

**REPORT ON STRUCTURAL CONDITION**  
**OF**  
**TOLLGATE HOTEL, WATLING STREET, NORTHFLEET,**  
**NR GRAVESEND, KENT DA13 9RA**  
**FOR**  
**BP PULSE**



**DATE OF INSPECTION:** 24 November 2022

**WEATHER:** Dry

**DATE OF REPORT:** 5 December 2022

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## **1.0     INTRODUCTION**

On 15 November 2022 Halliday West Ltd, Chartered Building Surveyors, were instructed to undertake a visual inspection to report on the general state and condition of the buildings and external areas of the former Tollgate Hotel complex to ascertain whether the buildings remain structurally sound and capable of re-use, and to comment on any repairs carried out since our last inspections in 2018 and 2019.

The extent of this current inspection and report is limited in that only the exterior of the buildings could be inspected. No access was possible to inspect internally within any parts of the complex other than the ground floor walkways and staircases to the accommodation block. Inspection of high-level parts was limited to views from ground level using binoculars where necessary. The flat roof over the accommodation block could not be accessed or inspected.

Instructions were received via Jason Lowes of Rapleys LLP acting on behalf of BP Pulse.

The inspection was undertaken on 24 November 2022 and this report is now submitted in summary of our findings and conclusions.

At the time of our inspection the premises were vacant and unoccupied. Doors and windows were generally boarded over or otherwise covered.

In accordance with the instructions received this should not be considered to be a full building survey and inspection. Access was limited to the rear of the accommodation block.

Building Services were not inspected.

## **2.0     GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

The site contains four buildings. The principal building is single and 2 storey in height with a basement (ascertained during prior inspection). The building is believed to date from the 1920's or 1930's and has pitched timber tiled roofs and brick walls. The building has been enlarged by single storey additions with flat roofs to the east and west. It is irregular in plan shape.

To the east of the main building there are accommodation blocks providing individual hotel rooms with en-suite facilities. These blocks are 2 storey in height with flat roofs, cavity brick walls and concrete floors. We suspect that these blocks date from the 1950 or 1960's. The western accommodation blocks is stepped with changes in floor and roof level due to the sloping nature of the site.

There is a smaller detached building, previously used as a function room, located toward the south of the site. This has brick walls under tiled and felted roofs. The building is single storey in height.

There is also a detached pre-fabricated building previously used as an office for the security guards. This was not inspected.

We are advised that the hotel ceased trading in 2006. We understand that part of the curtilage of the property was required for the construction of the newly aligned A2 Trunk Road. That part of the property not required for the new road, which is the subject of this report, was last used as temporary site offices in connection with the construction of the new road up to 2009. We are advised that the property lies within the Green Belt but retains the planning use of Class C1 (Hotels).

We understand that all normal mains services are available but this has not been verified.

### **3.0 EXTERNAL CONSTRUCTION AND CONDITION**

#### **EXTERNAL STRUCTURE AND FABRIC**

### **3.1 ROOFS, CHIMNEY STACKS AND RAINWATER FITTINGS**

The older building has a series of pitched roofs together with small flat roofed extensions.

The pitched roofs are covered with clay plain tiles whilst the flat roofs are overlaid with bituminous felt. There are lead lined valley gutters and inverted dormers to upper floor window openings. The pitched roofs were found to be in a reasonable general state and condition for their age although tile coverings are in need of overhauling. There are numerous slipped, broken and damaged tiles that should be replaced. There also areas of displaced roof tiling such as at the entrance on the south side. Roof flashings and valley gutter linings are dated and are likely to be in need of repair or replacement.

The felt roof coverings over the flat roofs are deteriorating and are likely to be at the end of their serviceable life and should be replaced. There is evidence of rainwater penetration. Roof flashings are in need of repair or replacement.

Roof structures could not be inspected although from our external only inspection there are no signs of collapse or other serious structural defects. There is the possibility of hidden decay to timbers due to rainwater penetration. There is minor decay to the exposed rafter feet externally.

The accommodation blocks have flat felt covered roofs. Access was not possible to inspect these roofs as the top floor corridors have been boarded off. At the time of our previous inspection in 2019 the felt coverings were deteriorated and had reached the end of their serviceable life. They had been patched in repair. Rainwater is penetrating the flat roofs causing damage to timber soffit boarding over the top floor walkways. This suggest that the roofs are in a similar or worse state to when inspected in 2019. There is likely to be hidden decay to structural roof timbers and roof decking.

