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QUINQUENNIAL CONDITION REPORT

On

THE OLD TOWN HALL BUILDING
HIGH STREET
ROYAL WOOTTON BASSETT
WILTSHIRE
SN4 7AF



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INSTRUCTIONS

Instructions were received from Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council, requesting an inspection of the property known as The Old Town Hall, High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 7AE.

1.2 CLIENT DETAILS

This report has been prepared on behalf of The Royal Wootton Bassett Town Hall & Trust, C/O Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council, 117 High Street, Royal Wootton Bassett, SN4 7AF.

1.3 PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The Old Town Hall is a timber framed structure, supported on fifteen stone columns and accessed by way of an external timber staircase. The roof is pitched, with hipped ends and sprocketed eaves, which project beyond the external wall line. The eaves overhangs are supported on carved timber corbels. Roof slopes are overlaid with natural stone slates.

The timber framing of the exterior walls is visible, interlaced with rendered infill panels. Set into the timber frame there are a number of window openings, comprising timber casements with leaded lights.

The building is currently used as the Town Museum.

1.4 LISTING INFORMATION

SU 08 SE WOOTTON BASSETT HIGH STREET (Central)
11/129 Town Hall, 17.1.55 GV II

Town Hall, c1700, much restored 1889, timber framed raised on stone columns. Hipped stone slate roof. Ground floor open, 15 stone columns of tapered oolite with bulbous capitals and torus bases. Stair with heavy turned balusters and moulded strings to upper floor, three-and-a-half bays, former Council chamber. Stair and office in half bay. Elevation straight corner braces and herringbone framing under leaded wood casement windows, perhaps improved when building restored by Lady Meux in 1889. Whitened infill panels with Meux arms and inscription REST ANNO 1889 both ends. Roof now with weathercock replacing central timber lantern. Internally, timber posts jowelled carrying chamfered and stopped tie beams, cross ties removed when ceiling raised to collar level at restoration. Stair partly renewed at restoration. 6-panelled door. Chair dated 1686.

Building, in a conservative style, was presented to the borough by Lawrence Hyde 1st Earl of Rochester as Council Chamber and Court Room. Ownership presented to town in 1895, when Blind House removed from below the stair.

2.0 DETAILS OF THE INSPECTION

2.1 DATE OF INSPECTION

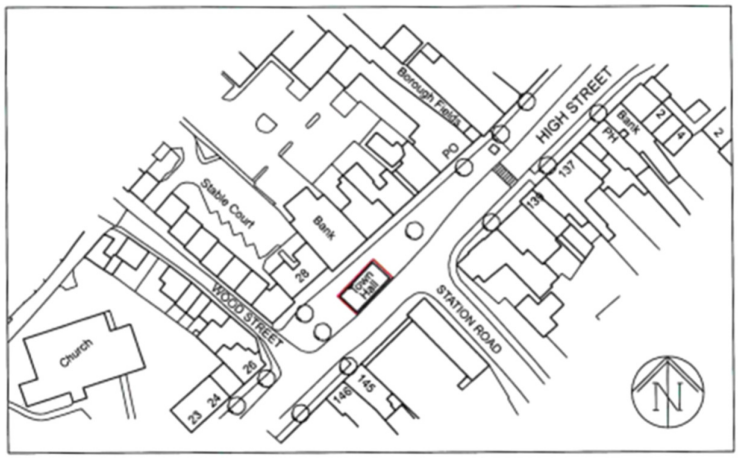
The inspection took place on the morning of Tuesday 19th April 2022. Access was arranged through discussions with Michelle Temple (Acting Town Clerk), Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council.

2.2 WEATHER CONDITIONS

The weather at the time of inspection was cool and breezy, predominantly cloudy, with intermittent periods of sunshine. No significant rainfall had occurred within the previous 48 hours.

2.3 ORIENTATION

The building has no obvious frontage. The primary elevation is therefore assumed to the one with the direct road frontage, which faces southeast. For the purpose of this report, left and right are as viewed from the High Street, facing the southeast elevation.



3.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE REPORT

3.1 SCOPE

The following report is based on a visual inspection of the property and has been undertaken to identify:

a). Any repair work completed since the date of last inspection
b). The general condition of the building fabric
c). The detailed condition of the fabric, including structural walls, roof coverings, fittings and monuments etc
d). Required works of repair and their order of priority
e). Recommendations on the building (and contents) maintenance and further investigations that may be necessary
f). Reference to historical factors, where applicable

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE INSPECTION

External Limitations

The external elements of the building were inspected from ground level, with the use of binoculars.

Due to the height of the building and its proximity to the adjoining buildings, it was not possible to clearly inspect the entire north facing roof slope. We were unable to access or inspect the method of fixing or establish security of the weathervanes.

