

INSPECTION REPORT



Shaftesbury Town Hall

October 2022

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By:

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This report is based on findings of an inspection carried out on the **10th October 2022**. The weather was sunny and dry. For safety reasons, inspection at roof level was limited to the North roof slopes, and a view of the South from the fixed ladder at the West end of the roof. The report below includes recommendations for improved access in the future.

A previous inspection was carried out by Chris Romain RIBA in September 2009 a copy of which was referred to during my inspection. A further assessment of the building was made in 2019 by Dorset Property and a list of priority works prepared following. My report refers back to both previous inspections and updates condition and recommendations where appropriate.

The following report is restricted to the general condition of the building and its defects and was carried out from ground level, and readily accessible locations. The inspection is a purely visual one and opening of enclosed spaces is excluded.

I have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and cannot report that any such part of the building is free from defect.

Preliminary Information:

Shaftesbury Town Hall is located at the West end of Shaftesbury High Street adjacent St Peter's Church, and at the top of the popular Gold Hill. It was built between 1827 and 1837, the central clock tower to the North elevation being added in 1879, rebuilt in stone in 1925 see listing description below. The North elevation addresses the market place whilst the South enjoys spectacular views down Gold Hill and across the Blackmore Vale.

Town Hall currently comprises of:-

Basement Level: sublet Cafeteria and Toilets.

Ground Floor Level: Town Hall, Kitchen, Disabled Toilet, Stores, Staircase to First Floor.

First Floor Level: Council Chamber, Major's Parlour, Council Offices, Toilets.

Listing:

National Grid Reference: ST 86268 22932

Details

ST86222/59 HIGH STREET (South Side) Town Hall 20.6.52.

GV II Built by Richard, Marquess of Westminster, in 1837. Tower 1879, rebuilt 1925. Ground floor reconstructed 1926. Stone ashlar building with 5-window fronts, that to High Street being 2-storey, and that to Gold Hill, where the ground falls away, 3-storey. Castellated parapets, Small central tower has open pediment and clock. The windows are mostly 5-light casements with Gothic heads to lights and diagonal glazing-bars, On the lower floors the openings have 5-centred heads, those to the lower ground floor facing Gold Hill having wrought-iron gates. Facing High Street there is a central castellated porch and contemporary railings.

The Town Hall Church of St Peter, The Mitre Inn and Nos 25 to 31 (odd) form a group. Listing NGR: ST8627222940

EXTERNAL

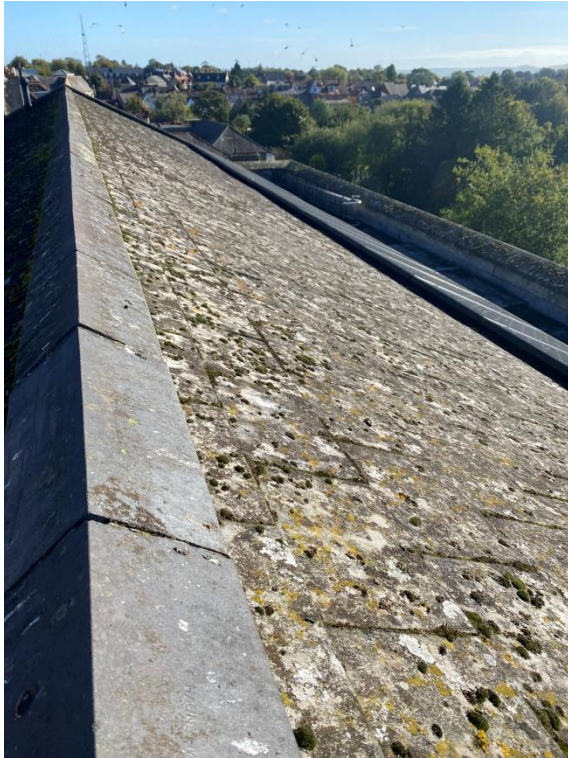
1. Roof Coverings including parapet gutters:

- 1.1 General note on access: The roof is accessed from the flat roof over the porch up through a small hatch in the floor of the clock tower reached via a long aluminium ladder. Putting aside the large quantity of pigeon droppings covering the ladder, hatch and the floor of the clock room, the arrangement is far from ideal, and presents a number of health and safety risks. I would recommend a more secure access is considered as proposals move forward.
- 1.2 **The principal roof** is dual pitch at approximately 27 degrees with central ridge running East-West. It is covered with asbestos cement slates in regular courses. The centre of the North roof slope is interrupted by the structure of the clock tower. A single line of PV panels has been installed to the bottom of the South roof slope.
- 1.3 The current roof was constructed in the 60s and the asbestos slates date from this period. Life expectancy of asbestos slates at the time was thought to be 30 years, although there are many examples remaining 50+ years later. The slates on the Town Hall are, in the main, whole and intact, but lower corners are curling a little. Quite a number have broken around the clock tower and to lower courses of the North parapet gutter presumably where the roof has been accessed to install or maintain heating units. A replacement roof covering should be planned in the coming years.
- 1.4 There are fixed steel ladders to the slopes at the West end of the roof, and I ascended part-way up the North side to allow a view of the South roof slope. The arrangement falls short of good health and safety practice, working at height etc, and alternative access should be implemented when possible.
- 1.5 As noted in the 2009 report, the roof generally has a light covering of moss which will drop into gutters and could cause blockages if not cleared. The asbestos slates should not be scraped (i.e let it fall, and clear gutters regularly).
- 1.6 The ridge has angular blue clay tiles which are in good order, but many now have open joints where pointing has failed.
- 1.7 The abutments are against very low gable parapets with stone cappings. Lead soakers are covered with a very narrow girth lead flashing, and there are a number of very narrow cut slates at the East abutment (North side).
- 1.8 The South slope discharges into a lead lined parapet gutter which has a central ridge roll and bays of reasonably short lengths falling to cess boxes at the outer corners. As noted in the 2009 report, outlets are fitted with wide lead chutes and overflow. This was not inspected at close quarters due to poor access, however, from ridge height it could be seen that the cover flashing at the South West corner has come adrift. The gutter appears to be clear save for a loose roof-ladder lying at the East end.
- 1.9 There are a significant number of broken slates where the clock tower interrupts the North roof slope, some of which have been replaced with fibre-cement (non-