There are decorative brick chimney stacks to the principal building. These appear to be in fair condition for their age and exposed location. They have suffered the normal effects of weathering and no doubt repairs to pointing and flashings will be required on closer inspection. Redundant chimney flues should be appropriately capped and ventilated.

There are also fibre cement boiler flues to both the principal building and the accommodation block.

The rainwater fittings are of metal and PVC. The fittings were found to be in a poor general condition. Metal fittings are corroded. Plastic fittings are damaged and displaced. Gutters and outlets are congested and blocked. Gutters and pipes are generally in need of replacement.

### **3.2 WALLS**

The external walls to the principal building are believed to be of cavity brick. Wall elevations comprise red clay facing brickwork including decorative window surrounds. There are also decorative timbers and timber boarded gables together with low level timber cladding and painted cement render finishes. Brickwork has been painted to some elevations.

These walls are in a fair general state and condition having regard to age. The external paint coating is deteriorated and there is graffiti damage. The walls are in need of some general repair and repointing works. Low level timber cladding boarding and render finishes are in a poor state. Coping and parapet brickwork is missing from the perimeter of a flat roof area on the east side.

The walls to the accommodation block are of cavity brick and block. The wall elevations are largely clay facing brickwork. There is timber boarding adjacent to room entrance doors, and to the roof level tank housings. There is also render finish at low level.

These walls are in a reasonable structural condition although repairs are required to pointing where weathered and to replace defective and missing timber cladding and defective render finish which is generally in a poor state.

### **3.3 FLOORS AND STAIRCASES**

Only the ground floor walkways, the edges of the upper walkways, and the staircases within the accommodation blocks could be inspected. These floors are concrete. The floor to the upper walkway has an asphalt finish. This is in a poor state and is in need of replacement. There are concrete paving slabs laid to the ground floor walkways and steps. There are various broken, loose and otherwise defective slabs. Vegetation is growing between slabs. Concrete is spalling and there is corrosion to exposed reinforcement steel to the edges and underside of the upper walkways. Specialist concrete repairs are necessary.

There are semi-external staircases serving the accommodation blocks. These have open risers and timber treads. The stairs are in serviceable condition although repairs are required to treads and landings. Safety improvements are also required to bring the stairs up to current Building Regulations. Improvements are necessary to improve slip resistance to treads, particularly as the stairs are semi-exposed elements.

There is an external metal fire escape staircase to the principal building. This shows signs of corrosion and is in need of treatment and repair.

### **3.4 WINDOWS, DOORS AND OTHER JOINERY**

The windows to the principal building are largely original metal framed single glazed leaded light units set within decorative brick surrounds. There are timber external doors. There are timber windows to the extensions. There are glazed doors and a feature glazed gable to the main entrance. The external joinery is in need of overhaul and redecoration. The more badly damaged and decayed joinery should be replaced. Glazing should be replaced with toughened glass in the required locations to meet current regulations. Windows have suffered extensive damage due to vandalism. Glazing is generally broken and lead is twisted.

The accommodation blocks have single glazed metal framed windows together with timber doors. Glazing is extensively broken due to vandalism. Doors are damaged due to vandalism. Complete replacement of windows and doors is recommended.

The timber fascia boards to all buildings are decayed and damaged and these should be replaced following all necessary roof level repairs.

There is extensive damage to the boarded timber soffits of the upper semi-external walkways to the accommodation blocks due to rainwater penetration through the flat roofs. Repairs are required.

Glazing is broken and missing from the balustrade protecting the edges of the semi-exposed ground and upper floor walkways and staircases to the accommodation blocks. Balustrade framework is weathered and damaged in part. Defective balustrade is in need of replacing.

Inspection of windows and doors was limited as they are boarded over or otherwise covered.

### **3.5 DECORATION**

The condition of the external decoration is weathered and poor. Complete redecoration is necessary.

### **3.6 OUTBUILDINGS AND EXTERNAL AREAS**

The walls to the function room outbuilding are brick, clad with timber boarding. Cladding is in a very poor state with sections missing. Cladding is in need of replacement. The roof over the outbuilding is largely flat with a felt covering. There is a small pitched and tiled roof to the west entrance. The felt roof coverings appear in very a poor condition and in need of replacement. Tiling repairs are necessary to the pitched roof. There are timber framed windows and doors. These are decayed and in a poor state. They are in need of overhaul and repair or replacement. Inspection was limited as boarding has been fixed over windows and doors.

