



**Summer Street Inspections**  
 1357 Addison St., Berkeley CA 94702

**SummerInspect.com**  
 (510) 644 3725

**Home Inspection Report: (Address)**  
 March 6, 2006. Inspection by Paul A. Rude.

The inspection and this report are covered by a Contract for Home Inspection with (Clients). The contract contains significant limitations on the scope of the inspection and this report. If you are not a party to this contract, you should not rely on this report. For others who wish to use the report, I will execute a new contract and conduct an on-site review for an additional fee. This option is available for 90 days from the above date.

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## GENERAL DESCRIPTION, CONDITIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

### Property Description

The terms **LEFT**, **RIGHT**, **FRONT**, and **REAR** in this report refer to the house as seen from the **front door**. Both the present and past tenses refer to the time the inspection was conducted: from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, March 6, 2006. There had been rain in the previous few days.

The house is one story with a garage at the right. The main entry is near street level. At the front, the lot has little or no slope; at the rear, it slopes downward toward the rear.

A toilet in the hall bath bears a date in 1964. This appears to be the approximate date when the house was completed. There have been several alterations, including two additions -- a master bath at the left rear, and a family room at the right rear. The toilet in the master bath bears a date in 1986, which appears to be the approximate date when the work was completed. Other alterations include a deck at the rear and installation of a furnace, water heater, and an evaporative cooler. You should contact the building department to determine whether permits were issued for the work, and whether changes may be needed to comply with applicable regulations.

The inspection was limited to the house itself and adjacent surfaces such as sidewalks, patios, and decks. There may be hazards or defects elsewhere on the property that are not mentioned in this report. If you require an inspection of the grounds, I will return for an additional fee when property lines have been located and landscaping plants cleared to provide access.

### Scope Of The Inspection

The inspection and this report are performed and presented in compliance with the Standards of Practice of the American Society of Home Inspectors (ASHI). The standards are posted at [www.ashi.org/inspectors/standards/standards.asp](http://www.ashi.org/inspectors/standards/standards.asp). I will provide a printed copy on request.

The inspection is a *visual* examination of *readily accessible* components, subject to limitations in the Standards of Practice and the Contract for Home Inspection. It does not include testing, technical measurements, or calculations to determine the adequacy of any component. This report is a general review of overall condition. It is not intended to identify every defect or hazard that may be present.

Components or areas not visible at the time of the inspection are not covered in this report. This applies to but is not limited to buried components such as sewers, septic tanks, storm drains, wells, foundation footings, fuel tanks, and utilities; wiring, pipes, insulation, and other components inside walls; structural elements concealed by finished walls; areas concealed by furnishings, draperies, floor coverings, personal property, or landscaping plants; areas accessible only through other properties; and locked rooms or other spaces.

The inspection does not include evaluation of the following: the location or verification of property lines, easements, setbacks, or other boundaries; compliance with zoning regulations, CC & R rules, and similar regulations; and compliance with plans or specifications. For information on these topics, you should consult the appropriate professional such as a surveyor, attorney, or architect.

The following are excluded: swimming pools, ponds, spas, saunas, and whirlpool bath equipment; water filters; security alarms; communications systems such as telephone, audio wiring, and intercoms; built-in or free-standing appliances; play or recreational equipment; and irrigation systems.

I do not assume responsibility for identifying equipment recalled for safety or operational defects. There have been numerous recalls of household appliances and equipment. For information on recalls, you should determine the manufacturer and model number of the appliances and equipment, then check the recall listings by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission at [www.cpsc.gov](http://www.cpsc.gov). If requested, I will help with identification of recalled products for an additional fee.

The report is not a substitute for a Seller's disclosure and does not affect the obligation of Sellers or other interested parties to disclose known defects, regardless of whether such defects are visible at the time of the inspection.

### **About Building Codes**

The report may refer to code standards to illustrate how the home compares to current expectations of safety and durability. However, it is not an evaluation of compliance to building codes. Separate codes for building, electrical work, plumbing, heating, and other aspects of construction are published by various agencies. Codes are frequently revised to reflect new technology and changes in use. Local governments must adopt a code for it to have the force of law, and they may add local amendments. A "code inspection" can be conducted only by a representative of the building department.

### **About Recommendations In This Report**

As used in this report, the term "recommend" has the generally accepted dictionary definition: to advise, counsel, or suggest. Recommendations are based on the assumption that clients prefer to maintain their homes in a manner that provides the greatest degree of safety and durability. Recommendations have no official status and there is no requirement that they be carried out.

The report may include recommendations that go beyond standards in effect at the time the house was built, even though there is generally no requirement that current standards be applied to an older home unless it is modified in remodeling. These recommendations are included because public expectations of safety, comfort, and durability have changed; risks considered routine by earlier generations are now regarded as unacceptable. Also, since buyers often remodel homes to suit their needs, I include observations on systems that may need to be upgraded if they are affected by alterations.

All inspections and reports focus primarily on defects and unfavorable conditions. The recommendations in this report should not be taken to imply that there are no important positive features. I offer no determination as to the market value or whether any purchase or other transaction is advisable.

## **F** KEY TO PRIMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following terms are used to identify the primary recommendations in the report.

**R – Repair.** This applies to something that would normally be present and functional in the house as originally built or in areas, systems, or components that have been altered since construction. This may relate to weather protection, durability, or normal function of components.

**SR – Safety Repair.** Repair is needed to address a hazard of injury or fire.

**SU – Safety Upgrade.** An upgrade is recommended to reduce the chance of injury, fire, or potential health hazards. This applies to features that would typically not be present in the house as built or remodeled, but which would usually be present in modern housing.

**FE – Further Evaluation.** Further inspection or evaluation by a qualified specialist is needed.

The selection of items for emphasis reflects my judgment based on experience as a homeowner and general contractor. You may have different priorities based on your personal requirements and tolerance of risk. *A list of emphasized items is not a substitute for reading the entire report -- recommendations that are not highlighted may still be important!*

Recommendations in this report for repair or evaluation by contractors, design professionals, and tradespeople shall be interpreted as referring only to *qualified* persons, meaning those holding a valid license of the proper category issued by the California Contractors State License Board or other competent agency, and having the skills and experience necessary to perform the work according to applicable regulations and trade standards. I recommend that all work be inspected and approved by the local building department.

## ROOF, GUTTERS, AND ATTIC

My roof inspection is limited to a visual evaluation of the overall condition. I do not guarantee that the roof will not leak. Roof leaks are commonly due to defects in components that are concealed by the roofing surface. Identification of leaks typically requires testing or removal of roofing materials, which are beyond the scope of my inspection.

### Roofing

The roof is covered with composition shingles. I used a ladder to reach the roof and walked on the surface.

