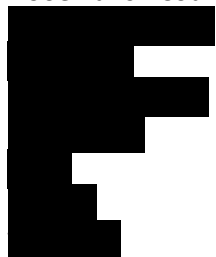


Your ref:

Our ref: E8582/RJS

31 October 2019

Hooe Parish Council



Dear Sirs

**Village Hall, Denbigh Road, Hooe, Battle, East Sussex**

Thank you for your instruction to complete a limited structural inspection of the above and to report our findings.

Our inspection was completed on 17 September 2019. No opening up or specialist investigation was completed. We were able to inspect the attic space only from one of the loft hatches. Inspection of external flat roofs was by ladder only.

References to location are made in relation to either compass north or as facing the front elevation. For the purpose of this report the front elevation faces west.

We are not aware the building is either listed or within a conservation area.

The original single storey detached building comprises of masonry (assumed solid) elevations with a pitched roof over. External elevations are in painted render.

A single storey extension exists at the rear across the width of the building again in masonry elevations but with a flat roof over. It appears to differently aged additions exist to the front right creating the kitchen and entrance hall again in masonry elevations with a pitched and flat roof over respectively.

Archive records from the Sussex Agricultural Express suggest the hall was built by November 1912 as a reading room for the village of Hooe constructed by Mr Horace Taylor at a cost of £300.00.

An historic drawing found on the internet suggests the building was originally only three approximate 9' long x 19' 6" wide bays with a small externally accessed outhouse attached to the rear left now being four bays in length plus the flat roof rear addition.

The current condition of the building suggests that limited maintenance, repair and redecoration has been completed especially in recent times. You should therefore expect necessary maintenance, repair and redecoration to be more involved & costly.

Subject to the following we consider the overall structural integrity & adequacy of the building to be good:

#### Roof Coverings & Roof Structure:

- 1) As viewed from ground level and from ladder access at eaves level the main roof covering to the pitches is in clay tiles with locally missing, broken &/or slipped tiles requiring replacement &/or shuffling. There is some minor undulation to the main roof pitches which is to be expected of a building of such age/arrangement/construction. Local disturbance exists to roof tiles such as the rear right corner where tiles are at risk of falling.
- 2) Gaps can be seen between ridge tiles which suggests bedding/fixity is not adequate. No mechanical fixity of ridge/hip tiles exist which is not surprising given the age of the roof covering. No waterproof membrane exists below roof tiles with timber battens/mortar torching evident. Mortar torching to the underside of the roof covering is locally missing having fallen off. Given the visible condition of the tile roof covering and lack of waterproof membrane below we consider the roof covering should be carefully stripped and reinstated (incorporating new/reclaimed tiles to match existing for any shortfall following stripping), new treated timber battens, new galvanised fixings, new breathable waterproof membrane and new leadwork all to Lead Sheet Association minimum standards.
- 3) At the time of replacement thermal insulation should be provided/upgraded and you should expect to find local roof timber/woodwork that requires replacement the extent of which remains unknown until the roof covering is stripped.
- 4) Original roof timber/woodwork should be treated for protection against rot/infestation at the time the roof covering is replaced. New roof timber/woodwork should be pressure impregnated for rot/infestation protection.
- 5) Local moss growth exists to roof pitches especially where north facing which should be periodically cleared and the tile joints lightly bleached. Valleys, flat roof/pitch junctions, gutters, hoppers and downpipes should be periodically cleared of debris. This will not be required initially if the roof covering is stripped and reinstated.
- 6) Other than minor cracking to ceilings & skelings and minor undulation to external roof pitches there is no visible evidence either internally or externally to suggest the roof structure which is in timber/metal tie rod trusses at centres through building length and purlins/common rafters is currently either defective or inadequate. Some local minor cracking exists in painted ceiling/skeiling finishes which requires only proper repair during normal redecoration.
- 7) Thermal upgrade/improvement is needed to the attic floor and skeilings (sloping ceilings) while maintaining attic cross ventilation.
- 8) Felt covered flat roofs exist at the rear and front right over the single storey extensions. The rear roof has been painted with a temporary repair waterproof paint system which suggests a previous water ingress problem. Typically such flat roofs have a life span of only 10-15N° years and it is recommended the flat roof coverings are replaced at the time the main roof covering is stripped/replaced. Thermal upgrade will be needed to the flat roofs at the time of covering replacement.
- 9) A water test is needed to confirm all roof water is collected & routed away adequately. Gutters and downpipes are in poor corroded condition with stop ends locally missing and local joints leaking requiring replacement. Periodic clearing will be needed of all gutters, hoppers, downpipes, outlets, etc going forward.

