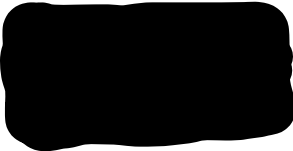


Our ref CL /133361

31<sup>st</sup> July 2019



Dear Madam

**133361 – INSPECTION AT COSY COTTAGE, MOSSTODLOCH, FOCHABERS**

We confirm that we carried out an inspection of the above property on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The inspection was carried out with regard to cracking that was highlighted in the Home Report.

We enclose our Definition of Scope of a Visual Structural Inspection which forms part of this report.

**Introduction**

The property is a single storey detached house of rendered masonry construction. To the south of the building a single storey rendered blockwork extension has been constructed. The roofs are formed with joiner built timber trusses clad with slates.

**Observations**

**External**

**Original Masonry House**

The east elevation gable wall has multiple cracks in the render along the whole of the wall. The render is de-bonded from the stonework along most of the wall.

There is a crack at the left hand base of the north elevation. There is evidence of vegetation growth in the crack.

At the left and right hand sides of the north elevation there is vertical, diagonal and horizontal cracking in the render. There are signs of repairs at the top of the cracks. The render is de-bonded from the stonework at the cracks.

There are hairline cracks in the recessed sills of the windows in the north elevation wall.

There is hairline cracking to the wall section between the infilled door opening and right hand window of the north elevation. The render here is solid and shows no signs of being de-bonded.

The paint finish to the infill timber panels at the previous door opening is flaking away from the timber.

The sill of the previous door opening is cracked and has vegetation growth.

The skew stones at each end of the north elevation has significant vegetation growth.

ABERDEEN  
BIRMINGHAM  
BRISTOL  
DUNDEE  
EDINBURGH  
ELGIN  
GLASGOW  
HUDDERSFIELD  
INVERNESS  
LEEDS  
LONDON  
NEWCASTLE  
SEVENOAKS  
TAUNTON  
THURSO  
WATFORD  
WESTHILL

## Observations

### External

#### Original Masonry House

There is moss growth to the north side of the house roof.

The west elevation gable wall is in poor condition. There are multiple cracks in the render throughout the wall. The render is loose and flaking away from the stonework behind. The wall is bulging out horizontally as well as leaning vertically.

There is a noticeable gap between the west gable window frame and the ingoes of the wall.

There is cracks below the base of the skew stone on the left hand side south elevations.

Hairline cracks are apparent in the south elevation. The render has de-bonded away from the stonework behind.

At the right hand side of the south elevation previously repaired cracks in the render have started to open up.

#### Blockwork Extension

There is a crack above the lintel of the door on the east elevation. There are signs that it has been previously repaired and has started to reopen.

The top course of the left hand side of the east gable wall and the right hand side of the west gable wall has cracked.

The smooth render of the window mullion has de-bonded from the concrete behind.

There is a hairline crack above the patio door lintel in the south elevation.

The base of the skew stone at the south elevation is cracked.

There is a growth of crawling plants on the west gable wall.

### Internal

There is cracking in the Kitchen ceiling around the extraction fan.

There are signs of dampness in the bedroom at the west end of the property. There appears to be mould growth around the north window of the bedroom.

The gable window of the west bedroom has a gap between the window frame and the wall. The gap has been filled with cardboard sheets.

There are signs of dampness in the bedroom at the east end of the property. There appears to be mould growth around the ceiling of the bedroom.

There are signs of dampness in the bathroom. There appears to be mould growth around the window and the ceiling.

No defects were noted in the Living Room, Hall or Porch.

### Discussion

There are significant problems noted around the original masonry house.

The majority of these issues appear to stem from the render that has been applied over the stonework. A concrete render is not suitable for stonework as it does not allow any moisture to naturally wick away from the stonework and instead will trap moisture between the render and the stonework.

The cracks in the render have allowed water to ingress behind the render. The freezing and thawing that occurs has caused the de-bonding of the render.

The dampness noted in the rooms within the original masonry house are most likely due to the walls being saturated and the render preventing the wall drying out. The moisture will eventually leech internally and cause the dampness noted. Poor ventilation within the rooms will also have an effect on the walls.

The West Gable wall of the masonry house is noted as being in particular bad condition. The garden area around the wall should be fenced off to protect people from any falling render from the wall. The render at this wall should be stripped back completely and the stonework behind picked and re-pointed with lime based mortar appropriate for the stonework. You may wish a further inspection to be carried out at this point to investigate the condition of the stonework.

The window at the West gable should be refitted within the wall to ensure no gaps are present.

All other areas of rendered stonework should also have the render removed and be picked and repointed with a lime based mortar as part of an ongoing maintenance schedule.

The cracking noted within the blockwork extension is due to thermal movement to the walls and are at areas know as weak points in the blockwork. The cracks should be filled with a suitable flexible sealant and any areas of loose render removed and repaired.

Any vegetation noted around the property should be removed.

The ventilation to the bathroom should be improved.

### Conclusions and Recommendations

As noted there are significant issues within the original masonry house due to the cement render that has been applied. The remedial actions noted above should be carried out to improve the condition of the walls.

In particular the following works should be carried out.

1. The garden area around the west gable should be fenced off.
2. The render to the west gable wall should be removed and the stone work picked and repointed.
3. The window to the west gable should be refitted.
4. Redecorate once the walls have dried out to remove signs of dampness

We hope the above is satisfactory for your requirements

Should you wish to discuss any of the above, please do not hesitate to contact the writer.

Yours faithfully



**Craig Little**  
Engineer

**Definition of Scope of Visual Structural Inspection**

Inspection will be based on a visual examination of some of the main structural elements of the property, such as internal and external walls. Certain parts of the structure are inaccessible without the removal of furnishings and finishes and these are obviously outwith the scope of a purely visual examination. In the case of floors and roof timbers, comments may be made on the level and stiffness of the floors and line and level of roof timbers. The structural adequacy of the floor and roof is not investigated unless specific instructions on these aspects are requested. Attention may be drawn to non-structural elements which could lead to deterioration of the fabric. Where an opinion is expressed regarding possible settlement, it is based on the visual evidence described above.

If a further more detailed examination is required this can be undertaken at an additional cost and may involve the removal of furnishings and finishes and may involve the taking out of trial pits. Confirmation of the reasons for settlement can only be determined by further investigation. In view of the work involved, the cost of this type of further investigation may be considerable.

In all aspects of a purely visual investigation, we are expressing an opinion of the adequacy of the structure and do not, unless specifically requested, calculate adequacy of the structural elements. No examination of the timber will be made for deterioration of the timber due to woodworm, wet or dry rot and we suggest that a specialist survey is carried out to examine this aspect of the condition of the property. However, if we observe any problems in this context, we would make an observation.

We hope that the above statement defines our position and your requirements, but if you do require any other advice relating to the property, please contact the writer of the report.