

A.00 PREMISES IDENTIFICATION AND INSTRUCTIONS

A.01 CLIENTS NAME AND ADDRESS

The Methodist Church
C/O Rev R Borgars
11 Lapwing Rise
Whitchurch
RG28 7SU

A.02 THE PROPERTY DISCUSSED IN THIS REPORT

Thattham Methodist Church
Bath Road
Thattham
Newbury
Berks
RG19 4RE



A.03 SURVEYED BY

W G Sykes, FRICS

A.04 DATE OF INSPECTION

9th August 2017.

A.05 INSTRUCTIONS

We are acting on written instructions received dated 1st August 2017 to carry out a Quinquennial Inspection on Thatcham Methodist Church, Thatcham.

A.06 LIMITATIONS AS TO THE CONDITION AT THE TIME OF OUR INSPECTION

This report reflects the condition of the various parts of the property at the date of our inspection.

A.07 THE SITE

The property occupies a long rectangular site close to the centre of Thatcham. Bath Road is on the south side of the property and I shall therefore refer to all elevations correspondingly.

A.08 FLOODING

I am not aware that flooding has been a problem in the past.

A.09 WEATHER AT THE TIME OF INSPECTION

The weather at the time of inspection was dry and bright and hence I am unable to make any categorical statement as to the condition of the rainwater goods such as might become apparent during periods of heavy storm.

B.00 REPAIR WORKS/NEW WORKS SINCE LAST INSPECTION

1. Two new kitchens have been installed.
2. The gents, ladies and disabled W.C's have been refurbished.
3. A new boiler has been installed together with new water tanks.
4. The electric water heaters have been taken out.
5. Internal decoration has been undertaken.
6. The electrical installation has been tested and LED lights have been installed.
7. New carpets have been installed within the church.

C.00 DETAILED CONDITION OF BUILDING

C.01 GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The cottage at the front of the site is I believe some 170 years old as is the original chapel.

The link between the cottage and the church was constructed in about 1975. The back hall was, I believe, added in about 1985.

The accommodation is arranged as follows:

Ground Floor: Main church entrance hall, gents WC, ladies WC, quiet room, church sanctuary, vestry, office, rear hall, boys WC, disabled WC, store, ladies WC, kitchen, back hall, Sunday school meeting room, kitchen 2, side hall with store room off and meeting room.

First Floor: Storage area.

LISTING

I understand that the property is not a Listed Building.

EXTERNAL FABRIC

C.02 WALLS/FOUNDATIONS TO THE WALLS

I was unable to inspect the footings and foundations hidden underground which support the walls and cannot therefore comment upon their existence, adequacy or condition.

I have inspected the Geological map which indicates that the property is built in an area of clay. This type of sub soil is prone to volume changes which can cause damage to buildings by way of subsidence or heave.

Whilst there are signs of movement to the older parts of the property none would appear to be related to ongoing subsidence or significant deflection of the walls to the property.

C.03 CONSTRUCTION

To the cottage the front elevation is in brickwork built in Flemish bond fashion having alternate headers and stretchers to each course. It is therefore of solid composition. Here there has been some re-pointing undertaken in a hard cement based mortar and this together with the fact that there has been salt water splashback from the road has

caused delamination to the face brickwork in a number of areas. Any bricks which have suffered in this manner should be taken out and replaced.



Spalling to face brickwork

The east facing gable wall to the cottage appears to have been re-built in recent times having a facing of modern brickwork which is in stretcher bond fashion. It is very possible that this is in modern cavity wall construction. Again some delamination to face brickwork was noted. The gable peak here is finished in tile hanging onto a timber frame.

The west flank elevation is finished mainly with a rendered face, although part brickwork towards the north. I noted that many of the bricks on the north side have been re-faced in a hard cement mortar. This should not be considered as a long term repair and bricks which have been re-faced in this manner should be taken out and replaced. Also any which have delaminated should be similarly treated.



Delaminated and refaced bricks.

There are areas of weak and open mortar joints generally around this part of the property and raking out and re-pointing of mortar joints is recommended, but a soft mortar incorporating a high lime content should be used for this purpose.

To the newer parts the walls are mainly in brick faced cavity with rendered panels below the windows to the east flank of the meeting room. To the church building the walls are again constructed in Flemish bond suggesting that they are of solid composition and they are part painted. Some of the original mortar joints are weak and some raking out and re-pointing is now required.

