

Trevor J. Francis

Chartered Building Surveyor.

Building Survey Report of:

**The former Moose Hall, Castle Street, Neath,
Neath Port Talbot, SA11 3LU.**



January 2020.

Trevor J. Francis, MSc. MRICS, MCIQB, MCABE. P.G. Diploma in Architectural Conservation
(Bristol), Chartered Building Surveyor and RICS Registered Valuer. 12 Dulais Fach Road, Tonna, Neath,
Glamorgan, SA11 3JW. Tel: [REDACTED] www.buildingsurveyingwales.com

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Client: Mr Chris Hill and Mrs Angela Hill, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Property Surveyed: The former Moose Hall, Castle Street, Neath, Neath Port Talbot.

Date of Inspection: 15th of January 2020.

Surveyed by: Mr. T. J. Francis, MSc. MRICS, MCIQB, MCABE,
P.G. Dip. Architectural Conservation (Bristol) Chartered Building Surveyor,
Chartered Builder, Chartered Building Engineer. CIOB Certified Conservation Specialist.
Building Surveying Practitioner, RICS Registered Valuer.

Weather Conditions at the time of the Inspection: An overcast winter's day following a pro-longed period over the past six months, where exceptionally heavy and persistent rainfall and high humidity levels have been experienced that is currently taking its toll on many buildings, whether modern or traditional in form.

Property inspected: A prominent, detached, former Moose Temple and social club that is Grade II Listed. It is set within the urban core and conservation area of Neath Town centre. Whilst we have only undertaken preliminary research into the building's history and evolution, it is claimed in the list description that it was built in 1813, originally as a Wesleyan Church. Both the modern commemorative plaque mounted on the front elevation and the Cadw list description appear to be factually incorrect. Any statement that John Wesley preached at the building is utter nonsense, as we gather, he passed away in 1791!

We suggest that the former hip roof that extends over the Chapel area (now housing the Lodge Temple and to part of the ground floor, housing the main Lounge and Kitchen areas) clearly preceded the construction of the far more decorative gabled fronted section with its arcade of Bath stone moulded door and window surrounds that face towards Castle Street.

Some of the cracking evident within the external wall elevations is the consequence of differential movement of dissimilar structures that were added together; the outward thrust of the roof, as well as the subsequent infilling/creation of a series of large window and door openings. You kindly informed us that the building served at one time as the Town's fire-station and can see from photographs taken in the 1960's was at that time operating as a car repair and sales garage, before being converted into the Moose Temple in 1967. A number of photographs in the first floor Temple illustrates the ongoing works. The building is now being disposed of, as Moose International seek to rationalise and shrink the footprint of their accommodation held in the UK.

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Conclusion and Recommendations *See Overleaf*

This is a very interesting, characterful property that with appropriate care and expenditure could become a distinctive and attractively presented facility; but it is one which is not without numerous challenges that will prove demanding to address.

For this building to have a viable, long term sustainable future, it must have an economic future use/range of uses that will warrant its skilled care conservation and appropriate adaptation. You must be confident that you can identify uses that will generate sufficient long term income to address the costs of repair and rehabilitation. We have assumed that the current use (as effectively a social club) is not viable long term, but that subject to sufficient repair and remodelling, uses such as licensed restaurants, bars, night clubs, speciality retail units and possibly a creche might be, assuming they will be granted consent and sufficient repairs and alterations are undertaken.

Some ongoing moisture related issues might need to be lived with and addressed periodically no matter how much remediation is granted and undertaken. It is a property that clearly needs to be sensitively conserved, repaired and refurbished in a consistent and holistic manner. Considerable maintenance and repair operations, further refinishing work, cosmetic improvements and updating is necessary. Despite these comments, the property remains a very attractive proposition for those we suggest who admire traditional buildings and readily accept the challenges posed.

This Report must be read in its entirety and in conjunction with the associated photographic plates. All comments made must be carefully considered. The following list is not intended to be comprehensive. Some operations are immediate, others will depend greatly on the designated future use and gaining planning. LBC and Building Regulatory consents. Necessary works will include:

- Cleaning of all gutters, valleys, roof surfaces, drains and surface water disposal systems immediately as minor holding repairs.
- Testing and renewal of electrical services.
- Testing and renewal of water, heating and ventilation services.
- Cleaning and updating foul, waste and surface water drainage systems.
- Gutting and removal of redundant elements and components from the current use.
- Updating fire doors, improving compartmentation, and adapting for new uses. Rewriting the fire safety strategy for any new uses and configurations.
- Addressing dampness issues that are arising throughout the building. This will include work to the roof and walls, repointing, re-rendering using traditional lime mortars, tanking, replastering internally, inserting damp proof courses and membranes; isolating

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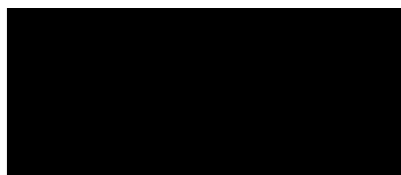
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timbers in contact with damp masonry, skilled ashlar stone masonry repairs, renewal of rainwater services with traditional systems, etc.

