# BUILDING SURVEY REPORT

**for**

**THE VICTORIA HALL**
**39 HIGH STREET**
**OAKHAM**
**LE15 6AH**

**Client:** Oakham Town Council
ROL House
Long Row
Oakham
LE15 6LN

**Date:** 2 July 2025

**Our Ref:** 250732/GCool/ad

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## APPENDIX

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Scope of Instructions

Gateley Smithers Purslow were approached by Oakham Town Council to provide assistance with a building survey report for the property known as Victoria Hall. The purpose of this report is to provide a survey and advice in relation to the current condition and potential future maintenance requirements for the hall. This will enable Oakham Town Council to consider options and potentially support the Trustees in relation to this historically significant local building.

### 1.2 Property Address

The Victoria Hall
39 High Street
Oakham
LE15 6AH

### 1.3 Clients Name and Address

Oakham Town Council
ROL House
Long Row
Oakham
LE15 6LN

### 1.4 Date of Survey

The survey was undertaken on 24 March 2025 by Mr Graham Cooley.

Access to the building was possible through liaison with Mr Chris Evans of Oakham Town Council and the building manager, Ms Melanie Palmer.

### 1.5 Weather Conditions

The weather conditions at the time of the visit were clear and bright.

## 1.6 Limitations of Inspection

This was a visual inspection only with no opening up or other investigations carried out unless expressly identified within this report.

The inspection was generally carried out from ground level and from areas where public access was available. Thus, areas of the roof and external elevations had restricted views due to adjacent properties and limited access to areas surrounding the building.

The main first floor hall has high ceilings and access hatches.

Suitable safe access was not available and therefore the survey has not included high level access above ceilings.

## 1.7 Information relied on within this Report

No historic information in relation to maintenance or the building fabric was available. Accordingly, we have not relied upon additional sources of information unless specifically identified.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

### 2.1 Type and Age

A Grade 2 listed, early 19th century, hall originally built as an agricultural hall and now having community use.

The hall is of a traditional construction with a combination of pitched and flat roofs, brick and stone walls, and timber and solid floors.

### 2.2 Accommodation

Ground Floor – Plant room and storage areas, toilets, office space and community rooms, kitchenette, entrance hall, foyer and stairwell.

First Floor – Main hall, bar and servery area, commercial kitchen and storage areas, stairwell and access areas.

## 3.0 LOCATION

### 3.1 Location

This is a town centre location where the building is surrounded by other buildings with various uses.

### 3.2 Orientation

For the purpose of this report, any references to right and left are as standing in the High Street and looking toward the front elevation. Thus, the kitchen areas are to the rear right-hand of the main property.

The main front elevation is generally south facing.

### 3.3 The Site and Surrounding Areas

The site is generally level with no significant slopes in any direction.

The town centre location results in the surrounding area having mixed use including a school, retail units, parking and similar uses.

## 4.0 CONSTRUCTION & CONDITION
## STRUCTURAL FRAME EXTERIOR & INTERIOR

### 4.1 Structural Frame

The building is of a traditional construction consisting of traditional materials transferring loads from the roof to the walls and down to the foundations.

### 4.2 Roof

The main roof has external slates to a pitched roof structure. This structure is a steel frame which is visible within the main first floor hall area. This in turn supports timber elements which are overlayed by the external slate.

There are further pitched roofs to the rear right and rear left-hand sides of the main building. To the rear left this is a mono-pitch above the rear entrance. To the rear right the slate roof is above the kitchen projection which is a two-storey projection.

The visibility of the external slates and roof is restricted due to neighbouring buildings and access only available to the public areas. Generally the majority of slate roof coverings are in a reasonable condition. However, there are areas where defects are present, both historic repairs and current minor defects to slates.

The high level flat roof area to the right-hand elevation near the fire escape has an asphalt roof covering. This is experiencing general wear and tear.

Elsewhere flat roof areas were inaccessible and could not be inspected.

To the right-hand side of the main building there is a single-storey external store. The fibre sheets to this roof have failed.

### 4.3 Chimneys

There are several chimneys serving various areas of the property. Given the age of the building these would originally have provided heating through fireplaces to the building. These are now generally redundant with no active fireplaces.

The chimneys above the roof lines are brick and in areas these are experiencing wear and tear. There is general deterioration to mortar joints.

## 4.0 CONSTRUCTION & CONDITION
## STRUCTURAL FRAME EXTERIOR & INTERIOR

### 4.4 Rainwater goods

There was very limited visibility of the gutters around the property. However, there is evidence of these being blocked and overgrown.

The entire rainwater system needs overhauling and then regular routine maintenance. Likewise, gullies and road gutters all need to be checked and overhauled and then regular maintenance carried out.

### 4.5 External Walls

The front of the building externally is dressed stone, while areas which are not facing the High Street are constructed of brick.

