QUINQUENNIAL INSPECTION REPORT 2024

FAVERSHAM GUILDHALL

MARKET PLACE FAVERSHAM

KENT ME13 7AG

Historic England Archive: CGH01_01_0668

DANIEL MARTIN *BSc, MA, MRICS*

CONSERVATION ACCREDITED CHARTERED SURVEYOR

Date of inspection December 2024

CONTENTS

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 GENERAL CONDITION
2.0 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS
3.0 FUTURE PLANS
4.0 THE REPORT
5.0 SCOPE OF INSPECTION
6.0 ORIENTATION
7.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING
8.0 WORK DONE SINCE LAST INSPECTION

PART 2 REPORT ON CONDITION

1.0 ROOF COVERINGS
2.0 RAINWATER DISPOSAL AND DRAINAGE
3.0 EXTERNAL WALLS
4.0 DOORS, WINDOWS AND GLAZING
5.0 INTERIORS
6.0 FURNITURE AND FITTINGS
7.0 SERVICE INSTALLATIONS
8.0 EXTERNAL AREAS
9.0 ARCHAELOGY

PART 3 COMPLIANCE

1.0 ACCESSIBILITY
2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
3.0 FIRE SAFTEY
4.0 SECURITY
5.0 ASBESTOS
6.0 BATS
7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY AND THE CDM REGULATIONS
8.0 INSURANCE

PART 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 RECOMMENDED WORK
2.0 FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS AND TESTS
3.0 POSSIBLE PHASING

PART 5 APPENDICES

1.0 LIST DESCRIPTION

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 GENERAL CONDITION

The interior of the Guildhall is in good condition. Provided the items recommended in this report are carried out in an appropriate manner, the present condition should be maintained.

External decorations are overdue.

The coverings to the main roof are nearing the end of their useful life.

1.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations within the main body of the report are summarised below in order of priority. Secondary numbers indicate cost band from 1 low to 4 high.

CATEGORY A: Urgent requiring immediate attention:

A1/1 Clear all gutters and repair all leaking downpipes.

A2/1 Remove plastic bird deterrents.

A3/1 Analyse vermiculite insulation in roofspace for the presence of asbestos.

A4/2 Upgrade fire performance of doors opening onto stairwell.

CATEGORY B: Requiring attention within the next 12 months:

B1/1 Carry out detailed inspection of roofs and elevations from a mobile access platform including localised removal of lead and opening-up of the structure for inspection.

B2/1 Appoint conservator to carry out assessment of the condition of Faversham coat of arms plaster details in tympanum to pediments.

B3/2 Temporary repair to defective lead weathering's to gutters, roofs and projections if C1 delayed.

B4/2 Improve evacuation facilities for people with disabilities from the first floor in the event of fire.

CATEGORY C: Requiring attention within 12-24 months:

C1/4 Repair or replace slipped or missing slate roof coverings and lead.

C2/3 Repair or replace decayed timber to windows, band courses, cornices and cupola.

C3/3 Redecorate render, iron and timber.

C4/2 Make improvements to rainwater disposal system.

CATEGORY D: Requiring attention within 5 years:

D1/3 Improve the thermal performance of the building.

D2/3 Repair arcade timber columns and stone plinths.

D3/2 Repair defective internal plaster in Committee Room and entrance lobby pending further investigations.

D4/3 Repair clock and restore bell.

CATEGORY E: Desirable improvements with no timescale:

E1/1 Assess historical accuracy of external decorative scheme.

E2/2 Replace poorly matched glass to clock face and kitchen window.

E3/1 Rationalise fire exit signage.

E4/2 Repair and re-stain timber floors in Council Chamber and Committee Room.

E5/2 Improve fire performance of timber boarded lining to soffit of arcade.

CATEGORY M: Routine maintenance tasks which can be done without professional advice:

M1 Periodic replacement of slipped or damaged slates.

M2 Decorate external render, timber and cast iron every 5 years.

M3 Redress lead flashings and weatherings.

M4 Ease and adjust sash windows

1.3 FUTURE PLANS

Reduce carbon footprint.

Redecorate and repair external fabric in 2026.

