

Our Ref: 22014/FW

Dr Alastair Noble,
NICE
By email: anoble30@aol.com

Dear Alastair,

22014 – Updated inspection of the Old Social Work Building, Nairn

Further to your instruction our Fiona Willis carried out a further visual non-intrusive inspection of the above property on 1st June 2022. This property was originally inspected in 27th February 2013, with a condition report issued at that time. The purpose of the inspection was to give an updated report on its condition. This report should be read in conjunction with the previous report.

Scope

The report is based on a visual inspection of the main structural elements of the property. In all aspects of a visual inspection we are expressing an opinion of structural adequacy and do not calculate the actual capacity of any elements. No examination of the timber has been made for deterioration due to infestation or rot and we would recommend that where any timbers are to be reused/retained that a specialist survey is carried out to examine this aspect. We have not inspected woodwork to any other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such part of the structure is free from defect.

Due to hoarding erected around the rear of the building no access was made to the rear courtyard of the building and as such no comment can be made on the current condition of the walls in that area.

External Inspection

The building forming No 60 is currently being used as a site office, staff facilities and for some storage during the construction of an adjacent property. No 62 has some hoarding stored in it and lies empty and without power. It has been subject to vandalism throughout.

From ground level the roof lines still appear relatively straight and level, although there is some vegetation growing at various wall/roof/chimneys joints. The condition of many of the chimneys has deteriorated, with the stone either delaminated, broken or mortar joints open in places. This appears to be particularly prevalent in the chimneys over the rear parts of the building and the rear faces of the front building chimneys. We would recommend that these are subject to a closer inspection by a stone mason and repaired as necessary, to prevent further deterioration or collapse.

Falconer Lane Elevation

This elevation was previously in reasonable condition, with mortar loss and erosion of the face of the stone over the lower courses. This erosion of the stone has worsened, with the majority of the stones over the

lower courses affected, many to a considerable depth. One stone to the centre door jamb has almost completely disintegrated which could lead to local collapse if not addressed. If the condition of the stone to the lower courses is not addressed imminently there is a risk of major defects developing and collapsing of sections of the wall. Photos 1-5 show the extent of the deterioration of the stone. The other defects noted in 2013 remain, relatively unaltered, albeit with the general condition of the stone worsening.

King Street Elevation

The stone to this elevation remains in reasonable condition and although it has possibly slightly deteriorated there are no further significant defects other than those previously noted – some delamination, slight erosion of the stone face and some mortar loss in places. To the left hand end the gutter has been cleared, which appears to have prevented further significant deterioration of the stone, as previously highlighted in that area. Photos 6-9 show the general condition of the elevation.

Courthouse Lane Elevation

The condition of this elevation appears to have significantly deteriorated in places, since the previous inspection. The joints to the lower courses, over the majority of the wall, are very open and a lot of the stone is delaminated or has suffered from erosion to the face. Photos 10-12 show the general condition. Photo 13 shows the erosion of the stone local to the rear door. Photo 14 shows the vegetation growing out of the mortar joints and the open joint above the top of the adjacent window, which appears to have led to water ingress and the collapse of the internal finishes local to the window. This is likely to have caused some deterioration of the timber safe lintels behind the finishes.

The rear stone gable and brick section above the toilet block flat roof does not appear to have significantly deteriorated.

Internal Inspection

Access was gained to both properties internally. No 62 would generally be described in a poor state of repair throughout although it does not appear to have significantly deteriorated since the previous inspection, apart from lots of damage to the finishes due to vandalism. There is cracking to the plaster finishes, where visible, although the majority of the walls are wallpapered, but the cracking appears typical for a building of this age and construction, albeit with the extent of deliberate damage it is difficult to assess what is defective. No access was made to any of the roof spaces and therefore no comment has been made on the condition of them.

The condition of No 60, when compared to the photos previously supplied, appears fairly similar in terms of condition, apart from what appears to be general wear and tear and with the exception of the area of water ingress and damage to the finishes on the window on Courthouse Lane, previously mentioned. Many of the plaster ceilings and walls are cracked, which again is to be expected given the age of building. The ceiling to the front left hand room appears to be in particularly poor condition, with cracks running across in both directions and the ceiling to the hall to the rear of this room appears to have suffered water ingress and subsequent cracking but no comparison photos are available to check if this has deteriorated since 2013 or is possibly due to the storage in the room above, in the case of the front room. Given the extent of the cracking to the front room this could lead to spalling of the plaster, so should be monitored and ideally removed or repaired to avoid a risk to the building users. Photos 15 & 16 show these ceilings.

Conclusions/recommendations

The conclusions/recommendations from the original report still stand, in addition to the following:

The condition of the stone, particularly to the chimneys and the wall areas highlighted on Falconer Lane and parts of Courthouse Lane, needs to be addressed to ensure they do not deteriorate further. An experienced stone mason will be required to assess which stone can be saved and which will need replaced. The condition of the stone to the courtyard area should also be checked as part of this in case there are areas requiring urgent attention.

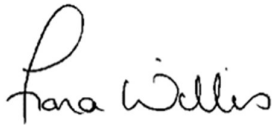
Any vegetation to the roof or walls should be removed and gutters/roof valleys kept clear to avoid further damage to the structure, with any necessary repairs made to these areas.

The cracking to the internal rear wall of No 60, mentioned in the original report, should be addressed during any redevelopment work, with the crack being stitched as required. The ceilings to the rooms noted should be monitored and if not immediately repaired, then replaced during any future works.

Any areas of water ingress should be addressed to prevent further structural damage with the extent of repairs being assessed once the ingress has been stopped and internal finishes removed to expose the structure below. As a minimum the timbers in those areas should be inspected for rot, prior to repairs to any of the internal finishes. As previously noted we would recommend that a specialist timber survey is undertaken for the whole property.

We trust the above meets with your present requirements but should you require anything further please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Willis', written in a cursive style.

Fiona Willis

For and on behalf of McKenzie Willis Ltd



Photo 1



Photo 2



Photo 3



Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12



Photo 13



Photo 14



Photo 15



Photo 16