, storm collar, and cap.

~~Can do?~~

? **Vent pipe in proximity to combustibles at roofline.**

Combustion/draft air to this water heater is insufficient. Closet must have minimum of two 100 square inch openings, or receive air from the outside. Follow manufacturer's directions.

✓ **Recommend adding a safety pan at this installation to protect valuable wood floors from slow leaks.**

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D. Hydro-Therapy Equipment
Comments:

V. APPLIANCES

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A. Dishwasher
Comments:

Unit cycled properly on the basic full cleaning setting, with heated drying.

✓ **Discharge hose lacks proper backflow prevention. Raise hose as high as possible in cabinet, or install backflow valve at cabinet deck.**

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B. Food Waste Disposer
Comments:

Unit ran when actuated.

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C. Range Hood
Comments:

? **No range exhaust vent present. TREC Standards of Practice effective Sept. 1, 2000 require reporting that the absence of a range exhaust vent is a condition in need of repair.**

I	NI	NP	R	Inspection Item
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D. Ranges/Ovens/Cooktops

Comments:

Gas range: burners actuated properly. Oven ran 350 °F at 350 setting.

Note: Self-cleaning feature, and clock and timer functions not checked.

condo

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Adjust burners, all four have flame uplift.

?

Anti-tip device not present. This bracket prevents the range from tipping over if a child gets on the oven door.

E. Microwave Cooking Equipment

Comments:

F. Trash Compactor

Comments:

G. Bathroom Exhaust Fans and/or Heaters

Comments:

H. Whole House Vacuum Systems

Comments:

I. Garage Door Operators

Comments:

Unit actuated, and reversed when hitting an obstruction. Photocell safety also worked. Remote controls not tested.

condo

Photocell safety has been mounted away from proper location.

J. Door Bell and Chimes

Comments:

Doorbell rang when actuated.

K. Dryer Vents

Comments:

Clothes dryer hook-up vent hose is metal.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

- The above is a confidential report of a **limited visual inspection**, performed by an Inspector licensed by the Texas Real Estate Commission, in behalf of the above named client, of various structural and mechanical systems, to determine if they were performing the function for which they were intended, at the time of inspection, or if they are in need of repair. This report reflects the professional opinion of the inspector.
- The inspection is of conditions that are present and visible at the time of the inspection. All inspected mechanical and electrical equipment, systems, and appliances are operated in normal modes and operating ranges at the time of the inspection.
- No representation is made of future performance, expected life, or future repairs. This inspection report is not a warranty, neither stated nor implied.
- Beyond the scope of this inspection are structural and mechanical elements which may be concealed behind or under vegetation, furniture, insulation, other objects, or the finish of the structure.
- A full list of excluded items will be found below.
- This inspection does not necessarily note compliance with building codes, standards, or ordinances.
- The report follows the Texas Real Estate Commission Standards of Practice (The Real Estate License Act §§535.227-231) effective September 1, 2000, and follows TREC Standard Inspection Form 7A-0.

This Inspector does **not** inspect, nor provide any opinions regarding the following parts, components, systems, or conditions of the residential building inspected:

- Radon Gas, Asbestos, Lead, Radioactivity, Pesticides, Termiticides, Hydrocarbon Products, Products of Combustion, Electromagnetic or Electric Fields, Noise, Odor, Potable Water Quality, Medical or Sewage Waste, Urea Formaldehyde, or any other substance or condition which is known to be harmful to plant or animal life;
- Geological Conditions, including the existence or proximity of fault lines; Location in a flood plain;
- Presence of Termites or other wood destroying Insects;
- Compliance with codes, ordinances, statutes or restrictions, including deed restrictions;
- Resistance to Windstorm, or Compliance with Windstorm Regulations;
- The efficiency, habitability, quality, durability, expected life, future performance, value, insurability, or warrantability of any part, component, or system inspected;
- Gas Lines (except reporting of materials used at visible branch lines, and leaks at accessible shut-off valves, as per T.R.E.C. provisions);
- Operation of windows (except at burglar bar locations as pertaining to egress); Door Lock operation;
- Smoke or Fire Alarms that are connected to a central alarm system; Security Systems; Audio and Video Equipment/ Intercom systems; Timer Devices/Photocells; Landscape Lighting;
- Underground Drainage or Utilities; Partial Blockage or Leaks in Underground Sewer Drains; Septic Tanks or Systems, Cesspools; Wells/Springs; Solar Systems;

- Pools or any equipment associated with a pool; Outdoor Whirlpools and their Equipment;
- Furniture of any kind; Elevators; Driveways/Sidewalks; Recreational Appliances; Sprinkler Systems; Clothes Washer/Dryer; Refrigerator; Water Filters and Softeners; Outdoor Cooking Equipment; Playground Equipment; Tennis Courts;
- Furnace Heat Exchanger; Individual Elements in Electric Furnaces; Programmable Thermostats;
- Wall or Ceiling Voids; Damaged wood inside walls; Parts, components, or systems covered by carpeting; Parts, components, or systems covered by attic insulation.
