

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

HIGHDOWN SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM CENTRE

**REINSTATEMENT OF PLASTER FOLLOWING EXTENSIVE TIMBER REPAIRS TO THE
UPPER FLOOR OF THE MANOR HOUSE**

AND

REPLACEMENT OF TILED ROOF COVERINGS TO “T” CLASSROOM

Chartered Building Surveyors • Architecture • Project Management

INTRODUCTION

This Design and Access Statement is to accompany a Listed Building Application for Reinstatement of Finishes to the Main House following a major structural repairs programme under Listed Building Consent 161149.

The Application is for additional works to replace defective tiled roof coverings over a single storey classroom.

The Manor House

This Application relates to Reinstatement and Repairs to the Manor House within the grounds of Highdown School & Sixth Form Centre. The School was established in the 1970's within the grounds of a large Manor House, formerly known as Caversham Grove. The Manor House is an 18th Century building in Queen Anne style which was adapted and renovated for use by the School in the 1970's.

The Manor House is a 4 storey structure with the main mansard roof having an upper flat lead covering which has subsequently been over-coated with a liquid membrane. The roof tiles were recently replaced in 2016 due to poor condition, and minor overhaul of the perimeter windows to repair decay. The external elevations are brick faced with a stucco string course at 1st floor level, flanking brick piers with rusticated bands and stone moulded eaves cornice.

A major structural repairs programme was implemented in 2016 to address significant timber decay and structural distress within the building funded by the Education Funding Agency. The extent of repairs was such that all of the funds were spent on repairs and no money available to reinstate disturbed finishes, but now EFA have awarded further funding for reinstatement to be completed so that the School can occupy the upper floors.

CONDITION

The purpose of the Application is to reinstate finishes following the major structural repairing programme carried out in 2016 under Application 161149. Very little original lath and plasterwork was present due to previous works carried out by Reading Borough Council. Access was required to address timber repairs within the perimeter eaves requiring removal of vertical ashlar plasterwork. This largely comprised plasterboard.

A ceiling within Classroom 01 is in poor condition, partially collapsed due to previous roof leaks and timber decay within timber laths, and requires replacement.

At ground floor level, a single storey classroom structure to the front of the Manor House, called "T" Classroom, is of similar architectural design to the Main House having a mansard structure with tiled and pitched coverings on 4 elevations, and upper flat lead covered area with a timber monitor rooflight. The leadwork has been over-coated with a hessian membrane and bitumen application along the lines of a turnerising technique. These repairs have since broken down and the elderly lead coverings remain intact beneath, but the roof leaks are causing damage to internal finishes.

The tiled roof slopes are in particularly poor condition suffering significant corrosion of nails resulting in roof tiles coming loose. This is presenting an imminent Health and Safety hazard for use of the building and adjacent pathways.

The timber monitor rooflight has been covered over with tarpaulin and the true condition of this cannot be assessed at the time until access is made available. There are significant leaks occurring, and evidence of timber decay to the main glazing bars visible from the underside.

PROPOSAL

Reinstatement of Finishes to Upper Floor

During the initial investigations and facilitating works to assess the extent of timber decay for the repairs programme, we found the majority of original plasterwork to have been removed as part of original works carried out by Reading Borough Council many years ago. As such, a majority of the historic lath and plaster has been removed at this floor level. For these reasons, we propose to reinstate missing plasterwork with plasterboard finishes both for economic reasons and the fact that any historic plasterwork has long since been removed.

Electrical re-wiring and introduction of an updated Fire Detection System together with surface smoke detectors will be incorporated as part of the finishing works.

"T" Classroom Roof - Single Storey Mansard Roof with Monitor Rooflight

It is proposed to retain the existing lead coverings by cleaning these down back to a sound finish. Whilst they are elderly, we believe they will be in suitable condition to be over-coated with a resin membrane such as Desmopol, to maintain integrity and ensure it remains watertight.

Consideration has been given to replacement of the leadwork, but this is not a practical solution due to the need to replace existing lead with Code 9/10, the weight of which is excessive and Structural Engineers have concluded that the roof structure is not capable of sustaining additional loads which would apply. For practical and Health and Safety reasons, we have adopted a similar approach to that used on the main roof to overcoat the existing lead as a suitable and non-obtrusive solution to address the problem.

The tiled roof coverings are in very poor condition, comprising play clay peg tiles which are in excess of 100 years old. There are numerous slipped and cracked tiles, which is an ongoing maintenance issue for the School. Evidence gained during recent major roof renovation works on the Main House revealed that tiles are not salvageable due to majority being beyond further use. Tiles were found to be cracked due to rusting of the nail fixings and battens are too slender to adequately carry weight. We propose, therefore, to strip roof coverings and replace these with a similar new play clay tile to that used on the main roof comprising a Phalempin Vintage plain clay nib roofing tile.

The timber monitor rooflight is badly decayed and has been covered over with tarpaulin for a number of years as a temporary repair to stop leaking. The full extent of the problem cannot be determined at this time until access is made available to roof level. Reports received from the Caretakers lead us to believe that the roof is possibly beyond economic repair. The rooflight serves no function for the room in use, and it is the wish of the School that this be removed and the aperture infilled as part of the flat roof structure.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend approval of the work on the basis that any historic lath and plaster was removed some time ago and there is no merit to return it to its original condition. The use of plasterboard would in our mind be an acceptable finish to the upper floor areas.

The roof coverings are in a poor condition as experienced from works on the main roof and replace roof tiles on a similar basis with new breathable felt and battens.

Over-coating of the leadwork will maintain the roof structure and its integrity without adding significant weight.



"T" CLASSROOM



"T" CLASSROOM FOOF



"T" CLASSROOM FLAT ROOF



REPAIRS TO RAINWATER GOODS REQUIRED



PLASTERWORK



PLASTERWORK TO BEAM REQUIRED



PERIMETER ASHLAR PLASTERWORK



CEILING IN CLASSROOM 01 TO BE REPAIRED OR REPLACED