Knott Structural Services Ltd
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BCP Council
Town Hall E3
Bourne Avenue
Bournemouth
BH2 6DY

11th March 2022

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: St Stephen's Homeless Hub: Initial Structural Review

We write to summarise the findings of our initial visual inspection at the above, carried-out Tuesday 1st March 2022. This letter should be read in conjunction with the enclosed annotated plans, any previous surveyor reports, records of repairs or monitoring / investigation carried-out by others at the property.

1.0 Brief:

Initial site visit to visually inspect the arrangement and discuss proposals with BCP Council (the Client), to refurbish and alter the building to serve as a health and wellbeing centre.

2.0 Limitations:

Visual inspection of structure was carried-out from floor level, on foot. No intrusive investigations were conducted and inspection to date has been limited to accessible and visible areas only, unless expressly stated and so our comments at this time are based upon those observations only. No calculations or detailed design or analysis have been carried-out to date.

3.0 Summary of Discussions, Observations and Recommendations:

In essence, we have reviewed an early-stage architectural scheme for refurbishment, alteration and change of use. Findings were that the building arrangement will significantly limit the scope of alterations feasible within the budget available. We are therefore unable to put accurate, specific structural works onto a drawing at this stage, as the architectural scheme must be revised. However, we can provide the following summary of our meeting, to assist in the broad estimation of potential costs.

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3.1 Stage and Rooms to Rear

Architectural plans indicate ramped access to several private rooms.

Inspection revealed a raised stage area, with sloping floor joists forming the stage (sloping front-to-back between masonry walls). Beneath the stage is a store room of significant height. The rear wall appears to form a retaining wall in part and a partition wall between store and plant room behind. This means that the building is a fairly complex arrangement of levels, incorporating sub-floor voids, load-bearing walls and retaining walls. Consider the following:

3.1.1 Ramped access to a large, level area of private treatment rooms from stage rearwards, may not be feasible. It may be necessary to consider access through an alternative door towards the rear or by forming other openings.

3.1.2 The extent of private treatment rooms shown must be reduced or relocated or split between hall floor level and stage / rear room level.

3.1.3 The number and extent of openings through the rear wall of the stage will be subject to detailed review.

3.1.4 Consider levelling the sloping stage joists by use of firrings and plywood deck on top of existing stage structure, subject to detailed design. Consider the impact on the doorway into entrance hallway and whether a ramped access might be incorporated by trimming joists.

3.1.5 Stage edge protection and / or partitioning are to be confirmed. Consider forming partition upon front wall of stage, subject to detailed design.

3.2 Space Within Main Hall

Given the height of ceilings, it may be advisable to leave the hall as an open space but create subdivision with low-level dividers / screens. Otherwise additional structure will be required to provide support.

3.3 Building Structure Generally

Our findings are based upon an initial visual inspection only. Make allowance for localised repairs to roofs, ceilings, floors, masonry and non-structural components. First floor joists appear to have been built into the inner leaf of walls. Check for damp, rot and woodboring beetle. Also make provision for replacement of rainwater goods, drainage clearance, drainage survey and repair.

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3.4 Retaining Walls

Cracks have been noted to the continuous external boundary retaining wall.

There appears to have been some form of drain to the head of the retaining wall, built into the wall (clay pipe and concrete bedding). This has been displaced and has disturbed a section of concrete at upper level. This displacement appears to have been caused by uncontrolled growth of vegetation and build-up of ground levels behind the wall, over many years.

The true details, extent of defects and potential works required are unknown at this stage but allowance should be made for

3.4.1 An arboricultural assessment, identifying tree protection orders and potential constraints.

3.4.2 Clearance of vegetation and pruning of trees (note branches also resting upon the building structure) subject to the above.

3.4.3 Careful landscaping of upper ground levels and management of retained ground (consider ownership boundary, liability and safety of users, workers, neighbours, public). Note risk of sharps.

3.4.4 Investigation and possibly reinstatement of what appears to have been a surface water drainage channel (Aco drain concept) although this is based upon very limited investigation at head of low-level section of wall.

3.4.5 Inspection and potentially clearance and/or modification of drainage weepholes.

3.4.6 Possible repairs to concrete at head of wall.

3.4.7 Possible patch repairs to what appears to be a mass-concrete gravity retaining wall (TBC).

3.4.8 Monitoring for movement.

3.4.9 *NOTE POSSIBLE RISK OF FALLS FROM THE UPPER GROUND LEVEL (TRESPASSERS).*

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3.5 Further Considerations

Consider whether it will be necessary to submit a listed building application for works and comply with conservation principles in repair and maintenance works, as this may significantly affect the extent of alteration permissible, costs and programme. Liaison with Conservation Officer regarding any works proposed.

We gather that an asbestos survey is in progress. Consider whether this is an R&D type survey and whether the scope of survey extends to all areas potentially affected by works.

This covers some early-stage high-level thinking, pending a more detailed design process, including liaison with stakeholders generally. Recommendations are not necessarily exhaustive, covering only structural matters and are subject to further review. We would recommend pricing conservatively at this stage, particularly in-light of escalating material costs.

This summarises our observations and recommendations at this early stage. We trust that this is of assistance.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require anything further, including continued involvement with investigation, remedial or design works where required.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Knott

MEng(hons) CEng MICE

For and on behalf of Knott Structural Services Ltd

Encl. Sketch Drawings Ref.

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