

Our Ref: RS/SD/20055

3rd November 2020

Richard Oxley
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Dear Richard

*CHIMNEY STACK, EAST GABLE, SOUTH RANGE
MANOR FARMHOUSE, NETHER WINCHENDON*

We have discussed the repair of the timber framed east gable of the south range of the Grade II* listed Manor House previously.

The timber framed gable dates from the 16th and 17th centuries.

The slender brick chimney stack which is fixed to the timber frame is much later.

There is evidence that the later brick stack is pulling away from the timber framed gable and damaging it in the process, see photographs P01 to P04. The exposed height of the chimney stack increases the wind load on the gable.

In addition, there are signs of escaping flue gases and consequent black staining of the brickwork, see photograph P05.

We managed to uncover the modern timber framed panelling on the inside face of the adjacent bedroom to reveal a decaying main beam support into the main horizontal rail of the timber frame at eaves level. This shows considerable decay of the rail and death watch beetle activity. This is almost certainly attributable to leaking surface water behind the brick chimney stack. It also reveals how poorly the gable frame is restrained by the horizontal framing of the attic main floor beam, see photographs P06 and P07.

It is also significant that the east gable, under discussion, was designed to be restrained against wind loads by the returning south elevation timber framing. It is clear that all of the joints from the exposed horizontal rails of the historic timber frame on the south elevation to the corner post are severely decayed and require repair to make the junction effective again, see photograph P08.

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There is also a significant problem with the adequacy of the foundations of the brick stack at ground floor level, see photograph P09.

There are cracks in the masonry flanks on each side of the chimney stack at ground floor level suggesting that the bulk of the stack is not adequately supported by the wall of the historic cellar below and is rotating outwards, see photographs P10 and P11.

The evidence would suggest that the historic east wall of the cellar is probably 0.5 – 0.6m thick and founded 1.8 – 2.0m below ground level. The more recent chimney stack would appear to be shallow founded close to ground level and projecting or cantilevering 1.0m so further east. This cantilever action severely distressing the timber framed gable.

If it is considered that the historic timber frame is the more important part of the structure which must be retained, then the later slender brick stack should be removed in its entirety.

There is therefore, in my opinion, a strong case for removing this later brick chimney stack, in its entirety making good the weatherproofing of the rendered gable frame and securing the lateral connection to the attic floor plate. This action will also remove the risk of leaking flue gases penetrating into the bedroom and also diminish the fire risk.

Also, the large base of the chimney stack becomes redundant, see photograph P09.

If the external brick stack is removed, then a survey of the floor structures abutting this east gable should be carried out to ensure that there is adequate restraint to the gable wall.

I hope that these comments are helpful.

Please contact me if you require clarification of any matter.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Richard Swift.

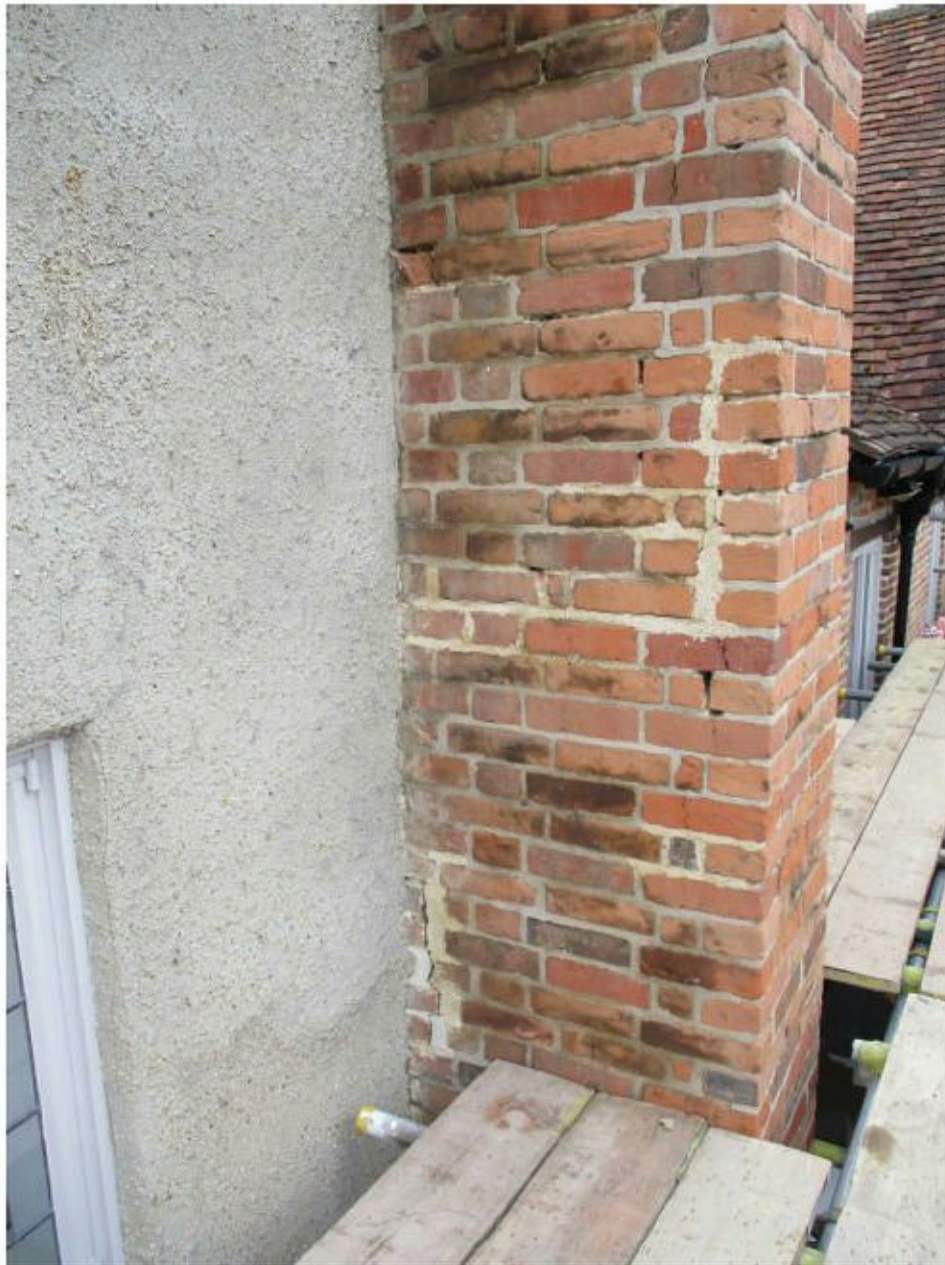
Richard Swift



P01



P02



P03



P04



P05



P06



P07



P08



P09



P10



P11