There is a tall vertical crack in the projecting corner on the west side of the office externally. There is a long length of brickwork along this elevation and I believe that this crack is associated with thermal rather than structural movement. I suggest that it should be filled with a flexible mastic as movement will obviously continue throughout the life of the building. Filling the crack will help to keep rainwater ingress at bay.



Vertical crack

There is a rubbed brick head to a window on the West side of the Church which has dropped over the years, but I do not at this stage believe that remedial action is required.





Dropped window head.

There is a rendered gable wall to the rear and this remains in satisfactory order.

C.04 DEFLECTION/SETTLEMENT/SUBSIDENCE

Other than noted, there are no signs of deflection in the external walls or of settlement or subsidence.

D.00 ROOF COVERINGS, CHIMNEY STACKS & FLUES, PARAPET GUTTERS ETC

PITCHED ROOFS

The Main Pitched Roof

Over the original cottage the roof is twin pitched and is covered with plain clay tiles with half round ridge tiles to the apex. There is a tiled valley at the intersection. The roof is slightly uneven, but the fact that there is underlay sarking present suggests that it has been re-covered within recent times. There is unevenness also in the tiling itself which suggests that the supporting battens have deflected.



Uneven tiles

The central link between the cottage and the church is in built up felt. There are no stone chippings nor solar reflective paint to the surface. There is no lead cover flashing to the upturn to the walls to each end. Leadwork is used below the windows to the church but is torn here. The roof surface is probably some 10 years old and as such I would anticipate that within the next 5 years repairs will be necessary and possible renewal as felt roofs of this type are known to have limited lives of some 15 years from new. At the time of renewal, the insulation values as well as the need for ventilation should be examined and upgraded as necessary.



Felt roof

To the main church the roof is twin pitched and is covered with natural slate. There is some undulation in the form of the roof suggesting deflection to supporting timbers, but all slates were in position at the time of my inspection. Although there are some tingles around some slates suggesting that they have been reinstated in the past.

The rear roofs are also twin pitched and covered with natural slate with half round ridge tiles to the apex. Some tingles have been used to reinstate slates which have slipped in the past. However, there are not a sufficient number of these slates to suggest the roof has become nail sick. At least one slate to the West slope has slipped out of position. There are some damaged slates on the West side of the intermediate single storey structure close to the eaves and these should be reinstated.



Tingles to slate roof



Damaged Slates

Chimneys

There is a brick built chimney stack to the cottage complete with corbelling, two terminating pots and lead flashing to the main roof abutment. This appears to be in satisfactory condition.

E.01 RAINWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEM

GUTTERS & DOWNPIPES

Surface water from the roof slopes collects in half round PVC guttering connecting to round PVC downpipes. Along this length of roof the gutters will be prone to thermal expansion and contraction which can easily cause breakage at the joints and they will need to be inspected periodically to ensure that they remain in satisfactory condition.

There is some undulation between the points of support and additional brackets may be necessary in future. The gutters are colour faded which indicates brittleness and on no account should ladders be leant against them.

E.02 DOORS & WINDOWS

Windows are mainly UPVC framed and double glazed. There is still one window over the porch which is suffering from defective seals and this should be replaced.



Misting to glazed leaf

I noted that there no frame vents fitted to the UPVC framed windows as is required under current Building Regulations and you may therefore find it necessary to leave

windows slightly ajar from time to time to promote air circulation and prevent a build up of condensation particularly in kitchen areas when in sustained use.

The door to the cottage is in hardwood with Georgian wired lights and push bar device. There is no weatherboard fitted to the base of the door, but there is adequate protection afforded by the porch which covers this door.

To the front of the church there is a pair of hardwood doors complete with side lights, cylinder lock and mortice lock. The door on the east side of the rear hall and that to the rear church are of similar construction with push bar devices. All these doors were found to be in satisfactory condition.

E.03 METALWORK, WOODWORK & PAINTWORK

Generally speaking the external decorations are in fair condition.

E.04 TOWER, SPIRE, BELLS & FRAME

N/A

E.05 ROOF STRUCTURES – RESTRICTIONS ON THE INTERNAL INSPECTION OF THE PITCHED ROOF STRUCTURES.

