

December 1, 2007

HOME INSPECTION REPORT

**Loft Building
Jersey City, NJ**

The following are the findings of a **Home Inspection** of the subject condominium residence unit done on December 1, 2007. This report is for the use of XXXXX..

Conditions on date of inspection: furnished loft style residence. Weather was cloudy, and approximately 50 Deg. F.

Present at the inspection: R. R. Meyers, Home Inspector; J., buyers; real estate representative.



Loft Building Jersey city, NJ



View of Interior from Upper Level

Description of Property Loft style condominium residence on the top floor of a three story building. Originally constructed for commercial usage in the late 19th century, this building was converted into loft style condominium space in the late 20th century. The residence inspected, is a high volume space with a ceiling height of approximately 45 feet (directly under the roof). The unit is entered from the common hallway, and there is elevator access to the hall. The space has been built out into three levels. The first level, which is the largest area, consists of a main living/work floor with open areas, a bathroom, and a kitchen, and also storage areas and the furnace closet. The next level up is a semi-open finished loft with the master bedroom, and a full bathroom. There is also a room on this level which appears to have been designed as a recording studio or sound proofed room. There is also another loft level (uppermost) which contains the laundry facilities, water heater and an exercise room.

Type and Condition of Exterior Facades The exterior of the building is predominantly

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old red brick masonry, which are also the structural exterior walls of the building. The uppermost sections of the exterior brick façade shows recent re-pointing or replacement of the brick, however the major sections of the façade, including the area directly outside the unit do not show evidence of recent restoration. **Old red brick masonry exterior walls are by their nature porous, and therefore water penetration through these walls is possible, and when this occurs, damage to interior finish materials may occur.** The unit is at the front of the building and the front interior wall is the raw brick interior surface of the building structural wall. **Inspection of the interior surface of this wall did find evidence of water penetration in the form of white efflorescence stains in limited areas, as well as stains on the wood beam at the top of the wall.** The water penetration may be a result of inadequate water proofing of the exterior brick walls, or a roof leak, or a combination of both.

Exterior facades are a common area of the condominium, and a complete evaluation of these is not included in this condominium residence inspection.



View of Interior of Front Wall- Stains suggest Water Penetration

Recommendation: Advise the building management of the evidence of water penetration of the brick wall, as they may have additional information regarding this condition, or may have a program or plan for repair. Monitor the wall for evidence of significant additional water penetration, and if this occurs, notify the building management immediately so that repairs can be done.

Windows and Doors Windows are metal frame double hung, double glazed units. All windows were tested by partially opening and then closing the windows. All windows were visually examined. All windows were found to be in functional condition on the

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date of inspection.

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.

Interior doors are wood, in functional condition.

The unit entry door is clad wood product, in functional condition.

Recommendations:

- **Consider installation of window guards to increase safety.**

Type & Condition of Structural Supports This building is built with structural brick masonry exterior walls, and appears to have a timber framed interior floor support system. The roof support framing is heavy timber trusses, with the use of lap joints and steel bolting connectors. Interior structural supports for the loft spaces are also timber framed, with the use of steel hangers and a limited amount of steel framing. Structural framing and floor supports were found to be functional. The common building foundation and structural supports were mostly not visible during the inspection. The common foundation and structural supports are a common area of the multi-unit condominium building, and as such a complete evaluation is within the scope of this inspection.



Typical Structural Framing Detail

No evidence of structurally significant defects was seen within the residence.

Wood Destroying Insects No evidence of current wood destroying insect activity or damage was seen during the course of this inspection. This statement is strictly limited to the subject condominium or cooperative unit only, and does not include other areas of the building.

Exterior Soil Grading and Drainage Soil grade levels at the visible area on the front of

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the structure appeared to be appropriate on the date of inspection. Soil grading and maintenance of exterior drainage is the responsibility of the condominium association. No unusual drainage conditions were seen around the structure on the date of inspection.

Roof Drainage System The roof is drained by a flat area at the roof edge with scuppers penetrating the parapet wall discharging to metal downpipes attached to the exterior of the building. The roof drainage system is a common element of the building, and only a limited area was directly inspected from the roof. **We observed standing water on the roof by the edge which indicates imperfect drainage.**



Standing Water at Roof Edge

Proper maintenance of the roof drainage system by the condominium association can help minimize the possibility of interior water entry into your condominium residence.

Recommendation:

- **Advise the building management of the adverse condition (standing water at the roof edge) so that they can take appropriate action.**

Roof The area of the roof over the residence is pitched and covered with asphalt composition shingles for most of its surface, with a mineral covered membrane at the lower edges. The roof has penetrations for multiple skylights and vents. The roof was inspected by close view of limited areas by directly walking the surface where safe. The condition of the surfaces visible found them to be serviceable. As described in the previous section of this report, the lower section where the roof drains has standing water, which is an adverse condition that may result in premature failure and leakage. **From within The residence we did see stains that suggest prior or current roof leakage. Interior stains were present at the front ceiling edge, and also at one skylight in the open area, and also at the skylight in the sound room within the residence.**

The roof is a common area of the condominium, and as such a complete evaluation is

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not within the scope of this inspection. We noted that roofing work was being done on the date of inspection, however we do not have further information related to this work.

