

# MEYERS HOME INSPECTION SERVICES

Licensed Home Inspectors

310 Fairmount Ave, Chatham, NJ 07928 ○ (973) 701-1097

March 8, 2006

## HOME INSPECTION REPORT

## Cummings Circle

West Orange, NJ

The following are the findings of a **Home Inspection** of the subject condominium residence unit done on March 5, 2006. This report is for the use of xxxxxxx.

Conditions on date of inspection: Vacant Home. Weather was clear, and approximately 45 Deg. F.

Present at the inspection: D. Meyers, Home Inspector; Mr. & Ms. xxxxxx, buyers; real estate agents; and, on March 7, a representative from Terminite, Inc for the Wood Destroying Insect inspection.



xx Cummings Circle, West Orange, NJ

Description of Property Townhouse style condominium residence. Entry is through a separate entry door from the common drives and paths. The first floor has an entry hall, living room, kitchen, dining area, den and half bathroom. The second floor has three bedrooms and two full bathrooms. The basement level is mostly finished, with a family room/playroom, additional finished room, full bathroom, and several unfinished utility/storage areas. There is an elevated outside rear deck. There is an internal one car garage.

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Type and Condition of Exterior Facades The exterior of the building is covered in vertical wood siding. Trim is wood. Exterior facades are a common area of the condominium, and a complete inspection of these are not included in the inspection.

**Wood trim at a corner on the front of the building is loose, possibly from vehicle impact. Roof edge trim boards are warped and weathered in several sections on the front and right side of the upper section of the roof.**



Damaged wood trim

## Recommendations:

- Advise the condominium association to have the warped/weathered roof edge trim board repaired or replaced as necessary.
- Advise the condominium association to determine responsibility for the damaged corner wood trim in the front, and have damaged wood repaired or replaced.

Windows and Doors Windows are modern double glazed casement type units. A representative number of windows (at least one per room) were tested by partially opening and then closing the windows. All windows were visually examined. Windows were in mostly functional condition on the date of inspection, **with the exception of several windows with loose crank knobs, some windows in need of internal frame repainting, and a window in a second floor bedroom with a loose exterior trim strip.**

*Note: Window guards are not present on any windows. It is possible for persons, particularly children, to easily fall through this type of modern window, with the potential for serious injury. Window guards may or may not be required by the local municipality, however it is our policy to always recommend the installation of window guards on this type of window above the first floor if children are to be present.*

Skylights are present on the home, on both the upper and lower levels of the home. Skylights on the upper level of the home appeared to be in functional condition. No signs of leakage around the upper level skylights were seen on the date of inspection.

**Skylights on the lower level over the living room have significant staining and/or fogging. This may be caused by a combination of internal fogging between the skylight window panes, exterior staining from weathering, and internal staining.**

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**Although no signs of leakage around the skylight into the living space were found on the date of inspection, some leakage into the skylight glass itself may be occurring. In addition, it may not be possible to completely remove any exterior staining and/or internal fogging of these skylights.**



Badly stained skylight

Interior doors are wood, in functional condition.

The unit entry doors are clad wood and sliding glass, in functional condition.

#### **Recommendations:**

- **Consider having window guards installed on all windows above the first floor level to guard against falling hazards.**
- **Have loose crank knobs tightened, have any windows with peeling interior paint re-painted, and have the loose trim strip repaired.**
- **Have the stained lower level skylights cleaned to the extent possible on both the exterior and interior. If cleaning does not result in a satisfactory appearance, skylight replacement may be necessary to achieve acceptably clear skylights.**

Type & Condition of Foundation Walls & Structural Supports The building is built mostly over a full basement. The foundation walls are concrete block, in functional condition where visible. Intermediate structural support is provided by concrete filled tubular steel columns, in functional condition where visible.

The foundation and structural supports are a common area of the multi-unit condominium building, and as such a complete inspection and evaluation is not within the scope of this home inspection.

