

The Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo**WI Community Hall****RENOVATION OR COMPLETE RECONSTRUCTION?**

The land ("40ft in width from East to West and 82ft in length from North to South") on which the Hall stands was sold by for £40 in September 1924 by Mr & Mrs Panchard to the Trustees of the Newton Ferrers and Noss Mayo Womens' Institute. The current Hall maximises the width and length of the site, leaving adequate space only to maintain the external structure.

It is stipulated in the Conveyance "*no building to be erected upon the said piece of land hereby conveyed or any part thereof at any time hereafter exceed the height of 30 feet nor shall any such building or any part thereof exceed such height. And further that no building or any part thereof erected or to be erected upon the said piece of land or any part thereof shall at any time hereafter be used as a shop hotel hospital sanatorium or for the purpose of any trade or business nor as a tavern beer shop or place for the sale of beer wines or spirits whether to be drunk off or on the premises but nothing herein contained shall prevent or restrict the said premises or any building thereon being used for a sale or sales by auction...*".

The WI Hall was built in 1925 with a £500 bank loan, opened in May 1926 and maintenance was at that time the responsibility of the WI Committee. In 1996 The WI Hall Trust was formed as a separate charity, responsible for maintaining the fabric of the building, its running costs and for its insurance. The Trust currently has just over £12,000, in current and savings accounts, with which to continue its "caretaker" role. The Trust raises funds from booking fees, fundraising events, £50 p.a. Parish Council, £1000 p.a. Revelstoke Trust and in 2001 received £2600 from the National Lottery "Awards for All" as the result of a successful grant application for replacement windows and doors.

The WI is entitled to use the Hall free of charge 15 times a year, on dates agreed with the Hall Trust, but is not obliged to fund the maintenance and running costs of the Hall.

The Hall is situated behind an attractive green, opposite the village primary school and is a prominent feature on the approach road to the village of Newton Ferrers. The Hall is outdated in design and now presents a somewhat gloomy aspect for a building needs to compete for income from bookings for community activities and private events. The WI Hall faces increasing competition from other more attractive community/club buildings in Noss Mayo, Newton Ferrers and adjacent villages.

Four years remain of the current lease from the WI to the Hall Trust. The WI Community Hall Trust awaits confirmation of a new 50 year lease. It is hoped that this will be confirmed during January 2010.

The original part of the Hall built in 1925, is of timber frame construction, probably with plaster and expanded steel infill, rendered to the exterior. It is built on timber plates mounted on a block work base, below floor level. This is a construction method that is very vulnerable to damp rising from the ground or through cracks in external stucco rendering. Sub floor ventilation is essential and the Trust is planning to remove a build up of soil to the back of the boiler house and to the North side of the building. There is evidence of cracking to the stucco rendering to front and rear of the building.

Without removing external and internal wall claddings it is not possible to establish the condition of the timber frames. After 83 years, it is possible that these frames are rotting to top and bottom and wherever there is or has been cracking in the render. Research indicates that buildings of this construction are thought to be good for a maximum of 50 years.

The pitched roof of the Hall has two layers - (1) asbestos cement sheet cladding with (2) a layer of profiled Onduline flexible sheeting overlaid. Correspondence indicates that the second roof was laid towards the end of 1998. If there is a 15 year guarantee document, this leaves 3-4 years of the guarantee still to run. Currently, the roof seems to be water tight, apart from the need to replace wooden slats to the air vents on the South side of the roof's apex, which could be letting in rain.

There is no correspondence to suggest that the roof timbers under the original asbestos cement sheeting were checked in 1998. It is reasonable to surmise that the original roof was leaking and needed replacing or overlaying.

The WI and Hall Trust have various options open to them:

1	2	3	4	5
Complete replacement of the roof, onto the existing 1925 timber frame construction	Complete replacement of the roof, onto the existing timber frame construction + new extension(s)	Complete redesign and replacement of the Hall on to new foundations	Do nothing, apart from continuing with routine maintenance, until such time as there is an urgent need	The Hall Trust is dissolved and maintenance responsibilities revert to the WI

Option 1: Two quotations for the roof replacement were received in December 2009

- DS Developments £29,820 + VAT
- JB Roofing Services in excess of £36,000

The quotes are not like for like and offer alternatives. A third quote is to be sought. To facilitate removal and renewal of the roof, permission from adjacent property owners will need to be given for the erection of scaffolding to all sides of the building.