The roof void above the cottage is approached via a hatch over the landing at first floor level. The sub structure is formed of softwood rafters, purlins and ceiling joists and an underlay sarking felt is laid over as a secondary precaution against rain and wind penetration.

There are abundant signs of past beetle infestation to timbers and unless there is a guarantee in place, I would suggest that treatment against wood boring insects would be advisable. It is possible that there are other areas, particularly within the older parts of the property where beetle infestation has occurred in the past and where treatment will be necessary.

Above the modern structure towards the rear of the church the sub structure is formed of softwood trusses of the ITPA (International Truss Plate Association) type spaced at intervals along the length of the roof. Longitudinal and diagonal wind bracing has been incorporated, although not strictly speaking in accordance with modern requirements. Again there is an underlay sarking felt as a secondary precaution against rain and wind penetration.

The two domestic cold water storage tanks have now been replaced but are not taken on the node points in the truss formation as is recommended. This could lead to disproportionate collapse.



Incorrectly supported tanks

Insulation is laid to about 100mm in depth and I would recommend that it should be increased to some 300mm in two layers with the second layer laid over and at right angles to the first. There is no insulation above the first floor ceiling to the cottage and you may, therefore, wish to provide insulation to reduce heat losses in this area.

E.06 WALLS, PARTITIONS & CEILINGS

Ceilings

Ceilings in the rear hall and also in the church are formed of a suspended aluminium grid system. Elsewhere they appear to be in plasterboard and partly lath and plaster. I noted that some of the ceilings have a textured finish and as such they may contain asbestos fibres. However, I understand that an asbestos report has been obtained and this may refer to these areas.

There are downstanding beams to the cottage. Care is needed when dealing with ceilings of lath and plaster in view of the loss of key which will most likely have occurred.

Wall Surfaces inside the Property

The internal walls are partly of solid composition and partly timber studwork. Considerable shrinkage has occurred along the junction with the ceilings and the external walls on the west side of the hall and in these areas some filling will be necessary prior to next redecorating.

Damp Proof Course

There is evidence of an injected damp proof course having been introduced to the older part of the property in the past. Other parts include a felt based DPC.

I took readings with a damp meter around the property where possible. Somewhat high levels of dampness were recorded to the east wall of the church and also to part of the west wall. To the east this is combined with some paint disruption. I am reluctant to recommend an injection damp proof course with re-plastering as I do not believe that this is an effective measure and it tends to result in the dampness being forced up the wall to above the level of the area which has been re-plastered. It will also entail complete redecoration of the church.

It is important that ventilation is maximised to these areas and it has to be said that high levels of dampness are often misdiagnosed as rising damp when the problem is associated with condensation as the lower parts of the walls are cooler than the upper parts and tend to attract moist air. It may be possible to reduce the effects of dampness by carrying out redecoration with a suitable paint and this may be the most appropriate way to start dealing with the problem.

E.07 DOORS, WINDOWS, WOODWORK & FITTINGS

Doors

Interior doors are of the softwood ply faced type, many of which are fitted with self-closers and these were found to be in satisfactory condition.

Skirtings

Skirtings and architraves are in softwood painted type and are generally complete showing only minor scuff and chip marks which should be accepted as fair wear and tear.

Kitchen Fittings

Kitchen cupboards are of modern style and are functional.

Staircase

The staircase in the cottage is formed in softwood treads, risers and strings. It has a low headroom at the top which can lead to personal injury when ascending and descending.

E.08 INTERNAL DECORATIONS

Internal decoration is generally satisfactory.

E.09 FLOORS

In the church the floor is in suspended timber. There are air vents to the exterior which are required to provide air circulation to the underside of these floors. Some minor give was noted to the tread.

Elsewhere the floors are generally of solid composition with vinyl, tiled and carpet finish. They were found to be level and free of serious obstruction.

Again some older vinyl tiles may contain asbestos fibres, but this may well be referred to in the asbestos report.

E.10 FURNITURE & FITTINGS

Furniture and fittings are relatively modern and in satisfactory condition.

E.11 MONUMENTS

N/A

E.12 SERVICES

HEATING SYSTEM & VENTILATION

There are two boilers to the property. In the larger kitchen there is a Glow Worm gas fired boiler with conventional flue. This heats the radiators in this part of the property which are of the steel panelled type fitted with thermostatic radiator valves. There is a room thermostat in the back hall and also in the church. This also provides hot water.