- Changing decayed timbers, plates and some timber preservation works.
- Renewal of floor and wall finishes when appropriately cured of excessive moisture challenges. Lowering abutting ground (if practicable) or tanking internally possibly with a drained tanking system.
- Structural crack repairs, replacing decayed timber lintols, plates, members, etc.
- Removal of Ivy and cutting/crown pruning of trees.
- Repairs to boundary details.
- Immediate repairs to the roof coverings, abutments, flashings valley gutters etc and future renewal of the roof coverings and sarking felt.
- Structural modifications to reopen blocked up window and door openings.
- Supply and fitting of new windows and doors to suit new functions.
- Possible demolition of the lean-to outbuildings or reconstructing more effectively.
- Renewal of plumbing and gas services installations.
- Replacing sanitary ware and all kitchen appliances and fitments that are dated and worn.
- Adjusting floor levels, improving accessibility and inserting at least one new staircase and/or lift. Renewal of almost all floor coverings.
- Modifying the access to the existing Gent's toilets or repositioning and incorporation of Unisex toilet facilities.
- Removal of all asbestos containing materials via specialists.
- Replacing/repairing cracked and debonding wall and ceiling plaster.
- Redecorating throughout, once all structural and remediation works have been completed.
- Overhauling windows and internal joinery
- Addressing flues and chimney stacks.

You must be prepared to fund and undertake the necessary repairs and accept the time inconveniences that such work can cause, whilst obtaining Listed Building Consents, as the work is not usually a quick turnover.

Please do not hesitate if you require further help and professional guidance. Best wishes with the project.



Within the Castle grounds, a semi-mature Yew tree is growing very close to the clay cavity brickwork wall of the brick cavity built, flat roof extension to the Lodge. This tree could potentially cause future structural damage to this structure and the associated rubble stone boundary walls via both its roots and boughs. We would be surprised however, if the various councils concerned, would accede to its removal or crown pruning.

The Interior

The former Wesleyan chapel area (set towards the rear) would, when originally constructed, have incorporated an upper gallery that has since been removed. Subsequently, a modern ceiling and floor joists has been partially inserted to accommodate changing functions and use classifications that have arisen over the past century. One can see from photographs that when the Moose Temple was created by retrofitting and remodelling the structure (from that of a vehicle garage). A double-height function room was initially envisaged within what is now the main Lounge. This has since had a series of lower height false ceilings installed. The chequer-board patterned ceiling remains evident (whilst looking through a metal pivot sash window, within the Gents toilet and into the currently inaccessible void). Although this, at one time would have been visible from ground level, timber ceiling joists, hangers and a modern suspended mineral fibre ceiling to the main lounge have been added, all as consequential interventions post 1967.

Ground Floor

Fitted carpets installed in many areas are now dated and worn. The large Lounge retains a modern laminate wood-strip effect strip floor finish which is laid over a replacement, suspended timber, joisted floor. This is presumably placed on top of an earlier concrete sub-floor. Sub-floor ventilation is not provided. It is likely that a damp-proof membrane is not installed beneath. This floor creates a single/double step within parts of the ground floor that impedes level access and inclusivity for wheelchair users. There are also small changes in level throughout some ground floor ancillary spaces. The Kitchen preparation areas and side stairwell, have older thermoplastic floor tiles installed that are likely to contain asbestos fibres.

'Altro' or similar vinyl safety floor covering's are laid within the Ladies toilet. Within the rear escape and ancillary cellar/storage areas some of the floors are simply concrete surfaced.

Reflooring and the levelling of the floors is recommended, as part of any major remodelling and to enhance inclusive accessibility.

