

BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY

in respect of

RHYMES PAVILION, COALPIT ROAD, BATHEASTON BATH BA1 7NW



on behalf of BATHEASTON PARISH COUNCIL 60 Gloucester Road Bath BA1 7BN

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Contents

	Page no.
Introduction	1
Brief Description	5
Condition of the Property	6
1.0 Roofs and rainwater gutters	6
2.0 Rainwater goods	7
3.0 External walls	7
4.0 Internal walls and partitions	8
5.0 Floors	8
6.0 Stairs	9
7.0 Windows	9
8.0 Doors	9
9.0 External Joinery	9
10.0 Fixtures, finishes and decorations	9
11.0 Services	10
12.0 Statutory matters	11
Summary	13
Photographs	P14 – P21



Introduction

Instructions and caveats

We have acted upon the instruction of Mr R Maccabee, Parish Clerk, Batheaston Parish Council, 60 Gloucester Road, Bath BA1 7BN to inspect Rhymes Pavilion, Coalpit Road, Batheaston Bath BA1 7NW and prepare a Building Condition Report to assist the Parish Council in determining the future of the building, as confirmed by our letter of 12 September 2023 and the Parish Council Purchase Order No. 23007, dated 15 September 2023. We undertook our inspection on 29 September 2023, at which time the weather was dry following moderate rainfall in the previous 48 hours.

The survey has been undertaken in accordance with our terms and conditions, as forwarded to the Parish Council with our letter of 12 September.

In accordance with our standard practice, we must point out that we have based this report upon our inspection of the premises and any information made available to us, both written and oral, which we have assumed to be correct.

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We have not inspected those parts of the structure that are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and are therefore unable to report that such parts are free from defect. We have however carried out non-destructive testing where appropriate and advise you of our findings within this report.

You have not instructed a specialist inspection of the mechanical, electrical, or public health services by a qualified services engineer. As chartered building surveyors, we are neither qualified nor competent to carry out a detailed examination or testing of building services installations (electrics, gas heating, underground drainage, air conditioning, etc.). As part of our survey, we undertook a cursory visual inspection of the services, but please do not consider or this this rely upon any comments made in relation to the building services as being extensive or definitive. Where it seems apparent that specialist testing is advisable, we have made such recommendations within this report. If you require, we can organise and coordinate such tests on your behalf.

We viewed the roofs and external elevations from ground level only. Access to the rear elevation is extremely limited and covered by vegetation and so this elevation could not be inspected in detail. We gained access into the roof void over the left-hand entrance hall, store, toilet, and kitchen via the hatch over hall corridor. We have not inspected the underground drainage system and so cannot comment on its condition.

We were unable to gain access to floor voids. General furniture and fittings were provided throughout preventing detailed inspections of some areas.

Orientation

All references to the front, rear, left and right assume the reader to be facing the property from the playing field, with Coalpit Road to the viewer's left (photograph 1). This elevation is assumed to be facing due north.



Services

Mains water, electricity and drainage are provided to the property.

Local Authority

Bath & North East Somerset Council. A search of the BANES Council website confirms that the property is not Listed nor is it located within a Conservation Area or the Bath World Heritage Site, although it is within the area defined as being within the Indicative Extent of the World Heritage Site.

Foundations

We were unable to gain access to inspect the foundations to the property. We assume adequate foundations were provided at the time of construction.

Radon Gas

Radon is an odourless radioactive gas emitted from the rocks and soil. When it builds to higher concentrations within buildings it has been linked to lung cancer. Public Health England (PHE) recommends that radon levels should be reduced in homes where the annual average is at or above 200 becquerels per cubic metre (200 Bq m-3). This level is termed the Action Level. PHE defines radon affected areas as those with a 1% chance or more of a house having a radon concentration at or above the Action Level of 200 Bq m-3.

Inspection of the Radon Map on the Public Health England website (see below) suggests Rhymes Pavilion is in an area with a maximum Radon potential of between 3% and 5%. The map only shows the highest potential Radon within a 1km square. The map is therefore only indicative, rather than definitive. We assume your solicitor will order a property specific Radon assessment for the property as part of their searches.

We advise the testing of the property for Radon Gas by contacting the Radiation Protection Division (formerly the National Radiological Protection Board) of Public Health England and obtaining a test kit for testing for the presence of Radon. According to their website <u>http://www.ukradon.org/information/measuringradon</u>, "A radon measurement is easy to complete. We post you two detectors to place in your home: one in the living area and one in an occupied bedroom. After three months you post the detectors back to us in the pre-paid envelope provided. We analyse the detectors and post the results to you: the cost is £52.80 inc. VAT".

Advice can also be sought from them on protection measures that can be taken. We have not undertaken any testing as part of our inspection, nor have we noted any obvious Radon prevention measures.

Flooding

Inspection of the Government's flood map for planning website <u>https://flood-map-for-planning.service.gov.uk/</u>suggests that Rhymes Pavilion is in Flood Zone 3, as shown overleaf, meaning it has a high probability of flooding from rivers.



Building Condition Survey Rhymes Pavilion, Coalpit Road, Batheaston Bath BA1 7NW



The Government's long term flood risk information website <u>https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/long-term-flood-risk</u> confirms that the property is at medium to high risk of flooding from rivers and surface water.

The maps suggest that relocation of the Pavilion to the north east corner of the playing fields would alleviate the risk of flooding.