asbestos) slates. Many fragments of asbestos remain in the back gutter and to the East side of the tower. Bird debris and miscellaneous scraps (rotting timber etc) are also evident.

- 1.10 There are a number of creases and one split in the lead gutter to the West of the clock tower which should be patch repaired. Steps are very shallow, and whilst laps appear to be good, would offer little resistance to water ingress if the gutter backed up. There is currently a loose strip of lead with lead clips running beneath the bottom course of slates, perhaps intended as an under-eaves course, but detached and currently serving no purpose. Cover flashings to gutters both East and West of the clock tower are generally intact, but have a few gaps in the pointing where tucked into the parapet.
- 1.11 The North parapet wall is castellated with stone merlons terminating with a roll top. There is one fractured stone to the West of the clock tower with the lower portion sitting in the gutter. This could be pinned and adhered back in position. The one missing merlon to the West return is currently sitting behind the clock mechanism in the tower.
- 1.12 All parapets are low and do not comply with current regulations. According to HSE data, working at height remains one of the biggest causes of fatalities and major injuries, and a high proportion of these are related to carrying out maintenance work on and around roofs. HSE guidance calls for barriers 1100mm above the working surface, and a suitable method should be devised to achieve this in a discreet and pigeon-proof manor.
- 1.13 Flagpoles have been re-positioned against the clock tower since the 2009 report, but their previous position can be clearly seen by the bolt holes remaining in the back of the parapet. The 2009 report noted that the fixing plate to the West pole was corroding (probably causing the fracture noted in 1.10 above), and to the East of the tower, the previous location of the flagpole has dislodged the parapet. The stone remains firm but the joint over cover flashings has cracked as a result. Flagpoles are firm in their new location though bracketry is a little clumsy/ill-fitting to the West pole.
- 1.14 It is noted that pigeon wires with spring tensioners are provided on the tops of the merlons some of which require maintenance (missing or broken wires).
- 1.15 The North slope has two roof vents above the toilets at the East end, and boiler flue penetration close to the ridge. All appear sound. There is also a redundant metal soil pipe adjacent the gutter box that could now be removed.
- 1.16 **The Clock Tower Roof** comprises of a small, lead covered flat roof behind a stone face brick parapet, again with stone merlons. There is no parapet to the South side (facing into the principal roof) but instead the lead roof discharges onto a lean-to roof with 6 courses of natural slates of regular size.

- 1.17 The lead roof is not accessible, but from the oblique view offered from the main roof appears to be sound. The few visible boards beneath the flat roof show some staining, and allowance should be made for repair when access is available.
- 1.18 I was unable to inspect the fixed bell on top of the lead roof, but the chain link fencing material referred to in the 2009 report is still visible, and the limited view of the lead covered box enclosing the chiming mechanism confirms that it remains in poor condition. A more satisfactory method of protection should be planned alongside other roof repairs.
- 1.19 The South side of the clock tower is timber framed with asbestos cement sheet cladding. The whole timber structure is in poor condition and cladding sheets are fixed with nails which are now rusting. Cover boards are missing to the corners exposing the rotting timber studs behind. The short barge boards to the slate section of roof have rotted through, and verge pointing has failed. Condensing units for the air conditioners have been fixed through the asbestos sheeting to plywood linings. Access doors to either side of the structure onto the roof are also simple sheets of ply which are delaminating (NB noted as ledged and boarded in the 2009 report). In short, the existing could be patched, but I would recommend substantial replacement of the structure with more robust construction when funds permit.
- 1.20 The pvc gutter beneath the slate lean-to is not connected to the downpipe.
- 1.21 The inner facing of the front North walls is Gillingham common brick and the clock dial is set in a circular stone surround.
- 1.22 The clock is by Gillet dated 1875 and is now electrically wound and the chiming mechanism is also electrically operated. It drives a single dial on the North face which is in opaque glass set in an iron frame. The iron is just beginning to rust and will need redecorating in the coming years. The clock face is timber framed with glass doors and a slightly pitched lead covered top to deflect any rainwater which might come through the roof. The ceiling itself is underlined with roofing felt which is coming adrift in several places.
- 1.23 The floor is boarded with square edged softwood tongued and grooved boarding. Whilst there was no evidence of current nesting within the chamber, the floor, top surface of the clock mechanism, and other items in the space are caked.
- 1.24 **The Porch Roof/Balcony** is covered with lead sheet with large hollow rolls at about 1200mm centres. This roof is shielded from direct sunlight and extremes of weather, and remains in good order. As noted in 2009, the roof has a shallow step at mid span, and falls to a very shallow internal gutter which runs Westwards. All was clear.
- 1.25 The parapet has stone merlons similar to the main roof, and these too fall short of current guidance. Previous stone repairs remain evident, though planting boxes may obscure further defects. Further minor repairs and repointed are recommended.