We were unable to reach or closely inspect the condition of the timber boarding or the moulded timber corbels beneath the roof overhang and were unable to closely inspect all of the render panels and exposed framework.

We were unable to access the understairs cupboard or inspect the structural framework to the underside of the staircase.

Internal Limitations

Whilst we were able to access the roof void, we were unable to inspect the entire roof structure, as some of the ceilings have been underlined in lath and plaster.

Large sections of the internal wall faces were obscured by the built-in display cabinets and exhibits. We were unable to access or inspect the structure which supports the first floor.

We did not test any of the building services and were unable to access or inspect the mains electric and water connections which were housed within the cupboard beneath the access staircase.

3.3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The last inspection was undertaken by ARicab Chartered Architects, of 5 Shrivenham Hundred Business Park, Shrivenham, Oxon, SN6 8TZ. We believe the previous inspection took place in August 2017, though the report is dated January 2018. The report was updated again in October 2019.

In preparing our own report, we have referred back to the previous documentation, paying particular attention to the recommendations for repair and investigation.

For the sake of continuity, this report follows the same basic layout as that which was previously adopted.

3.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OPENING UP AND FURTHER INSPECTION

- The eaves level felt should be exposed and inspected, to ascertain whether it is starting to perish, which may in turn be contributing to the water staining of the timber boards and corbels at eaves level.
- Investigations should take place as to the cause of staining on the undersides of the exposed perimeter ring beam.
- The tops of the columns should be inspected to ascertain whether lead caps need to be installed.
- The underside of the staircase framework should be exposed and inspected to ascertain whether the treads and risers are suitably supported and secured.
- The structure serving the first floor should be exposed so that its condition can be assessed and any necessary remedial works considered.

3.5 CONDITION RATINGS

The report is separated into sections, reflecting the various elements of the property. A description of each element and its make-up is provided, followed by a summary of condition and recommendations for any necessary repairs. The repairs are graded on a scale denoting the urgency of attention required.

GRADE	ACTION
A	Urgent – requires immediate attention
B	Requires attention within the next 18 months
C	Requires attention within the next 18-24 months
D	Requires attention within 5 years
E	A desirable improvement but no timescale is defined
M	Item considered to be routine maintenance

4.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The building appears to remain largely in good structural condition, though it appears that little has been done since the time of the last inspection. As a result, certain elements have suffered continued deterioration. Parts of the external envelope are now at a stage where they require routine and general maintenance, primarily to protect against further and potentially more serious degradation, but also to improve aesthetics and general presentation.

A degree of opening up and investigation of the structure is necessary and there is justification for to explore upgrades and improvements to building services, insulation provisions and some fixtures and fittings.

5.0 THE REPORT - EXTERIOR

5.1 THE ROOF

5.1.1 Description

The roof slopes are overlaid with natural stone slates, laid in diminishing courses. We believe the roof was stripped and re-laid in 1996.

Eaves are sprocketed, with large cussom tiles forming an overhang to discharge surface water. Ridges are finished with angled tiles, bedded on cement mortar. Lead soakers are visible beneath the exposed bottom edges of the hips, though we cannot confirm if these extend the full height. External faces of the hip ends are finished with cement mortar. A matching pair of weathervanes are mounted on the ridge, at the head of each hip end.

5.1.2 Condition

The thickness and uneven profile of the stone tiles results in slight surface irregularities, though the covering is consistent with no obvious cracked, broken or missing slates and no obvious routes of water penetration. In one or two places, there are gaps between the cussom tiles, arising largely from installation but made more pronounced by general weathering and surface deterioration. These gaps create a path of water penetration and have contributed to surface staining and slight deterioration of the timber boards and exposed corbels below.

A degree of moss and lichen was visible on each roof slope, though was more pronounced on the rear elevation, due to directional heading. Moss was also visible along the ridge line and on the face of some cussom tiles. The moss will hold moisture, accelerating rate of weathering and increasing the risk of frost damage, particularly during the winter months. The extent of development does not warrant removal at this time, though periodic treatment and removal should be considered going forward.

Ridge tiles are in reasonable condition, exhibiting some surface erosion as a result of general weathering and moss growth. In one or two places the mortar bedding is starting to crack and small sections of mortar are likely to start breaking away. Lifting, cleaning and re-bedding of the ridge will need to be considered in the short to medium term.

The cement mortar to the hip ends is also starting to crack and whilst there are currently no sections which have detached, these will inevitably continue to deteriorate. Replacement of the hip fillets will need to be considered in the short to medium term. Use of a lead should be considered as a more robust long-term solution, though this would necessitate discussions with the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

The weathervanes are in reasonable condition, though their method of fixing and security could not be established from the ground. This should be checked.