1.4 THE REPORT

The previous report was produced by FDA Architects (Faversham) and is dated May 2018.

This is a summary report only. It is not a specification for the execution of recommended works and must not be used as such.

No liability will be accepted for the contents of the report to a third party.

1.5 SCOPE OF INSPECTION

This is my first quinquennial inspection of the Guildhall.

During my inspection I spoke to Adrienne Begent and Stacey Woolf about the condition of the property, recently completed works and aspirations for improvements.

The report is based on the findings of an inspection made from the ground. The inspection is purely visual. I have not inspected parts of the structure which are concealed or inaccessible and am unable to confirm that any such part of the building is free from defect.

No parts of the building were opened up for inspection. Concealed flues, ducts and voids were not inspected.

Neither specialist inspections nor testing were carried out as part of the survey. Above and below ground drainage, mechanical, electrical and other service installations were not examined in detail or tested.

On the day of the survey, it was dry but overcast.

1.6 ORIENTATION

Please refer to appended drawings showing numbering of doors, windows, rainwater pipes and buttresses.

It is assumed for the purposes of the report that the main entrance which is housed in the base of the clock tower faces due south.. The terms left and right where used are in reference to facing the part of the building being discussed.

1.7 DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

Please refer to appended List Description. The initial date of Listing was July 1950.

The building comprises a Council Chamber and smaller Committee Room at first floor level with a timber framed open market arcade beneath.

Access to the first floor is via a tower which sits in the south-west corner of the property. The original tower houses a clock and is surmounted with a lead clad cupola. To its north sits a shorter flat roofed addition which now accommodates the stairs. The stairs are likely to have been moved from their original position.

There is an accessible toilet on the ground floor of the tower and a small kitchen on the first floor. A recently installed platform lift rises from the ground to the first floor next to the stairs. The ground floor of the tower has been extended into the arcade and houses the WC.

External elevations are finished with painted render. Walls are timber framed other than to the lower stages of the tower which are assumed to be constructed in brick.

The main roof is pitched and covered with slates. It is surrounded by a lead lined parapet gutter.

Windows are timber framed sashes.

The original Market Hall and surviving columns to the arcade date from 1574 but the building as seen today with its Classical detailing predominantly dates from 1814. The addition housing the tower is later.

1.8 WORK DONE SINCE LAST INSPECTION (excluding routine maintenance)

1. Redecoration of interiors.

2. Installation of new gutter outlet wire guards.

It should be noted that significant works were carried out between 2013 and 2018 including the installation of a platform lift and accessible toilet.

It should also be acknowledged that the global COVID 19 pandemic occurred during the period 2019-2021.

PART 2 REPORT ON CONDITION

2.1 ROOF COVERINGS

2.1.1 Main Roof

In poor condition: further investigation needed.

The main roof is pitched and covered with purple coloured natural Welsh slates that were popular in the C19th. The slates are laid in regular courses. Hips and the ridge are protected with lead.

The slates drain to a stepped lead lined parapet gutter. There are outlets in the gutter to both sides of the roof. ‘T-Pren’ neoprene expansion joints have been fitted in the lead bays to reduce the risk of splits in the lead due to thermal expansion. The inner face of the parapet is clad with timber weatherboarding and the head of the wall capped in lead.

The roof structure was not inspected.

There are the bases of two redundant lead clad ventilators set in the ridge. They would originally have been taller with an open terminal to allow a flow of air into the chamber beneath. They can be seen in the archive engravings included in this report. Subject to further investigation they might usefully be used to ventilate the roof space which currently doesn’t appear to have any.

The slates which may already have been salvaged and reused are deteriorated. A large number have slipped and been replaced or refixed using supporting strips of lead known as tingles. This suggests that the nail fixings are corroded. The problem will progressively worsen with time.

The lead coverings are in generally satisfactory condition although a closer inspection and localised opening-up is advised. There is evidence of water ponding which may be the result of decay and settlement of the timber lining and/or structure supporting the lead.

The provision of a fall arrest system to allow easier access to clean the parapet gutter would be beneficial. It will require Listed Building Consent.