The shingles appear to be nearly new. Composition shingles generally have a service life of from 15 to 25 years. You should contact the roofing contractor to verify that the manufacturer's warranty is in effect and to verify the nature of any warranty on installation. I offer no warranty as to the service life.

All roofs require routine maintenance and occasional repairs. You should have a roofer examine the roof regularly and perform any repairs required to keep it waterproof and extend the service life.

Stains on the roof framing visible in the garage attic above the water heater appear to be due to leaks that occurred before this roof was installed. However, I could not reach them to check for moisture and I do not guarantee that there are no leaks. You should check the attic occasionally in wet weather. If moisture appears, have a contractor repair the roof as needed to eliminate them.

There are loose flashings at the swamp cooler. Flashings are transition pieces, usually of metal, used to protect edges, openings, and intersections in a roof. Inadequate flashing is a common source of leaks. I recommend that a roofer repair the flashings as needed to ensure that all penetrations and intersections are waterproof.

R E

Several seams in the roof have been coated with roofing mastic, including at the chimney flashings. Mastic must be re-applied occasionally in routine maintenance.

The electrical conduit for the swamp cooler passes through the roof, but does not have a flashing. Mastic has been applied around the opening, but it does not appear fully sealed. I recommend that a roofer seal this area.

There is a tree near the roof at the front. I recommend that it be kept trimmed away from the roof, as plants touching the roofing can damage it. Also, accumulations of leaves on the roof hold water, increasing the chance of leaks.

### Gutters

The gutters and downspouts are of galvanized steel. They are in good condition. You should have a qualified contractor check them occasionally in routine maintenance to ensure they are kept clear of debris that could clog the downspouts.

The gutters at the right of the family room and garage were full of water. This may be due to clogged downspouts, or the gutters may be out of level, so water does not flow to the openings. Clogging can result in leaks and the weight of water can cause gutters to pull loose. I recommend that a contractor clear the gutters and downspouts and modify them if needed to eliminate standing water.

R E

### **F** Key to Conditions:

For details see page 4

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The gutters are not painted on the interior. Galvanized metal resists corrosion, but lasts much longer if protected by a suitable paint. This is especially true where gutters are subject to accumulations of leaves, which hold water, promoting corrosion. I recommend that a suitable rust-preventive paint be applied to extend the service life.

### Roof Framing and Attic

The roof is built of nominal 2 x 6 lumber rafters approximately 2 feet apart with plywood sheathing. This is a common framing pattern.

There are two attic areas. One has an access opening in the hall. The second access is in the ceiling of the garage. My inspection was limited to a visual check with a flashlight from the openings. Because of the personal hazard and the possibility of damaging the ceilings, I do not enter unfinished attics in inspections.

The main attic was insulated with several inches of loose cellulose. This corresponds to an insulation rating lower than the R30 standard for modern housing in this area. For greater comfort and energy efficiency, I recommend that a qualified contractor install more insulation.

The garage attic is insulated with fiberglass batts about 5 to 6 inches thick. This corresponds to an insulation rating of about R19. Insulation is not normally required in garages.

The main attic is ventilated by openings in the exterior walls and metal vent fittings in the roof. This may not meet current technical standards, but should be adequate under normal conditions.

Some of the ventilation screens are clogged with paint and may not admit enough air for adequate ventilation. I recommend that a contractor clean or replace them as needed.

The vaulted ceiling of the family room does not have ventilation. In newer homes, spaces between rafters are typically ventilated by openings at the eave and strips of special roofing material at the peak. In some cases, inadequate ventilation can result in moisture damage due to condensation above the ceilings. It may be possible to add ventilation in the course of repairs. For more information, consult a qualified roofing contractor.

There were rodent baits or traps in the attic. You should retain a qualified pest control firm to eliminate any infestation.

The ceiling joists in the main attic are of 2 x 4 lumber approximately 16 inches apart. This is typical of homes of this era and design. The framing is not designed to bear significant weight. You should avoid storing heavy items such as boxes of books in the attic, as the weight could cause sagging or cracking in ceilings. Joists in the garage attic are of 2 x 6 lumber, but they have a longer span and also should not be stressed excessively by heavy property.

There is no access opening for spaces above the family room and master bath. I could not determine whether the ceilings in these areas are insulated. If you require further inspection, you should have a qualified contractor install openings. I will return for an additional fee when access has been provided. Access is not required where the height inside an attic is not more than 30 inches.

## **F**

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For details see page 4

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## FOUNDATION, STRUCTURE, AND DRAINAGE

### Foundation

The access to the space under the house is at the rear below the deck. There is a second opening at the right of the master bath. I checked the structure by crawling below the floors and by walking in the garage.

The house has a concrete perimeter foundation. Foundations of this era typically have reinforcing steel, although it is not possible to verify this in a visual inspection.

I did not see cracks or other indications of foundation failure in accessible areas, but cracks in interior walls show that there has been at least limited movement or stress in the structure. A certain amount of movement occurs in nearly all foundations, especially in older ones. It may be necessary to repair cracks and other such defects periodically in routine maintenance.

Portions of the concrete are deteriorated by moisture, including at the front exterior to the left of the entry. The surface in these areas is loose and sloughing off. This reduces the strength of the foundation to some extent, but repair is typically not cost effective unless the damage extends further into the concrete. In most cases, the best approach is to prevent further damage by improving drainage to reduce moisture. If you require further evaluation, you should consult a qualified engineer.

I could not find an access opening to the space below the family room. Access is required for spaces under a wood-framed floor. There may be defects not mentioned in this report. I recommend that a qualified contractor install an opening. If you require further inspection, I will return for an additional fee when access can be provided.

FE **E**

### Framing

This is a wood-framed structure. At the perimeter, the floor framing rests directly on the foundation. On the interior, the floors are supported by girders with posts on concrete piers. The subfloor is of tongue-and-groove lumber. This is a common pattern in homes of this era. The wall framing is entirely concealed by finished surfaces on the interior and exterior.

Several aspects of the framing do not meet current standards. There is generally no requirement to alter framing in an older home, although an upgrade could be needed in areas affected by remodeling.

The floor of the master bath is insulated with fiberglass batts. There may be defects concealed by insulation that are not mentioned in this report. If you require further inspection, I will return for an additional fee when access can be provided.

### Seismic Reinforcement

The house must be anchored to the foundation to prevent it from slipping off in an earthquake. If it were to be displaced from the foundation, it would be severely damaged. Foundation bolts were visible in several places. They do not meet present standards, but appear typical for the time the house was built. There is plywood siding on the exterior. Plywood siding can serve as wall bracing for earthquake resistance if it is properly nailed.

To reduce the potential for damage in a strong earthquake, you may want to have a contractor install additional foundation anchors, bracing, or other improvements to ensure the house can withstand expected earthquake forces.