A lack of guttering or eaves guards means there is nothing to prevent damaged slates or loose sections of mortar from falling to the ground. Considering the position of the building in relation

to the road and pedestrianised areas, it must be accepted that there is an ongoing risk of injury to members of the public. An eaves guard system should be considered, though this would significantly alter the appearance of the building and would necessitate Listed Building Approval. Such a system is unlikely to prove favourable with the Local Authority Conservation department, though discussions around the various options would be sensible.

5.1.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a	Treatment and removal of moss and lichen	C
b	Lift, clean and re-bed ridge tiles	C
c	Remove and re-form hip fillets – consider use of lead	C
d	Check security & fixing of weathervanes	B
e	Consider installation of eaves guards	E

5.2 RAINWATER GOODS

5.2.1 Description

The building has no form of guttering and no downpipes, with surface water being discharged from the roof via large eaves overhangs. The eaves are lined on the undersides with exposed timber boards, supported on carved timber corbels, which project out from the timber framed walls below.

At ground level there are no dedicated storm drains. A shallow open gully, formed with brick paviours, runs along the rear perimeter. On the remaining elevations the paviours are laid flush with the slabs which run beneath the footprint of the building. There is therefore a reliance on gradients and ground levels for the purpose of promoting water run-off.

5.2.2 Condition

Surface water run-off and penetration through the joints of the cussom tiles has resulted in some staining and discolouration of the exposed eaves boards. In several places the boards are split, some sections are missing and there is evidence of some minor early-onset decay. It is possible that the roofing felt in these areas has started to perish and become brittle with age and exposure to the elements. Opening up and investigation of the eaves level felt is advised in the short-term. Several eaves boards will need to be replaced.

The carved corbels are free of obvious decay, though several are stained and many exhibit cracking and surface irregularities due to long-term exposure to the elements. A number of replacement corbels were noted on each elevation and there are slight inconsistencies in size and profile. The corbels require closer inspection. It is anticipated that some isolated examples will need to be replaced in the short-term. Cosmetics need to be renewed.

There is evidence to suggest that surface water ponds at the base of the stairs. The paving in this area could be lifted and ground levels adjusted, though careful consideration will need to be applied to aesthetics and to the relationship with the adjoining slabs and staircase. The extent of work involved is likely to outweigh any potential benefit.

5.2.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Expose and inspect condition of eaves level felt	B
b.	Replace decayed/split/missing eaves boards	B
c.	Undertake closer inspection of timber corbels and allow for localised replacement	B
d.	Renew cosmetics	B
e.	Consider slight adjustment of detailing to base of stairs	E

5.3 EXTERIOR WALLS

5.3.1 Description

The exterior walls comprise a hardwood frame, built off a timber ring-beam which bears onto the exposed stone columns. Historic photographs confirm that the exterior face of the building was originally rendered.

Much of the structural timber framework is now exposed. On the longer side elevations, the framework is split into 3 ½ bays, with structural corner posts and intermediate vertical posts, which align with the columns and primary roof trusses above. These primary structural members support diagonal braces which transfer loads from the perimeter eaves beam. Between the main structural elements are a range of vertical and horizontal members. Beneath the various window openings there is herringbone framing, with curved sway braces visible on the gable ends.

The framework exhibits the scars of various schemes of historic repair. It is clear that some sections of the framework have been replaced and some of the joints have been filled with Oakum Caulking. Reference to the previous condition report indicates that parts of the frame were treated historically with Stockholm Tar, which lead to problems with water penetration and deterioration of the panels. We believe that the framework was last treated in 2014, at which stage a linseed/Danish oil mix was applied to the exterior face.

Sections of the wall between the framework are finished with rendered infill panels. The majority of the panels are formed with lime render, treated with a limewash. On the west elevation (to the central panel either side of the coat of arms) and on the south elevation (at the eastern corner) several of the render panels have been replaced with a cement-based render.

We understand the exterior walls were last redecorated around 7 years ago, at which stage there were adhesion issues in these replacement panels. Subsequent remedial works included the application of a water-based stabilising solution prior to redecoration.

5.3.2 Condition

The timber frame is free of significant defect and decay, though cosmetics are tired. Many of the primary elements exhibit shakes (splits) and in numerous places there are open joints between timber components and the adjacent infill panels. The framework has suffered from a degree of weathering and some patch repairs and cosmetic upgrades are now required to protect against decay and improve aesthetics.