1: South roof slope, Asbestos slates, ridge and PVs 2: Access ladder to south roof slope, loose flashing



3: North West lead lined gutter, fractured stone (RHS) missing merlon



4: Asbestos clad clock room, rotten barge boards, missing cover board



5: Ply door to clock room, replaced/broken slates, gutter remote from downpipe.



6: Gutter behind clock tower

2 Roof structure/void:

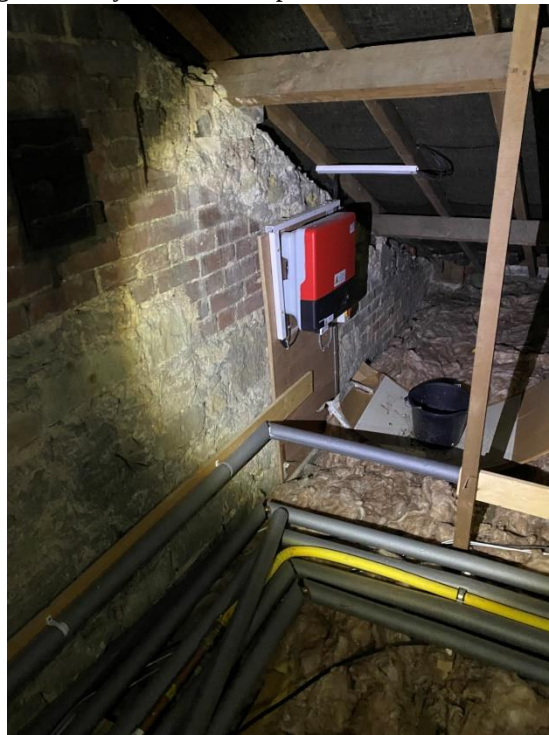
- 2.1 The roof void is reached through a loft hatch and over the w.c. landing. Over the ceiling, there is a small storage void/crawlspace with a short flight of timber steps leading into the main roof void.
- 2.2 Once in the roof space there is a small area of boarded ceiling at the East end of the roof, giving limited views across the structure. I would recommend provision of a boarded central walkway to allow regular closer inspection of the whole space with platforms adjacent plant. This could perhaps link with rooflights or dormer-style access to the main roof and clock tower for routine maintenance.
- 2.3 The roof structure comprises of four steel framed lightweight trusses which support two purlins to each slope and rafters at approx. 600mm centres with type 1 reinforced felt underlay to the slates. Between each truss, there is a ceiling binder running across the width of the roof and 75 x 50 mm ceiling joists with plasterboard.
- 2.4 The ceiling is insulated with fibreglass. The thickness varies and additional layer has clearly been added in some places. As reported in 2009, there are patches where insulation has been lifted and not put back. An unused roll sits within the North West corner.
- 2.5 Both gables are largely of stone construction, though there is some brickwork where flues clearly passed through (both ends), soot boxes remain. There is an airbrick to the outside on the West gable, but none to the East, and some cross ventilation would be advisable.
- 2.6 Close inspection of the parapet gutter boarding is not possible, but there appears to be some white staining of the felt to the South East corner which suggests some water ingress at some point which could be ongoing.
- 2.7 I could not inspect the West end at close quarters due to poor access.
- 2.8 As noted in 2009, the floor timbers to the clock tower are visible on the North side and remain heavily stained. Water ingress may now have been arrested by the repairs to the slates at the back gutter, but this remains a weak point particularly given the build-up of debris and generally poor condition of the back gutter to the clock tower.
- 2.9 There is a Glow-worm Flexicom cx combi boiler located on the East gable. This sits above insulation in cold conditions. Whilst the majority of pipes are lagged, the majority of those rising to the boiler are bare, and vulnerable. Pipes crossing the roof void run to expansion vessels located centrally, and on to the external condensing units to the South side of the clock tower.
- 2.10 Since the 2009 report, a single line of PV panels has been installed to the South roof slope. The inverter for these is also mounted on the East gable. There is currently a bucket beneath the point where cables pass through the roof finishes at the East end of the panels, presumably due to leaks.



6: Roof space showing steel trusses, irregular untidy insulation, expansion vessels



7: Boiler within roof space – uninsulated pipes



8: PV inverter with bucket beneath roof penetration



9: North East corner redundant lead soil stack, w.c. extract ducting, roll of unused insulation

3 Rainwater goods and disposal:

- 3.1 As noted in 1.8 above, South lead-lined parapets drain through large lead chutes at East and West extremes of the South facade, and discharge through 100mm diameter cast iron downpipes directly to the ground. Goods are generally in good decorative order, although several sections of the South East downpipe are rusting a little, suggesting some overflow/blockage in the past. I returned to the Town Hall during heavy weather, and a light trickle of water was running down the outside of the lowest section of pipe, but all was otherwise sound.
- 3.2 The North Parapet to the East of the clock tower discharges through the West elevation in what appears to be a lead pipe which is crudely jointed to a 100mm dia plastic downpipe. This turns around the North West corner of the building with plastic fittings approx. 1m above ground level and connects into the last section of cast iron pipe. The cast iron downpipe has a shoe discharging low into a trapped gully. I noted that a trickle of water was running down the wall behind the downpipe emanating from the top – possibly where lead is connected to plastic. Consideration might be given to altering the gutter outlet to the North elevation with similar detailing to the South outlets (thereby avoiding the awkward turning of the corner at the lower end).
- 3.3 The North parapet to the West of the clock tower discharges into a rectangular downpipe immediately West of the entrance portico. It has a branch with a hopper collecting the water from the balcony roof this was working well, but is tight to the wall.