SU **E**

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Injuries in earthquakes are often caused by broken glass, falling furniture, and other contents rather than by the structure itself. To reduce the chance of injury, you should have a qualified contractor secure tall shelves and cabinets, appliances, and heavy mirrors, pictures, and other items hung on walls. Shelves should be fitted with stops to prevent property from sliding off.

**Drainage**

There was moisture-damaged drywall and stains on the floor in the garage at the left, apparently due to seepage. The yard at the left of the garage is enclosed by concrete and has no apparent means of drainage. This may contribute to moisture under the house and in the garage. I recommend that a contractor install a suitable means of drainage for this area.

R E

The soil under the house was wet. Excessive moisture under the house favors structural pests, may contribute to settling or damage to foundations, and can damage flooring. The downspouts open next to the foundation and the yard is not properly graded to slope away from the foundation. This will contribute to moisture under the house.

I recommend that drainage be improved to keep excessive moisture from accumulating under the house. It may not be feasible to eliminate all moisture, but it should be possible to keep it within acceptable limits by installing drains to carry water from downspouts away from the house, and regrading the yard next to the foundation to slope away from the house and toward the rear. Surfaces next to the foundation should slope away from it for a distance of at least 2 feet.

R E

The crawl space ventilation openings have louvers, which greatly reduce the flow of air. Poor ventilation may contribute to dampness under the house. I recommend that a contractor install vents with 1/4 inch mesh screen, which excludes animals while permitting a greater air flow.

**Limitations of the Inspection**

My inspection is limited to a visual evaluation of the overall condition of readily accessible components. It does not include testing or engineering. This exclusion applies to but is not limited to the technical evaluation of soils, foundations, seismic reinforcements, retaining walls, beams, girders, cantilevers, or other structural components. I offer no warranty as to the adequacy of such components.

My inspection does not include identification of any geologic or seismic hazard; locating the property relative to earthquake faults or landslide zones; or determining whether the property may be subject to flooding. You should contact the appropriate local authority or a qualified engineer for information on these topics.

I am not a structural pest inspector and I do not represent that I have surveyed the premises for structural pests or damage. I recommend that you retain a licensed structural pest control firm to inspect the structure and issue a standard report.

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## EXTERIOR

### Siding And Trim

The house is covered with plywood siding. The lower edges are damaged by moisture in several places, especially at the left of the garage, at the right of the master bath, and at the right and rear of the family room. I recommend that a qualified contractor replace the damaged materials. You should consult a current structural pest control report concerning this condition.

R E

The siding at the left of the garage does not have adequate clearance to the soil. This has apparently contributed to the moisture damage. I recommend that a contractor regrade the soil, trim the siding, or otherwise provide adequate clearance.

There are loose, split, or generally worn trim pieces in several places, including at the rear and right of the family room and at the window of the right bedroom. Some of the trim is damaged by moisture, including at the family room air conditioner, at the door at the right of the family room, and in scattered places in the fascia trim at the roof edges. I recommend that a contractor replace or repair the woodwork as needed for appearance and to protect the exterior from the weather. You should consult a current structural pest control report concerning the condition of the woodwork.

R E

The inner side of the siding was wet at the lower edges at the right and rear of the family room and at the right of the kitchen. This appears to be due to leaks and has apparently contributed to moisture damage in these areas. The siding was dry in other areas I checked, but I did not check the entire perimeter.

There are loose seams in the siding, especially in the horizontally installed siding on the upper (gable) walls of the family room. The trim at several windows is loose and there are no flashings above the windows and doors. Flashings are transition pieces, usually of metal, used to keep moisture from entering openings. These defects are common sources of leaks. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair the exterior as needed to eliminate leaks.

R E

There is a gap between the siding and the chimney. This area may leak. I recommend that a contractor seal it. Resealing will be needed occasionally.

The paint is peeling in several places, especially on window trim and on the fascia trim at the edge of the roof. I recommend that a painter prepare and repaint the exterior to protect the house from the weather.

You should plan on repainting every 3 to 5 years in areas with strong sun exposure. Shaded areas need repainting less often, typically in the range of every 6 to 10 years. The service life of a coat of paint depends largely on the quality of the materials and especially on the quality of surface preparation. For best protection of wood siding and trim, repaint as soon as the paint shows a dull, chalky surface; waiting until the paint is peeling increases preparation costs and allows the wood to deteriorate.

The access door to the crawl space at the master bath is damaged. I recommend that a carpenter repair or replace it as needed.

Some of the exposed siding nails are rusty, especially at the right, and may stain the siding following rains. You should have a contractor replace or paint them as needed.

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There are plants growing against the walls at the right. Plants in contact with the wall can damage the siding. I recommend that they be kept trimmed away from the walls. Portions of the walls were concealed by plants. If you require further inspection, I will return for an additional fee when the plants have been trimmed.

I examined the exterior from the ground and from surfaces such as porches and stairs. I did not examine the entire exterior surface closely. There may be defects that would be apparent only with close examination from scaffolding or ladders and which are not mentioned in this report.

**Porches and Stairs**

The front porch is of concrete. It is in good condition. The steps to the porch are irregular and shorter than normal. To reduce the hazard of falls, building standards have long required that steps be of uniform height and width. I recommend that a qualified contractor rebuild them for safer access. SU E

There is no handrail for the stairs at the right of the family room. A handrail may not be required, but falls on stairs are among the most common causes of injuries in homes. Older people are more likely to fall and can be seriously injured by falls that would not affect a younger person. If you prefer a greater margin of safety, you should have a contractor install a handrail. SU E

The top of the family room stairs extends over the lower edge of the siding. It may trap water, resulting in moisture damage. There may be concealed damage now. To prevent damage, it may be necessary to modify the stairs to provide an air space behind the concrete. You should consult a current structural pest report concerning this condition.

**Deck**

There is a redwood deck at the rear. The decking is weathered but still serviceable. I recommend that a contractor recondition it and apply an oil or coating to protect the wood from moisture and sunlight. Wood continually exposed to strong sunlight should be recoated annually; in shaded areas, coating every 2 or 3 years is usually adequate.

The deck is damaged in places by moisture or structural pests. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair it as needed to eliminate damaged materials and provide sound support. You should consult a current structural pest report concerning this condition. R E

There is no flashing above the ledger--the board supporting the other framing at the wall. Without flashing, moisture can accumulate behind the ledger, resulting in moisture damage. I recommend that a contractor install a flashing to prevent this. R E

The railings are split or otherwise deteriorated. I recommend that a qualified contractor replace or recondition them as needed.

The handrail for the stairs is rough and may generate splinters. I recommend that a contractor replace it or sand and refinish it to provide a safer surface.

**Yard And Grounds**

The sidewalks and driveway are cracked in several places. In most areas, the extent of cracking is not unusual. It's a good practice to seal larger cracks to prevent water from entering and expanding them. Most building supply stores have caulks and fillers for concrete.

