

Inspection and report

43 Herd Street,
Marlborough



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Brief

Andrew Waring Associates were engaged by the owner's agent to conduct an appraisal of the existing structure at 43 Herd Street, Marlborough

The purpose of the AWA inspection was to visit and report upon the structural condition of the building fabric, following extensive water damage caused by a leaking water tank over a prolonged period whilst the owner was away.

Visit

The site was inspected by Andrew Waring on Thursday 18th September 2025

Weather conditions at the time of survey were dry and warm.

Site

The site is located on the eastern side of Herd Street, Marlborough which runs approximately north. For the purpose of this report, the front elevation faces west.

Structure

The building is a Grade II listed end of terrace dwelling comprising ground, first and attic floors with pitched clay tile roof. The elevational treatment varies.

Inspection

The building is an end of terrace, but a further dwelling runs back into the site on its east side making the building effectively a corner terrace. An alleyway runs down the northern side of the dwelling under the adjacent house footprint, off which the front door leads.

Internally the front door opens into a single room off which a stair immediately rises to the first floor. There are clear signs that the building is timber framed with posts and beams visible in the walls; a down-stand oak beam spans north to south across the space. Water damage has led to the loss of the ceiling thus exposing all the first-floor structure to the east of this main beam. The main beam is significantly defected, by around 100mm at midspan, and the first floor above has, at some time, been levelled by the addition of a new joisted chipboard floor laid over the original oak joists. These floor joists once spanned from the main beam to the eastern brick division wall, but alterations and, possibly the later addition of the stair, have resulted in an 'ad hoc' arrangement of the floor structure.

For example, two joists are nail fixed into end grain to the face of the top stair riser, which is itself unsupported, and others are floating in space with no coherent or effective load path. It is essential to locally strengthen this section of floor. The attached photographs show this floor area, and the annotated sketch illustrates the problems and the outline solutions.

The main beam clearly supports significant loads from both first floor, attic floor and roof structures.

Access to first floor is via a timber stair comprising timber risers and treads with some side stringers but no real structure given its “winding” form; there has been some movement, and the stair needs strengthening and properly supporting.

At first floor, the space is subdivided by a wall running east-west with several visible timber posts and a beam over the wall head. These posts sit onto the boarding to the first-floor structure beneath, but not directly onto beam or joist lines in the floor.

To the south of the division wall is a kitchen area in which the eastern half of the floor has been levelled and there is a step in level down to the original floor on approximately the main beam line beneath. To the north is a bedroom area. The ceiling has collapsed over the stair and landing area exposing the timber fabric which appears generally to be in serviceable condition.

Ascending the stairs there is an attic area, again sub-divided, with a bedroom and bathroom. The ceiling has again collapsed directly beneath the water tank, which was the cause of the leak.

The roof structure is traditional in form with timber purlins spanning north to south. The western one appears to span full width of the building, but the eastern one is jointed over an intermediate division wall forming one side of the cupboard.

Discussion

The prolonged water leak clearly caused significant damage and collapse of a plaster ceilings, which has revealed the structure in a number of locations.

The exposed fabric of the building reveals alterations made in the life of the building and also a number of structural deficiencies. These are concentrated in the eastern side of the first-floor structure around the stair and adjacent to the chimney party wall. Some intervention is now essential to ensure the structural stability of the floor areas and stair flight from ground to first. The structural works are indicated on the appended sketch.

The other matter to which consideration should be given is a review of the loads on the primary beam spanning north – south over the ground floor, which is significantly deflected due to the substantial load it carries from above. Whilst it appears sound at the present time, it is likely to be substantially over stressed under full design loading, and it might be sensible to strengthen it in some way whilst all the structure is exposed.

Inevitably some structure is obscured particularly at attic/roof level, and it should be anticipated that some localised repair work could be required once work gets underway.

Whilst undertaking the survey it was noted that, unsurprisingly, the fire separation between this and adjoining properties is non-existent, and this should now be addressed.