The front elevation has a canopy over the main front door. This has experienced what appears to be numerous impacts form vehicles and is accordingly damaged by these impacts.

There are previous repairs to the stone front elevation and some minor defects but generally the stone is in a reasonable condition.

Elsewhere the external brick walls are in a reasonable condition. The overflowing rain water goods are causing accelerated deterioration in localised areas and there is some general wear. To the rear left-hand corner climbing ivy or similar has previously been removed.

### 4.6 Damp Proof Courses

Damp Proof Courses (DPC) are not visible in external walls but there is some evidence that external walls have some damp proofing present. For example areas of clear damp present below a particular line and apparent dryness to masonry above this.

Given the age of the building any DPC is likely to be a slate course embedded within the mortar joint.

This is a listed building of historic interest and we would not recommend any consideration is given to a modern DPC being installed.

## 4.0 CONSTRUCTION & CONDITION
## STRUCTURAL FRAME EXTERIOR & INTERIOR

### 4.7 Sub-Floor Ventilation

There are external vents in some areas. However, many of these are partially blocked and we cannot confirm that there is good cross ventilation to the building.

### 4.8 Internal Walls and Partitions

The majority of internal walls are of a sold construction. Although some walls are lined and a small number appear to be alterations and timber stud walls.

There is no indication of significant defects to internal walls.

### 4.9 Fireplaces and Chimney Breasts

Fireplaces have generally been blocked and are no longer in use. While some of these have had vents added there is also evidence of damp next to some chimneys and hence we can not confirm that all chimneys have adequate ventilation and are not blocked.

### 4.10 Basements and Cellars

There are no basements or cellars within the property that we are aware of.

### 4.11 Floors

Floor coverings have not been lifted, however, the first floors are all suspended timber and there is no indication of any significant defects.

The ground floor has some original quarry tile floors, some timber floors and other floors where the floor structure under the floor coverings is uncertain but could be more modern concrete floors.

There is a variety of floor coverings across the building. These were not lifted or disturbed during the inspection.

There is no indication of significant movement or defects to floors. However, timber floors can be significantly affected by damp and as previously indicated we can not confirm that adequate sub-floor ventilation is present. There is also areas of damp around the building. Therefore there is a risk that there are hidden defects, particularly to timber floors on the ground floor.

## 4.0 CONSTRUCTION & CONDITION
## STRUCTURAL FRAME EXTERIOR & INTERIOR

### 4.12 Ceilings

Across the building there is some general cracking to ceilings typical of such a building. In areas, repairs have been carried out.

There are no visible significant defects that indicate concern regarding the stability of ceilings.

In the main hall and adjoining areas the ceiling is timber boards fitted to the underside of the roof structure. Again there are no visible significant defects.

### 4.13 Windows, Doors and Joinery

There are several windows that show evidence of rot and deterioration. These require repair and refurbishment.

### 4.14 Finishes and Decorations

While some areas are in good decoration condition other areas are in poor condition. Particularly those areas that have not been regularly used recently. A regular programme of redecorations should be considered.

The external decorations are worn and are thus not protecting the elements of the building fabric that require good decorations.

### 4.15 Dampness

There are areas of damp present. These often correlate with areas near blocked gutters and rain water goods, or potential other water sources.

Areas which have been dry lined or where coverings have restricted ventilation also exacerbate the damp.

Areas of damp include the walls of the toilets, the walls of the front left hand office room, and other external walls near overflowing rain goods.

### 4.16 Fire Escape

The fire escape is experiencing some corrosion. This needs cleaning off and redecorating to protect the fire escape and reduce future corrosion and deterioration.

## 4.0 CONSTRUCTION & CONDITION
## STRUCTURAL FRAME EXTERIOR & INTERIOR

### 4.17 Structural Movement

There is no indication of recent or ongoing structural movement within the property.

### 4.18 External Store

The external store which is located to the rear right-hand corner of the property has a failed roof structure and defective gutter. As a result the store is currently not fit for purpose and requires urgent repair.

## 5.0 SERVICES

**5.1** At the time of the inspection the boiler was being renewed. The old one had been stripped out and operatives were on site carrying out the renewal. It is assumed that the entire heating system has been reviewed by those installing the new boiler.

The electrics should be inspected by a suitably qualified and registered electrician. They should be registered with the NICEIC or the Electrical Contractors Association.

Water services where randomly tested across the building were in working order.

We did not lift drainage covers or inspect drains. We were not made aware of any problems with the drains during the inspection.

## 6.0 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 6.1 First Floor Bar Area

The first floor bar area to the rear of the main hall appears to be a later alteration and project out from the original building.

At the rear of the Victoria Hall is a building which appears to be in the grounds of Oakham School. The first floor of this building appears to contain the bar area to Victoria Hall while the ground floor has no access form Victoria Hall and appears to be used by the school.