*Note: Finish materials and stored items in the basement significantly limited access to the foundation walls, and our findings are limited by this.*

Type and Condition of Structural Framing Structural floor framing is dimensional lumber floor joists and a wood main beam. Structural wall framing is dimensional lumber. Structural roof framing is dimensional lumber. Roof sheathing is plywood. Only limited sections of structural floor and wall framing are visible. Structural roof framing is visible within the attic crawlspace. All areas of visible structural framing

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appeared to be in functional condition. The structural framing is a common area of the multi-unit condominium building, and as such, a complete inspection and evaluation is not within of the scope of this home inspection.

Floors and walls were adequately stiff, level and plumb.

*Note: Finish materials in the basement and upper floors significantly limited access to the structural framing, and our findings are limited by this.*

Wood Destroying Insects We do not inspect for wood destroying insect infestation, however as a convenience and as a matter of expedience, an inspection for the presence of wood destroying insects has been ordered by us for this property. The official results of this wood destroying insect inspection will be sent to you under separate cover by the provider of this service, Terminite, Inc, Tel: 908-353-6938.

Recommendations:

- Carefully review the separate wood destroying insect report from Terminite, Inc. and be guided by the recommendations therein.

Exterior Soil Grading and Drainage No unusual drainage conditions were found in proximity to the home. Soil grading around the building was at appropriate levels. Soil grading and maintenance of exterior drainage is the responsibility of the condominium association.

Roof Drainage System The roof drainage system is a common element of the building. Proper maintenance of the roof drainage system by the condominium association can help minimize the possibility that heavy rains will cause flooding or other water damage to siding, roofing and windows.

Roof The roof, flashing, and penetrations were only partially visible from the exterior. The roof is a common area of the condominium, and as such a complete evaluation is not within of the scope of this inspection. Visible exterior shingles appeared to be in functional condition on the date of inspection. No visual evidence of roof leakage into the condominium residence was observed to be present on the date of inspection.

*Note:* Our roof evaluation normally consists of an inspection of the exterior surface covering, including an inspection of visible flashing details. A steeply pitched roof is usually inspected from the ground by use of binoculars. If safely accessible, a moderately pitched roof will be mounted and walked for close inspection. The underside of the roof decking is also closely inspected where accessible, and we use a professional moisture meter to evaluate stained areas that may be evidence of leakage. The interior finished surfaces of the home, especially ceilings and walls at the top or attic floor, are also inspected for evidence of leakage, and a moisture meter is used to evaluate suspect areas.

If we see evidence of roof leakage, we will say so in our report, and recommend that further evaluation and repair or roof replacement be done. Often we see stains on the underside of the roof deck or at ceilings that strongly suggest that the roof has leaked. Depending on the season of the year and recent weather, as well as recent painting or repair done by the owner, we may not be able to say if the roof is currently leaking. What we can say with certainty, is that all roofs eventually leak, and for older homes, parts of the roof system such as flashings in valleys or at the chimneys and plumbing vents may never have been replaced even if the roof surface has been re-covered. Consequently, our inspection report should not be taken as a guarantee that the roof will not leak, but simply as a report on the condition of the roof as we found it on the date of inspection.

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Driveway & Paths The driveway and common parking areas are asphalt, displaying some cracking and wear near the driveway entrance, but in functional condition. The path is a short section of pavers. **Pavers near the front entry steps have settled, possibly from water accumulation, and now have a depression. This could be a falling hazard.** These are common elements and the responsibility of the condominium association.

**Recommendations:**

- **Advise the condominium association to have the settled section of the pavers on the entry path re-set so that they are acceptably level.**

Deck There is a wood deck at the rear of the home off the first floor. This deck is elevated above the walkout area of the basement. **The deck surface and railing are worn, and the railing is very rough and splintered. One of the deck corner support posts is cracked. If this crack increases in size, the structural support strength of the deck could be compromised.**

**Recommendations:**

- **Advise the condominium association to have the cracked deck support post replaced and the splintered deck railing repaired or replaced.**

Patio None present.