10: Plastic downpipe to NW corner wall damp behind 11: Last cast iron section and shoe into gully

4 Exterior walls/windows/doors:

- 4.1 Walls are constructed of Shaftesbury greensand and Chilmark Ashlar stone. There is a large profile string mould at first floor level and projecting cornice at eaves with deep weathered top surface. Stonework to lower ground level has a chamfered offset which forms a plinth to the front (North).
- 4.2 Weathered surfaces of the plinth, string course and cornice to the North have moss cover particularly around the porch. Those to the South harbour a variety of plant growth. It would be good to remove plants and moss as soon as practical not only for aesthetic reasons but to avoid damage to stonework.
- 4.3 North elevation
 - 4.3.1 The upper section of the clock tower has some open joints to the West side which require pointing.
 - 4.3.2 There is minor scaling to the pediment of the clock tower (not urgent).
 - 4.3.3 One merlon to the West of the clock tower has a section of sheered stone (where the flagpole was previously fitted) and should be pinned and mortar repaired.
 - 4.3.4 A parapet stone has shifted on its base to the East of the clock (where the flagpole was previously fitted) and should be re-aligned, or at least re-pointed in its new position – *see photo 12*.

- 4.3.5 There are a number of open joints to the cornice, and the moulding to its under-side is scaling and spalling. This is currently minor, and could be repaired with lime mortar by a specialist contractor.
- 4.3.6 The string course and hood moulds over windows are in similar condition.
- 4.3.7 The heads of the first floor windows are flat arches with stone voussoirs. These have dropped and had some mortar repair carried out in the past. Some further work is likely to be needed alongside other stone/window repairs.
- 4.3.8 Mortar repairs and pointing between the window frame and stonework to the first floor window to the East, is fractured and working loose. Situated above the entrance door to the council offices, it would be wise to remove any loose segments to prevent falls. Some further pointing/repair will be required. – *see photo 14*.
- 4.3.9 The arched openings to the porch and first floor clock tower are tied using ferrous metal straps set into their under-side. All have corroded to some degree, the worst being beneath the clock tower, where expansion of the metal caused by corrosion has blown the adjacent stones. Replacement with non-ferrous equivalent would be ideal, but removal of the rust and decoration may arrest the damage in the short term. – *see photo 13*.
- 4.3.10 The soffit boards to both porch and clock tower appear to be asbestos. If an asbestos register does not already exist, this should be commissioned, and asbestos throughout the building identified. It would be good to replace in the fullness of time, but it appears to be intact and likely to be low risk at present.
- 4.3.11 The five arched ground floor openings also have some open joints at their heads. The lower sections beneath windows are rendered brick illustrating the original open nature of the building. It is worth noting that the stone heads to the three openings to the East extend through to the interior, whilst the two at the West are rebated with frames extending behind/above in a similar manner to the South elevation.
- 4.3.12 There are two redundant flues with cages attached running through the rendered panels and one to the first floor which should be removed and openings blocked in due course.



12: Stone block to parapet out of place (where flagpole previously fitted)



13: Corroded strap beneath clock tower arch



14: North East corner scaling and previous mortar repairs

4.3.13 Similarly, the various noticeboards, security panels etc attached between openings are a little untidy and ill-fitting, and it would be good to consider their replacement or re-location alongside other remedial work.

4.3.14 Boxings to clock weights are located in the internal corners of the porch and balcony, and re-decoration of these is now required.

4.3.15 The two pipes projecting through the first floor close to the North East corner and referred to in the 2009 report remain. They appear to be copper-coloured plastic, and may be overflow pipes from adjacent w.c.s. Whether they are redundant should be checked before removal.

4.4 West elevation

4.4.1 As noted in 1.11 above there is currently one missing merlon from the North West corner stored within the clock chamber.

4.4.2 The cornice and string course have a few open joints and several minor sections of erosion but mouldings beneath are intact.

4.4.3 The whole gable/elevation has a number of open joints, pitting and cavities where stone has failed in the past. Some mortar repair would prevent water ingress to these and retard further degradation. A number of ashlar below the chamfered plinth stone are also spalling.

4.4.4 The flues projecting above string course are now redundant and could be removed/repared. A further low level flue sits through the chamfer of the plinth.

4.4.5 There is some recent stone replacement at the South corner where the downpipe has been relocated to the South elevation. New stone faces have been tooled to match existing.



15: General view of West elevation



16: South West corner showing previous stone replacement

- 4.4.6 There is an aluminium louvered air intake just above ground level.
- 4.4.7 As noted in the 2009 report, the tubular steel handrail would benefit from redecoration. The black colour is appropriate, but the light reflectance value should be checked (should be 30 points contrasting from the wall behind according to DDA guidance).

4.5 South elevation

For the purposes of this report the openings are referred to as 'lower ground', 'ground' and 'first' floors to avoid confusion with those of the North elevation.

