

The Old School Refurbishment Project Highnam Community Centre

Although the Old School looked in reasonable condition, a while back the prevailing management Trustee Committee discussed the need to carry out some maintenance and improvement works. This was not only to improve the overall environment for users but also to carry out the obligations and responsibilities of managing a Grade II listed building. (English Heritage List Entry Number 1091370).

The aim was to remove the suspended ceilings from both main rooms, demolish and rebuild the toilet block with new sanitaryware, carry out maintenance works internally and externally, redecorate throughout and provide a new electrical installation throughout.

With this in mind a "Condition Survey" was commissioned employing a Chartered Surveyor to inspect the main fabric and structure of the building to enable costs for repairs and improvements to be obtained. Whilst the examination was as extensive as access and circumstances permitted matters such as the presence of fixtures, fittings and floor finishes imposed restrictions on the inspections. No excavations or opening up of the building fabric were undertaken to establish or examine the nature or condition of concealed parts.

Using the Condition Survey Report a Chartered Quantity Surveyor converted the findings into a costed schedule of building works. At the same time costs for demolishing and rebuilding the toilet block were obtained along with quotes for the electrical and plumbing installations. With allowances for Architect professional fees this resulted in a budget cost of circa £188,000.

The next stage to find funding for the project proved to be extremely frustrating, particularly with the intervention of the COVID-19 pandemic, in finding willing supporters. However, the search for funding continued resulting with a total funding of £201,306. See separate financial statement for details.

In spring 2020, Covid-19 restrictions were beginning to ease, so the Management Trustee Committee felt that the circumstances were right for the project to move forward.

Danny Sullivan of Design-for-Living Architects was appointed to produce a detailed set of drawings for the new toilet block and submitted them along with works to be carried out in the main building to Tewkesbury Borough Council. Building regulation approval was achieved on 14th May 2021 and final Planning Permission for Development with Listed Building Consent for Development was achieved on the 8th October 2021.

At this stage Danny supervised a Tender Enquiry sent to four local building contractors. On the tender submission return date only three builders made an offer and only **King Builders of Gloucester** made a detailed return as requested.

King Builders have been established for a very long time and have recently satisfactorily completed the extension to the Highnam Doctors Practice. They are known to have access to trades people with the appropriate skills required for this project.

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On this basis **King Builders** were appointed using a “JCT Minor Works Building Contract 2016”. Under the contract the Architect is the overall “supervisor” of the project which involves ensuring regular site progress meeting are held and that the builder properly applies for money relative to the progress of the project. The architect also ensures that the workmanship is satisfactorily completed to the required standards and specification. Additionally the architect controls any variations to the project by issuing an appropriate Architects Instruction (AI). The AI's are then costed by the builders Quantity Surveyor using set standard and procedures. AI's can have a nil, omit or a plus cost.

The **King Builders** contract excluded electrical and plumbing installations as these will be directly employed by the HCCT.

After appropriate preparation and lead in time **King Builders** started on site 8th November 2021 and it was not many weeks before unknown items were discovered eroding our contingency allowances. Items such as the discovery of a well under the old toilet block which involved the redesign of the new toilet block slab. The underground drainage also had to be redesigned to ensure we achieved the right falls to the site cesspit.

As part of the works a bird-cage scaffolding was built inside the main building (this is virtually a mezzanine floor) to allow work people to gain access to the very high levels. This gave the opportunity to remove the existing lathe and plaster to the underside of the roof rafters.

Exposure of the roof gave indications that extensive wet rot was present and, more disturbingly, extensive infestation of dry rot. On examination it was considered that this condition was due to the failure of the lead lined roof valley, poor selection of roof membrane and poorly designed roof structure which did not allow proper ventilation. Water has probably been creeping into the building via the lead lined roof valley, which is at the junction of the small hall and the kitchen / first floor office, unnoticed for a considerable number of years.

The decision was made to ask the Architect to carry out a detailed survey and submit a report. This was done and the outcome was better in part but worse in others. Better because not the whole of the main building roof would have to be stripped etc. but worse as serious dry rot infestation has affected the first floor office floor / kitchen ceiling.

In addition structural inefficiencies were found to the door opening to the first floor office and over the windows of the kitchen. These inefficiencies are such that they are considered dangerous and need resolving.

It was also noted that prior to the report wet rot was found in the floor of the small hall caused by lack of ventilation in the sub-floor. A solution was found costs for which needed to be included.

The Architects report included a detailed schedule of works enabling the builder to provide a more accurate variation cost.

This is when it became blatantly obvious that there was a serious shortage in the

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project funding. After making some adjustments with existing funding and ensuring that there was still a reasonable contingency figure incorporated the shortfall in round terms was **£110,000**.

It was also obvious that the HCCT would need help in finding this extra funding as quickly as possible. Highnam Parish Council (HPC) as Custodial Trustees, were highlighted of the situation. Despite initial enthusiasm from Tewkesbury Borough Council representatives and other sources every avenue for conventional funding proved to be frustratingly negative. Based on this it was mutually suggested that the HPC might see their way clear to investigate the possibility of a Public Works Loan.

As far as the project was concerned a decision was made to use existing funds to carry out the remedial works to the main building roof and the first floor office floor / kitchen ceiling. The logic being that it was no use carrying on with internal and finishing works until the building was secure and weathertight. It would also prevent any further deterioration to the building structure and fabric.

This will mean that some existing contract works will have to be deferred until the additional funding has been secured. Calculations have been made as to what works could be included within the existing funding and take advantage of the bird-cage scaffolding to gain high level access.

The deferred works include the following:

- internal fitting out of the toilet block partitioning, floor and wall finishes etc.
- external repairs to stone work and repointing on all elevations of the main building
- the refurbishing of all main building windows
- internal decoration throughout the project
- repair work in the cellar
- all electrical works
- all plumbing works

In essence the building has to be “moth-balled” until extra funding is made available.

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Financial Statement

Project funding

Section 106 from the Parish Council	£40,000
VHIG from Acre	£24,069
Bernard Sunley Foundation	£10,000
Enovert	£39,900
Tewkesbury BC Capital Grant	£18,105
HCCT Reserves	£69,232
Total	£201,306

Original Costs

Building works	£ 169,794.59	
Electrical Installation	£13,590.00	
Plumbing Installation	£3,900.00	
Total	£187,284.59	£187,284.59

Architect Instructions (Project variations)

AI-0 Main roof inspections & tests	£4,638.80	
AI-1 Alteration to toilet block concrete base	£4,201.13	
AI-2 Tests for asbestos and anthrax	£781.80	
AI-3 Revised storm drain and foul drains	£1,361.92	
AI-4 Re-issue of roof detail following AI-0	£1,337.28	
AI-7 Main Roof & First Floor Remedial Works	£100,123.74	
AI-8 Additional repairs to kitchen / first floor	£828.00	
Total	£113,272.67	£113,272.67
Total Project Cost		£300,557.26
Available funding		£201,306.00
Project shortfall		£99,252.26

Expenditure to date

Original Building Works	52% done	£88,293.19
Variation Building Works	90% done	£101,945.40
Electrical Installation	5% done	£690.00
Total		£190,928.59

Note: All of the above costs include 20% VAT where applicable.