Description & Condition of Entrances The individual front entry door and masonry entry area are in functional condition. There is a sliding glass door to the basement walkout area, in functional condition. There is an entry door from the garage to the first floor, in functional condition.

Condition of Masonry or Metal Chimneys Not applicable. These are common element of the building and not included in this home inspection.

Fireplace There is a wood burning fireplace present in the living room. The hearth area and flue damper are in functional condition.

**Significant deposits of creosote are present in the fireplace and lower sections of the chimney flue. This can cause chimney fires.**

**Recommendations:**

- **Have the fireplace and fireplace chimney flue cleaned by a chimney contractor.**

Electrical System Electrical service is by underground feed cable, 240/120 volts, 200 amperes capacity. This entrance service capacity is considered to be adequate for present usage of this home.

Electrical service equipment consists of a main circuit breaker panel, located in the basement. The panel was opened for inspection, and no visible defects were seen to be present within it.

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Grounding of the electrical system is to the metallic water main.

Visible branch circuit wiring is by predominantly by plastic sheathed cable (Romex).

All 15 and 20 ampere branch circuit wiring appears to be copper.

Receptacles are grounded three pin units. A representative number of receptacles were tested, with no defects found.

GFCI electrical outlets are present in all wet areas of the kitchen and bathrooms.

GFCI electrical outlets provide protection against electric shocks in wet areas.

Plumbing System The main water shutoff valve is located in the basement. The main water shutoff valve appeared to be in functional condition.

The visible water pipes within the home are copper tubing, in functional condition on the date of inspection.

Waste disposal appears to be a public system (sewer system).

The drain and vent pipes are PVC, and appeared to be in functional condition on the date of inspection.

Natural Gas Piping Visible rigid and flexible natural gas piping appeared to be in functional condition on the date of inspection.

Heating System This home is heated by two separate gas fired, forced air furnaces, supplying warm air to ducts in a two zone system. The furnaces are located in the basement utility room. When possible, operation of the system is done using normal controls, and this was done on the date of inspection.

When the thermostats were turned up, the furnaces activated, sending warm air to the supply registers. The furnaces were in functional condition on the date of inspection.

Furnace venting is by metal flue pipes to a metal chimney.

**The furnaces appear to be approximately 18 years old. Furnaces of this type typically have design lifetimes of 20 years, although maintenance is often required before this time period.**

### **Recommendations:**

- **Change the furnace filters regularly, at least once in the Spring, and once in the Fall.**
- **Inquire with the gas utility about “worry free” service programs to cover minor maintenance and repairs on the furnaces.**
- **Budget for the need for replacement of the furnaces within the next five years.**

Heating Equipment Clearance & Make-Up Air Provision The heating systems are located in a basement utility room. Combustion makeup air is supplied by a metal grill installed in the door of the basement utility room. **Combustion makeup air may not be adequate. The two furnaces and gas fired hot water heater are all located in this room, and may require more ventilation. Inadequate combustion makeup air can cause inefficient and/or hazardous furnace operation.** Clearance to combustibles is currently adequate.

# MEYERS HOME INSPECTION SERVICES

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## **Recommendations:**

- **Increase ventilation to the basement utility room where the furnaces are located by replacing the solid door to this room with a louvered door.**
- **Do not store combustible items or liquids near the furnaces.**

Central Air Conditioning There are two central AC systems, with air handlers integrated into the furnaces, and external compressors located on the outside of the home. The AC components appear to be approximately 18 years old. Typical exterior central AC compressor lifetimes are 12 to 15 years, however failure before this time is not uncommon for this type of equipment. The AC systems were not tested on the date of inspection, as the outside air temperature was too low. **The AC components are now past the end of their designed service life. Continued reliable operation cannot be assured.**

## **Recommendations:**

- **Have the AC systems tested at the start of the next cooling season and serviced annually by a qualified technician.**
- **Inquire with the local utility about a “worry free” service contract for the central AC systems.**
- **Budget for replacement of the AC components.**
- **Consider replacing the AC components and heating systems together.**

Asbestos This inspection can not guarantee that asbestos materials, which have been commonly used for insulation and some finish material, are present or absent from this home. The amount of asbestos used in construction materials in newer homes has been significantly reduced as compared to homes built 20 or more years ago.

