



Ref: 22/002

21 Double Common  
Charmouth  
Dorset  
DT6 6PT

Mr M Arnold  
Holly Farm  
Alston  
Axminster  
Devon  
EX13 7LG

26 May 2022

Dear Mr Arnold

### **Outbuilding at Holly Farm, Alston, Devon EX13 7 LG**

In accordance with your instructions, I visited the above property on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2022, to consider the condition of the outbuilding to the front / right hand side of the main house, in relation to its potential conversion.

My examination was primarily linked the above planning requirement and should not be seen as a complete structural engineering survey. My findings and conclusions are based upon a visual inspection without removal of any fixtures or fittings. We have not inspected parts of the structure which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and we are therefore unable to report that any such parts of the property are free from defect.

This survey has been carried out from foot without specialist access equipment and finishes have not been removed.

All observations are made as though looking at the buildings from the road and considering this to be the front of the building. This corresponds with the East elevation references on the planning drawings.

### **General Description of the Property**

The property comprises a single storey building, built with stonework walls supporting a shallow pitched roof clad with corrugated metal sheets.

The roof slopes from front to back. The supporting roof timbers are purlins spanning side to side onto beams between front and back elevations. The main beams are either cut timbers or uncut tree branches or stems. There has been deterioration of the roof timbers with some now supported via timber posts.

We understand that the building may have originally been a small dwelling and had a pitched roof but cannot confirm this.

The walls are approximately 500mm thick at the original stonework, with some openings infilled or adapted with concrete blockwork. As well as the later blockwork, most timber lintels have been replaced with concrete elements.



There are internal concrete blockwork walls, added to create partitions between animal stalls. These walls do not appear to be bonded to the main elevation stonework.

The ground floor is of rough solid construction.

### **Conversion**

The proposed conversion of the buildings is shown on drawings:

HOL/13052203	Existing Plan
25032201	Existing Elevations
HOL/13052204	Proposed Plan
HOL/13052201	Proposed Elevations

### **Observations**

It is apparent that the building has not been used or repaired in a number of years. There has been water ingress, with roof cladding and supporting timbers having deteriorated to an extent where they are unserviceable and will need to be replaced. The proposed conversion includes a replacement pitched roof.

The water ingress has affected the stonework in a number of locations, particularly at high level.

Although a lot has been removed, there are both current climbing vegetation and the dead remains of previous coverings present. The roots of these climbers penetrate fairly deep into the lime mortar.

The result of the water and vegetation penetration is that some stonework at the external elevations has bulged and will need to be rebuilt locally. This is particularly true at the rear elevation between the two doors. The extent of the repairs to this external stonework will only be fully known once work commences.

The internal elevations are in better condition and required repairs should be less extensive. There is some relatively minor cracking evident internally although, in most case local repairs or stitching should be sufficient.

Most lintels have been replaced with concrete elements that appear to be functioning adequately. At the rear door there is a shallow timber lintel that has deflected excessively and will need to be replaced.

Previous repairs and repointing have been carried out with cement mortar. These will need to be removed and lime mortar repairs carried out to replace them.

Although the left side flank wall has a slight outward lean, this is within acceptable limits with the wall being approximately 500mm thick. There are no visible signs that significant ongoing foundation movements are occurring. However, foundations should be exposed before the works commence to check they are suitable for the additional loads.



## **Discussion**

The property is in a poor condition, with water ingress having caused rot of the roof timbers and deterioration of the stonework. There has also been extensive growth of vegetation on the elevations with roots penetrating the lime mortar. However, the roof is to be replaced with a pitched structure and, if masonry repairs are carried out to the elevations, the main structure will be stable.

Where elements require repair, these are localised, albeit the actual extent will only be known as works progress and do not compromise the overall building.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that, subject to localised repair and strengthening, the building is suitable to be converted as shown on the Planning drawings.

If you have any queries or wish to discuss any items further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



David Moorey BSc CEng MICE MStructE  
Director