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The walkway at the driveway gate is uneven, creating a trip hazard. I recommend that a contractor replace or repair it as needed to provide a safe, uniform surface.

There is no public sidewalk at the street. This is typical of the surrounding area.

The fencing at the left rear is leaning and broken. You should have a contractor repair or replace it as needed. The fencing may be shared with the neighboring property. You should consult the property owners prior to repairs.

**R E**

There are irrigation fittings in several places and a control panel in the garage. Examination or testing of irrigation systems is beyond the scope of my inspection. You should obtain a set of instructions for the equipment and operate it to verify that it works.

There is a large tree at the front. Falling trees or branches can pose a hazard, especially in storms. You should have an arborist examine it and take any measures needed to eliminate any hazard.

*There is a shed in the yard at the rear. It was not inspected and is not covered in this report.*

### FIREPLACE AND CHIMNEY

There is a brick fireplace with a metal liner in the living room. The liner shows moderate corrosion and wear. Metal liners corrode and must be replaced eventually. How soon replacement is needed depends on how often the fireplace is used, the type of fuel, and other factors. For more information, consult a qualified fireplace specialist.

There is a damper to prevent heated air from escaping up the chimney when the fireplace is not in use. It must be opened whenever a fire is lit and must remain open until all fuel is completely burned or extinguished. There is also a set of glass doors, which serve the same purpose as a damper and help to prevent embers from escaping onto the floor.

The damper is stuck in the closed position. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair it for convenient operation.

The mortar in the brick hearth is cracked, loose, or missing in places. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair the hearth as needed.

The chimney is of brick lined with clay flue tiles. The top of the chimney is too low relative to the roof. It should be at least 2 feet above any part of the roof within 10 feet. This rule is both for fire safety and to ensure adequate draw. I recommend that a qualified contractor extend the chimney as needed.

**R E**

The chimney has apparently settled or tilted, creating a gap between the chimney and the exterior wall. Settling is usually due to the chimney footing being too small or too shallow. Poor drainage can also be a factor. Reinforcement may eventually be needed to prevent further movement. I recommend that you have drainage improved (see Drainage, above), then monitor the chimney in routine maintenance. If movement continues, consult a qualified engineer or fireplace contractor concerning repairs.

The chimney has a spark screen and rain cap at the top. The purpose of a screen is to prevent embers from escaping and causing a fire. A cap is needed to keep water out of the chimney.

The mortar "crown" at the top of the chimney is cracked. The crown is needed to shed water and prevent erosion of the mortar. I recommend that a mason replace it.

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Because I was not able to remove the chimney cap and because the damper was stuck, it was not possible to look into the flue. There may be defects not mentioned in this report. For further evaluation, you should have a fireplace specialist examine it and correct any defects.

FE **E**

You should have a the chimney cleaned occasionally as needed to prevent excessive tar from accumulating; tar deposits can create a fire hazard. The frequency of cleaning depends on the type of wood fuel used as well as on how often fires are lit. As a rule of thumb, if the fireplace is used once a week on average, the chimney should be cleaned every year or two.

I did not light a fire or perform any test to determine whether the chimney has adequate draw to prevent smoke from escaping into the room. This is beyond the scope of my inspection. If you require further evaluation, I recommend that a qualified contractor perform any test that may be needed and correct any defects found in further inspection.

## WINDOWS AND DOORS

### Windows

The windows have aluminum frames with sliding operation. They show considerable wear but are generally operable except as noted.

There are dual-pane windows in the family room. A common defect in dual-glazed windows is failure of the seal between the panes. This permits moisture to condense between them, fogging the glass. This has occurred in one of the family room windows. I recommend that a glazing contractor repair or replace it as needed to eliminate this condition.

R **E**

The latch does not work properly in the window at the hall bath. I recommend that a contractor repair it.

The temperature difference between glass and warm indoor air often causes condensation in cool weather, especially when the furnace is in use. Condensed moisture can damage the window sills. You should keep them painted or otherwise sealed in routine maintenance. Several sills are stained or damaged now; I recommend that they be repaired and refinished as needed.

I did not examine every window, but only a sample. Inspection of every window is beyond the scope of my inspection. There may be defects not mentioned in this report. I recommend that you check each window for damage and operation.

### Doors

The exterior door at the rear of the garage is in poor condition. It is split or damaged by moisture and it has broken glass that is not safety glass. In modern housing, safety glass is required for doors to prevent injury to someone falling against the glass; unlike standard glass, safety glass shatters into pieces without sharp edges. I recommend that a qualified contractor replace the door. If it is to be retained, you should have the glass replaced with safety glass or plastic.

R **E**

The pocket door to the master bath does not operate properly. I recommend that a contractor repair it as needed for convenient operation.

Doors to the bedroom closets drag on the carpets. The floor guides are missing for several sliding closet doors. I recommend that a contractor trim the doors and install suitable hardware.

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The screen door at the family room does not operate properly. I recommend that a contractor repair it as needed.

## ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

### Service Equipment And Capacity

The electric meter and main panel are at the right exterior of the garage. The panel contains a set of main breakers. Switching these to the off position should disconnect power to the house. Power is supplied through overhead wires from a utility pole in the street.

The main breakers are rated for 100 amps. The service capacity appears to be 100 amps. This should be adequate under normal conditions. The service has both 240 and 120 volt current.

A telephone wire is in contact with the service wires above the roof. This creates a potential shock hazard. You should contact the company and have the wire moved. **SR E**

In addition to the main breakers, the panel contains breakers for individual circuits, including one or more pairs at 240 volts. There is space for more breakers if new circuits are needed.

Some of the breakers are not labeled. For greater safety and convenience I recommend that an electrician determine what is controlled by each breaker, and label them clearly.

### Grounding

There is a ground wire in the main panel but I was unable to find a connection to the water main. In modern electrical work, the ground wire must be clamped to the water main in an accessible location near the point where the pipe enters the house. It is possible that there is a connection I did not see.

The system lacks other features required for grounding in modern systems. There is no ground rod in the soil. In modern services, a rod is used to supplement the connection to the buried water main, which is normally the primary ground.

The water and gas pipes are not connected or "bonded" electrically. In modern systems, the cold water is bonded to other pipes to reduce the shock hazard that could occur if a pipe were to be energized by a wiring defect. Bonding is usually accomplished with a wire clamped to the pipes at the water heater.

There is generally no requirement to upgrade an older system, but if you prefer a greater margin of safety, you should have an electrician upgrade the system to meet present standards. **SU E**

### Wiring

The wiring is mostly of plastic-insulated cable, widely known by the brand name Romex. This is typical of modern homes.

There is loose wiring in the garage attic. Wiring must be secured to prevent movement and damage that could result in a fire. Cables must be fastened at boxes, fixtures, or panels. I recommend that an electrician secure all loose wiring as needed to meet applicable standards.

