

Masonry Inspection Report

Hereford Town Hall

Entrance Canopy

19th January 2016



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This is a report focusing on the condition of the **Entrance Canopy**, which has shed fragments of masonry onto the entrance steps & footpath below, raising serious Health & Safety issues.

Limitations

This report is based on the findings of a close visual inspection carried out from a **tube & fitting scaffold** erected to prevent further fragments falling to ground.

Inspection Report

Town Hall, St Owen's Street, Hereford. c.1904

The inspection was carried out on **Wednesday 9th December 2015**. The weather conditions were dry and bright with an average temperature of 14 degrees Celsius.

DESCRIPTION

- The façade of the building - St Owen's Street elevation - is constructed in Terracotta that is heavily ornamented with banding, pilasters, finials, scrollwork & figures.
- The central doorway has rusticated pillars and round-headed arch, under a prominent round-headed canopy that is lead covered.
- The soffit of the canopy has recessed panels with ogee detail.
- The extended corbels have a dentilled detail above them and scroll & fine detail to their sides and front, the extended corbels are set on rusticated columns.



OBSERVATIONS



Lead covering to canopy appears sound apart from having no cover flashing or upstand of any kind where it meets the wall face above.



Lead flashings to the window balcony directly above the canopy were not secured.



Where the soffit of the canopy meets the main building the joint has widened in general, but more so in several locations.



Considerable number of fissures and fractures visible throughout the soffit of the canopy, some appear recent and some historic, but all were hollow to a tap test.



Fractures evident throughout both corbels in all directions



Without much encouragement the hollowest of fractured Terracotta on the canopy soffit was removed exposing corroded steel.

CONSIDERATIONS

- In my opinion it seems that with various opportunities water has ingressed into the terracotta construction promoting the corroding of the steels, which carry the weight of the canopy back into the main building.
- With the corrosion comes expansion and with the incredible force it exerts it fractures the weakest points around it.
- Without knowing the actual steel arrangements it's impossible to truly understand the extent of replacement support structure necessary to address the current issues.
- All that is known is that the steels extend from above the internal arch to within approximately 100mm of the front of the canopy, and that the steels are set within the terracotta units. Nothing is known of any further steels which are undoubtedly an integral component within the buildings fabric.
- How the steels are set into the main structure is an unknown until partial dismantling has taken place, this will necessitate adequate structural supporting prior to any investigative work.

RECOMMENDATIONS / REMEDIAL WORK

- Have the structure inspected by an appropriately qualified structural engineer for calculated details of load and possible recommendation for a replacement system, also to assess the likelihood of further issues with other embedded steels.
- Suitable structural scaffold to allow mechanical supporting of the canopy and possibly the inner arch, also to achieve a lifting rail above the canopy for dismantling and reconstructing.
- Dismantle the balcony above the canopy, the canopy and the corbels as necessary to remove all visibly damaged terracotta and fully expose the extent of problematic steelwork.
- Replace the steel as necessary with appropriate modern material/system.
- Have matching replacement terracotta sections manufactured to reconstruct around the new support system.
- Re detail the lead covering to the canopy to discourage water ingress where it abutts the balcony detail.
- Replace the lead covering to the balcony, re detail if necessary, and perhaps introduce a lead covering to the balcony capping.

BUDGET COSTS

I can offer an **estimate of costs** to cover the likely total for all works - **presuming complete replacement of Canopy and Balcony – Excluding ANY structural steelwork** (survey, calculations, removal & replacement) **& scaffolding.**

£

Subject to Vat

Any queries regarding any part of this report, please do not hesitate to contact the writer

This report is a true reflection of my opinions regarding the remedial work required to address the heightened Health & Safety issues regarding falling masonry from this part of the building.

Signed:

Date: **19th January 2016**

Nial Hemmings
Director
CDL Stone Ltd