- 4.5.1 The parapet wall to the South elevation is plain and without castellations. I would not recommend cleaning or maintenance work is carried out to upper levels without suitable access or restraint.
- 4.5.2 There are numerous saplings and plants growing from the ledges between lower ground and ground floor levels which should be removed at the earliest opportunity to avoid damage to stonework.
- 4.5.3 First floor windows are square headed and without the voussoirs of the North elevation. Window heads and hood moulds appear to be as one cast element. All appear sound. Sills at this level have some odd scaling to either end of each window. I suspect that these originally had a similar sloping sill to the North openings, perhaps replaced due to their more exposed location and failing stonework.



17. General view of South elevation. Plant growth, ties, vents and services.

- 4.5.4 The face of the stone has blown on two or three of the surrounding ashlar blocks, most notably to the left of the central window where a clumsy cement-rich mortar repair has been applied, and to the right of the second window from the East. Close inspection is required to determine whether the face of any other stones is detached.
- 4.5.5 Most clearly viewed from the interior, several of the cast sills and mullions are failing where reinforcement has rusted, blowing the cast stone face (most notable on the second window from the West where a section of the blown mullion has been placed adjacent the window).
- 4.5.6 As with the West elevation, the cornice moulding and string course have a few open joints and minor scaling, but less so than the North elevation.
- 4.5.7 There are three square tie plates and a vertical tie between ground and first floor windows all remain in sound order.
- 4.5.8 The Ground floor has five arched headed openings in similar manner to the North elevation, also with a few open joints. The two outer openings are partially blocked in painted brick with windows to the upper half, and the centre three are full height. All have heavy iron railings. The three central openings are fitted with faux timber mullions beneath the arched fan lights, behind which, sliding aluminium doors are fitted. A further layer of secondary glazing is fitted internally.
- 4.5.9 There are a few missing chunks of stone from the head of the central opening (West side). The loss is primarily aesthetic at this stage (putting aside the issue of falling stone) and could be mortar repaired to match adjacent surfaces.
- 4.5.10 Painted brickwork to the outer openings is discoloured and patchy, 'though partly hidden behind railings and vegetation at present.
- 4.5.11 There are seven extract grilles between lower ground, and ground floor openings. Some of these are redundant and could be infilled with stone, those remaining could perhaps be colour matched to the stone to reduce their impact.
- 4.5.12 The lower ground floor also has five arched head openings the West of which has been blocked with stone housing a single timber door (fire exit). The other openings are fitted with glazed screens serving the Salt Cellar Restaurant and Coffee Shop. The entrance to the restaurant retains the iron gates to the exterior of the screen, other gates have been removed but are retained decoratively within the restaurant.
- 4.5.13 There was a pot plant, stool and table in front of the escape door at the time of inspection.
- 4.5.14 As noted in the 2009 report, the fixings to the iron railings at the head of openings (fish shaped) have corroded and blown/cracked the stonework adjacent.

- 4.5.15 Several stones are cracked and pitted, and others have lost their face (some delamination of the stone has occurred). This is not affecting the structural integrity of the building, but as noted above (4.5.4) other stones may be failing in a similar manner which may result in falling masonry.
- 4.5.16 As with the North elevation, there are a number of loose cables, partnership security boxes, signs and other paraphernalia which may be redundant and could be removed. The fading black plastic soil pipe running the full height of the building perhaps could also be rationalised



18: painted brickwork railings and vegetation



19: South West corner showing signage rwdp etc.

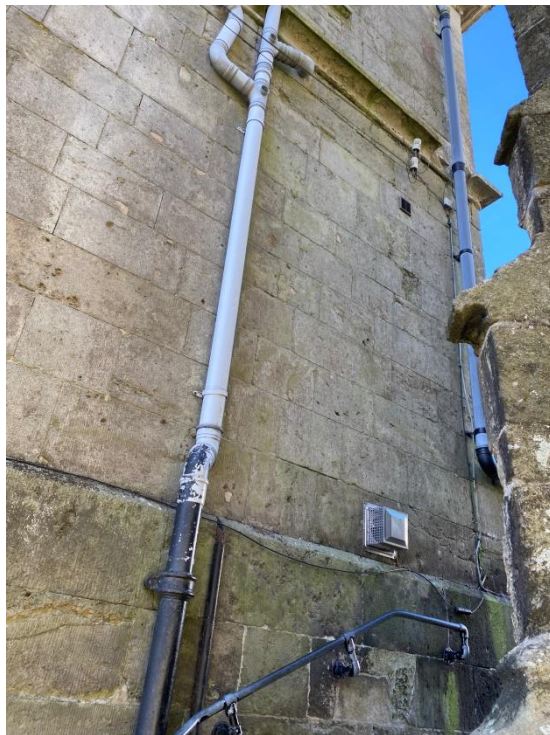
4.6 East elevation

- 4.6.1 As with other elevations the cornice and string mould have some open joints and scaling which is likely to drop fragments in time.
- 4.6.2 This elevation has many open joints, perhaps over 50% are without mortar. The upper stages over string course and to the gable are particularly poor and whilst relatively sheltered, re-pointing is required.
- 4.6.3 A scar from the removal of a flue rises from the lower ground floor window through string course and cornice above. Some ferrous fixings remain which should be removed when access is available. It would also be good to clean traces off surrounding stone and reinstate the missing sections of string and cornice.