- 10) Flash band temporary repair exists between the flat roof at the rear and the main rear elevation suggesting a water ingress problem.
- 11) Rooflights exist to the cloakrooms which are aged with seals deteriorating requiring replacement in new.

#### Foundations, Sub-Structure & Superstructure:

- 12) There is visible evidence of historic movement to the building as evidence by the leaning left and right flank elevations with it appears a post construction tie rod installed across through the centre of the building. There is no visible evidence of recent/ongoing outward movement in the side elevations.
- 13) There is sizeable (8-9mm to left flank and 3-4mm to right flank) previously repaired vertical cracking/gapping between the main rear elevation and the rear single storey addition which is indicative of ground movement. Cracking exists internally and externally. A claim for subsidence should be made upon the buildings insurer allowing site investigations to be completed, mitigation works actioned and repair/re-decoration progressed. Stabilisation (ie underpinning) is not typically completed unless movement is ongoing/progressive and cannot be controlled by mitigation works. At this stage possible causes of movement include leaking drains, the abstraction of moisture from a shrinkable sub-soil, leaking water supply, etc. Site investigations are needed to confirm cause. Monitoring may be needed to confirm movement is neither ongoing/progressive.
- 14) We are pleased to report we saw no evidence of recent/ongoing ground movement such as subsidence, heave &/or landslip to the main building.
- 15) Horizontal cracking exists to the front gable at gutter level and local minor displacement exists to the roof tiles over the gable which suggests the masonry gable is not adequately restrained. No lateral restraint could be seen in the attic from the hatch. We recommend lateral restraint be provided to tie the roof structure/both front/rear masonry gables such as Helifix tying or lateral restraint straps and the cracking cut out/stitched. Poulton Remedial Services Ltd ([www.poultonremedialservices.co.uk](http://www.poultonremedialservices.co.uk)) are known with experience.
- 16) Masonry is assumed solid with external elevations rendered and painted. Where repair is completed it is likely that natural hydraulic lime (NHL) must be used. Without destructive testing we cannot confirm the extent of NHL mortar/render and presence of modern cementitious mortar/render. Solid masonry walls of this age require NHL mortar/render and the application of a breathable paint. Cementitious mortar/render prevents an NHL masonry wall from breathing.
- 17) Painted render exists externally which appears in reasonable condition as viewed from ground level. Minor vertical cracking exists locally to the render generally above/below window/door openings which requires cutting out & proper repair during normal redecoration. Opening up is needed to confirm no embedded metal exists which is corroding requiring removal. All hollow/de-bonded render and plaster should be replaced.
- 18) External redecoration is needed throughout and should be completed every 3yrs or sooner should deterioration dictate.
- 19) Corroding fixings to external elevations should be removed.
- 20) Although we saw no climbing vegetation to elevations/roofs you should be aware that climbing vegetation should always be removed from elevations. Vegetation growing up from between the external elevations and paths should be removed.
- 21) Timber lintels may exist over original window/door openings. We saw no visible evidence of structural deficiency of lintels over openings however opening up is needed to confirm condition.
- 22) Local cracking and outward movement exists to the rear wall/right corner of the kitchen original addition which requires local repair/rebuild. 2-3mm cracking exists internally to the tile splashback of the kitchen rear wall which requires cutting out/stitching and proper repair during normal decoration. This damage may be associated with leakage from the below ground drainage and should be investigated in the insurance claim mentioned above associated with the rear extension.

- 23) Waste pipes require rework to reduce distance travelled to gullies and improve fall. All pipes should be taken into gullies with appropriate splashback surrounds provided around.
- 24) Local minor horizontal cracking exists to some window/door reveals which is likely to be due to corroding fixings requiring either removal (if redundant) or replacement in non-ferrous form (if not redundant).