The neoprene expansion joints are reported to have been installed about 15 years ago. They have a limited life expectancy

The timber weatherboarding to the inner face of the parapet is an unusual detail. It suggests that the wall behind is timber framed. Any failure of the lead lining is hence increasingly likely to result in decay. It is therefore critical that the gutter is maintained in good condition. The staining on the front face of the parapet wall indicates that there are issues of water ingress. The lead coping to the head of the parapet also needs to be closely examined.

2.1.2 Clock Tower Roof and Cupola
In poor condition: further investigation needed.

The roof of the clock tower is formed by a timber framed octagonal open cupola that houses a bell. It is capped by a lead clad dome surmounted by a timber ball and iron weathervane. The weight of the dome is carried by eight engaged circular timber columns joined by a timber ring beam. The columns sit on the walls of the tower which at this level also appear to be timber framed.

The wall supporting the columns has recessed panels on each elevation accommodating timber bottle shaped balustrades. A dentilled cornice projects forward of the wall face under the balustrades. The cornice and all other weathering surfaces are protected with lead.

There is evidence of decay to all parts of exposed timber framework but a closer inspection is needed to quantify the extent of deterioration.

At this stage it is felt that the repairs are likely to be localised but extensive. There is evidence to suggest that earlier repairs have been carried out and the failures are occurring at the interface between the original and new wood. The choice of wood for carrying out the work is crucial to the long-term survival of pieced in timber repairs.

A lead lined gutter appears to run around the perimeter of the dome above the ring beam. The structure immediately beneath this gutter will be especially vulnerable to decay. The arrangements for disposal of the water collecting in the gutter are unclear. The outlet is likely to be blocked.

E
W
N

2.1.3 Stairs Flat Roof
In average condition: further inspection advised.

The roof to this part of the building is relatively simple. It is flat and covered in lead, draining to a gutter running on its western side served by a single outlet.

The roof is surrounded by a rendered brick parapet with coping stones.

The gutter was blocked at the time of my inspection and needs to be cleared. The vegetation and moss growing on the roof obstructed limited inspection.

The lead appears old and is laid in oversized bays. Repairs may be found necessary following a more detailed inspection.

The composition of the copings is unclear. The render to the inner face of the parapet appears to be in reasonable condition.

2.2 RAINWATER DISPOSAL AND DRAINAGE

2.2.1 Main Roof
In poor condition

The roof is served by two cast iron 75mm diameter circular downpipes via decorative iron hopper heads.

On the west elevation the downpipe discharges into a lead lined gutter that runs across the elevation to a second pipe at the corner of the stair addition tower. The gutter is a later addition and appears to have settled. It no longer falls towards the outlet.

Both downpipes discharge onto the ground.

Both downpipes are corroded and leaking. Repairs and redecorations are urgently needed.

Consideration should be given removing the lead lined gutter on the west elevation and replacing it with a pipe. It has been reported to be a problem in successive QQI reports. The change would require Listed Building Consent.

2.2.2 Stair Addition Roof
In average condition

The roof is served by a single 75mm cast iron circular downpipe with a simple iron hopper head discharging onto the ground.

Decorations are overdue.

2.2.3 Clock Tower Roof
In poor condition: Further investigation advised.

One lead downpipe running internally within the clocktower and discharging onto the main roof via a plastic hopper.

The current arrangements are poor and not adequate for a building of this quality. They should be improved.

Gulleys, gutters and hopper heads need to be regularly checked and cleared or rubbish, leaves and debris.

All downpipes and hoppers need to be redecorated. They are in poor condition.

Defective rainwater goods are the primary cause of dampness in buildings and commonly result in decay to timbers buried within the thickness of the walls of old buildings.

2.2.4 Underground Drains

The underground drain system serving the building was not examined or tested. The dampness in the entrance lobby may be the result of defects in the underground drains. They should be tested.

2.3 EXTERNAL WALLS

2.3.1 Main Building
In reasonable condition

The walls of the main building are timber framed finished with a painted stucco render. There are pediments to the gable ends with timber cornices and band courses to the perimeter.

There are non-structural hairline cracks above and below some window openings. They should be cut out and filled as part of routine preparation for redecorations.