It should be noted that conventional tiles /slates roofing systems will be too heavy for the existing and aged timber frame construction. Alternative lighter weight roofing materials are available and need to be researched.

Caution: It is possible that, having removed both existing roof layers, that deterioration to the top of the timber frame construction will be discovered and it is also possible that removing the roofing layers will destabilise the 1925 timber frame construction and more recent extensions. If this is the case, Option 3, complete replacement of the Hall, may prove to be the only viable way forward and money will have been wasted in paying a roofing contractor to discover the condition of the wood frame, adding cost to the complete reconstruction figure.

It will also need to be established whether the existing 1998 guttering and downpipes can be reused if the roof is replaced. If they need to be replaced because they do not suit the new roof construction, this should be added to the roof replacement quotation(s). It is also probable that the existing ceilings will need replacement. It may be discovered that some of the 1933 wiring in the roof space, which is not currently accessible, may need upgrading.

It is thought that the existing roof space is not insulated. If this is the case, energy costs are probably 45-55% higher than necessary, which is an unnecessary burden on the Hall Trust. When replacing the roof, insulation should be undertaken.

The working area of the kitchen has no suspended ceiling. If a ceiling is installed while reroofing is undertaken, insulation above that ceiling will be viable, where there is currently none.

It is advisable to have the current on demand, wall hung, gas water and central heating boiler moved from the external boiler room into the main building, ensuring that thermostatic control is activated by internal rather than external temperature fluctuation.

Option 2: It is suggested that while replacing the roof, there will be the opportunity to extend the porch area/disabled entrance and make minor changes to internal layout, giving access to WCs from just inside the entrance door. At present it is necessary to cross the main room to access the WCs and this is not thought to be the best access for disabled visitors to the Hall. WC piping and sanitary ware are ageing and need replacing with good quality, robust fittings suited to a public facility. The toilet and basin in the disabled WC are not of the correct height. By moving access to the WCs, the area behind the main room can be used more efficiently for storage, as it will no longer be an access route.

The combination of removing and disposing of the existing two roofs, reroofing, complete insulation, replacement of ceilings, upgrading of plumbing & sanitary ware, upgrading of fire equipment including smoke detectors and a sprinkler system, rewiring where necessary, replacement of guttering and downpipes and possible redesign and extension, it is likely to cost approximately a third of the cost of a complete rebuild.

Option 3: This option will provide the opportunity for the foundations of the Hall to be properly dug and formed to take the weight of a more robust and longer life building in a more attractive modern day design. One option for consideration could be the modern system of timber framed building which is now recognised by government and building regulators as a quality, low cost, well insulated to reduce running costs and that can be erected speedily, to minimise loss of income. These types of buildings are designed and built in modular form at the company, while groundwork is underway.

Design of a new building could be decided democratically by main users, ensuring a feeling of "ownership" and encouraging its future viability through continued and expanded use by local and adjacent community societies, activities and private bookings.

Options 4 & 5: Maintenance will efficiently continue through the Hall Trust, providing Option 5 is not invoked. It is not felt that this can continue for more than 2-3 years, due to (1) the age of the building and (2) high energy costs due to lack of insulation and poor roofing.

PROPOSALS:

- A Chartered Surveyor be asked to give an independent opinion on the condition of the building and, in particular, the ability of the existing wall construction to survive removal of the existing roofing and reroofing.
- Subject to the findings of a Chartered Surveyor, actions should be agreed between the Hall Trust and the WI.
- The WI should extend the lease to the Hall Trust from the anticipated 50 to 100 years.
- Whether Options 1,2 or 3 are agreed, grant applications be submitted on behalf of the freeholders, the WI, for funding to renovate or rebuild the Hall.
- Whether Options 1,2 or 3 are agreed, community fundraising be undertaken by both the WI and the Hall Trust to supplement any approved grant funding.