Significant surface staining was noted on the undersides of the exposed perimeter ring-beam. The staining has occurred in isolated areas, though its cause is not immediately obvious. This could be due to surface water tracking around the face of the beam or may be due to penetration through the face. Further investigation is required. It may be prudent to consider installing small lead drips along the upper face of the beams or forming drip grooves in the undersides to assists with water dispersal. Either option will though require Listed Building Consent and should be discussed with the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

Several of the render panels have cracked and in places, small holes have formed where the render abuts the framework. On the southwest elevation, the face coat of one render panel has failed completely and others are starting to suffer in a similar way. Some render patch repairs and reinstatement are required.

Elsewhere cosmetics are tired. Much of the exterior limewash is cracked and has started to flake and lift. Cosmetics will need to be overhauled.

5.3.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Fill shakes and open joints to framework	B
b.	Rub down and treat exposed framework with linseed/Danish oil	B
c.	Investigate staining to undersides of ring beam	C
d.	Consider installing lead drips/forming drip grooves to disperse water	E
e.	Reinstate defective/missing render panels and fill gaps at junction with frame	B
f.	Renew cosmetics to render panels	B

5.4 COLUMNS

5.4.1 Description

The building sits on a range of 15 tapered stone columns, with squared heads. Several of the heads have been lined with lead.

Detailing at the base of the columns varies. We assume these all originally had squared plinths, though where ground levels have been raised and hard surfacing applied over the years, several of the squared bases, particularly along the roadside edge, are no longer visible.

5.4.2 Condition

The stone columns are generally in stable condition, though nearly all have suffered from deterioration brought about by age, exposure and damage from impact or friction. Several of the columns have been subject to historic splice repairs and others have been treated with sacrificial shelter-coats. The columns along the roadside have, unsurprisingly suffered the most significant erosion, due to the effects of road salt and airborne contaminants.

We believe the columns were last repaired in or around 2014 and they are now at a stage where further attention is required. Surface cracks and eroded joints will need to be raked out and filled. Eroded bases will need to be repaired – potentially with damage stone sections carefully cut out and replaced. Friction damage needs to be made good through careful pointing and filling.

Loose/friable sections of the shelter coats should be removed, and a replacement shelter coat applied.

A closer inspection of the heads of the columns should be undertaken, to assess the condition of the lead and to ascertain whether similar detailing needs to be adopted elsewhere.

5.4.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Rake out and re-point surface cracks and eroded joints	B
b.	Localised repair/replacement of defective/eroded bases to several columns	C
c.	Fill sections of friction damage	B
d.	Remove and reinstate shelter-coat	B

5.5 WINDOWS

5.5.1 Description

The property has ten windows, two in either gable end and three on each of the side elevations. The windows comprise opening metal casements set into timber surrounds with central mullions. The casements have leaded lights.

A modern aluminium secondary glazing system has been fitted internally, with sliding openers. The window reveals have been clad internally with peg-board.

5.5.2 Condition

The timber window surrounds are in reasonable condition, free of any obvious decay. We believe they were last decorated as part of the 2014 scheme of remedial works and as a result, cosmetics are a little tired. The metal casements are also in reasonable condition, exhibiting light surface corrosion on the internal faces, due to the occurrence of condensation. Some of the glazing putty around the perimeter edge of the windows is starting to crack, where it is becoming brittle with age. All of the windows are dirty and in need of a good clean.

The secondary glazing system is, for the most part, in reasonable condition, though several of the sliding sections have warped, meaning the centre rails no longer meet. In one or two instances there are notable gaps between the sliding casements, meaning they will offer little in the way of heat retention.

Several of the peg-board cladding panels have become loose and need to be re-fixed.

5.5.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	The windows, especially those facing the highway, need cleaning	A
b.	Window frames and casements need cosmetic refresh	C
c.	The warped secondary glazing panels should be adjusted or replaced to assist with minimising heat loss	A
d.	Loose sections of peg-board need to be re-secured	C
e.	Cracked glazing putty will need to be raked out and replaced to maintain security of the glass	C

5.6 EXTERNAL DOOR

5.6.1 Description

At the top of the external staircase there are a pair of vertically boarded doors. The doors swing outwards over the staircase. The left-hand leaf is the slave. The door is secured with key-operated mortice locks and large shoot-bolts top and bottom.

5.6.2 Condition

The position of the doors means they are sheltered from the elements and as such the doors are in reasonable condition, exhibiting no evidence of water staining or decay and only minor deterioration to cosmetics.

The primary door leaf operates freely, though the slave unit rubs a little on the floor. The shoot bolts are stiff to operate. Both would benefit from a little easing and adjusting.

The opening arrangement of the doors is not ideal, as they swing out over the staircase. As a result there is no external landing and it can prove a little tricky to open the door when walking up the stairs.

As with all external joinery, routine cleaning and upgrades to cosmetics should be considered, though in this instance the requirement is less urgent.