Recommendation:

- **Consult the building management to find out more about roofing work that appears to be ongoing, and the history of leakage into the residence.**
- **Monitor the ceiling and skylights for evidence of active leakage, and if this is observed then the building management should be notified to take corrective action as appropriate.**

Driveway, Parking Areas & Paths These are all common elements and the responsibility of the condominium association. These areas are not included in this inspection.

Deck/Terrace None present.

Description & Condition of Entrances The building is entered from a common lobby. There is an elevator present. These are common elements of the building and not included in this inspection.

Condition of Masonry, Metal or PVC Chimneys There is a double wall metal vent for the freestanding fireplace within The residence. The furnace is vented by PVC pipe to the exterior through the roof. The water heater is vented by a metal vent pipe to the exterior through the roof. All of these vents were inspected where accessible and visible at the exterior. No visible defects were seen at the fireplace vent pipe, or at the PVC furnace vent. **The vent for the water heater was observed to be disconnected from the water heater exhaust outlet, and this is a hazardous condition.**



Water Heater Vent is Not Connected

Recommendation:

- **Properly re-attach the water heater to the vent pipe.**

Fireplace There is a free standing light duty sheet metal fireplace in the main living area. We did not operate this wood burning fireplace. The exterior and hearth area appeared to be in acceptable condition. This type of fireplace is designed to be enclosed. **The exterior surfaces of this sheet metal unit can get hot enough to cause burns, and the exterior of this fireplace is not protected by an enclosure.**

Recommendation:

- **Enclose the fireplace to reduce the risk of burns.**
- **Always use caution when using this fireplace. Do not leave fires burning**

unattended. Burn only moderate amounts of well dried hardwood or commercial fireplace logs.

Electrical System Electrical service is by common building feed cable, 240/120 volts, at least 100 amperes capacity.

Electrical service equipment found consists of a circuit breaker sub-panel, located within The residence. **There is most likely another electrical panel containing a main disconnect and possibly other circuit breakers located elsewhere in the building, however access to other areas was not possible, and we did not inspect other equipment.**

The sub panel within The residence was opened for inspection, and wiring within was found to be in functional condition on the date of inspection.

Grounding of the electrical system is to common building ground.

Visible branch circuit wiring is by predominantly by armored sheathed cable.

All visible 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.

Functional GFCI electrical outlets are present in all wet areas of the kitchen & bathrooms. *GFCI electrical outlets provide protection against electric shocks in wet areas.*

Overhead and track lighting is predominantly by low voltage lamps fed by specialized transformers. **There is some specialized control equipment for lighting present that we could not evaluate or inspect. Wiring and lighting controls in the sound room are also specialized; some of this lighting did not respond to switches accessible.**

Recommendation:

- **Consult the owner or building management to determine the location of the main electrical service panel.**
- **Consult the owner or available plans for the interior electrical wiring for The residence for more information on the specialized electrical equipment and low voltage lighting.**

Plumbing System 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 in the unit are metal and PVC. Drain pipes appeared to be in functional condition on the date of inspection. *Note that drain pipes and other plumbing is located within walls or under floors, and was not accessible for inspection, and is therefore not included in this home inspection.*

Natural Gas Piping Visible rigid and flexible natural gas piping appeared to be in acceptable mechanical condition on the date of inspection. **The gas range/oven in the kitchen was not functional, and this may be due to the gas feed for this appliance being shut off. We could not access or inspect the gas feed for the range.**

Recommendation:

- **Have the gas range demonstrated operational before closing on this**

property.

Heating System This residence is heated by a gas fired forced air furnace, located in the utility closet on the main living level within The residence. Furnace venting is by direct vent PVC pipe to the exterior. Heat is distributed by air ducts and registers installed in the open space above the living areas.

When the thermostat was turned up, the furnace activated, sending warm air to the supply registers. The furnace was in functional condition on the date of inspection.

This furnace appears to be approximately 3 years old. Furnaces of this type typically have design lifetimes of 20 years, although maintenance is often required before this time period.

The air filter for the furnace is an electrostatic unit mounted in the air return duct next to the furnace casing. *This home inspection does not include evaluation of electrostatic filtration systems.*

*Note on Heat Distribution: The residence is a large open space with a very high ceiling. The heating system delivers warm air to the space approximately high above the main floor level. **Although there are ceiling fans present set to blow air down to the main floor level, warm air naturally rises, and therefore the upper loft levels within the living space are likely to be warmer than the main floor level.***

Note on Presence of Additional Thermostats: In addition to the thermostat located on the main living level, two additional thermostats were found; one in a storage room on the main living level, and another in the sound room loft. Operation of these thermostats did not appear to have any effect on the main furnace. We are not aware of any other heating systems, and did not find any others, and therefore the purpose of these additional thermostats is not known to us.