There is no fire stopping to

- The head of the eastern wall
- Along the northern wall at first floor level in the under-stair cupboard, the soffit of the timber stair to the adjacent property is visible
- At roof level on the northern side

Conclusions

Clearly the prolonged water leak has caused extensive damage to the finishes in the buildings, primarily to plaster walls and lath and plaster ceilings.

This damage has revealed deficiencies in the extant structure of the dwelling which must be remedied in any repair scheme to the building.

Consideration should be given to a review of the primary beam and potential strengthening works.

The fire stopping to adjacent properties should be brought up to modern standards.

Disclaimer

Our report concerns only the parts of the structure we that were appointed to inspect. Any other parts, adjacent structures, buildings or other areas are explicitly not considered unless deemed to pose some risk to the inspected structure.

Our inspection was visual in nature only. We did not include any intrusive investigations unless specifically noted otherwise. Where reasonably practicable we have attempted to access and inspect safely accessible areas.

We have not inspected all structural members in their entirety, but have examined a representative sample of areas that we believe offers a reliable indication of the overall structure. Localised areas with different construction types may not have been identified as a result.

All external observations of the structure are made from ground level only.

No guarantee can be given against the presence of rot, disease, beetle infestation or other defects within the timber elements of the structure.

No guarantee can be given against the presence of dampness, asbestos, harmful gases or other hazardous materials within the structure.

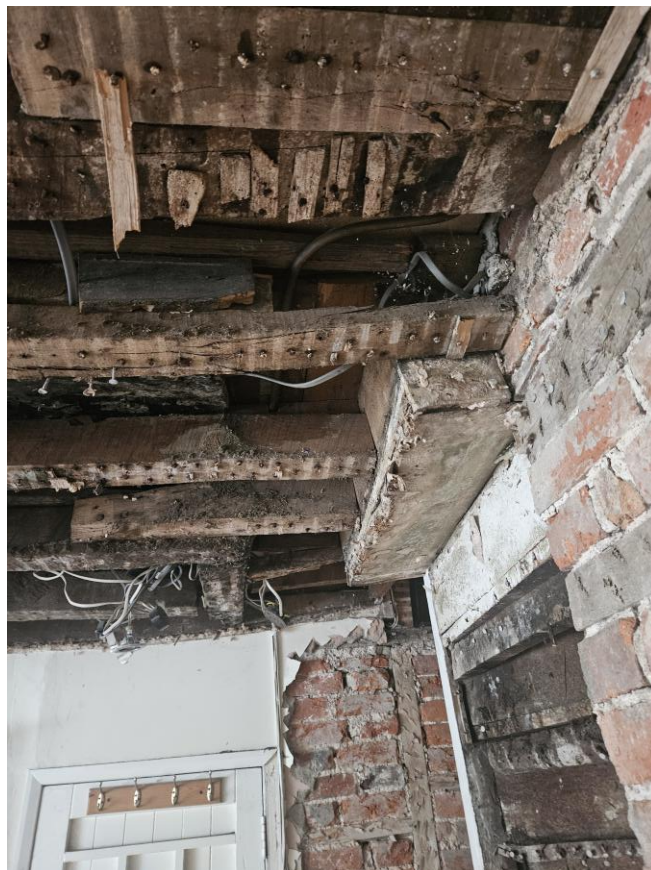
No testing or enquiries as to the presence of or susceptibility to pollution contamination, radiation, methane, radon and toxic mould, fungus or spore or other hazardous substances has been carried out.

Our inspection concerned structural aspects only and no comment or guarantee can be made on the condition of services, architectural finishes or decorations.

Any potential work valuations mentioned are estimated based on prior experience and should not be relied upon without consulting a professional cost consultant.

No responsibility is accepted to any third party for the whole or part of the contents of this report, which has been exclusively compiled for the use of our client.

The client should also note that liability to the client, whether in contract or tort, shall not exceed the amount as stated in the agreement, recoverable by way of indemnity insurance taken out by Andrew Waring Associates at the time we received instruction from the client.