5.6.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Ease and adjust door to prevent it catching on floor	B
b.	Ease and adjust shoot-bolts	B
c.	Plan for routine redecoration	C

5.7 STAIRCASE

5.7.1 Description

The staircase is located below the northeast corner of the building. Historic photographs suggest this was originally internal, though it is now exposed and open to the High Street. At the base of the staircase is a lockable metal gate.

Construction comprises a timber frame, with moulded strings and heavy turned balusters , supporting a timber handrail. The handrail and string course are scribed around the stone pillars at the base. Treads and risers are in exposed timber. The treads have been treated with a textured anti-slip coating. The underside of the staircase is lined with horizontal timber boarding. The base of the underside comprises a small cupboard, which we believe houses the meter for the incoming electric supply.

The staircase was subject of repair and redecoration in 2017. Reference to the previous condition report, indicates that the work included removal of the handrail and balusters, filling of open joints and re-decoration.

5.7.2 Condition

The staircase is in serviceable condition but is in need of some fairly extensive repair. The 5th tread from the bottom has split and does not appear to be completely supported. The bottom 3 treads and the corresponding risers are a little loose. One of the treads has been fitted with some beading, presumably to fill an open joint where the connection between the tread and riser have detached.

The exposed string course and handrail on the outer (northeast) face is suffering from some surface decay and here, several of the balusters have become detached. The balusters are loose and not sufficiently connected to the supporting framework. We suspect water has entered the junction with the string course and caused decay/corrosion of the fixings.

Some of the timber panelling to the underside of the staircase has distorted and is now hanging down. It is not clear whether this has detached from the framework above and further inspection is required.

Cosmetics of the entire staircase are tired and in need of renewal. Where the string and handrail meet the stone columns at the base, the joints require attention. On the left-hand side the joint needs sealing with silicone. To the junction on the right, the mortar infill is starting to detach from the stonework. This should be removed and reinstated

5.7.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Re-fix loose spindles	A
b.	Patch/repair decayed string course and handrail	A
c.	Repair/replace cracked treads/risers	A
d.	Make good junctions with stone columns to base	A
e.	Investigate condition of framework behind panelling and check fixings/security of treads	A
f.	Redecorate	B

6.0 THE REPORT – THE INTERIOR

6.1 THE ROOF

6.1.1 Description

The roof space is accessed by way of a small hatch, located in the store-room above the staircase. Access is a little tricky, due to the position of the hatch relative to internal shelving. The hatch gives way to a small platform beneath the northeast facing hip-end. From here it is possible to climb up the framework of the adjacent stud partition (which separates the store cupboard from the main hall), into the main part of the roof space.

The roof structure is split into three bays. There are two hardwood trusses spanning across the width of the building. The bottom chords of the trusses are visible within the main hall. Additional collars are visible just above ceiling level. The trusses support hardwood purlins which run the length of the building, spanning between hip rafters at either end.

Much of the roof structure has been replaced, presumably when the roof was stripped and re-laid in the mid 90's. All of the rafters are in modern softwood, as are the hip rafters at the southwestern end of the building. The rafters have been overlaid with modern (impermeable) roofing felt.

The roof is uninsulated. The nature of the roof covering and the detailing at eaves and ridge level means that ventilation provisions are limited.

6.1.2 Condition

The roof structure is in reasonable condition, exhibiting no evidence of structural distress. The felt lining is consistent and free of any holes, tears or perforations. There was no visible evidence of active water ingress.

Some decay was noted on the front leg of the right-hand truss, though we believe this to be historic. There is widespread evidence of insect attack in many of the roof timbers. Whilst the last report indicates that specialist timber treatment took place in 2014, it would appear that the infestation is ongoing and indeed, in places, the extent of attack is quite significant. Surface deterioration was noted in both of the trusses, several of the purlins and to the hardwood hip rafters at the northeast end of the building.

Whilst there was no visible evidence of water penetration, the rafters do show evidence of fairly extensive staining, consistent with the effects of condensation. This is somewhat unsurprising considering the fact that the roof is uninsulated and poorly ventilated. The situation will be exacerbated by the grated openings in the ceiling, which will allow warm air to rise up from the

room below, where it will condense within the roof space. The openings should be infilled and the ceilings insulated, though provisions will also need to be made for upgrades in ventilation.

6.1.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Arrange for specialist inspection and treatment of roof timbers	A
b.	Block up openings in ceiling	B
c.	Install roof insulation and improve roof ventilation provisions	B

6.2 CEILINGS

6.2.1 Description

Ceilings throughout the first floor (habitable) spaces are constructed in traditional lath and plaster. An asbestos survey undertaken in 2006 confirms that the external underlining of the first-floor structure is in asbestos cement sheeting. The joints of the asbestos cement boards are clad with timber battens.