Recommendations:

- **Inquire with the local utility regarding the availability of “worry free” service contracts, to cover minor maintenance and repairs to this furnace.**
- **If uneven heat distribution is not acceptable, then a re-design or modification of the duct and register system would be required.**
- **Inquire with the owner as to the function or purpose of the additional thermostats located in the storage room and also the sound room.**

Heating Equipment Clearance & Make-Up Air Provision The heating system is located in the utility closet within the subject unit. Clearance to combustibles was adequate on the date of inspection. Combustion makeup air is drawn directly from the exterior through a PVC pipe, and appears to be adequate.

Central Air Conditioning There is a central AC system, with air handler integrated into the furnace, and external compressor. The AC components located outside of The residence could not be inspected due to lack of access and the specific compressor/condenser unit for The residence could not be identified. 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 system was not tested on the date of inspection, as the outside air temperature was too low for a safe and effective test.



Exterior AC Equipment

Advisory Recommendations:

- *Have the AC system serviced annually by a qualified technician.*
- *Inquire with the local utility about a “worry free” service contract for the central AC system.*

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 75 gallon gas hot water heater located on the upper loft level. The hot water heater appears to be approximately 15 year old as determined by the manufacturer data plate. Typical service life for hot water heaters of this type is 8-12 years. **This water heater is now past the end of its design service life, and is now more likely to fail, requiring replacement on an emergency basis.**

The flue pipe venting this water heater had come loose, and this is a hazard.

Recommendation:

- **Properly connect the flue vent pipe to the water heater.**
- **Budget for near term replacement of this aging water heater.**

General Interior Condition Interior walls and ceilings within the living space are of various materials including wood, drywall gypsum board, and other composite surfaces, and the front wall is rough red brick without any finish wall. Floors are of various materials, including wood product, tile, and composition panels. Walls floors, and ceilings are in generally acceptable condition, showing only minor cosmetic defects.

Kitchen

The kitchen is an open area on the main living level.

The kitchen sink is in functional condition.

The gas stovetop and oven was not 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.

There is a dishwasher present. **The dishwasher was given a limited operational test and was found to leak from the door seal.**

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

Kitchen cabinets and countertops are in functional condition.

Recommendations:

- **Have the dishwasher repaired or replaced.**
- **Have the gas range/oven serviced or put into operation and demonstrated functional before you close on this property.**

Laundry Equipment

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.

Bathrooms There are two full bathrooms, one on the main living level, and one master bathroom in the loft area. The main bathroom has a sink, toilet and open shower. The master bathroom has two sinks, a toilet, tiled stall shower, and separate spa tub.

Water pressure and local drainage were adequate in all bathrooms.

Functional GFCI electrical outlets are present in the bathrooms. *GFCI electrical outlets protect against shocks in wet areas.*

All fixtures and faucets in the bathrooms were inspected and operated, including a full tub test of the spa. Bathrooms are generally functional, however we found the following conditions in need of attention or further evaluation:

The sink in the main bathroom is not securely mounted to the wall.

The shower in the main bathroom is an open design without adequate protection against water spilling out on to the bathroom floor.

The spa tub circulation plumbing discharged debris into the tub when it was tested, and this is an unsanitary condition.

Wood panels in the vicinity of the master bathroom exterior show stains from water. It could not be determined if these stains were from bathroom leakage or prior leakage from the roof.

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Limitation: We operate showers and inspect areas outside and below for evidence of leaks such as ceiling stains. Tiled stall showers can have minor leakage or develop leaks that cannot be found in the course of a home inspection, and we are not responsible for finding such defects if visual evidence is not present on the date of inspection.

Recommendations:

- **Properly secure the main bathroom sink to the wall.**
- **Use care when using the main bathroom shower, as the design may allow spillage and leaks.**
- **Sanitize the spa tub circulation plumbing.**
- **Further evaluation to determine the cause of the water stains on the panels in the vicinity of the master bathroom.**

Interior Stairs Functional and structurally sound on the date of inspection.

Insulation No insulation was visible for inspection.

Basement None present for The residence.

Attic Space No attic spaces were accessible from within the unit.

Garage None present.

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.

Carbon Monoxide Tests Carbon monoxide (CO) is produced when fossil fuels are burned. Properly operating gas, or fuel oil burning heating systems normally produce very low levels of this toxic gas, and it is normally vented to the outside of the home. The best protection against carbon monoxide poisoning in a home is regular maintenance of the heating systems and chimney and flue connections, as well as properly maintained carbon monoxide detectors/alarms in the home. In the course of our home inspection the inspector wears a CO meter/alarm for his protection and yours, and all areas of the home that are entered are therefore automatically checked during our inspection. If the CO meter indicates a high level of this gas, we alert occupants and state the condition in the report.

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 or renovated *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

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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 No additional tests ordered or performed.

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. While every reasonable attempt has been made 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. Costs of repairs or replacement cannot be accurately determined by this inspector.

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.

Please Note: *This is a Home Inspection with defined terms, conditions and limitations as set forth in the "Inspection Agreement", previously sent to you. The inspection is limited to accessible visible components of the home as found on the date of inspection, with no warranties or guarantees implied. The home inspection is done by a fully qualified 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.*

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