#### **Ground Bearing and Suspended Floors:**

- 25) A combination of ground bearing & suspended floors exist. Local minor horizontal gapping exists between the kitchen floor slab and the external elevations which appears historic rather than recent/ongoing although a programme of monitoring is needed to confirm. In the absence of site investigations this gapping is assumed to be settlement caused. If movement continues the floor slab is likely to require replacement.
- 26) Ground floor level is similar to ground level at the front door which results in a risk of surface water entering the property. Ideally ground level should exist at least 150mm below ground floor level. The original drawing suggests the floor was meant to be above ground level.
- 27) It is unlikely that any appropriate damp membrane exists below ground bearing floors and it would be necessary to take up all floors to provide such at which time thermal insulation could be included. If no appropriate sub-base/bedding exists such should be provided.
- 28) A specialist timber treatment contractor such as Poulton Remedial Services Ltd ([www.poultonremedialservices.co.uk](http://www.poultonremedialservices.co.uk)) should attend, check and confirm the condition of timber/woodwork in relation to the presence of wet/dry rot and infestation. Although we did not see evidence of such our inspection was not exhaustive. We cannot confirm the condition of timber/woodwork not accessible.
- 29) No floor coverings or floorboards were lifted & we cannot therefore confirm the condition of floor structure below unless opened up although no visible evidence of a problem was observed. Exposed floorboards exist to the main hall and vinyl type floor coverings exist to the extensions and kitchen.
- 30) We are not aware that a cellar/basement exists.

#### **Dampness, Wet/Dry Rot & Infestation:**

- 31) The external elevations appear to be in solid construction (as expected for the age of the building) and are therefore likely to be damp given the age of the property requiring appropriate internal lining (including waterproof membrane) to prevent internal finishes being affected by damp/water ingress.
- 32) High damp readings were obtained to skirtings especially at critical areas such as door openings. New skirtings would be provided inside the waterproof lining if waterproof lining is provided.
- 33) Wet/dry rot exists to the skirtings in the cloakrooms which requires investigation to confirm cause and appropriate remedials actioned. No infestation was noted to woodwork however our inspection was not exhaustive. We recommend a specialist timber treatment contractor such as Poulton Remedial Services Ltd ([www.poultonremedialservices.co.uk](http://www.poultonremedialservices.co.uk)) attend, check & confirm condition in relation to wet/dry rot and infestation.
- 34) As viewed through a broken air brick on the right flank elevation limited floor depth exists below the suspended ground floor and oversite. A minimum 150mm depth should exist below joist bottoms and be well ventilated. Air bricks should exist at maximum 1500mm centres to all elevations to ventilate. Broken air bricks should be replaced. Any metal air bricks should be replaced in either clay or plastic air bricks.
- 35) Local black condensation staining exists to walls and ceilings especially below flat roofs which suggests a cold bridge problem. Thermal insulation to walls, ceilings and skirtings is recommended.

### Chimney Stacks, Breasts & Flues:

- 36) No chimney breast or stack was observed.
- 37) Flues should be kept well ventilated.

### Internal Walls, Partitions, Ceilings, Skelings & Finishes:

- 38) In the absence of opening up to confirm otherwise internal walls are generally in solid masonry with plaster finish.
- 39) Local minor cracking exists to walls, skelings & ceilings which are generally minor requiring only cutting out/stitching and filling during normal redecoration.
- 40) Given the age & construction of the property limited/no thermal resistance/capacity exists to floors, walls & roofs. Thermal resistance could be improved using appropriate systems. Ground floors would need to be taken up, the roof covering removed, etc to improve thermal resistance.
- 41) Internal decorations are aged requiring redecoration. You should expect at least local repair of finishes. Hollow/de-bonded plaster should be replaced.
- 42) No appropriate mechanical or back-ground ventilation exists to the cloakrooms. We recommend such be provided.

### External Joinery, Doors & Windows:

- 43) External joinery (such as soffits, fascias, barge boards, etc) is in very poor condition requiring significant repair/local replacement and redecoration. Rafter feet to the main roof are exposed. The rear gable barge board is significantly wet rot affected requiring replacement. Given the lack of paint to external joinery and general poor condition we consider replacement throughout is needed. Corroding fixings should be replaced in non-ferrous material.
- 44) External joinery should be redecorated periodically every 3 years or sooner should deterioration dictate.
- 45) Windows and doors are in timber singly glazed in very poor condition requiring replacement in new. Some windows/doors have been heavily repaired in the past especially at cill/threshold levels. Some windows are at risk of falling out and therefore pose a significant risk of injury. Security of the building is reduced given the condition of the windows and doors. We have not checked the operation condition of windows & doors. Ideally new timber windows should be provided although in consideration of both cost and future maintenance double glazed PVCu windows could be considered.
- 46) Internal & external doors require overhaul and easing/adjusting. It is not clear whether the doors off the kitchen have appropriate fire resistance. We anticipate replacement doors are needed.
- 47) It is unlikely that the large glazed window on the front elevation is in safety glass requiring replacement along with the entrance door. A limited structure ply boarded panel exists below the glazing which would benefit from replacement.