Fuel Oil Storage Not applicable to this condominium residence inspection.

Domestic Water Heater Hot water for washing is generated by a 50 gallon gas fired hot water heater located in the basement. The hot water heater appears to be approximately 8 years old. Typical service life for hot water heaters of this type is 8-10 years. The hot water heater was in functional condition on the date of inspection.

General Interior Condition Interior walls and ceilings within the living space are of drywall gypsum board, in generally acceptable condition, showing only minor cosmetic defects in most areas, **with the exception of flaking paint in the master bathroom on the second floor and some popped sheetrock nails along the stairway.**

**One set of window blinds has pulled out of the ceiling.**

Floors are of wood, carpet and tile, in functional condition.

## **Recommendations:**

- **Have the master bathroom repainted and popped sheetrock nails along the stairs refinished.**
- **Have the window blinds re-mounted securely.**

# MEYERS HOME INSPECTION SERVICES

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310 Fairmount Ave, Chatham, NJ 07928 ○ (973) 701-1097

Kitchen The kitchen sink is in functional condition.

The gas stovetop and electric oven are in functional condition.

There is no garbage disposal.

Functional GFCI electrical outlets are present at the counter areas. GFCI electrical outlets protect against shocks in wet areas.

The dishwasher was in functional condition on the date of inspection.

Water pressure at the sink was adequate. Drainage at the sink was adequate.

Kitchen cabinets and countertops are in functional condition.

Laundry Room The washer and dryer are located in the laundry closet on the first floor. **The dryer vent hose is plastic, is very long, and runs through the basement ceiling. Plastic vent hoses can catch fire if clogged with lint. This vent hose may be difficult to replace due to the length and location of the hose.**

*Note: We do not inspect or operationally test laundry appliances during a home inspection due to the multiplicity of different cycles built in to these units and the large amount of time it takes to complete these cycles. We recommend that any laundry equipment that is to remain in the home be demonstrated to be in satisfactory operational condition before you close on this property.*

*Note: Laundry equipment installed in close proximity to finish materials can cause extensive damage to finish materials in living areas of the home should water leakage occur due to hose or equipment failure, and you should therefore turn off the water to the laundry equipment when it is not in use.*

## **Recommendations:**

- **Have the plastic dryer vent hose replaced with metallic vent hose.**

Bathrooms There is a full bathroom in the basement, with sink, toilet and stall shower with solid base, in functional condition.

There is a half bathroom on the first floor, with sink and toilet, in functional condition.

There are two full bathrooms on the second floor. The main bathroom has a sink, toilet and shower over tub, in functional condition.

The master bathroom has a sink, a toilet, a large tub (not a spa type tub), and a stall shower with solid base. All fixtures in the master bathroom are in functional condition, **with the exception of loose sink faucet knobs.**

**The exhaust fan in the main bathroom is loose on its mountings, and does not appear to be functional. There is no exhaust fan in the master bathroom. Although a window is present in the master bathroom, the lack of a fan may be contributing to flaking paint in this bathroom.**



**Loose, non-functional exhaust fan in main bathroom**

# MEYERS HOME INSPECTION SERVICES

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Water pressure and local drainage were adequate in all bathrooms.

Functional GFCI electrical outlets were present in all bathrooms. GFCI electrical outlets protect against shocks in wet areas.

