

The Old Kirk and Muirhouse Manse

The manse is a late Victorian detached stone villa with slated roofs, situated at 35 Silverknowes Road, Edinburgh EH4 5LL. It comprises on the ground floor, an entrance hall, a lounge, dining room, study, kitchen and toilet; and on the first floor, 4 double bedrooms and a large bathroom. There is a detached single garage, and extensive and well-kept gardens.

The accommodation meets the manse standard and the property was in generally good condition, subject to the comments noted below. It had recently been tenanted, and was vacant at the time of our visit, following departure of the latest tenant.

There is a separate garage and grounds are maintained on a weekly basis by a locally appointed gardener. There is a 24/7 monitored alarm system covering both the house and the garage.

Comments – exterior

Window sashes and frames are in need of repainting, particularly on the south-facing frontage. There are signs of poor preparation in previous redecoration, and where this is the case, the paintwork should be stripped back to bare wood and reprimed. There are places where bare wood is already visible, and at risk of deterioration from weather. The garage doors are also in need of repainting. This work should all be carried out in the first half of 2023.

The render on the chimney of the single-storey outshot at the rear of the property has failed, exposing brickwork and allowing growth of vegetation. The plants should be removed and the render repaired. We understand this will be done as part of annual roof maintenance which is already programmed.

Comments – interior

The interior is in good decorative order, though staining of areas of the outer walls in the two east side bedrooms indicates that there has been damp penetration. We were told that the external defect had been remedied early in 2022, and that the wall could take a year to dry out. Once it has been confirmed that water is no longer getting in, the affected areas of the bedroom walls should be repainted.

There is evidence of cracking in the walls above some bedroom doors on the upper landing. This is probably old, but should be kept under observation.

Floors are in good condition. Some are polished wood, others carpeted. Carpets appear clean and of good quality.

Heating is by a modern gas boiler. Windows are generally single glazed, though secondary glazing has been installed in some rooms. We understand there is an EPC rating of D, which is fairly typical for manses of this age and type, but indicates a property that would be expensive to heat on a minister's stipend. The General Assembly has adopted a policy of raising manse EPC performance to at least C by the end of 2025. The congregation should seek advice on appropriate measures to achieve this.

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