Unsupported floor
43 Herd Street

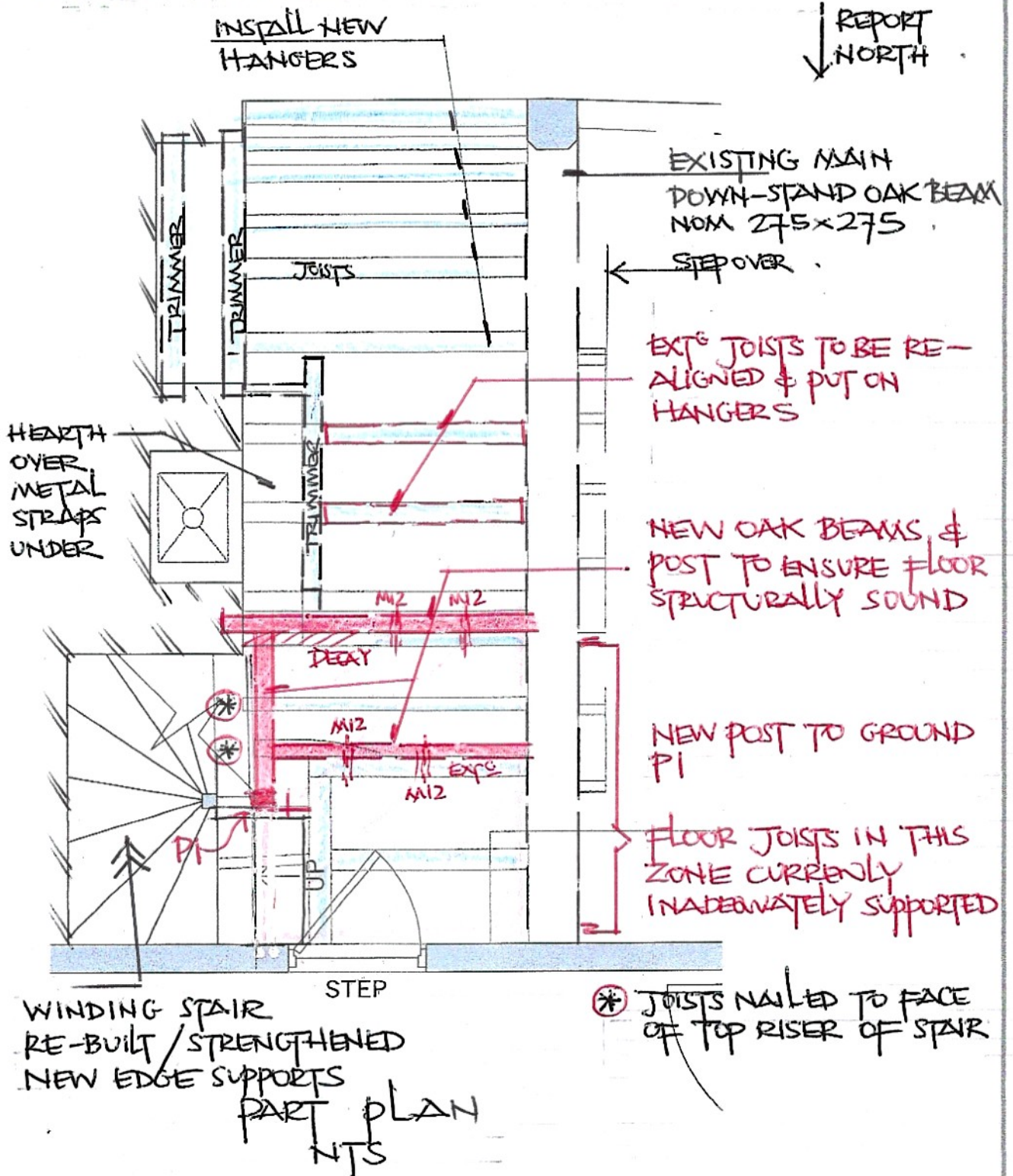
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