## **Recommendations:**

- **Have a plumber repair the loose sink faucet knobs in the master bathroom.**
- **Have the exhaust fan in the main bathroom on the second floor repaired or replaced.**
- **Consider installation of an exhaust fan in the master bathroom.**

Interior Stairs Interior stairs within the home are in functional condition.

Insulation Insulation is present in the attic floor, and appears to be correctly installed.

Basement The basement is mostly finished space, with some unfinished utility and storage areas. No signs of water entry or high moisture meter readings were found on the date of inspection.

No sump pump is present. A sump pit is present, which was dry on the date of inspection.

## **Recommendations:**

- **See Roof Drainage section.**
- **Consider installation of a sump pump to reduce the possibility of water entry into the basement during severe weather conditions.**

*Please be aware that the lower level interior space is near or partially below grade level, and foundation walls and the floor slab floor in this home are not perfectly water proofed, and therefore the possibility of water entry with consequent damage to stored materials or current and future finish materials exists, especially during extreme weather conditions.*

Attic Space An unfinished, unfloored attic space is accessible from a ceiling hatch on the second floor. The attic space was viewed from a ladder at the hatch, but was not entered, as no flooring is present. Structural framing and roof sheathing was partially viewed, and no significant defects were seen.

*This attic space is not meant to be entered except for service. Insulation obscures many of the attic floor joists. A person could easily step between the joists, which could result in damage and injury.*

Garage There is a one car interior garage, with one power overhead door. The garage door and door hardware are in functional condition. **The garage door opener is obsolete, with no electric eye safety cutoff mechanism. Adults and children can and have been seriously injured by this older type of opener mechanism.**

## **Recommendations:**

- **Replace the garage door opener lacking electric eye safety cutoff mechanism with a new garage door opener meeting current safety standards.**

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Smoke & Carbon Monoxide Detectors & Fire Safety Devices Installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors as per local code are recommended for this one family residence. We do not test fire safety devices, since these must be checked on a regular basis for proper operation, and this should be done prior to closing on this property and regularly according to manufacturer advice thereafter.

Lead Paint Many homes built prior to 1978 do have surfaces covered with paint containing lead oxide pigment, and under certain circumstances this lead-based paint can become a health hazard. This home appears to have been built *after* 1978.

Mold & Fungal Conditions Mold and other fungal organisms are a natural part of our environment and can not be completely eliminated. Certain types of construction and wet conditions in a home can, however, allow excessive growth of mold, and damage to the structure and a health risk may occur. Wet insulation in attics and finish and stored materials in basements or below grade areas may be especially prone to accelerated mold growth when water penetration occurs. We are not certified mold inspectors or mold experts, and this inspection does not include testing for mold or other fungal organisms.

Ordered Tests Radon, results pending laboratory analysis.

**General Disclaimer** The observations and findings presented in this report are based upon what was visible on the date of inspection. Many unseen problems can exist in a home without visible evidence present. It is recommended that a qualified technician in the various fields be used to do invasive testing whenever a problem is suspected. Costs of repairs or replacement can not be accurately determined by this inspector. While every attempt has been made from a professional standpoint to disclose deficiencies in the home that is being considered for purchase, due diligence must be assumed by the buyer, as they alone will bear the financial burden to correct unforeseen or hidden problems that may occur after purchase. All separate reports from other inspections for wood destroying insects, testing laboratories, septic system and/or well experts, mold experts, etc. should be carefully read and considered as well.

*This is a Home Inspection with defined terms, conditions and limitations as set forth in the "Inspection Agreement", which is attached to and is part of this report. The inspection is limited to accessible visible components of the home as found on the date of inspection, with no guarantees implied. The inspection is done by, or under the direct supervision of, a professional home inspector licensed to practice in the State of NJ. As consultants for the buyer(s), we affirm that we have no proprietary interest in this property, nor do we have any other agreement with or business relationship with the principals involved in the sale of this property.*



Daniel Meyers, Inspector  
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