<b>F</b> Key to Conditions:	For details see page 4
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There is insulated cable exposed in the garage at the laundry and water heater. This wiring is not intended for use where someone could touch it or where it could be damaged by property. I recommend that an electrician replace it with materials approved for exposed locations. SR

E

**Outlets and Lights**

The outlets are the 3-hole type designed for grounded systems. Those I checked operated properly. I did not check every outlet, but only a sample. There may be defects I did not find. If you require an inspection of each outlet, you should have an electrician check them in the course of repairs.

An outlet at the left of the garage does not have a cover. Covers are needed to prevent accidental contact with the wiring, to keep debris out of the boxes, and to reduce the chance of fire in case of a wiring defect. I recommend that an electrician install plates wherever they are missing.

There is a non-weatherproof outlet on the exterior at the deck. Water entering an outlet can cause a short circuit or create a shock hazard. I recommend that an electrician install approved weatherproof equipment. SR

E

Outlets or switches in the paneled wall of the living room are installed in boxes that do not extend to the panel surface. This leaves the terminals exposed to flammable materials and provides a gap for the spread of fire. I recommend that an electrician modify them as needed to meet applicable standards. SR

E

The bedrooms and living room do not have light fixtures controlled by a switch, but they have switched outlets. This is an approved lighting method. If you find this unacceptable, have an electrician install switched fixtures.

**Ground And Arc Fault Protection**

There is a GFCI outlet at the deck. The GFCI, or ground fault circuit interrupter, detects electrical imbalances associated with short circuits. A GFCI can shut off power before a short can result in a serious shock.

The house does not have GFCI protection elsewhere. The GFCI, or ground fault circuit interrupter, is a device that detects electrical imbalances associated with short circuits. A GFCI can shut off power before a short can result in a serious shock. In modern homes, GFCI protection is required for baths and kitchens, near sinks, on the exterior, in garages, and in certain other situations.

There is usually no requirement to install GFCI equipment in an older home unless it is altered in remodeling or repairs. However, since it provides a significant margin of safety at moderate cost, I recommend that an electrician install GFCI outlets where needed to bring the system up to present standards. In most cases, GFCIs can be installed to replace regular outlets without extensive rewiring. SU

E

In new homes, arc fault protection is required for bedrooms. Special arc fault breakers detect wiring defects that can cause a fire but that will not trip a normal breaker. Common defects that can create an electrical arc include loose connections and damage due to nails that penetrate wires. There is usually no requirement to add arc fault protection in an older home. However, it should be installed for any new or modified circuits serving bedrooms.

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### Limitations of the Inspection

I do not perform tests or calculations to determine the adequacy of any component. This exclusion applies to but is not limited to load calculations for electrical capacity, and measurement of voltage drop, continuity, or other electrical parameters.

I do not operate circuit breakers or fuses, except to restore power when a breaker or fuse is accidentally turned off in the course of the inspection. Breakers may have defects that are apparent only when they are operated or removed from a panel. There may be defects that are not mentioned in this report.

The inspection does not cover photovoltaic or other solar-powered electrical equipment. It does not cover communications and accessory systems such as security alarms, telephone, cable TV, data, and audio wiring, intercoms, and low-voltage outdoor lighting.

## PLUMBING

### Water Supply

The main valve for the water supply is at the front. The water can also be turned off at the meter, which is in the front yard. A special tool, available at most hardware stores, is needed to operate the meter valve. The main pipe to the house is the 3/4-inch size. This is typical of single-family homes in this area.

The accessible water pipes are mostly of copper, which typically does not corrode and can last indefinitely unless there are unusual concentrations of corrosive minerals in the water. Composition of the water cannot be determined in a visual inspection. For more information, contact the local water supply agency.

The water pipes to the master bath are not adequately supported. This is visible under the house. Pipes must be secured to prevent stress that can loosen fittings and cause leaks. I recommend that a plumber secure them.

**R E**

An irrigation pipe is installed on the surface of the front steps, creating a trip hazard. I recommend that a plumber relocate it.

The water pressure measured at an outdoor faucet was 80 pounds per square inch. This is at the upper end of the normal range of 40 to 80 pounds. The pressure may vary depending on conditions in the public water system. Excessive pressure can cause failures in washers and fittings, resulting in leaks. For greatest protection, you should have a plumber install a regulator to keep the pressure within normal limits.

The outdoor faucets do not have anti-siphon devices. These are used in modern plumbing to prevent contaminated water from being drawn into the water supply—for example, from a hose left in a puddle. There is generally no requirement to add them in an older home, but since they are inexpensive and installation is simple you may want to add them as a preventive measure.

### Drains And Vents

The drains and vents are of cast iron, galvanized steel, and ABS plastic. Iron and steel drains corrode and often develop rust deposits that result in clogging or slow drainage from fixtures. It may be necessary to have them cleared occasionally. Where clogging occurs repeatedly, drains should be replaced.

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ABS pipe for the laundry and kitchen drain is improperly supported by steel straps. ABS expands and contracts with temperature changes; scraping on metal supports can damage it. I recommend that a plumber install suitable supports.

Drains for the kitchen sink and laundry are the 1 1/2 inch size, rather than the 2-inch size required in modern plumbing. The smaller drains are more susceptible to clogging. This is common in older homes. You should be careful to keep foreign materials out of the drains. It may be necessary to upgrade drains in areas affected by remodeling.

**Sewer**

The sewer exits from below the house at the rear. There is a cleanout fitting at the rear below the deck for access in case of clogging.

Sewers are subject to damage from roots, earth movement, and other factors. Examination of buried components is beyond the scope of my inspection. I recommend that a qualified contractor examine the sewer with remote video equipment and correct any defects found in further inspection.

FE **E**

There is a "mushroom cap" device on the sewer at the left rear. These are intended to prevent sewerage from entering the house in case the public sewer becomes clogged. If clogging occurs, sewerage may be released into the yard. If you require further evaluation, have a qualified sewer contractor test the device and correct and defects. More information on check valves and sewer maintenance is available at [www.sewersmart.org](http://www.sewersmart.org).

**Natural Gas**

The gas meter is at the right. The valve for the gas is on the pipe next to the meter. To turn off the gas, use a wrench to turn the flange of the valve so that it is perpendicular to the pipe. It's a good idea to keep a wrench where it will be readily accessible for turning off the gas in case of emergency.

Damage to gas pipes in an earthquake or from other causes can cause a fire or explosion. For greater safety, I recommend that a plumber install an automatic valve to turn off the gas in case a pipe breaks.

SU **E**

**Water Heater**

There is a gas-fired water heater in the garage. It was operating and there was hot water at the fixtures. The tank capacity is 40 gallons; this is typical of homes this size in this area.

Judging by the serial number, the water heater was manufactured in 1995. The service life of water heaters is typically in the range of 8 to 15 years. You should contact the manufacturer to verify the nature of any warranty. I offer no warranty as to the remaining service life.

