

CONDITION REPORT

THE OLD TOWN HALL ROOF HIGH STREET CHRISTCHURCH BH23 1AB



HISTORY & ARCHITECTURE

The Old Town Hall, incorporating the Mayor's Parlour at first floor level, is a Grade II Listed building. It was originally built as the Market Hall in 1745 at the junction of Castle Street, Church Street and the High Street and was relocated to its present position in 1859.

The building is of red brick with stone dressings, eaves, cornice and balustrading, it has a hipped slate roof over with lead lined valley gutters. The central domed cupola and weather vane form a dramatic architectural feature typical of the historical period. There is a stone plinth and first floor stone string course abutting a stone centre bay on the front elevation. The central bay is comprised of two Doric pilasters supporting a pediment over a balustraded balcony with a Venetian window/doorway. The pilasters are adorned with triglyphs and guttae. The ground floor windows, door and open space adjacent have rounded stone arches with stone surrounds and keystones over. First floor windows are simply glazed sliding sashes with gauged/rubbed red brick headings and feature keystones.

Up until the latter half of the 20th century the Old Town Hall and Civic Offices occupied what is now Saxon Square. The Civic Offices moved to Bridge Street in 1980 and the following year all the buildings except the Old Town Hall were demolished as part of a redevelopment scheme of the Town Centre. The Celtic cross in the square marks the back of the building before its demolition.

To complement the Saxon Square development it was decided to refurbish the building and reinstate the Mayor's Parlour into the newly restored building. In April 1983 the Old Town Hall was officially opened with the ground floor having been restored to an open arch design making reference to its original market function and allowing views through to Saxon Square.

It is currently used for council members to assemble when joining civic functions such as Remembrance Sunday and the Civic Service and for formal entertainment of visitors and local people by the Mayor of Christchurch.

In recent years the building has suffered from various problems associated with a building of its age. When restoration work to the exterior stonework, roof and paintwork was carried out in 1996, the opportunity was also taken to carry out some refurbishment to the interior.

More recently (January 2016) major redecorations and refurbishments were carried out in the Mayor's Parlour after ingress of water from a blocked valley gutter caused internal damage to the ceilings and walls.

CONSERVATION OF THE BUILDING

The Local Authority is charged with the structural integrity and general maintenance of this Grade II Listed Building and to deal with issues that in time would cause degradation to the building. It is the Authority's intention to maintain the building's integrity for future generations. In recent years, issues with pigeon droppings and staining to the stone and brick elevation around the building have all been dealt with successfully.

Maintaining the characteristics of the building and its visual impact on the street scene is of paramount importance, any remedial works must be carried out in a sympathetic manner with the full support and guidance from the Authority's Conservation Officer.

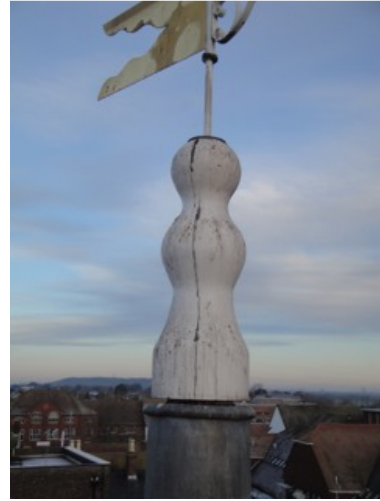
SURVEY OF THE ROOF AND CUPOLA

According to archived records the cupola was replaced in the Autumn of 1988 due to its poor state of repair and threat to public safety. The present cupola appears to be structurally robust, but the recent internal refurbishment works have revealed further problems with water ingress through and around the base of the cupola, resulting in several of the main timber supports having wet rot – wood samples were taken at the time of inspection in January 2016. The leaking leadwork covering the base of the cupola has been repaired on a temporary basis by a local roofing contractor (Byron Spillard) who has had previous experience in dealing with the roof of this building.

PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF CUPOLA

Below are photos taken at the time of inspection in January 2016:-





Temporary repairs carried out January 2016:-



PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD OF ROOF

Below are photos taken in October 2015:-





PREVIOUS CONDITION REPORT (March 2014):-

OLD TOWN HALL

**REPORT WITH RESPECT TO CONDITION OF ROOF COVERING &
ASSOCIATED LEAD WORK.**

SLATES, ridges & hips.

The roof appears to have been re-slatted in the recent past using second hand blue slates. The slates are of poor quality and there are many broken, cracked and slipped slates. The south east corner bottom hip tile was loose.

The roof should be recovered with either new best quality Welsh slates or best quality second hand Welsh blue slates. New or second hand “Old Staffordshire Blue capped” ridges should be used, to replace the inappropriate 1950’s concrete ridges and hips.

(During the site visit the slipped and missing slates were secured and the hip tile was re-bedded)

LEAD WORK

It is presumed that some renewal of lead gutters was undertaken when the roof was last re-slatted. The rear and south side gutters appear to have been renewed. The weight of lead used was incorrect for the lengths involved and is already buckling, which will lead to further cracking and failing.

The leadwork to the front and north gutters, the over flashings, box outlets and the “Surbaisse Pediment” covering, all appear to be original lead and all have cracks, splits and folds, many of which have been soldered over or treated with proprietary sealants.

The lead work to the whole roof requires renewing. This will necessitate removal of the balusters and copings from the parapet wall to renew over flashings and removal of lower courses of slates to renew over flashings to the box gutter.

Reconstruction of the steps to the base of box gutter may be necessary, in order to enable the new sheet lead to comply with the Codes of the LDA.

The lead flashing to the boiler flue was found to be cracked on the welded joint and this was coated with a sealant by the Contractor. The Contractor coated all visible and suspect cracks with a sealant whilst on site.

R. Oates 4th March 2014.

As far as the author is aware no roof works have been carried out subsequent to the findings of the above report.

ESSENTIAL REMEDIAL WORKS

To ensure that this important building remains in good condition for the foreseeable future the following works need to be carried out within the next six months:-

1. Removal of existing leadwork beneath cupola.
2. Repairs to any rotten woodwork by scarfing in new and/or chemical treatment.
3. Inspection and cleaning of existing slates, replacement of any broken items.
4. Replacement of leadwork beneath cupola including valleys of pitched roof adjacent.
5. Re-painting of cupola.

OTHER MAINTENANCE WORKS

Whilst access equipment required for the above essential works will be on site, the opportunity should be taken to carry out other remedial works as follows:-

1. Removal of existing roof covering and leadwork.
2. Inspection and repairs to exposed roof woodwork – rafters, purlins, joists etc.
3. Inspection and repairs to existing roof insulation.
4. Replacement of slates with good quality Welsh slates.
5. Inspection and repairs to masonry copings and balustrading, including pediment and balcony at first floor level.
6. Replacement of ridge tiles with appropriate product as advised by the Conservation Officer.
7. Replacement of all leadwork in perimeter valley gutters.
8. Careful and considerate cleaning of stonework at high level.

Keith Shepherd BSc (Hons)

Architectural Surveying Officer