In the second kitchen there is a Worcester Green Star i gas fired boiler with low level flue which provides central heating and there is a room thermostat in the hall and also in the cottage. A Redwing WS7 also provides domestic hot water in this kitchen.

I understand that the boilers are serviced on an annual basis and this should be maintained. The systems were not run at the time of inspection.

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATION

Mains electricity is connected and the meter and consumer unit is positioned in the side hall.

Where visible the installation appears to be satisfactory, but I have commissioned no tests.

LIGHTNING CONDUCTOR

N/A

E.13 SANITARY FACILITIES & DRAINAGE

General

Our inspection of the services, mains and distribution pipework was limited to those areas which are visible. No comment can be made as to the soundness of any pipework, wires or fittings which were not visible and you must recognise the risk of defects in such hidden areas.

Water

Mains water is connected and there are stoptaps situated in both kitchens. I have not tested either of the stoptaps. They should be tested and freed periodically to ensure that they shut the system off well in the event of an emergency.

Visible pipework is in copper, adequately supported and jointed although it should be appreciated that there are long lengths of pipework which cannot be seen as they are boxed in or otherwise concealed from view.

Cold Water Storage Tanks

The water storage tanks are new in the loft area as previously described. These should be properly insulated and covered. Ideally they should be positioned on supporting beams close to the node points in the truss formation.

Sanitary & Kitchen Fittings

All Sanitary fittings have been renewed within the last five years and were found to be in a good satisfactory condition.

Underground Drainage

The property is connected to the mains drainage system and there are internal soil and vent pipes.

There is a gully outside kitchen 2. There are three inspection chambers and the covers were lifted to two as the 3rd inspection chamber cover could not be lifted. The drains appeared to be running well at the time of inspection, but no underground drainage tests have been commissioned.

Surface Water Drainage

I cannot say whether the drains run to the main system or to soakaways.

E.14 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

There are self-closing doors around the property as is necessary. There are fire extinguishers in the entrance lobby to the rear hall and also in the front entrance hall and the hall to the cottage. These should be tested from time to time.

E.15 SECURITY

There are no specific security measures relating to this property.

E.16 GROUND, BOUNDARIES, PATHS, TREES, CAR PARKING & GRAVES

This section sets out the necessary details of any repairs and maintenance works which need to be carried out to the buildings and garden areas.

The Site

There is a brick paved forecourt at the front and a concrete paved path leading from front to rear.

There is a 225mm (9 inch) solid brick wall forming the boundary to the east. Currently it is in firm condition although there are some areas of delaminated brickwork and in these areas normal repairs should include replacement of these damaged bricks.

A timber fence along the east side has been renewed by the developer to the adjoining land.

There are two timber and felt sheds which are in satisfactory order for their purpose. The rear garden is laid to lawn with paving. The paving is somewhat weedy.

F.00 ITEMS REQUIRING FURTHER DETAILED OR SPECIALIST INVESTIGATION

The electrical installation should be tested at 5 yearly intervals.

G.00 WORKS OF REPAIR IN ORDER OF PRIORITY

None

G.01 OF UTMOST URGENCY

No such items have been noted

G.02 ESSENTIAL WITHIN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS

Any slates which slip out of position should be reinstated

G.03 ESSENTIAL WITHIN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Rake out and re-point areas of open mortar joints.

G.04 ADVISABLE WITHIN THE NEXT 5 YEARS

Replace bricks which have spalled and lost their facings.

Budget to replace felt roof area.

Replace double glazed windows which are suffering from defective seals.

G.05 MATTERS REQUIRING FURTHER INVESTIGATION

None.

OBLIGATORY NOTE

This report provides a general guide as to the state of repair. No exposure work whatsoever has been carried out and the foundations have not been inspected. Plasterwork has not been tested, no underfloor inspections made and flooring where concealed by coverings was not inspected. No electrical, water or drainage tests have been carried out.

MAINTENANCE COSTS

A regular inspection of the property will possibly reduce excessive repair costs. With this in mind we attach a list of the most vulnerable parts of the property which should be looked at from time to time. If such inspections are undertaken and action taken as necessary the maintenance will be improved.



Signed

Date: 24th November 2017

W G Sykes, FRICS