The gas supply is an older flexible tube that contains copper. These can break where the tubing meets the fittings, causing a leak or fire. I recommend that a plumber replace it.

SR **E**

If the water heater were to fall in an earthquake, it could break the gas or water pipes, causing a fire or flooding. It has a single strap, but a minimum of two is required. I recommend that a qualified contractor secure the water heater as needed to prevent it from tipping.

SR **E**

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The water heater is supported partly on loose pieces of lumber. This increases the chance that it could tip over. I recommend that a contractor provide secure support.

The water heater has a relief valve to allow water to escape in case a defect overheats the water or causes excessive pressure. The drain from the valve opens in a concealed location. The opening must be on the exterior and should be readily visible so that any discharge will be noticed, since water coming from the drain means repairs are needed. I recommend that a plumber relocate the drain as needed to meet applicable standards.

R E

Manufacturers generally recommend that relief valves be tested annually. I did not test the valve because the valves often start leaking when tested, usually due to rust or other particles in the water. You should have a plumber check the valve occasionally in routine maintenance.

The water heater does not have insulation meeting modern energy standards, and the pipes near the tank are not insulated. This will result in heat loss, increasing the cost of operation. I recommend that a qualified contractor insulate the pipes and tank.

To obtain the greatest service life, it's a good idea to flush the tank every year or two to remove residue that accumulates in the tank. There is a hose connection and valve near the bottom of the tank for this purpose. The drain valves often leak when operated, usually due to particles in the water. Leaks can usually be controlled by installing a threaded plastic cap on the hose connection.

When it is time to replace the water heater, you may want to upgrade to an on-demand model that is more energy efficient. Some models can be mounted on an exterior wall, saving interior space and eliminating the need for a vent. Since they are normally fastened directly to a wall, these units also pose a lower risk in earthquakes than tank-type models.

**Limitations Of The Inspection**

I do not perform tests, measurements, or calculations to determine the adequacy of any component. This exclusion applies to but is not limited to the measurement of pressure or flow at plumbing fixtures, and testing for leaks in drains, vents, water pipes, or gas supply lines.

The inspection does not cover plumbing associated with outdoor or indoor pools, ponds, fountains, spas, water filters, water softeners, or irrigation systems. It does not include evaluation of fire sprinkler systems or solar-powered equipment such as water heaters.

I do not operate water or gas supply valves, other than those normally used by occupants at plumbing fixtures. This exclusion applies to but is not limited to control valves or "angle stops" commonly found below sinks, toilets, and other fixtures. These valves are typically used only when it is necessary to repair or replace a fixture; they commonly leak when operated and may need to be repaired or replaced when a fixture is changed.

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## HEATING AND COOLING

### Furnace

There is a gas-fired, forced-air furnace in the garage. It is a Bryant brand with an input capacity of 66,000 BTUs per hour. It is controlled by a thermostat in the living room and operated when the thermostat was turned up.

Judging by the serial number, it appears that the furnace was manufactured in 1998. The service life modern furnaces is typically in the range of 10 to 15 years. I offer no warranty as to the remaining service life. You should contact the manufacturer or contractor to verify the nature of any warranty.

Furnaces require regular maintenance for optimum performance and maximum service life. Cracks or holes in a heat exchanger--the compartment containing the burners-- can allow exhaust gases into the circulating air, creating a health hazard. You should have a qualified heating contractor service the furnace annually and perform any maintenance or repairs needed to ensure that it functions safely.

The blower compartment is not fully sealed at the bottom. This may permit exhaust gases to be drawn into the circulating air, creating a health hazard. I recommend that a qualified contractor seal it.

There is no fuse for the furnace. To prevent damage to the furnace wiring in case of a short or overload, most furnaces require fuses with a lower rating than the circuit breakers for the house wiring. I recommend that a qualified contractor investigate and install a fuse if needed.

Whether the furnace capacity is adequate depends on the nature of the ductwork, insulation, and other factors. A determination as to whether a furnace provides adequate or uniform heat is beyond the scope of the inspection. If you require evaluation of the capacity, you should have a heating contractor perform any tests or calculations that may be needed.

### Ducts

Accessible parts of the heating ducts are of metal with fiberglass insulation. Most of the ducts are in the attic.

Part of the air return duct under the house is in contact with the soil. Ducts should be well above the soil; otherwise, moisture may enter them, creating a potential health hazard. There was a water line on the duct, which suggests that it has been flooded. The air return chamber behind the furnace contained soil and debris. The return duct is not insulated, which reduces efficiency. Cleaning and repair may be feasible, but probably would not be cost effective. I recommend that a qualified contractor replace this duct.

R **E**

Some rooms, including the family room and master bath, do not have heat registers. If you find that these rooms are not adequately heated, you should have a qualified heating contractor install additional ducts and registers as needed.

The ducts are sized for heating. If you plan to have air conditioning installed, it may be necessary to upgrade them for efficient operation. Larger ducts are needed for air conditioning because cool air is heavier and does not move through ducts as readily as warm air.

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**Filter**

The filter for the circulating air is in the furnace blower compartment. It was clogged with dust. I recommend that it be cleaned or changed. Filters should be changed often enough to keep the airflow clean. A dirty filter can cause the furnace to overheat, reducing its service life. For best performance, change or clean filters every two or three months during the heating season. Regular maintenance is especially important if there are pets in the house or if you are allergic to dust.

**Air Conditioner**

There is a through-wall air conditioner in the family room. The fan operated, but the unit appears generally worn and I was told that the air conditioning portion does not work. I did not attempt to test it because the outdoor temperature was too low; operation at low temperatures can damage the compressor. If you require an air conditioner, you should have a qualified contractor repair or replace it as needed.

R E

**Evaporative Cooler**

There is an evaporative cooler or "swamp cooler" on the roof, with a duct to a grille in the hall ceiling. These units have a fan that draws air over water-soaked pads, cooling the air by evaporation. The controls are in the hall closet and the valve for the water supply is at the front exterior near the front steps. The water pump and fan operated in response to the controls.

The evaporation pads were clogged by debris. This will greatly reduce efficiency. I recommend that they be cleaned or replaced as needed.

R E

An evaporative cooler will not cool the house to the same extent as an air conditioning system, but many homeowners in this area find these coolers to be adequate under most conditions. One advantage is that coolers use less electrical power than an AC system.

**Limitations Of The Inspection**

I do not perform tests or calculations to determine the adequacy of any component. This exclusion applies to but is not limited to measurement of the flow of heated or conditioned air and evaluation of heating or cooling efficiency.

I examined only those portions of the furnace that are readily accessible without dismantling any part other than a simple access panel. I offer no warranty against defects in heat exchangers.

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## INTERIOR

The house was vacant and unfurnished.