6.2.2 Condition

The internal ceilings exhibit no staining that would otherwise indicate water penetration through the structure above. Some hairline cracking was noted, caused by slight delamination of the plaster from the supporting laths, though the ceilings are largely free of bulging or distortion. In places the ceilings exhibit scars of previous patch repairs.

We assume the ceilings were largely re-painted following the last survey inspection as they are generally well presented. In one or two areas though, the paint is starting to crack and flake. This may be due to the use of a modern emulsion finish, though is more likely the result of condensation arising as a result of insufficient heating and insulation.

The asbestos cement ceilings are well presented and in generally good condition, exhibiting a small amount of hairline cracking in the front right hand corner of the building. Removal of the asbestos cement sheeting will need to be considered at some point in future, though it would seem sensible to retain the existing ceilings until such time as their condition justifies replacement.

6.2.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Redecorate interior ceilings	C
b.	Replace asbestos cement sheeting	E

6.3 INTERIOR WALLS & PARTITIONS

6.3.1 Description

Internal walls within the main hall are predominantly clad with vertical timber boarding. The boards are of varying widths and have been applied to varying heights. Large sections of the boarding are obscured from view as a result of the display cabinets.

Walls in the small storeroom are finished with lath and plaster with a painted finish.

6.3.2 Condition

The interior walls and partitions are generally well presented and raise no specific concerns. Large sections of the panelling exhibit evidence of insect attack, though this appears to be historic. Decorations will require renewal in time but are not currently at a stage where this is considered necessary.

6.3.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Investigate as to whether the panelling has ever been subject of treatment for insect attack	B
b.	Refresh cosmetics	D

6.4 FLOORS

6.4.1 Description

The floor structure comprises timber beams, which we presume span across the width of the building, between the perimeter ring-beam and the central spine beam. The floors have been finished internally with square edged oak/elm boards. The boards are of varying widths

6.4.2 Condition

Floors are generally level and stable, though some slight deflection was noted at the western end of the building. In places the display cabinets rattle slightly due to deflection of the boards under foot traffic. Boards are generally well secured though in several areas, particularly towards the rear right-hand corner some of the board edges flex when subject to pressure, suggesting they are inadequately supported. In several places there is evidence of beetle infestation and whilst this appears largely historic, we have reason to believe that some isolated areas are active.

Reference to the previous report suggests that some treatment was undertaken in 2017, though this exercise is likely to need repeating. Further inspection and advice should be obtained from a specialist contractor.

We believe that the supporting floor joists were exposed and inspected in 2004 and that at the time, their condition was found to be satisfactory. Given the time that has passed since that inspection and considering the evidence of active insect infestation in various parts of the building, it would be prudent to allow for a degree of opening up again now.

Whilst the floor structure is exposed, it would also be prudent to consider potential upgrades in insulation, for further discussion with the Local Authority Conservation Officer.

6.4.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Allow for inspection and treatment of floorboards	B
b.	Expose and inspect condition of floor joists	C
c.	Consider insulation upgrades	E

6.5 INTERIOR JOINERY

6.5.1 Description

Throughout the main hall there are a number of glazed display cabinets, some of which are wall-mounted and some of which are free-standing. In 2017, a high-level shelf was added to the perimeter of the building, for the purpose of creating additional display space.

6.5.2 Condition

Internal joinery is generally well presented, raising no specific concerns. Periodic cleaning will be required, along with cyclical decoration. Opening sections of cabinetry may need easing and adjusting from time-to-time.

It is not clear whether the glass in the display cabinets is safety glass. Upgrades may need to be considered going forward.

6.5.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Cyclical cleaning and decoration	M
b.	Periodic easing and adjusting of cabinetry	M
c.	Check glass to display cabinets. Consider future upgrades to safety glass	E

7.0 THE REPORT - SERVICES

7.1 HEATING

7.1.1 Description

Heating is currently achieved through the use of free-standing electric convector heaters and oil filled electric radiators.

7.1.2 Condition

The system is wired back to plug sockets and fused spurs. The system is basic and relies on the occupants for activation and control. The system will be inefficient and expensive to run. Use is not continuous and the output a little limited for the space involved. The system and the way it is operated means it will offer minimal levels of comfort to the users of the building and potentially cause a degree of thermal stress on both the building and the various exhibits. A general lack of heating is clearly contributing to some of the issues identified in respect of condensation, leading to cosmetic deterioration of windows, wall/ceiling finishes and potentially exacerbating the issues associated with insect attack.

Consideration should be given to the installation of a more robust and coherent method of heating. Due to limited services connectivity though, any new system will almost certainly need to run off electric.

Discussions should take place with a suitably qualified heating engineer, to explore the various options and cost implications.