- 4.6.4 To the North end of the wall, a grey plastic soil pipe with external branches and wastes serves the first floor w.c.s. This drops into black cast iron for the bottom stage. Ideally this should be internalised, or replaced with cast iron. The rainwater downpipe to the North corner is also plastic - *see 3.2. and photos 11 and 21.*
- 4.6.5 The cast sill beneath the three w.c. windows has blown exposing the corroding reinforcement. Other sections may also be corroding – *see photo 22.*
- 4.6.6 An old mortar repair to the string course beneath the w.c. window has also failed revealing the corroding armature. I would recommend that this section of mortar is checked at close quarters and any loose sections removed without delay.
- 4.6.7 The tubular handrail is in a similar condition to that on the west elevation (4.4.7).
- 4.6.8 As noted on other elevations, there are a number of redundant fittings, sign bracket, coiled telephone cables, flue and cage, yet another Partnership Security etc which could be removed or rationalised.



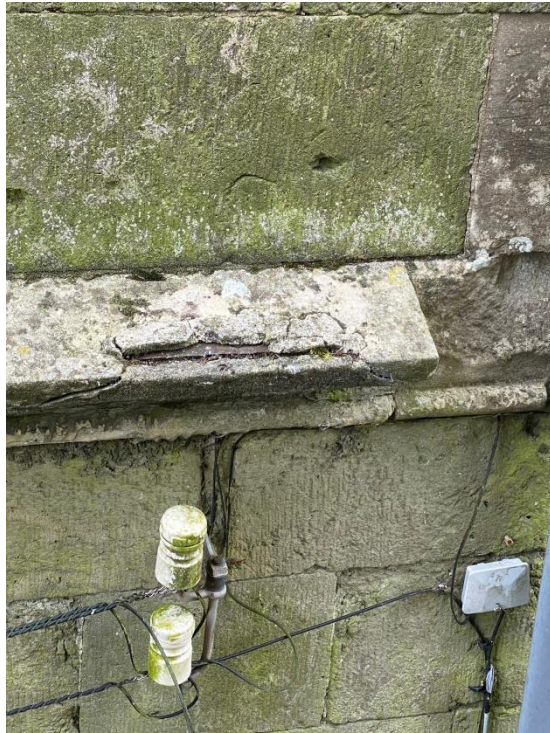
20: Scar from removal of flue



21: Plastic pipes close to North East corner



22: Blown window cill to w.c.s



23: Failing mortar repair to string course NE corner.

INTERNAL

5. First Floor:

- 5.1 Windows to the North are timber frame, with metal sash leaded casements all with arched heads. Unfortunately frames have come apart at the corners, and casements have dropped preventing the windows from closing fully. Decorations are flaking and peeling to the frames generally. Opening lights rely on external pin hinges, some of which are corroding. Secondary glazing is fitted, but has been removed (for cleaning?) in the past and re-assembled in the wrong order, with draught stripping now on the face rather than between sliding casements. The condition is the same to all North windows of the first floor.
- 5.2 Windows to the South are Crittal style metal casements within cast frames. *See 4.5.5 above for condition.* Secondary glazing is in a similar condition to the North windows.



24: Ill-fitting leaded casements to North windows



25: Incorrectly assembled secondary glazing.

5.3 Council Chamber.

- 5.3.1 Ceilings remain as noted in 2009 with some open joints to the plasterboard and skim linings. These could be filled and decorated. Painted cornice, border and beading are modern.
- 5.3.2 Staining is evident to high level in both the North East corner and the South West corners of the room. This corresponds with parapet gutter outlets over. At the time of inspection, gutters and downpipes were clear and operating well, so the staining may be historic. However the cover flashings are loose to the South West corner (see 1.8 above), which may still contribute and be ongoing.
- 5.3.3 The 'school vents' noted in the 2009 inspection remain to the four corners of the room. It is worth noting that the construction of the clock tower long since covered the external vent to the North East corner. Some crude plywood board covers previous defects associated. Ceiling vents have been covered using surface fitted painted square boards.
- 5.3.4 Gas heaters have been removed from the West elevation and exposed internal finishes have been vaguely matched over boards beneath the dado rails. External flues remain behind (*see 4.4.4*). It would be desirable to remove the flues and complete making good and decorations to a higher standard. This is common throughout the building where gas heaters have been removed. There is some interesting surface wiring to the skirting line.



26: Staining to the SW corner of the chamber



27: Patched wall where gas heater has been removed

- 5.3.5 Surface trunking has been used to accommodate a hearing loop for the chamber currently running beneath the cornice. I would recommend this is tested as the location may not be optimal.
- 5.3.6 There is kitchenette built into the East partition which is clearly much utilised. All is functional though units now have some chips and bumps.
- 5.3.7 The floor is varnished pine narrow boards, and whilst there are a few stains, it is generally in fair condition.
- 5.4 Mayors Parlour.
- 5.4.1 The ceiling is in similar condition to the Council Chamber.
- 5.4.2 Walls remain in sound condition, though decorations and fittings might be considered a little dated.
- 5.4.3 The leaded casement window leading to the balcony is in a similar condition to others on the North elevation, but unfortunately leaded lights have now come adrift from the metal casement likely due to more regular use. Currently the glazing is held in using duct tape.
- 5.4.4 Six panel doors to the landing and Council Chamber have been upgraded to FD30, and are fitted with self closers. The Parlour forms the alternative means of escape from the Council Chamber in the event of a fire in the office corridor adjacent. The 2009 report refers to the use of asbestos to upgrade the doors, but given the date of

the work, this may not be accurate? If no record exists I suggest the doors panels are tested.