### Smoke Detectors

There is a battery-powered smoke detector in the hall. It sounded when the test button was pushed. I recommend that the battery be replaced regularly.

There were no detectors elsewhere. In modern housing, detectors are required in bedrooms and in spaces such as hallways outside bedroom doors. Multi-level homes should have at least one on each level. In California, installation of smoke detectors is usually required for an older home when a permit is issued for improvements valued at \$1,000 or more. I recommend that a qualified contractor install or replace smoke detectors where needed to meet current standards.

SU E

Battery-powered detectors are inexpensive and easy to install, but often fail when batteries are not replaced regularly. Battery-powered detectors should be the type with batteries lasting several years; these are available in most home supply stores. For greatest security, the best approach is to have an electrician install wired-in detectors with backup batteries.

Carbon monoxide detectors should also be installed. Carbon monoxide, or CO, is an odorless gas that is deadly at high concentrations, and harmful even at low concentrations. CO can be produced in fireplaces, furnaces, and other gas appliances. When properly installed and maintained, CO detectors can prevent serious health consequences in case of a failure in an appliance or exhaust vent.

### Walls, Ceilings, and Floors

The walls and ceilings are of gypsum board "drywall," also known by the brand name Sheetrock. Most of the living area was carpeted.

There are loose seams, cracks, and other defects in the drywall in some rooms, including the hall and right bedroom. The extent of damage is not unusual for an older home. I recommend that a contractor refinish the affected areas. Repair of such defects will be needed occasionally in routine maintenance.

The wall at the right of the living room is covered with paneling installed over gypsum board. Portions of the paneling are loose. I recommend that a contractor secure it.

### Limitations of the Inspection

The condition of floors under carpets cannot be determined without loosening them, which is beyond the scope of my inspection. There may be holes or other defects in the floors not mentioned in this report.

The inspection does not include an evaluation of security. I offer no warranty as to the likelihood of burglary, arson, trespassing, vandalism, or other criminal acts.

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## KITCHEN, BATHS, AND LAUNDRY

### Kitchen

The kitchen has ceramic tile countertops and a cast iron sink. The cabinets and surfaces show considerable wear but are generally useable.

The cabinet doors do not have adjustable hinges and the drawers do not have the full-extension hardware typical of modern kitchens. If you require such features, you should have a qualified contractor upgrade or replace the cabinets as needed.

There are cracked tiles or loose grout in the counters in places, especially near the sink. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair the tile as needed to provide a sanitary, waterproof surface.

**R E**

The sink enamel is chipped or otherwise damaged. It may eventually leak, but this is essentially a cosmetic defect now. If you find this unacceptable, have a contractor repair it as needed.

There were moisture stains in the sink cabinet. I did not see any leaks, but there may be leaks under some circumstances, possibly between the counter and the sink rim. You should monitor this area in routine maintenance. If leaks occur, have a qualified contractor repair the installation to eliminate them.

The sink has plastic water supply tubes, which can fail where the tubing is fastened to the fittings. Failure can result in flooding, especially if it occurs when no one is home to turn off the water. I recommend that a plumber replace them.

There was an electric cooktop and oven, but no other appliances. The appliances are older and moderately worn; replacement or repair may be needed at any time. I did not check them except to verify a source of power. You should check all appliances that will remain in the house to make sure they work and meet your needs. If you require further evaluation, I recommend that you retain a qualified appliance technician.

There is a hood with a ventilation fan over the range. It is generally worn and the fan was slow to start. Replacement or repair may be needed at any time. You should clean the screen occasionally in routine maintenance to prevent excessive grease from building up. Grease can ignite if there is a flare-up on the stove, causing a fire.

The counter at the right of the cooktop does not have an electrical outlet. This may lead to the use of extension cords, which are common sources of fires. In modern kitchens, outlets are required for each counter. There is no requirement to meet this standard in an older kitchen unless it is altered in remodeling, but if you prefer a greater margin of safety, you should have an electrician install outlets for all counter spaces which lack them.

The floor is carpeted. Carpet is readily damaged by moisture and grease and is difficult to maintain in kitchens. For easier maintenance, you may want to have an alternate material installed.

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### Master Bath

This bath has a fiberglass shower stall, a sink, and a toilet. The floor is carpeted. There is an operable window for ventilation. The surfaces and fixtures show moderate wear but are generally serviceable.

I was unable to find a safety glass label on the shower door. In modern housing, safety glass is required for shower doors to prevent injury to someone falling against the glass. Unlike standard glass, safety glass shatters into pieces without sharp edges. Possibly, there may be a label I did not find. I recommend that the door be cleaned and checked for a label. If it is not safety glass, I recommend that a qualified contractor replace it.

SU E

The metal sink is rusty. It does not appear to be leaking now, but replacement may be needed at any time. You should monitor this area in routine maintenance. If leaks appear, have a plumber repair or replace it as needed.

The sink is not properly sealed to the vanity top. Water will leak around the edges, damaging the cabinet. I recommend that a plumber reset and seal the sink.

R E

The toilet and sink have plastic water supply tubes, These tubes can break at the fittings; this can result in flooding, especially if it occurs when no one is home to turn off the water. I recommend that a plumber replace them with more durable materials such as "no burst" tubes of braided stainless steel.

The seam where the flooring meets the shower is not well sealed. It should be kept sealed to prevent moisture damage or leaks. I recommend that a qualified contractor caulk this area. Re-caulking will be needed occasionally in routine maintenance.

The electric heater has open heat coils. You should avoid placing clothing or towels near it, as this could cause a fire. Contact with the coils could burn or shock to someone inserting a finger or object into the grid. You should keep the heater off when children are present, or keep them away from it. If you prefer a greater margin of safety, you should have an electrician replace it. If it is not needed, it should be disconnected.

The window does not open readily. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair it. Because excess moisture promotes mildew and can damage surfaces, ventilation is essential in bathrooms. If you find it inconvenient to open the window, you should have a qualified contractor install a fan.

### Hall Bath

This bath has a shower over a tub, a sink in a vanity cabinet, and a toilet. The shower walls are of ceramic tile. The flooring is of sheet vinyl. There is an operable window for ventilation. The surfaces and fixtures show moderate wear but are generally serviceable.

The sink stopper is missing. I recommend that a plumber install new components as needed.

R E

The toilet has a plastic water supply tube. These tubes can break at the fittings; this can result in flooding, especially if it occurs when no one is home to turn off the water. I recommend that a plumber replace it with more durable materials such as a "no burst" tube of braided stainless steel.

The light fixture is too close to the medicine cabinet door. To prevent breakage, I recommend that an electrician replace it or relocate it for more clearance.

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The lighting is generally poor. For greater safety and convenience, you may want to have an electrician install better lighting.

Seams where flooring meets a tub, shower, or toilet must be kept sealed to prevent water from entering them and causing moisture damage. You or a qualified contractor should caulk the seams occasionally in routine maintenance. Be sure to use a caulk intended for wet areas such as baths.