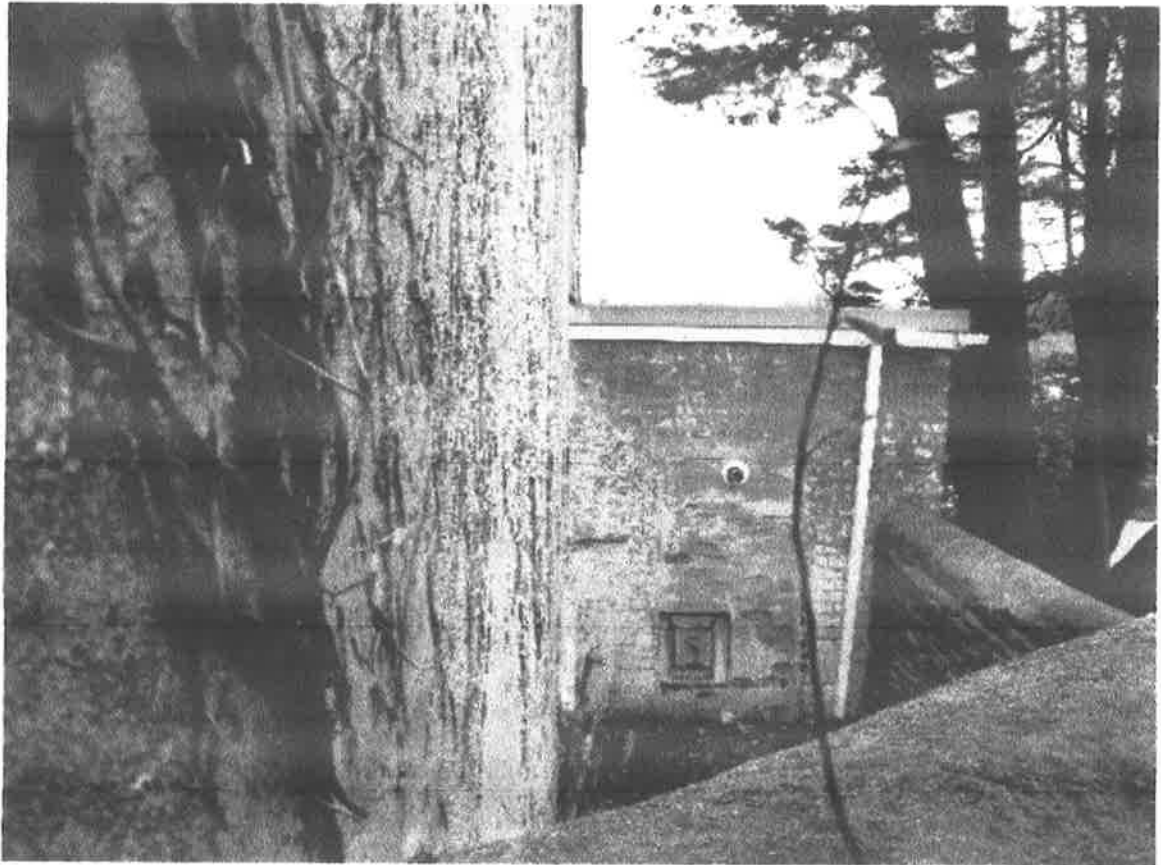


Photo 24 – Rear and Right Side Wall Elevation



Photo 25 – Left Side Wall Elevation (Upper)