5.4.5 The floor is fully carpeted and remains firm.

5.5 Landing, Staircase and Corridor

5.5.1 There is a water stain and cracking to the plaster immediately over the office door borrowed light. This is likely to be associated with the expansion vessels in the roof void over which should be checked (*see 2.9 and photo 6 above*).

5.5.2 There is similar staining and cracked plaster over the stairs immediately below the PV panel entry and bucket (*see 2.10 and photo 8*).

5.5.3 There is a significant stain to the South East corner of the stair landing and along the cornice. This could not be checked at close quarters, but sits beneath the parapet gutter outlet which has been re-routed. It may be historic, but without close inspection is impossible to confirm. Some white staining of felt in the roof space over remains



28: Stains and cracks to ceiling over stair case, and landing (including stains to cornice)

5.5.4 Recent wiring and data cabling has been surface fixed leaving cables suspended and/or poorly clipped. The cable entry over the office hatch and to the copier room being particularly questionable.

5.5.5 As with other doors to the chambers, the six-panel doors to the office corridor and the offices are FD30 (*see 5.4.4 above*). Those to either end of the corridor are fitted with

magnetic hold-opens, whilst the office door was wedged open at the time of inspection. The fire strategy should be checked going forward.

5.5.6 Service penetrations to the floor of the corridor are un-plugged.

5.5.7 The stair has 21 risers to the first flight, well in excess of the maximum under building regulations (16) and a further 5 to the second. They measure approx. 1500mm across each flight (including the stair lift), excessively wide considering the maximum capacity of the first floor, and in my view are wasteful of space. A stair lift is fitted.

5.6 Offices

5.6.1 The offices are located to the South side of the corridor, and whilst there is a hatch provided, are a little disconnected from visitors when entering to the chambers. Space is also close to the minimum required for staff.

5.7 Photocopier room

5.7.1 This is drawn on existing plans as the disabled w.c., and referred to such in the 2009 report. Sanitary ware has been removed and shelves fitted to accommodate the photocopier, and the room is crammed with stationary.

5.7.2 The ceiling is plaster boarded and has several holes where services have been altered, the light sensor and alarm pull cord remain from its former use.

5.7.3 The alcove formerly accommodating the w.c. has panelled reveals and soffit suggesting perhaps an original cupboard. Linings to the opening shelved have now been fitted some of which is painted.

5.7.4 Walls are largely tiled from its former use. Tiles above the door have missing grout, and rawl plugs remain in various locations where grab rails have been removed. Additional 13A socket have been installed due to the change of use, and these are white plastic surface boxes with mini trunking. There are also a number of loose data cables.

5.7.4 The 6 panel door into the room has at some point been crudely chopped between panels to form a 'stable-door' with small counter fitted. Panels have been lined to the inside of the room to fireproof the door, 'though the subsequent adaption probably compromises its integrity. Hinges are rising butts

5.8 W.Cs and Store

5.8.1 In addition to the disabled w.c., three toilets were originally provided off the landing space. One has since been converted to a store, leaving two remaining w.c.s.

- 5.8.2 Ceilings are set below the original level, appropriate for small rooms, creating the storage space through the landing hatch.
- 5.8.3 Windows are obscured Crittal style and window heads are slightly mouldy due to cold bridging/condensation. Reveals and sills are tiled. Decorations are peeling to the frames.
- 5.8.4 Walls are fully tiled (as photocopier room), and several have blown in the store. Grout is looking a little grubby in places, particularly around the urinal boxing.
- 5.7.5 The doors currently drag on the tiled floors.
- 5.7.6 Extracts are in-line type and are ducted through the roof space over

6. Ground Floor:

- 6.1 Windows to the North are timber frame over rendered pa, with metal sash leaded casements all with arched heads. Unfortunately frames have come apart at the corners, and casements have dropped preventing the windows from closing fully. Decorations are flaking and peeling to the frames generally. Opening lights rely on external pin hinges, some of which are corroding. Secondary glazing is fitted, but has been removed (for cleaning?) in the past and re-assembled in the wrong order, with draught stripping now on the face rather than between sliding casements. The condition is the same to all North windows of the first floor.
- 6.2 Main Hall
 - 6.2.1 The ceiling has a suspended grid with acoustic tiles between three main cross beams running North/South. Each beam is supported by a circular cast iron pillar each with a simple capital and base. A number of the tiles have scrapes and bumps, and others are cut around service penetrations, but generally are sound. They no doubt make a significant contribution of the acoustic quality in the hall.
 - 6.2.2 Walls generally are vertical boarded and painted with stained chair rails, the East wall is stud and plasterboard. East and West are adorned by murals by local artists.
 - 6.2.3 Placement of the heaters on North and South walls is unfortunate, which have no doubt been installed at a manufacturer's recommended 2.4m height but without regard to the architecture of the room, or available width between windows.
 - 6.2.4 As on the first floor, removal of the gas heaters has left gaps in finishes, and redundant flues which it would be good to tidy. Trims are a little hit and miss around the room and skirtings are lacking across much of the North and West walls.



29: General view of Main Hall (looking North).

- 6.2.5 Trestle tables and chairs were stacked in corners during my inspection, and better provision for storage should be considered going forward. The storage of the timber pole (currently along the West wall), could also be re-considered.
- 6.2.6 Floors are boarded with narrow softwood boards. Alterations to the layout are evident in the boarding at the East end of the room, and there are noticeable infill panels (of different board width) adjacent the entrance doors.
- 6.2.7 An electrical inspection has been separately commissioned and the condition of the installation is beyond the scope of this report, however it was noted that several surface fittings are loose or without covers exposing bare wires.