The staining at parapet level however demands further investigation. It may be an indication of more serious problems.

Redecorations are overdue.

There is a three lions yellow plaster motif on a red background in a green painted wreath set in the tympanum to both pediments. The detail is eroded and paintwork or poor quality.

Analysis of the paint colours is recommended together with careful consolidation of the plaster detail.

2.3.2 Clock Tower
In satisfactory condition

Beneath cupola the walls at first and second stage of the clock tower appear to be formed in brick with a painted render finish.

There are raised quoins at each corner and full rustication to the main entrance door surrounds. A simple black painted plinth sits at its base.

The timber cornice from the main building continues at second floor level with a simplified plain band at first floor level.

2.3.3 Stair Addition
In satisfactory condition

The walls appear to be formed in brick with a painted render finish. It has raised quoins and a simple black painted plinth as found on the clock tower.

There is no cornice or band course. The design is based on the clock tower but simplified.

The coping is stained.

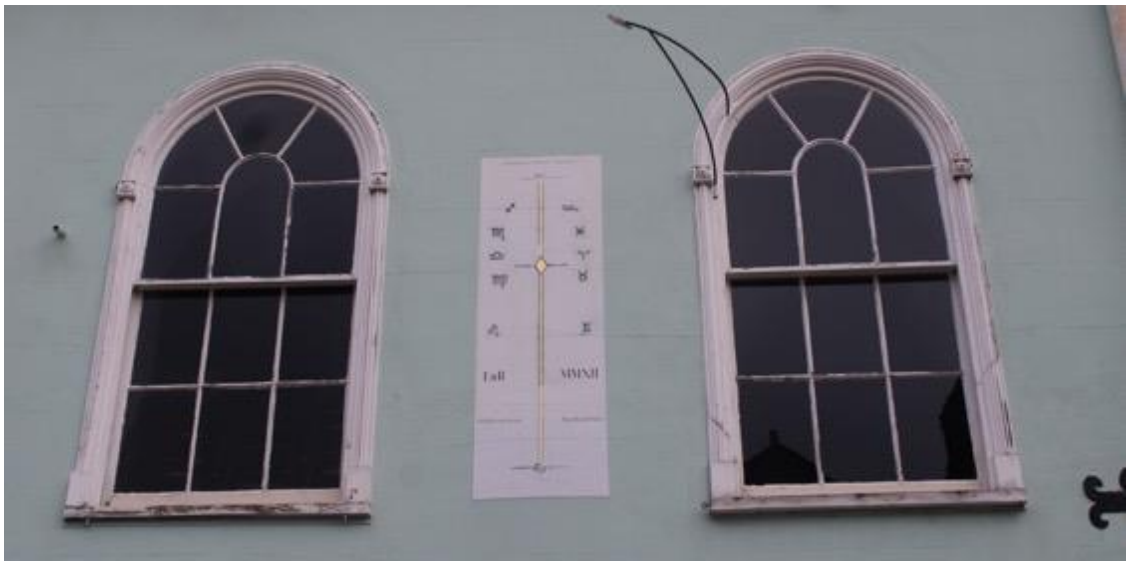
2.4 DOORS AND WINDOWS

2.4.1 Windows
In reasonable condition

Timber framed sliding sash windows with flat heads to the east and west elevations. Larger Venetian sash window at southern end and sashes with semi-circular heads at northern end.

Redecorations are overdue.

Widespread previous repairs and limited localised decay. Timber for replacement repairs should be carefully selected and carried out by carpenter/joiner rather than a painter/decorator.



Many sashes are replacements but are well matched to the original details.

2.4.2 Doors
In reasonable condition

There is a single external door serving the building. It is constructed in timber and has raised panels. The door was split into two leaves as a part of a package of works to improve accessibility when the lift was installed.

The door is in reasonable condition but requires easing and redecorating.