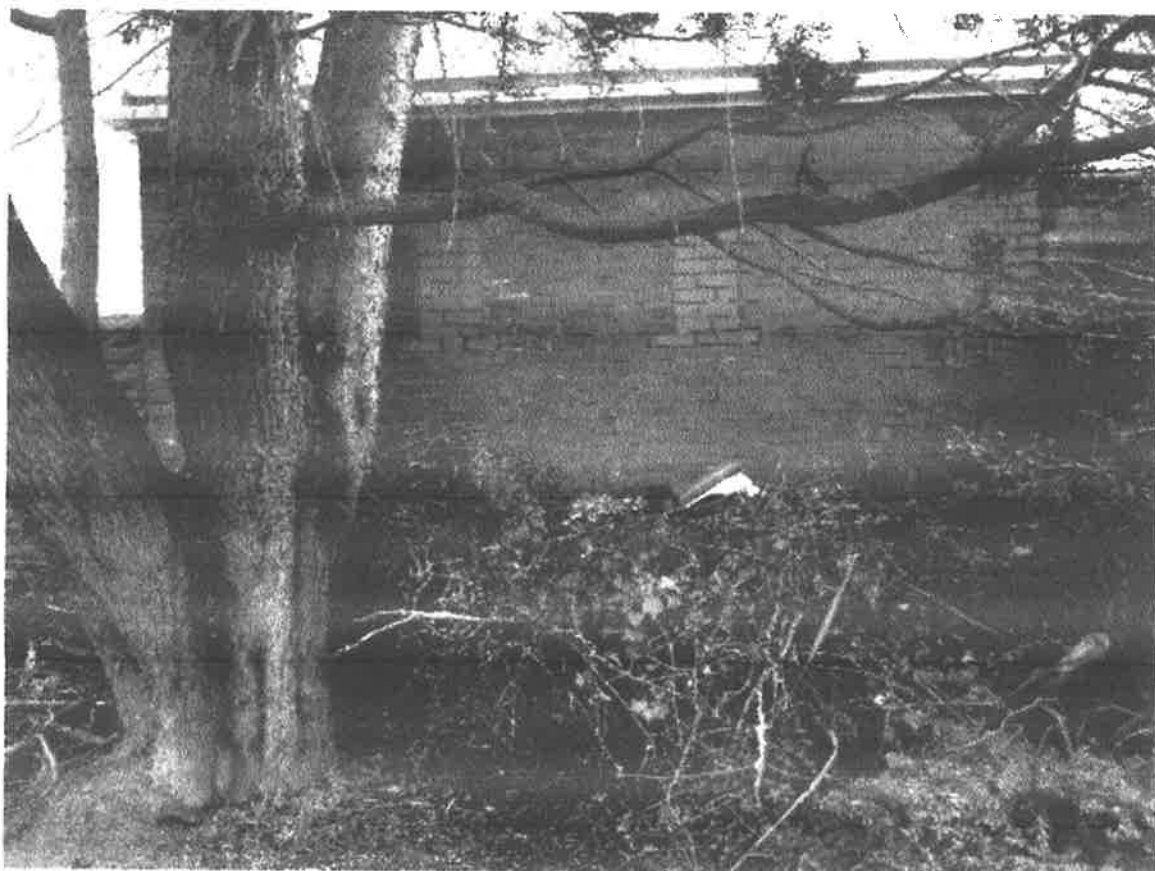


Photo 28 – Rear Wall Elevation (Lower)

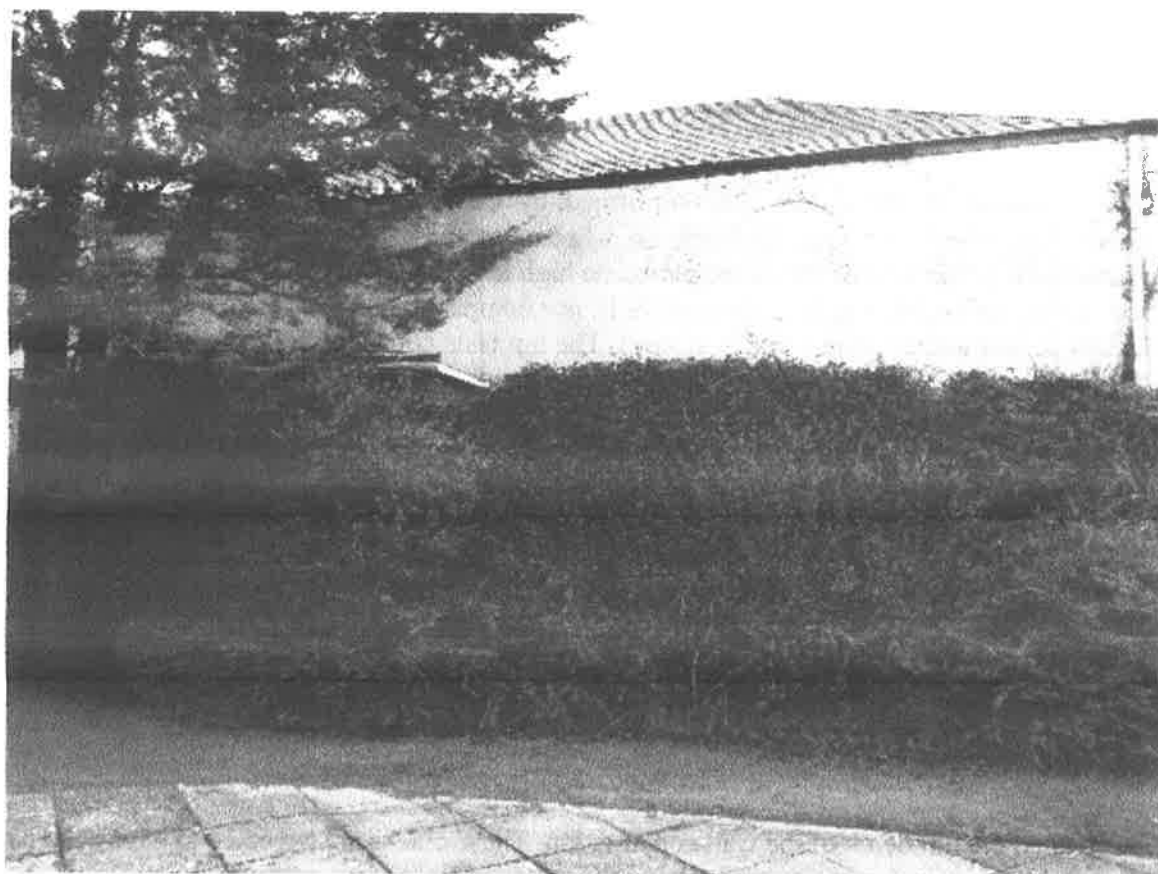


Photo 29 – Rear Wall Elevation (Upper)