### Site & Garden:

- 48) A small lawn area exists to the left of the building which we understand is part of the site.
- 49) Boundary walls and fences are in varying states of condition requiring repair/replacement. Your solicitor should check and confirm both boundary positions and liability/responsibility for such.
- 50) Denbigh Road is particularly narrow with very limited parking outside the building. No off-road parking exists.
- 51) We have not checked the timber shed along the right flank elevation which shows significant lean.
- 52) Local damage and depression exists to the macadam pavement along the front of the building which requires repair/replacement. We assume ESCC are responsible for the pavement?

**Generally:**

- 53) No adequate level access exists into or around the building and should be provided.
- 54) We recommend an asbestos survey be completed on the building. It is a legal requirement of building owners/persons responsible for buildings to ensure an appropriate asbestos survey exists. Potential sources of asbestos include floor slab floor coverings.
- 55) If the water supply is not in blue MDPE we recommend such. We recommend the water supply be checked for leakage.
- 56) Electrics & plumbing lie outside our experience/remit and should be checked by competent & experienced contractors/consultants.
- 57) No fire detection and/or alarm system was observed in the building. We recommend an experienced and qualified Fire Consultant attend the building and advise on requirements.
- 58) No mains gas exists in the village of Hooe.
- 59) The kitchen units, worktop, etc are particularly aged/tired not to commercial grade. No cooking facilities exist.
- 60) We have not had sight of any existing guarantees for work completed to the building.
- 61) We recommend a cctv survey & water test on the below ground foul & storm drainage systems to confirm condition. We assume the property is public sewer connected. If a septic tank, cesspit, treatment plant exists the condition and adequacy of such should be confirmed.
- 62) The electric main is overhead from a nearby telegraph pole which is typical of Hooe village. Appropriate fixing of the cable to the building is needed.

Quotations should be obtained from at least three experienced local contractors for the necessary updating/maintenance and repair/re-decoration however until such quotations are obtained we suggest the following budget costs be considered/expected:

<i>Item:</i>	<i>Budget Cost (£):</i>
i) External scaffold	£12,000.00
ii) Main roof covering replacement	£16,000.00
iii) Local roof timber repair/replacement	£2,500.00
iv) Treatment of roof timbers	£1,000.00
v) Flat roof covering replacement	£16,000.00
vi) External joinery replacement	£8,500.00
vii) External redecoration	£8,000.00
viii) Local render replacement	£5,000.00
ix) Window replacement	£12,000.00
x) Door replacement	£3,000.00
xi) Internal & external crack repairs	£3,500.00
xii) Internal plaster repairs	£3,000.00
xiii) Lateral restraint to gables	£2,500.00
xiv) Internal waterproof lining	£22,000.00
xv) Internal thermal lining to walls	£8,000.00
xvi) Internal thermal resistance to floors	£14,000.00
xvii) Local rebuild of kitchen external wall	£3,500.00
xviii) Replacement glazing/panel to front	£8,500.00
xix) Internal redecoration	£6,000.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£155,000.00</b> excluding VAT.

The above costs do not include kitchen/cloakroom updating, electrics/plumbing updating or works to repair/stabilise the rear addition. Works to repair/stabilise the rear addition would be expected to fall under a building insurance claim. If accepted it is likely a policy excess (typically £1,000.00 no VAT) will apply to the insurance claim.

Please note that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and are, therefore, unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

Where opening up/access/investigations are recommended it is assumed any necessary recommended repair/remedials/replacement following opening up/access/investigation is completed.

You will be aware that this letter of report is not intended as the normal RICS "Homebuyer" Report and that we have not inspected or tested any sewers, drains or services.

This report is solely for the use & benefit of the addressee. No other party may rely on this report unless prior agreed in writing by EAR Sheppard Consulting Civil & Structural Engineers Ltd. Should it be agreed that a third party may rely on this report all fees due to EAR Sheppard Consulting Civil & Structural Engineers Ltd must have been paid.

We trust that this letter of report is sufficient for your immediate requirements but should you have any queries, or if we can be of further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully



RJ Sheppard

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**EAR Sheppard Consulting Civil & Structural Engineers Limited**