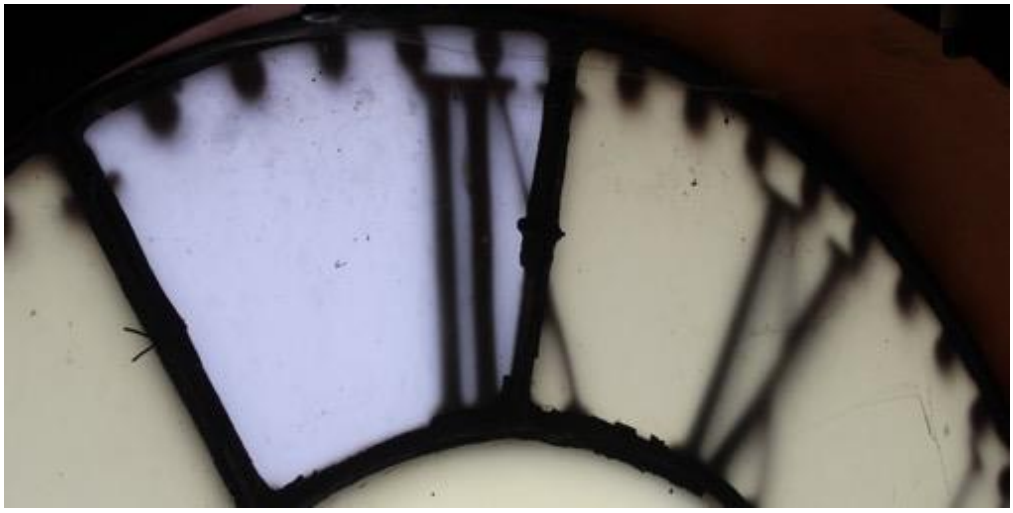
It has a threshold that requires the use of a portable ramp for wheelchair access.

2.4.3 Glass
In reasonable condition

The glass is in reasonable condition to windows.

The obscured glass to the kitchen is poorly matched and should be replaced to a uniform pattern.

The replacement white glass to the clock face is poorly matched and should be replaced.



2.5 TIMBER CORNICES AND STRING COURSES

In poor condition

There are modillion timber cornices on the main building and clock tower and the same detail forms the pediment to the north and south end of the main building.

There is also a band course with a reduced projection at lower level on the main building. The band course accommodates iron hoops to hold flags,

In all cases the timber is protected with a lead weathering.

The timber needs redecorating. A closer inspection is likely to reveal decay.

The lead coverings need redressing, and some lengths may require replacement. Improved clipping to exposed edges may be needed.

Consideration should be given to removing the unsightly plastic bird spikes. They are better methods available if bird control is deemed necessary.

2.6 THE CLOCK

In poor condition

The clock face sits on the south side of the tower. It is surrounded by a moulded timber frame, the bottom section of which is decayed. The inner and outer rings of the clock face, Roman numerals and hands appear to be formed in cast iron.

The numerals are hands are finished with gold paint. They are likely to have originally been gilded.

The face of the clock is glazed. Replacement glass is poorly matched to the original.

The clock dates from the 1814 rebuild and was made by Thwaites of Clerkenwell.

The hammer assembly to the bell has seized and the time keeping is reported to be poor. Repairs are needed.

It appears that the clock has not been regularly serviced. Clocks should be maintained annually.

The clock was inspected by the Cumbria Clock Company in July 2024 who offered various repair options including installing an automatic winding device.

2.7 INTERIORS

2.7.1 Floors
In reasonable condition

The floors to the two main chambers comprise timber joists supporting exposed softwood boarding. A hatch is accommodated in the Council Chamber floor. There does not appear to be any insulation within the depth of the floor.

There are gaps between some boards and localised damage elsewhere that requires repair. The damage could constitute a trip hazard.

It would at the same time improve the appearance of the rooms to renew the finish to the boards. Samples should be undertaken using wax, stains and varnish before selecting a finish.

The ground floor including the accessible toilet and entrance lobby are of solid concrete construction finished with ceramic tiles. The suspended timber floor to the kitchenette is covered with vinyl sheet. Both are in good condition.

2.7.2 Ceilings
In reasonable condition

Ceilings appear to be formed in lath and plaster with decorative plaster cornices to the perimeter and ceiling roses to light fittings.

