

Phil Raynor – Historical Building Restoration

44 Hesselwell Court

Heswall, Wirral

CH60 7TW

07804 435117

Site Address : 38-41 High St, Wrexham LL13 8HY

Date : 15th March 2019

Interior Dry Rot Report

We limit our report to the interior findings discovered at the above site address on the above date. The report is prepared for Clydesdale Project Management Ltd. Areas without full access are not recorded. Exterior works are not fully reported below. A full exterior structural survey may be prudent.

The site consists of two properties;

No 38-39 is presented as a vacant shop, with the building dating from the 18th century. It has a brick facade and is observed to be mainly of brick construction, with some timber frame structural components noted within the interior. We note that overall the fabric appears in good condition and worthy of some gentle restoration.

No 40-41 is a larger, more robust 19th century vacant bank. This second property is considerably greater in scale and appears to have undergone significant updating by the banking tenants. It has little in the way of architectural merit within the interior except for a fine art-deco staircase and wonderful bank vault.

Both properties have areas of wet and dry rot which are described below. They will require both orthodox and environmental treatments.

Property 38-39 High Street

Top Floor / Roof Space

These roof areas show extensive timber replacement of roof timbers with modern treated timbers from circa 20 years ago. The roof is original welsh slate and appears to be mainly water-tight. No areas of rot or wetness are noted. We did note some areas of historic woodworm damage, but no active infestation. Some fine kingpost structures may be observed in the loft and may benefit from cleaning. Air bricks are present in the roof space and are performing adequately. The top floor has some appealing roof timbers on show in the ceiling and areas of re-plastering along the interior front facade. One must presume some roof leakage in the past, but it now appears dry. The wooden sash windows are of a recent replacement type and are in excellent condition. Flooring is a mixture of original floorboards and replacement ply; both are dry and in good condition. Timber structural joists appear dry and rot free.

First Floor

Overall it appears to be dry and free of rot, with no areas of concern noted. Sash windows are again of a modern replacement type, and floorboards and joists are all dry and complete. No areas of rot or leakage are noted. Intumescent painted steel structural elements are on view behind the tiled suspended ceilings. Walls are dry and of a painted wallpaper finish, with small replacement type skirting boards. Doors are painted 1970's fire doors which are in poor condition with many areas of cracking / splitting.

ADVICE: Replace fire doors. Assess roof condition along the front facade

Ground Floor

This floor has seen considerable water ingress in the past to the rear. The front section however appears dry and rot free, with a small area of original timber frame structure on show. This frame is dry and has brick elements. Much of the front has exposed original lime pointed brickwork revealed after removing modern plaster studwork. We advise gentle cleaning and repointing of these areas with NHL 3.5 Eminently Natural Hydraulic Lime to maintain the brick surfaces. The floor in the front is a mixture of ply covered floorboards, concrete, brickwork and mosaic tiles. It may be best to cover or replace the floor in its entirety, with the timber joists appearing in good /dry condition. The wooden shop frontage is of a more recent type of construction and has small areas of wet wood rot. These areas should be replaced and the front repainted. Two original sash windows with architraving are in good condition and only require painting.

The larger toilets appear dry and rot free, with painted timber windows. The floor is 80mm concrete laid over original timber. The ceiling made up of large painted joists and modern plaster inserts.

The rear corridor has a vaulted ceiling / roof space area. Above it we note a recent replacement timber / slate roof in its entirety. This area appears upgraded and replaced circa 10-15 years ago. It is now dry and rot free. Areas of brickwork have also been replaced with modern sand and cement pointed bricks. However there is still a large portion of original lime pointed brickwork and horse hair plaster in the vaulted roof space. These areas should be painted with a breathable Farrow and Ball limewash and masonry paint. Repointing should be with a NHL 3.5 Eminently Natural Hydraulic Lime mortar.

Below this vaulted ceiling area in the corridor to the rear of the property is a small wooden staircase and small wooden panelled wall, doorframe and door. The staircase is sealed off due to the presence of dry rot spores. We confirm this whole area has been infested with *Serpula Lacrymans* due to previous water ingress above. The timber has no structural strength and has areas of white mycelium, budding and brown spores. The adjacent plaster is crumbling. An adjacent boarded up door frame is also rotten, with collapsed brickwork infested with dry rot. This area is joined to the property next door.

The rear kitchen of 38-39 is adjacent to the listed corridor area of dry rot. It appears free of damage, but the modern plaster board on timber stud frame should be removed to assess the original brick and timber structure. Viewing through a loft hatch shows no areas of wetness or rot at present. However we must be aware of the adjacent dry rot spores.

ADVICE:

Front; replace damaged floorboards, replace / paint damaged areas of shop front.

Dry Rot infested staircase and panelling must be cut out and removed off site and burnt. Remove all sound timber to a radius of 1m from nearest visible decay if possible (please note Grade 2 Listed nature of some large structural roof joists. These should be left to continue to dry out. Water content 20-25% at present is good and these joists appear solid). Remove all infested / crumbling brickwork and plasterwork. Clean back all masonry to 1.5m from decaying areas, remove rear kitchen studwork and plasterboard for assessment of structural elements to rear. Remove all debris and dust off site for burning. Retain as much original fabric as possible.

Once the whole area is clear of infestation and the root cause of water ingress is identified and corrected, we can enter a period of monitoring. Once all plaster is removed we can clean and monitor brickwork. A water based fungicide may be prudently applied to adjacent interior masonry. We can replace any original brickwork with aged matched bricks and lime mortar. We should promote drying out and increase ventilation and heating. We should maintain as much of original structural fabric. We should implement a regular schedule of inspection and maintenance. We should assess the large structural roof timber joists and retain as much original fabric as possible due to historic nature of building. Our goal is to retain these large original roof timbers at present.