7.1.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Investigate options for new heating system	C

7.2 ELECTRICS & LIGHTING

7.2.1 Description

The building is served by a 100amp single-phase supply. We believe the supply arrives underground, to a meter which is housed within the cupboard under the stairs. The consumer unit is located internally on the north facing wall of the storeroom.

There are pendent light fittings over the staircase and landing. Lighting within the museum comprises directional spots mounted above and below the truss chords.

7.2.2 Condition

The electrical installation is relatively basic, comprising a mixture of metal and plastic fittings, all served with pvc cabling. The consumer unit is fitted with miniature circuit breakers. Circuits are well labelled. Light fittings were operational at the time of inspection. The system raises no specific concerns at this time.

It is recommended that electrical systems are inspected and safety tested every 5 years. A sticker on the consumer unit suggests that the system was last inspected in February 2019 and as such the next inspection should be scheduled for February 2024. We assume that portable appliance

testing is undertaken annually. This is of particular importance, considering the current method of heating.

When the system is next inspected, considerations should be applied in respect of the light fittings. Replacing the existing fittings with LED alternatives would offer significant benefits in terms of energy usage.

7.2.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Schedule electrical safety test and inspection	C
b.	Consider replacement of light fittings with more efficient LED type units.	E

7.3 HOT & COLD WATER SUPPLIES

7.3.1 Description

We believe that there is a mains water supply, located in the small cupboard beneath the stairs. The supply is currently used for watering plants and by market traders.

7.3.2 Condition

Despite the presence of a mains supply, the occupiable parts of the building have no clean or waste water facilities. A small sink would be beneficial for the purpose of hand-washing. The provision of drinking water and tea-making facilities would also be desirable. Consideration should be given to potential upgrades, though options are extremely limited and this is likely to prove unfeasible.

7.3.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Consider the provision of clean and waste-water connections.	E

7.4 VENTILATION

7.4.1 Description

The building has no dedicated ventilation systems and does not require any form of mechanical ventilation. As with any building though, background ventilation is important to protect against issues associated with condensation.

Ventilation grilles are located in the internal ceilings above the main hall. A ventilation grille is also mounted in the external ceiling above the staircase. The building is therefore ventilated from the outside, with the occupiable part of the building and the roof void all linked.

7.4.2 Condition

The arrangement of the existing ceiling vents is leading to problems associated with heat loss and condensation. The position of the vents within the occupiable parts of the building means that any heat generated internally, is being allowed to rise into the roof space. This is exacerbating condensation risk within the roof timbers and is leading to a higher than normal moisture content, which in turn is increasing the risk of timber decay and insect attack.

Whilst the void is vented from above the staircase, the level of roof ventilation is insufficient to promote a cross-flow of air.

Ventilation needs to be reviewed as part of a wider scope of insulation upgrades. It is important to consider these points concurrently, as insulating the ceilings will make the roof void inherently

colder. It is therefore imperative that the roof is adequately ventilated, to protect against further deterioration of the roof structure.

7.4.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Upgrade roof ventilation provisions as part of a scheme of insulation upgrade.	C
b.	Remove and infill ceiling vents from occupiable areas.	B

7.5 SAFETY & PROTECTION SYSTEMS

7.5.1 Description

An automatic fire detection and alarm system is present, which we believe was installed in 2014. The system comprises mains powered ceiling mounted detectors to both the main hall and storage cupboard. The control panel is mounted on the rear wall of the store cupboard. Elsewhere there are foam and carbon-monoxide extinguishers.

The building has no dedicated intruder alarm system. Security is in the form of a key-operated padlock to the gate at the bottom of the stairs, along with key-operated mortice and surface mounted locks on the external and internal entrance doors.

7.5.2 Condition

We assume the fire alarm and detection system is regularly inspected, with the last inspection having been completed in February 2022. Reference to the report documentation confirms there were no actions or remedial works required at the time of inspection. There were no visible issues at the time of our own inspection.

Security provisions are limited but fairly typical for a property of this nature. Whilst we are not aware of any specific instances of theft or vandalism, it must be accepted that the building is in an exposed location and as such there is an ongoing risk of future issues occurring. Installation of an intruder alarm system should be considered.

7.5.3 Recommendations

ITEM	ACTION	GRADE
a.	Maintain regular fire safety tests and inspections	C
b.	Consider installing intruder alarm system	E

8.0 GENERAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 ACCESS

The nature, design and layout of the building means that there is only one point of entry. The arrangement means that there is no disabled or ambulant disabled access.

Previous iterations of this report have included comparisons with similar properties within the local area. Conclusions have already been drawn that there is very little scope for improvement, without significant impact on the appearance and character of the building. Such improvements are likely to prove prohibitively expensive and are almost certainly going to result in extensive harm to the heritage asset.