They are in generally satisfactory condition. Hairline cracking which is common on lath and plaster ceilings is minimal and unlikely to be of structural significance. The condition of the key between the plaster and timber laths should however be examined when access is made available into the roofspace.

The open crack running along the top edge of the cornice in the Committee Room is of greater concern. It may be related to a defect in the parapet gutter lining above. It should be periodically monitored and examined in greater detail when roofing works are undertaken.

The ceiling rose in the Committee Room is of simpler design than the one in the Chamber. It is probably a later replacement

It is likely that the ceiling roses were originally used to ventilate the rooms via the now lost lead clad terminals on the roof.

Vermiculate insulation is visible to the ceiling over the Committee Room. The thickness is insufficient to comply with current standards. More importantly some forms of vermiculite contain asbestos. It should be analysed in a laboratory and not be disturbed in the meantime.

2.7.3 Roof Structures

Main Roof: Not inspected.

Provide access to the roof space either by constructing a hatch in the ceiling of the Committee Room or in the pitched roof.

The roof structure will be vulnerable to decay because of defects to the roof coverings, most especially beneath gutters.

Clock Tower: Damp ingress

Access to the clocktower is via a flight of timber stairs rising from the kitchen. There is an iron ladder in the tower offering access to the cupola. This was not used during the survey. It should not be used by lone workers.

An inspection of the roof to the tower and cupola is recommended using a mobile access platform that will also allow the dome to be inspected.

There is evidence of damp ingress to the timber boarded soffit of the roof.

The timber framed walls of the clocktower are lined with polythene. It is torn. This is a later addition possibly inserted to prevent water ingress. It is liable to trap moisture and should be removed.

2.7.4 Internal Wall Surfaces
In reasonable condition

Most internal walls are finished with painted plaster above a simple timber vertical boarded wainscot. A panelled timber screen has been built to separate the Committee Room from the stairs.

The plaster to the sides of the chimney breast in the Committee Room is hollow and unsound. It is liable to be contaminated with salts. Repair is not urgent.

There is dampness and unsound plaster to the walls of the entrance lobby. The arrangements for drainage to the paved areas surrounding this part of the building should be examined and the underground drains tested prior to considering inserting a damp proof course. Repair is not urgent.

2.7.5 Internal Joinery
In reasonable condition

Timber panelled doors to principal rooms including large circular headed doors between them. Original Ionic reeded architraves. Detail repeated to Committee Room semi-circular headed windows.

There is a simple slate chimney piece and hearth in the Committee Room. Chimney stack is however now removed.

Moulded timber dado rails and skirtings. There are open joints between adjoining sections of the wainscot panelling, but this is not a major concern. The most recent fire risk assessment recommended that the panelling be painted with an intumescent paint to reduce the risk of spread of flame.

The door to the ground floor electrical services cupboard needs to be repaired where it has been forced open.

The addition of security bolts to windows would offer improved security.

There will be a continuing requirement to periodic ease and adjust sash windows to ensure they open effectively. This should be done as part of cyclical external decorations. Weights may sometimes need adjusting.

Consideration might be given to providing secondary glazing to windows. This should however be part of a wider assessment of the thermal performance of the building.

The provision of intumescent strips in the frame and/or leading edge of designated fire doors opening onto the stairs would improve their fire resistance. Intumescent coatings can also be applied to the face of the doors. The kitchenette door should be fitted with a self-closing device. These issues are highlighted in the fire risk assessment.

Duplicate of fire signs should be removed.

The main entrance door needs easing.

2.8 FURNITURE AND FITTINGS

The presentation of the C14th coffered timber carved overmantel in the Committee Room might be improved.

Minor repairs are needed to the display boards in the Council Chamber.

2.9 KITCHEN AND TOILET

The kitchen and toilet are in good condition.

2.10 SERVICE INSTALLATIONS

Heating System
The building is heated by local electric panel heaters. There is no background heating when the building is unoccupied. The building is poorly insulated and of low thermal capacity. The temperature range inside the building is therefore likely to be substantial.

Electrical System and Lighting
The building should have its electrical installations tested every 5 years by an appropriately qualified contractor.