**Laundry**

There are laundry fixtures in the garage. There were no appliances.

One of the water supply valves is damaged and the handle is missing. I recommend that a plumber repair or replace it.

R E

There is an electrical outlet for a dryer; it had 240 volt current. The outlet is the older, 3-prong type. Most newer dryers require a 4-prong outlet. If an electric dryer is to be used, you may need to have an electrician install a new outlet.

The laundry does not have a gas outlet for a dryer. If you plan to use a gas dryer, you should have a plumber install a gas pipe and valve.

A leak in a washer hose or a failure in the washer controls can flood the floors, causing extensive damage. It's a good practice to have the hoses changed every 3 to 5 years, even if they have no visible defects, or have "no burst" hoses with a jacket of braided stainless steel installed. For greatest protection, electronic valves can be installed that detect leaks and turn off the water automatically.

To reduce the chance of a fire in case of a gasoline spill from a vehicle, it is good practice to have at least 18 inches of clearance between the floor and the gas burners or any source of electrical spark. A platform may be needed to elevate dryers, especially gas dryers. If you prefer a greater margin of safety, you should make sure that clearance is provided when appliances are installed.

**GARAGE**

The door from the garage to the house does not meet modern fire safety standards because it is not self-closing. In modern housing, a fire separation is required between a garage and living space because of the hazard posed by gasoline in vehicles. I recommend that a qualified contractor install spring-loaded hinges or other suitable hardware to provide the self-closing feature.

SU E

There were moisture stains on the floor, especially at the left. The garage may be damp or flooded in wet weather. The concrete floor is cracked in a pattern that is typically related to poor drainage, which can cause heaving of the soil below. I recommend that a qualified contractor repair or replace the concrete as needed and upgrade drainage to prevent further damage. See discussion under Drainage, above.

There is a roll-up sectional vehicle door with an automatic opener. The opener did not operate in response to the button on the interior. I recommend that a garage door specialist repair or replace it as needed.

R E

The door does not have the "electric eye" light beam at the bottom required for modern garage doors. This feature reverses the door to if something breaks the beam while the door is operating. It is required in modern garages to protect children or others who might be in the way of the door. I recommend that a garage door specialist install suitable equipment.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Potentially hazardous materials commonly found in homes include asbestos and lead, as well as certain components of paints, adhesives, and processed materials. A determination as to the presence or hazard posed by such materials is beyond the scope of my inspection. The observations here are provided as a courtesy only. I make no representation that I have surveyed the property for hazardous materials, or that the conditions mentioned below are the only ones present.

Lead is often present in the paint in older homes in this area, and may be present in the soil and in household dust as a result of scraping and sanding during repainting. Without adequate precautions, preparation work such as sanding, scraping or heat may create a lead exposure hazard. Prior to any paint preparation, I recommend that a qualified lead abatement contractor test the paint and take any measures that may be needed to prevent an exposure hazard.

Heating ducts in homes of this era may have asbestos tape on the joints. I did not see any material that appears to be asbestos, but I do not guarantee that it is not present. Most of the ducts are in the attic and are covered with fiberglass insulation, so the joints are not visible. If you require further evaluation, you should have a qualified abatement contractor examine the system and take appropriate measures to eliminate any hazard.

Asbestos may also be present in older roofing, flooring, drywall compound, and other materials. More information on asbestos hazards is available from the National Cancer Institute at [http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/3\\_21.htm](http://cis.nci.nih.gov/fact/3_21.htm) and from the Environmental Protection Agency at <http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/help.html>.

Certain fungi associated with moisture may create a health hazard under some conditions, especially for those with certain allergies or compromised immune systems. I am not qualified to identify molds, fungi, or other potentially harmful organisms of any kind. Identification of such organisms and evaluation of any health hazard are beyond the scope of my inspection. If you require an evaluation of such conditions, you should consult a qualified environmental health specialist.

The inspection does not include evaluation of environmental conditions such as soil, air, or water pollution, odors, noise, electromagnetic forces (EMF), any form of radiation.

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## APPENDIX 1

### GUIDELINES FOR HIRING CONTRACTORS

\*Before signing a contract, ask the contractor for references for similar work. Call previous clients and make sure they were satisfied with the contractor's performance.

\*Check the Contractors State License Board database at (800) 321 2752 to verify that the contractor's license is valid and that it was issued for the kind of work you plan to have done. The information is also posted on the Board's web site: [www.cslb.ca.gov](http://www.cslb.ca.gov), along with information on regulations related to contracting, how contracts must be written, your rights in the event of disputes, etc. Payments to unlicensed contractors can be subject to payroll tax assessments and penalties in the event of an audit.

\*Insist that contractors provide certificates for general liability and workers compensation insurance. Certificates should be sent directly to you by the insurance agency, which will notify you if the insurance is cancelled. A copy presented by the contractor is not acceptable, as the insurance may already have been cancelled. Hiring contractors without insurance can expose you to liability if something goes wrong.

\*Never pay a large deposit prior to start of work. Down payments are limited by law to \$1,000 or 10% of the contract amount, whichever is less. Legitimate contractors have credit with suppliers and do not need money in advance to pay for materials.

\*For larger projects, ask for a list of suppliers and subcontractors. Contact them to verify that the contractor's accounts are in good standing. If not, the contractor may fail to pay someone who supplies materials or works on the job. This can expose your property to a mechanic's lien, even if you pay the contractor. Mechanic's liens are a complex topic; consult an attorney for further information.

\*Permits are required for most improvements. Make sure the permit is posted at the job before work starts. In most projects, the building inspector will check the work at several stages -- all work must be inspected before it is concealed by later phases. For example, reinforcing steel is inspected before pouring concrete, and wiring and plumbing are inspected before installing wall surfaces. The inspector signs off each phase on the permit card, so you can monitor what has been approved.

\*If the contract calls for progress payments, they should not greatly exceed the value of the work completed by the time the payment is required. It's a good idea to have progress payments keyed to approval of specific phases of the work by the building department.

\*Always retain part of the price until ALL work has been completed, including cleanup -- this may be after final inspection by the building department. On completion, make sure materials are as specified and that equipment provided by the contractor works properly. It is common practice for an owner and contractor to review the project together, noting details that need to be corrected before final payment in a written "punch list."

\*For larger projects, especially one that includes an addition, consult an architect. For structural work such as foundation repair and seismic reinforcement, consult an engineer. Professional design pays for itself by reducing expensive changes and mistakes during construction. Architects and engineers are also a good source of contractor referrals.

\*Before signing a contract, ask the contractor for references for similar work. Call previous clients and make sure they were satisfied with the contractor's performance.

***I can help with quality control inspections during construction, review of completed work, or documentation of construction defects. Please call any time.***