The detached prefabricated building previously used as an office for the security guards was not inspected.

The external areas are generally in a poor state and are in need of significant repair and improvement. The vehicular entrance and car parking areas are generally surfaced with tarmac. The hard standings adjacent to the buildings are surfaced with concrete paving bricks and concrete paving slabs. There are brick garden and retaining walls. Boundary fencing is largely concealed by vegetation growth and it was not therefore inspected.

Damaged paving, fences, garden walls, steps etc. should be appropriately repaired. Circulation roads and car parking areas are in need of repair and resurfacing.

## **4.0 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **4.1 SUMMARY OF CONDITION**

The hotel buildings and external areas have suffered from prolonged neglect and vandalism. The external fabric of the buildings and the external areas of the complex are in a significant state of disrepair. Substantial repair and refurbishment works are required in order to bring the property back into use and a good state of general repair. There are no signs of any significant repairs having been undertaken since our inspections in 2018 and 2019. An external covered walkway has been removed from between the main buildings and vegetation has, to some extent, been cut down. The general condition of the external fabric of the buildings has deteriorated since our previous inspections.

However, from our external only inspection, there are no signs of any significant structural defects to the principal building and the accommodation block. Rainwater penetration, particularly through flat roofs, may have cause hidden decay to roof timbers.

In any scheme of re-use fire safety and means of escape provisions will need to be considered together with the access and facilities for disabled persons.

### **4.2 HIDDEN DEFECTS**

In a building of this age there is always a risk that decay has occurred to concealed timbers, poorly bonded brickwork, inadequate foundations, leaking roofs and the like. In many instances, problems may have occurred in the past which were inadequately dealt with. By their nature, such hidden defects occur where they can least easily be seen and often do not provide superficial evidence. Once the immediate works of repair have been undertaken and safe access to all areas is feasible, it will be possible to complete a comprehensive inspection and identify appropriate additional remedial works where necessary.

We are specifically required by our professional indemnity insurers to remind you that we have not inspected woodwork or other parts of the structure which were covered, unexposed in inaccessible such as foundations, built-in timbers and steelwork. Therefore, we are unable to report that such parts of the property are free from defects, rot, timber infestation or other problems. We did not take samples in order to ascertain the content of load bearing subsoil adjacent to the foundations. We are unable to confirm if woodwool slabs have been used as permanent shuttering, or if calcium chloride additives, high

alumina cement concrete, RAAC concrete, asbestos or any other known deleterious or hazardous materials were incorporated into the structure or fabric of the building. Where appropriate, we have indicated the need for further investigation in these respects. We are unable to confirm there is no Japanese Knotweed or other invasive plant growth within the site.

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

The external fabric of the buildings and the external areas of the complex are in a significant state of disrepair. Condition has deteriorated over a prolonged period. We have identified the need for extensive repair and refurbishment work to bring the buildings and complex back into use.

From our inspection, however, we found the principal building and the accommodation block to be permanent, substantial, of relatively sound construction and currently structurally stable. In our opinion, subject to the preparation of a detailed scope and specification of repair and refurbishment works being duly completed, it would be possible for the property to be brought back into use. In doing so it will be necessary to replace elements that have reached the end of their serviceable life and to carry out refurbishment works to meet current standards and regulations etc.

The cost effectiveness of refurbishment for re-use has not been considered as part of this instruction.

This report has been prepared for the use of BP Pulse and its advisers. It sets out our independent expert opinions in relation to the limited terms of reference of the report. It must not be relied upon by any third party for any use whatsoever without our prior written consent.

M West MRICS  
Halliday West Limited

**APPENDIX A**  
**PHOTOGRAPHS**



*Photograph 1. Principal Building from the east.*



*Photograph 2. Principal Building from the west.*



*Photograph 3. Principal Building from the north.*



*Photograph 4. Principal Building from the east.*



*Photograph 5. Principal Building from the north.*



*Photograph 6. Rear of the western Accommodation Block.*



*Photograph 7. Western Accommodation Block.*



*Photograph 8. Eastern Accommodation Block.*



*Photograph 9. Rear of Eastern Accommodation Block.*



*Photograph 10. Walkway to Accommodation Block.*



*Photograph 11. Outbuilding.*



*Photograph 12. Outbuilding.*



*Photograph 13. Outbuilding.*



*Photograph 14. External areas.*



*Photograph 15. External areas.*



*Photograph 16. External areas.*