Despite further consideration, we concur with the comments previously put forward.

8.2 INTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Through discussions with representatives from the Town Council, we understand that efforts have been made to protect the internal parts of the property and many of the displays and exhibits,

from the effects of natural light. This has included the use of tinted glass to internal secondary glazing systems.

Despite these previous, we are led to believe that levels of ultra-violet light are still above the optimum range.

Further improvements should be fairly straightforward to incorporate, with little impact on the historic fabric or character of the building. The use of specialist blinds and fabrics could be considered, to supplement the existing filtration systems that are already in place.

9.0	SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS						
Item	Action	Urgent	Action within 18 months	Action within 18-24 months	Action within 5 year	No timescale	Routine Maintenance
	EXTERNALS						
5.1.3a	Treatment and removal of moss and lichen			C			
5.1.3b	Lift, clean and re-bed ridge tiles			C			
5.1.3c	Remove and re-form hip fillets – consider use of lead			C			
5.1.3d	Check security & fixing of weathervanes		B				
5.1.3e	Consider installation of eaves guards					E	
5.2.3a	Expose and inspect condition of eaves level felt		B				
5.2.3b	Replace decayed/split/missing eaves boards		B				
5.2.3c	Undertake closer inspection of timber corbels and allow for localised replacement		B				
5.2.3d	Renew cosmetics		B				
5.2.3e	Consider slight adjustment of detailing to base of stairs					E	
5.3.3a	Fill shakes and open joints to framework		B				
5.3.3b	Rub down and treat exposed framework with linseed/Danish oil		B				
5.3.3c	Investigate staining to undersides of ring beam			C			
5.3.3d	Consider installing lead drips/forming drip grooves to disperse water					E	
5.3.3e	Reinstate defective/missing render panels and fill gaps at junction with frame		B				
5.3.3f	Renew cosmetics to render panels		B				
5.4.3a	Rake out & re-point surface cracks and eroded joints		B				
5.4.3b	Localised repair/replacement of defective/eroded bases to several columns			C			
5.4.3c	Fill sections of friction damage		B				
5.4.3d	Remove and reinstate shelter-coat		B				
5.5.3a	The windows, especially those facing the highway, need cleaning	A					
5.5.3b	Window frames and casements need cosmetic refresh			C			
5.5.3c	The warped secondary glazing panels should be adjusted or replaced to assist with minimising heat loss	A					
5.5.3d	Loose sections of peg-board need to be re-secured			C			
5.5.3e	Cracked glazing putty will need to be raked out and replaced to maintain security of the glass			C			
5.6.3a	Arrange for specialist inspection and treatment of roof timbers	A					
5.6.3b	Block up openings in ceiling		B				
5.6.3c	Install roof insulation and improve roof ventilation provisions		B				
5.7.3a	Re-fix loose spindles	A					
5.7.3b	Patch/repair decayed string course and handrail	A					
5.7.3c	Repair/replace cracked treads/risers	A					
5.7.3d	Make good junctions with stone columns to base	A					
5.7.3e	Investigate condition of framework behind panelling and check fixings/security of treads	A					
5.7.3f	Redecorate		B				

	INTERNALS						
6.1.3a	Arrange for specialist inspection and treatment of roof timbers	A					
6.1.3b	Block up openings in ceiling		B				
6.1.3c	Install roof insulation and improve roof ventilation provisions		B				
6.2.3a	Redecorate interior ceilings			C			
6.2.3b	Replace asbestos cement sheeting					E	
6.3.3a	Investigate as to whether the panelling has ever been subject of treatment for insect attack		B				
6.3.3b	Refresh cosmetics				D		
6.4.3a	Allow for inspection and treatment of floorboards		B				
6.4.3b	Expose and inspect condition of floor joists			C			
6.4.3c	Consider insulation upgrades					E	
6.5.3a	Cyclical cleaning and decoration						M
6.5.3b	Periodic easing and adjusting of cabinetry						M
6.5.3c	Check glass to display cabinets. Consider future upgrades to safety glass					E	
	SERVICES						
7.1.3a	Investigate options for new heating system			C			
7.2.3a	Schedule electrical safety test and inspection			C			
7.2.3b	Consider replacement of light fittings with more efficient LED type units.					E	
7.3.3a	Consider the provision of clean and waste-water connections.					E	
7.4.3a	Upgrade roof ventilation provisions as part of a scheme of insulation upgrade.			C			
7.4.3b	Remove and infill ceiling vents from occupiable areas.		B				
7.5.3a	Maintain regular fire safety tests and inspections			C			
7.5.3b	Consider installing intruder alarm system					E	