Cellar

This area appears mainly dry at the front. It is of stone / brick construction with a stone floor. The rear has areas of timber wet rot and dry rot under the rear corridor. We note blocked air bricks. No plaster is present here, only timber and brickwork. Original brickwork appears clear of infestation at present.

ADVICE: treat as above, remove offsite infested material for burning, increase ventilation by unblocking air bricks, implement schedule of inspection and maintenance. Maintain as much original structural fabric as possible. Replace any infested / decayed structural timber with new fully preservative treated timber, but maintain wherever possible. Prudent application of a water based fungicide to adjacent brickwork.

Property 40-41 High St, Wrexham.

Roof Space

Inspection of this space indicates significant long term water ingress along the frontage of the building. We suspect a combination of damage to the lead valley above and to the adjacent brickwork and coping stones. The water has damaged roof timbers (wet rot) and the original plaster ceiling below has collapsed.

Advice: repair lead valley, adjacent brickwork and damaged slates. Correct historic lead and correct lime mortar on NHL 5.0 on these exposed bricks must be used. Replace bricks and slates where damaged with age / cosmetic matched replacements. Ensure increased ventilation within the loft space by removing damaged plaster work below. Allow roof timbers to dry out over 6-8 weeks and replace structural joists with new fully preserved treated timber as appropriate. Implement a regular schedule of inspection and maintenance.

A second area of collapse has occurred over an interior rear staircase. This is due to slippage of exterior slates, causing wet rot damage to roof joists and plaster ceiling disintegration.

Advice: repair roof, restore slates, replace damaged timber with new fully preserved treated timber. Replace ceiling plasterwork with Soundbloc Gypsum system boards and associated insulation to reduce noise and energy consumption.

Top Floor

The front rooms all have collapsed ceilings and damaged plaster walls due to long term water ingress. No dry rot is detected. The rest of the upstairs rooms appear dry and without damage. Windows, floorboards, plaster walls and ceilings are all intact. Cosmetic updating and replacement to meet building regulations of various elements will be required. The top floor has some original plaster ceilings and floorboards, but no original decorative plasterwork, doors, architraving or skirting.

Advice: Repair roof, remove wet and damaged plasterwork from walls and ceiling joists. Increase ventilation and heating to dry out brickwork and roof / ceiling joists for 6-8 weeks. Replace structural timbers with fully preserved treated timbers as appropriate. Preserve as much of original fabric as possible due to Grade 2 listing.

First Floor

All first floor rooms appear dry and free from decay. Windows, ceilings, walls and floors appear in good condition. Some historic wood worm damage is noted, but no active infestation is apparent. Cosmetic painting is required. Structural steel beams with intumescent paint are noted in the ceiling spaces. Original floorboards are present and appear dry and robust. The first floor has no original ceilings, doors, architraving, skirting or decorative plasterwork.

Ground Floor

This floor has many aluminium and glass partitions fitted by Barclays. The walls are clad with plyboard and plasterboard on timber studwork, with woodchip wallpaper laid over. The interior front walls have some water ingress damage to the non-original plasterboards fitted to timber studwork in this area. This studwork is now damaged and is fitted onto structural interior brickwork with screws.

Advice: remove all ply and timber studwork to reveal original fabric of building. Inspect for wet and dry rot damage. Increase ventilation and heating to slowly dry out the brickwork and plaster. Maintain as much of original fabric of building as possible. Treat as appropriate and as outlined above.

The rear of the property has a small area of significant damage and collapse. An old bitumen / flat roof has collapsed completely and the adjacent brickwork is infested with dry rot (*Serpula Lacryman*). Significant dry rot strands have infested all the associated brickwork and cement mortar. The brickwork has collapsed. This whole area is of a more recent construction style, with modern bricks and cement mortar noted. This area also adjoins the property of 38-39 High Street. The adjacent property has considerable dry rot damage in this combined section. The adjoining 6 panel wooden door and frame has disintegrated and structurally collapsed. The wooden floor and floor joists have collapsed.

Advice: Maintain as much original building fabric as possible due to Grade 2 Listing. However, the Dry Rot infested brickwork and timber must be removed off site and burnt. Remove all sound timber to a radius of 1m from nearest visible decay if possible. Remove all infested brickwork and plasterwork with dry rot strands offsite and burn. Clean back brickwork to 1.5 meters from areas

of decay. Remove all debris and dust offsite. Remove collapsed floors and doors / doorframe due to dry rot infestation. A water based fungicide may be applied prudently to adjacent areas of good brickwork.

This area will unfortunately require rebuilding with new matching bricks, new fully preserved treated timbers, new flat roof, new concrete floor. Original concrete foundations appear intact. Replace the hidden 100mm damaged structural timber above adjoining door with a 100mm concrete lintel due to risk of dry rot spores. Re-plaster area with matching modern plasterboard. Implement a regular schedule of inspection and maintenance, including measuring timber water content. Increase ventilation and heating within this section.

This completes our initial interior assessment of the above properties. We note the two properties have been empty for several years with no heating and limited ventilation. We envisage that once the buildings are reoccupied, then the building fabric will dry out. Areas of minor wet rot will improve once the water ingress has been addressed. Areas of dry rot will also recover slowly, and a schedule of inspection will allow close monitoring of the damaged sections. We must emphasize that you use the correct paint for breathability and durability, that you use the correct lime mortar and bricks (in property 38-39 High St). We would advise maintaining all original building fabric wherever possible due to the buildings listing. We would advise a full exterior roof survey by a suitable roofing contractor to address the leakage and water ingress. We would advise a full electrical survey to assess water damage to wiring.

Phil Raynor,

Historic Building Restoration,

Heswall, Cheshire.