We had no access to the grounds of the school and when we made initial enquiries the ownership and agreements in place regarding this area were unknown.

The boundary positions should be confirmed and also any agreements regarding this area and the apparent shared building with Oakham School.

### 6.2 Listed Building

Victoria Hall is a Listed Building, as such it is of special historical interest and all aspects of the property are protected. This is internally, externally and within the grounds and settings.

The Conservation Officer should be consulted regarding any proposed alterations or significant repairs.

## 7.0 SURVEYOR'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### 7.1 Surveyor's Overall Opinion

There is no indication of significant structural movement or failure. Accordingly, the basic structure of Victoria Hall is sound.

However, the building is in need of regular routine maintenance and investment to address current issues and prevent deterioration. Like all buildings and in particular listed and historic buildings ongoing maintenance and investment will be required.

In addition areas of the property are worn and consideration may wish to be given to updating and general refurbishments.

### 7.2 Consideration and Recommendations

The ownership and legal responsibilities regarding maintenance of the building containing the first floor bar area should be clarified. At present it should be assumed that there is maintenance responsibilities for this area.

Externally there is timber cladding and a flat roof to this area and it should be expected that both will require maintenance and potential replacement within the next few years.

The blocked gutters and rainwater goods are causing ongoing water penetration and accelerated deterioration. The high level access required is not easy and could be costly to achieve. Once the gutters have been cleared regular ongoing maintenance will be required.

While high level access is provided, consideration should be given to conducting as much maintenance at roof level as possible, for example, repointing of chimneys, decorations, replacement of any defective roof slates etc.

We could not inspect all flat roof areas or all pitched roof elevations. It should, however, be anticipated that maintenance will be required and in the next few years the flat roof coverings will require replacement.

The external windows and other timber items require attention. Many require repair and potential replacement in addition to redecorations. Again, high level access for external decoration is likely to be costly and difficult.

Chimney flues should be checked, cleared and vented across the building with the aim of ensuring good ventilation to assist with moisture control.

## 7.0 SURVEYOR'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### 7.2 Consideration and Recommendations Cont'd…/

There are areas where damp is present and clearly visible. In addition there are areas where walls have been lined with plasterboard and there is some evidence that the reason for the lining was to hide damp and moisture issues.

We would recommend a traditional approach to the management of damp and moisture within the building. Prioritise potential areas of water ingress such as the blocked gutters. Then improve ventilation across the building wherever possible using passive ventilation.

Ensure there is background heating present. The principle being that cool air will be drawn into the building, this will be warmed and the warmer air will carry more moisture and thus, evaporate moisture from the building fabric. This warm damp air then needs to be expelled and removed. This process will remove moisture and manage the damp within the structure.

It should be noted that there is no quick fix to the damp within the building structure. It needs time to enable moisture to migrate to the surface and then evaporate when the water penetration has been reduced.

The rear right-hand external store should have the roof replaced, gutters replaced and be generally refurbished. At present the deterioration is ongoing and the roof should be considered unsafe. Given this is a Listed Building there is an obligation to maintain the property and by addressing this area it also prevents further deterioration from adjacent areas.

External decorations, including the fire escape, should be carried out to provide protection to the building fabric and reduce further wear and tear.

Consideration should be given to the removal of the front canopy. This has clearly experienced impact damage and if there is a historic precedent for the removal this will reduce the potential for future damage and associated defects.

It should be expected that as repairs and refurbishment works are carried out other defects will be uncovered and will require addressing. For example the underfloor ventilation can not be confirmed. Given the moisture elsewhere as floor coverings are lifted and timber floors exposed further rot or defects should be anticipated.

The above are all works that have the aim of stabilising the building and preventing further deterioration. They do not consider refurbishment or updating the building.

A budget of £200,000 to £300,000 or more could easily be used in stabilising the external fabric of the building.

Realistically if refurbishment and general updating of areas such as the toilets are considered the budget could significantly increase.

## 7.0 SURVEYOR'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT

### 7.2 Consideration and Recommendations Cont'd…/

The building appears to have had various business plans over the last 20 years or so as income has fluctuated. Thus, the commercial kitchen provided on the first floor was, no doubt, to enable potential weddings and other larger events. The lining of walls to the ground floor public areas and alterations to lights to enable a gallery space. The storage areas either side of the main hall to store and put away tables and chars which can be put out and removed to enable different functions in the main hall.

Going forward a long term plan should be considered before any refurbishment works are carried out. For example if larger functions are to be promoted what improved toilet facilities would be required to attract such events? If a ground floor café is considered would it be desirable to refurbish the old kitchen area currently used as a store?

Going forward an annual programme of maintenance is required and regular inspections and a plan of potential larger projects considered.

Signature: . . . . . Date: 2 July 2025

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