The last inspection was carried out December 2020. Several relatively minor issues were raised including fire stopping to cables and damaged socket outlets.

The next inspection is due in 2025.

The mains intake, consumer unit and distribution board are located in a cupboard in the ground floor entrance lobby. The door was locked at the time of my visit.

Lightning Conductor Installation
Any lightning conductor protection system should be inspected visually once a year and tested every 5 years by a competent electrical engineer.

A lightning conductor installation is installed to the tower.

The installation is not fully compliant with current legislation. There is no surge protection.

The installation was last inspected in May 2024.

2.11 EXTERNAL AREAS

Arcade Columns

Reasonable condition: Further investigations needed

The arcade is oldest and arguably the most historically significant part of the building.

The oak columns are its most visible manifestation.

They have been repeatedly repaired using both inserted sections of oak and less successfully with filler and resins.

Oak of this age is extraordinarily strong and durable and a few cracks and fissures are unlikely to affect its performance.

The resins and fillers will however trap moisture and will advance decay. They should be removed.

A detailed survey of each column should then be undertaken.

Repairs are likely to be relatively small and localised. Resins might be used but need to be very carefully controlled and proceeded by trials. The preference should however be to piece in replacement timber cut and shaped to each specific defect.

Arcade Soffit

Reasonable condition.

The arcade soffit is formed by painted timber boarding. It is in satisfactory condition although it requires to be redecorated.

The latest FRA recommended that the soffit be finished with an intumescent paint. If this is considered necessary it should be proceeded by a more detailed assessment of the risk. The paint must not be applied to oak members projecting beneath the painted surface. The application of the paint would require Listed Building Consent.

Arcade Column Plinths

Reasonable condition.

The arcade columns are supported on stone plinths with a lead DPC between.

The height of the plinths varies as the ground slopes. The type of stone also varies suggesting some of the plinths are replacements.

The stonework is in average condition. Some open joints and cracks require repointing but repairs will be localised and minor. All repairs should use lime-based mortar mixes.

Where there is excessive decay to the base of the column the DPC should be checked.

The fill between the stone plinth and pavings often needs repair.

Paved Areas

Average condition

There are large number of cracked concrete pavings and much smaller number of damaged Yorkstone slabs which need to be replaced. Greater care needs to be exercised in policing the use of the area by market traders to prevent future damage.

The granite setts to the perimeter of the pavings need local repointing. Those to the base of the tower should be prioritised as their condition may be a cause of the internal dampness found in this part of the property. Consideration might be given to installing a gravel filled French drain to the perimeter of the tower. This is likely to be a more effective long-term solution than injecting a chemical DPC.

2.12 ARCHAELOGY

Above and below ground archaeology is an increasingly important consideration when work is planned to Listed buildings. Allowance should be made for archaeological assessments, investigations and recording in project budgets and programmes when ancient or historic fabric will be affected.

PART 3 COMPLIANCE

1.0 ACCESSIBILITY (THE EQUALITY ACT 2010)

Your attention is drawn to the requirements of the Equality Act which supersedes and withdraws the provisions of the previous Disability Discrimination Act (DDA). The Equality Act has implications in terms of access, provision for the hearing impaired and sight impaired and mental disability.

If you not done so already you are encouraged to carry out an Access Audit to establish how and where physical access to the building might be improved. Provision for people with disabilities should include a loop system for the hearing impaired.

There is accessible toilet on the ground floor. It is not fully compliant with current legislation but offers reasonable facility.

The most recent Fire Risk Assessment highlighted the lack of facility for escape from the upper floor for people with disabilities in the event of a fire.

An induction loop system was installed in 2023.

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

I have not seen the Councils Environmental Sustainability Statement but it is advised that consideration be given to upgrading the thermal performance of the building when substantial works of repair or enhancement are planned.

This might include upgrading the level of insulation to the floor, windows and roofs. It should also examine the current heating system. A holistic approach is recommended.