6.3 Kitchen

- 6.3.1 The kitchen is neatly fitted beneath the stair landing to the East end of the hall. The area clearly gets a lot of use, and after 20 years of use, units are now looking tired.
- 6.3.2 The ceiling is plasterboard, and joints are visible.
- 6.3.3 As noted in the 2009 report, there is an extract located through the South wall at high level. This is a 100 diameter extract, which may struggle when cooking is in process.
- 6.3.4 As noted above, the electrical installation is the subject of a separate inspection, however, it was noted that there are several meters and consumer units housed in the wall units including solar panel meter and diagram. There appears to be a fuse board over the cupboards on the North wall which may be redundant.

6.3.5 There is a small cleaners cupboard located under the stair accessed from the kitchen lobby

6.4 Disabled Toilet

6.4.1 The disabled w.c. at the foot of the staircase would benefit from re-decoration, but is otherwise without defect.

6.5 Entrance Lobby

6.5.1 The Entrance lobby is reached through a pair of stained timber doors to the East arched opening on the North elevation. The space is a small, and a little cluttered with fire and alarm panels, large post box, pamphlets and signage, all of which are no doubt required, but detract from the experience entering the Council Chambers.

6.5.2 Inner doors are also stained with a leaded light panel over. Decorations to both sets of doors are chipped, there is an escutcheon missing and daylight can be see through the lower panels. Some maintenance is required.

6.5.3 Boxing to the North East corner has been recently opened, and there is some making good required to this and the plywood cover board adjacent.



30: Barrier to the views by railings, timber frame, patio doors and secondary glazing



31: Entrance lobby to Chambers



32: various floor finishes, patched walls, wiring SW

7. Lower Ground Floor:

- 7.1 The lower ground floor is let to the Salt Cellar restaurant and coffee bar as noted above. The space is formed with 5 barrel vaulted bays supported centrally on greensand stone columns. Decorations are uneven in places, but generally all are in good order.
- 7.2 Floors are a mixture of vinyl and timber boarding and remain in good order.
- 7.2 Evidence remains of the original stairs down from the front of the Town Hall building, and gates from the South are mounted internally.

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SCHEDULE OF RECOMMENDED PRIORITIES

NB the following are intended as an initial guide only, and tenders should be sought before commissioning any work. Note that approximate costs exclude scaffolding costs where required, and it would be most cost effective to erect a scaffold and carry out all reachable work in one visit as scaffolding may cost around £40,000. All figures are excluding VAT and professional fees

<u>Priority A Repairs Recommended without Delay</u>	<u>Approximate Cost</u>
Clear roof, surfaces and ledges of moss a plant growth (1.5, 4.2, 4.5.2)	£150
Clear and maintain gutters generally (1.9 & 2.9)	£150
Repair and maintenance of pigeon wires (1.14)	£200
Identify asbestos throughout (4.3.10)	£150
Fire escapes cleared and fire strategy to be checked (5.5.5 & 4.5.13)	£500
 <u>Priority B Repairs</u>	
Replacement of roof covering (1.3)	£40,000
Alternative access to improve health and safety to roof (1.1,1.4)	£3,500
Patch repair split in gutter to West of clock (1.10)	£150
Review parapets to comply with regulations (1.12)	£7,500
Repair visible boards beneath flat roof (1.17)	£750
Provide a more satisfactory method of protection to chiming mechanism (1.18)	£inc below
Replacement of timber structure to South side of clock tower (1.19)	£10,000
Minor repairs and repointing to porch roof parapet (1.25)	£750
Re-align or re-point shifted parapet stone (4.3.4)	£150
Pointing and stone repair to open joints generally (4.3.1, 4.3.5, 4.3.6, 4.6.2)	£50,000
Repairs to windows generally (4.3.7, 4.3.8,4.5.3, 4.6.5, 5.1, 5.2, 5.4.3, 5.8.3, 6.1)	£30,000
Replacement of non-ferrous straps to arched openings (4.3.9)	£10,000
Mortar repairs to West elevation (4.4.3)	£3,000
Internal decorations, re-clip cables etc and complete making good (5.3.1, 5.3.4, 5.4.1,5.5.4, 5.7.4, 6.5.1, 6.5.3)	£30,000
Review stairs to meet building regulations (5.5.7)	£*
 <u>Priority C Repairs (less urgent)</u>	
Remove redundant metal soil pipe (1.15)	£250
Connect pvc gutter to downpipe (1.20)	£-
Redecoration of iron (clock) and monitor roofing felt (1.22)	£500
Provide boarded central walkway to roof structure (2.2)	£*
Provide airbrick to east gable (2.5)	£350
Consider altering gutter outlet to North elevation (3.2)	£1,000
Review scaling to pediment of clock tower (4.3.2)	£250
Pin and mortar repair merlon to West of clock tower (4.3.3)	£740
Remove redundant flues (4.3.12, 4.4.4, 6.2.4)	£750
Internalise or replace grey plastic soil pipe (4.6.4)	£1,000
Replace or re-locate noticeboards, security boxes etc (4.3.13 & 4.5.16)	£500
Boxings to clock weights to be redecorated (4.3.14)	£750
Redecoration of tubular steel handrail (4.4.7 & 4.6.7)	£350
Remove ferrous fixings (4.6.3)	£750
Test hearing loop (5.3.5)	£volunteer
Redecorate disabled w.c. (6.5.1)	£250
*Dependant on scheme design	