Upton Village Hall Annual Building & Grounds Report 2015

The Hallmark assessments carried out in 2013 were very complimentary about the overall state of the 1928 building both external and internal. In August 2015, during a major shutdown, extensive work was carried out on both the car park and on the roof/ceiling of much of the building. The result of most of the work would not be that apparent to the general Hall user. A record of the shutdown work is contained within this report. The local Council and other authorities were consulted on our proposals but Building Control not formally involved.

Building External

Our roof timbers have now been very closely inspected as part of the August construction work. They are in good condition. The decision to insulate the ceiling has demanded significant attention into providing adequate roof ventilation of all loft voids including the vaulted areas. We have now established ventilation flow from the eaves; up and out of the top of the building.
This has been resolved with grills in the eaves and under the top ridge tiles. Grills have been installed on the underside of the eaves, from the toilet block around the back of the building and up to the kitchen bar area. The front area (meeting room, stage and utility room) is deemed to have adequate ventilation due to its openness through the lighting docks to the rest of the loft void. How all this has been achieved is covered within the text on '*Building Internal*' – covered later in this report.

All work on renewed (last few years) gutters, downpipes, and fascia boards is still in a good state and performs well. Roof tiles are clean and intact. Brickwork, woodwork and plastic are all in acceptable condition with adequate decoration. The front face of the building was recently tidied by some patch re-pointing. There are no further signs of settlement. Cementing work around the front entrance pillars is now in good condition. The building has been generally checked out by our builder, Bob Dodd. The side entrance ramp is now fit for purpose with a better safer handrail and top grab rail. The fire exit by the furniture store now has a steel-plate threshold that is more wheelchair friendly. All external varnished doors are in good condition. All windows and skylights are in good condition.

Grounds

The car park was very crazed and breaking up even after many years of patching up. CWaC Council and Welsh Water agreed we could resurface and improve run off into main drains. The car park was resurfaced in August with 40mm of tarmac using 10mm stone. The foundations were first made good with filling of potholes and depressions. The edging along the north boundary has been improved with edging slabs well haunched into place. A prior levels survey indicated flow off towards the back SE corner and towards the building/drives. Indications are that any potential flooding in the SE corner would be alleviated by natural soakaway and the plentiful trees in neighbouring ground. Re-surfacing the car park has raised the car park level even higher above the building damp course. The existing drainage channel was clearly 'not fit for purpose' and flooding towards the building has been alleviated by a new drainage channel, totally across the western boundary of the car park. This channel feeds directly into the main storm drains. Furthermore, between the drainage channel and the building a defense has been constructed that seems to be proving effective – no damp wall above the damp course and no flooding in the lower level boiler room. See attached appendix 1 for schematic.

The car park is now well floodlit with movement detectors and LED flood lights. The two drives and front hard-standing are adequate but we are planning for resurfacing and improvements to side drainage channels - possibly within the next five years or so. Good car park marking lines have been well received and the major markings on the two drives have been re-made. These should suffice for many years.

The container roof has been inspected and is adequately sound. There is no indication of leakage. The whole container exterior was repainted recently – the top done this summer.

The Monica garden continues to be well tended and offers interest and colour through much of the year. The back fence (new a few years back) has now settled in to its grey state. It looks sound and should last for a long time. There are no plans to coat it – for either protective or cosmetic reasons. The side fence and other side hedge as well as the front hedge are both in an acceptable state.
All signage is good. The external noticeboard has not yet been refurbished or replaced (as intended in last report) but this should be resolved within the next 12 months. A full-size standard 'no entry' symbol sign has been robustly installed at the entrance of the 'EXIT' drive.

Building Internal

Virtually the whole building now has roof/ceiling insulation meeting current Building Regulations. The only exceptions are above the stage and inaccessible areas such as the low tight voids in the main lobby and utility room.
Vaulted ceilings now have 75mm Recticel rigid foam insulation between the spars with a further 25mm across the spars before the plasterboard. The old softboard ceiling on top of the spars was cut away to give a 50mm ventilation 'chimney' between the spars. Removal of specific bricks on the wallplate and gaps cut in internal partition walls has ensured ventilation from under eave grills through to ceiling voids and the breathable ridge tile arrangement. The exposed 'spars' of the vaulted ceiling in the main hall are dummies that have been attached to the new ceiling to retain the heritage architectural look. Attention to detail has been exemplary – such as the use of roughsawn timber which has been multi-coated with black paint.
The central ceiling of the main hall has been completely rebuilt using 200mm**(check)** deep joists. Plasterboard ceiling has been installed within the joists (to retained the exposed timber architecture) and the whole ceiling insulated with 300mm of sheeps wool (Thermafleece Cozywool). All the softboard has been removed in the 'wedge' areas between the vaulted ceiling and suspended ceiling. As plasterboard was then installed, rigid foam & sheeps wool insulation was used as could best be achieved to maximize insulation while ensuring retention of adequate through ventilation.
The upper part of the main hall internal walls adjoin the loft void above suspended ceilings of kitchen and toilets. This internal wall was insulated with Thermafleece hung vertically in the loft void against the internal wall. The total consumption of Thermafleece was 75 rolls. Adequate ventilation above these kitchen and toilet suspended ceilings has been improved with occasional brick removal from the wall plates. Many photographs were taken of this insulation/ventilation project – including areas now inaccessible. Some are recorded on the UVH website (Appendix 2 lists the now inaccessible views).
Future insulation of the stage and lighting docks ceiling is being considered with attention to the potential problem of overheating during theatrical productions. During other times the practice of keeping the stage curtains closed is now well established – preserving heat within the main hall.
It was deemed unnecessary to add dummy exposed spars on the insulated vaulted ceilings in the fire-exit corridors and in the furniture store and kitchen store. The boiler room vaulted ceiling was not insulated but fire protection improved with two sheets of plasterboard under the spars and sealed edges using appropriated fire rated sealant.