3.0 FIRE SAFTEY

All buildings need to complete a suitable and sufficient fire risk assessment to comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.To comply with the regulations, a responsible person must conduct a comprehensive risk assessment that considers, amongst other things:

- Ignition sources
- Suitable means of detecting and raising the alarm in the event of a fire
- Adequate emergency escape routes and exits
- An appropriate type and number of fire extinguishers
- The correct type and sufficient number of fire signs and notices
- Provision for the correct maintenance of fire equipment
- Suitable provision for the protection of fire service personnel

- Ensure the occupants receive the appropriate instruction/training in actions to be taken in the event of a fire, using evacuation drills
- The effect a fire could have on neighbours.

Your insurers should be consulted and the number and type of fire extinguisher agreed with them. Further advice may be obtained from the Fire Prevention Officer of the local Fire Brigade.

The emergency lighting and fire alarm systems were tested and approved by Guardian Security and Fire in April 2024.

A Fire Risk Assessment was carried out in October 2024 by LTM Fire Safety Consultants. It raised several concerns including:

The performance of the fire doors at first floor level protected the stairwell.

The provision for means of escape from the first floor for people with disabilities.

The spread of flame to the timber soffit above the market arcade and the timber panelling in the principal rooms.

4.0 SECURITY

The security system was inspected and approved by JC Locks Safe in 2024.

There are no security locks to windows.

5.0 ASBESTOS

The Control of Asbestos Regulations require those with responsibility for the repair and maintenance of non-domestic premises to find out if there are, or may be, asbestos containing materials within them. It also requires them to record the location and condition of such materials and then assess and manage any risk from them.

It is understood that a recent survey concluded that
The existing asbestos has been managed to prevent any dispersal of fibres.

6.0 BATS

When work is carried out in the building the contractor is always be aware of the possible presence of bats even if no obvious evidence exists. Bats are usually found in the roof space but the contractor should be aware that they may be present in other areas.

All species of bat are protected by law. It is illegal to kill, injure or disturb bats, obstruct access to bat roosts and to damage or disturb bat roosts.

If evidence of bats is fund then advice must be sought from Natural England.

There was no evidence of the presence of bats at the time of inspection although it should be noted that roof spaces were not inspected.

7.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

You are reminded of your duty as Employer (Client) under the CDM Regulations for construction and maintenance works for more than 30 days and involves more than 3 people working at any one time. Visit the CDM Regulations website for more information: https://www.hse.gov.ul/condtruction/cdm

8.0 BUILDING INSURANCE

You are reminded that the insurance cover should be index linked so that adequate cover is maintained to guard against inflation. It is imperative that the basic sum is adequate at the inception of index linking. Please speak to your insurers for further advice.

Your insurers should be notified whenever you carry out repairs or alterations.

PART 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.0 RECOMMENDED REPAIRS

Please refer to Section 1.2

2.0 FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS AND TESTS

1. Test underground drains.
2. Inspect high-level areas from mobile access platform
3. Sustainability audit.
4. Detailed survey of arcade columns.

3.0 SUGGESTED WORKS PACKAGES

1. Repairs to rainwater goods.
2. Fire safety improvements.
3. External decoration, re-roofing, repairs to clock and upgrading thermal performance.
4. Repairs to arcade timber columns, soffit and pavings.

5.2 LIST DESCRIPTION

Built as a Market Hall in 1574 (during the reign of Elizabeth I). Converted into the Guildhall in 1605. Enlarged and rebuilt about 250 years later in 1814 (when George III was king).

The building consists of a market arcade on the ground floor with the Council Chamber over and a clock tower at the southwest corner. The building is supported on 3 rows of octagonal columns, The arcade is original, but the 1st floor above dates entirely from the reconstruction of 1814. Stuccoed. Modillion cornice and parapet with pediment above the north and south fronts, each containing a round cartouche in the tympanum. Round-headed windows on the south side, square headed windows on the east and west sides, and a single Venetian window on the north side, all in moulded architrave surrounds. Panelling inside. The clock tower is in 4 sections. The ground floor is rusticated. The first floor has long and short quoins. The south side of the 2nd floor is flanked by pilasters with a clock face between them and a dentilled cornice over, plus an inset parapet containing a balustraded panel in the centre. The top section of the tower is an octagonal cupola with leaden dome over, surmounted by a ball and weathervane.

Note chimney stack now removed.