Two destratification fans have been installed and run continuously (currently at level 3). The 2016 report should be able to report on the value of these during cold and hot periods but already, feedback is positive. All ceiling lighting in the main hall is now LED with a Wattage loading reduced by over 50%. These have been well received but currently we are still resolving the how the central set of four dimmable panels can best be operated.

The smart room thermostat settings have recently been reviewed and revised but we are dependent on further user feedback to ensure adequate environmental comfort without wasting heat.

Due to the extensive construction work it was decided to fully repaint the main hall – ending the shutdown with what is effectively a brand new main hall - above floor level. All curtains other than the main stage curtains and mirror curtains were fully cleaned. The main hall wood floor was well protected during the shutdown work and appears not to have suffered despite the extensive scaffolding. Our routine management of the floor is now established and successful. Hopefully it will last us for very many years. The painted badminton lines however are now very worn and we hope to work with the two user clubs to improve these when they believe it is necessary.

The kitchen/bar area has been fully repainted as has the furniture store. Generally, surfaces and decoration elsewhere are all in a reasonable state. The two fire exit corridor walls are painted brickwork. Now that their new ceilings are painted, the walls look very dated and deserve some cosmetic attention next summer. The side entrance lobby is looking a bit tatty and would benefit from re-decoration and possible plastic paneling below dado-height. The Meeting Room was redecorated during the summer shutdown 2012. The lower level plastic panel has been successful but areas of wall above the paneling are getting badly marked from table stacking. Carpeting in the meeting room and bar area and lobbies is overdue for thorough cleaning. This should be addressed during the next available period (Xmas 2015?)

All historic unused electrical cabling (including Drama lighting) in the main hall ceiling has now been removed. The new LED lighting and fans have new wiring. All main hall ceiling electrics have now been checked including the skylights, which until now had no certification. Upton Drama Society have promised to clear their docking and stage areas of unused historic wiring.
We still do not have a fully comprehensive set of satisfactory test certification for the complete building, however, those few areas not fully certified are all adequately protected and present no accessible hazard to the general public. The kitchen certificate is 10 years old in April 2016 so electrical testing/certification will occur during 2016.

Hygienic cleanliness is being maintained at a very acceptable standard in the kitchen/bar area although the initial new brightness of the stainless steel lives on only in photo records. Sinks are stained with tea drainage but all is still hygienically acceptable. The kitchen vinyl flooring is still in an acceptable state. Except on the odd occasion, the previous experience with smells in the toilet corridor seems to have been resolved with improved air ventilation/extraction. The various improvements to the Disabled Toilet are performing correctly and we believe the facility meets the spirit of DDA legislation. The toilet block is now looking dated but is fit for purpose. There are no imminent plans for refurbishment. On purely cosmetic grounds considerations have been given to re-surfacing the furniture store doors. A trial will be underway shortly. Functionally they are sound and practical. Some of our doors – new over recent years – are now starting to look 'tired'.

Finally – as part of the thorough roof investigations – we consulted on adding solar panels and identified in outline how the installation could readily be installed, externally and internally.

See Appendix 1 – drainage sketch and Appendix 2 – index of 'now hidden' ventilation/insulation.

Further reference points

1. The last professional 'Building Condition Report' was carried out by Architects/Surveyors Tweed Nuttall Warburton of Chester in July 2004. We have not yet identified the need for another full survey. Various aspects of the building have been looked at by specific experts since that report. None of these have raised issues that are still unattended to. At some point a thorough inspection under the timber floor should be undertaken but we are confident that the ventilation is reasonable – as can be witnessed under the stage.
2. The drains were last surveyed (videoed) ten years ago. No concerns have triggered a new survey to date but depending on experience with the new car park drainage – this may be worth considering during the next year.

PGPearn Nov2015 (with consultation with NDraper)