Japanese Knotweed

Japanese Knotweed is an invasive non-native plant that is subject to control under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is classed as controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. It is extremely fast growing and can cause significant damage to property with the potential to grow through bitumen macadam and through the gaps in concrete pathways. It has even been known to grow in cavity walls where there is a light source, such as an air brick, to allow it to photosynthesise. It is illegal to allow it to grow onto other persons land but is often found on riverbanks where it flows downstream from plants that are cut down or are growing on the banks.

The plant's growing season commences in early spring and the plant dies back at the end of the season, leaving dry canes as the only evidence of its presence. However, it can remain dormant for in excess of 20 years when treated with biocides, only to regenerate when the soil is disturbed. It can be suppressed by brambles which may hide its presence, and the vendor could disguise its presence during its dormant period. These facts can make it difficult to identify with certainty.

We have not undertaken an environmental audit of the site and assume that the Council grounds maintenance staff will be aware if the plant is present on the site.



Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

From 9 January 2013, it is a requirement for all non-dwellings over 500m2 frequently visited by the public to display a valid EPC in a prominent place clearly visible to members of the public. This will only apply to buildings where an EPC has been produced for that building. The floor area of the pavilion is less than this and so it does not require an EPC, unless sold or rented out.



Brief Description

Rhymes Pavilion is a single storey sports pavilion serving a small paying field and providing a community hall with a kitchen and accessible toilet facilities, with a lower ground floor to the right-hand end that provides small changing rooms and shower facilities. We would estimate that the hall was constructed in the 1970's or 1980's.

The property has a steel portal frame that supports a pitched roof of corrugated asbestos cement sheeting (assumed asbestos content) over steel purlins spanning between the steel portal frames. The underside is lined with a factory lining system in the hall and a timber joist and plasterboard ceiling over the entrance corridor, accessible toilet, and kitchen.

The walls appear to be of cavity construction, most probably of concrete blockwork, with a render finish externally and a plaster finish internally.

The floor appears to be of raised timber construction, whilst the lower ground floor changing rooms and shower room have solid concrete floors.

The windows have been replaced with PVCu framed double glazed windows.

The property has electric night storage or convection heaters to the main areas and wall mounted electric fan heating to the changing rooms. Wate heating is also by electric.



Condition of the Property

1.0 Roofs

The pitched roof consists of corrugated cementitious sheets that are presumed to contain asbestos, although only testing or Council records can be conclusive about this. The sheets are supported on two steel purlins per slope, which span left to right between the steel portal frames (photograph 6).

Inspection was limited because of the overhanging trees and large accumulations of leaves and conifer needles that have fallen onto the roof (**photograph 7**). These will restrict drainage from the roof and also retain water, which will accelerate the decay of the cementitious sheets. The roofs need to be cleared of leaves on a regular basis, but if they have an asbestos content, the cleaning must be done in accordance with the Asbestos Regulations. The sheets are also a fragile roof covering and so access to clean them is difficult and will necessitate the preparation of a detailed method statement prior to any works being carried out.

Our inspection of the interior did not indicate any obvious leaks through the roof sheeting and so we assume they are currently in watertight condition. The life expectancy of corrugated cementitious sheets should be expected to have a serviceable life in the order of 25 years, although it is not unusual for then to last for 50 years or more. There are specialist companies that can clean asbestos cement roofs with specially enclosed brushes, and then seal them with paint systems but they are designed to extend the life of factory roofs and the costs for a roof of this size are likely to make such a repair unfeasible.

Above the hall, the roof is lined with a factory lining system (photograph 8), essentially a type of lightly insulated panels system retained in a grid similar to a suspended ceiling, but in line with the roof slope. The insulation value of the system is likely to be relatively low. It the roof sheets need to be replaced we recommend that modern composite profiled metal roof sheets are used. These are essentially two sheets of profiled metal with a rigid insulation core.

The existing lining system incorporates square fluorescent light fittings and so new, more efficient LED lighting would need to be provided. The lining system currently has one damaged tile (photograph 9) and several mismatched tiles. If the roof sheets have an asbestos content, we consider the risk that asbestos fibres could be released into the hall through the damaged tile is very low as the hole does not penetrate the tile thickness.

Over the entrance corridor, store, accessible toilet and the kitchen there is a plasterboard ceiling supported by timber ceiling joists, which creates a small roof void (photograph 6). The void is insulated by glass fibre quilt laid between the joists, but it is only in the order of 100mm thick and unevenly distributed (photograph 10). Ideally it needs to be increased to a thickness of 300mm.

There is condensation mould growth on the plasterboard ceilings of the left-hand section (photograph 11). This is most probably due to the irregular use of the building, limited heating, poor insulation, and inadequate ventilation. It can represent a health hazard to certain vulnerable groups and needs to be remedied. Increased insulation in the ceiling alone will not remedy the defect, and heating and ventilation measures also need to be considered.

To the right-hand side there is a pitched roof over a vandalised and blocked off room (photograph 4), which is covered with Redland Renown interlocking concrete tiles that appear in good order, although the tiles are in danger of being removed and used as missiles by vandals. The roof is covered with conifer needles and needs cleaning, and the flashing against the main building is loose and needs to be re-fixed, although as it is a lead flashing it is at risk of theft.



2.0 Rainwater goods

The property has PVCu eaves gutters and downpipes to the front and rear, and to the right-hand lower ground floor extension.

The front gutter has a broken joint towards the left-hand side (photograph 12) and all gutters are full of leaves and conifer needles (photograph 7) and need to be cleared immediately and on a regular basis.

The front right hand downpipe is missing and must be replaced. When in place it discharges into a hole in the concrete at the top of the steps. This hole the runs through the concrete to discharge the rainwater down the steps. This may well be contributing to the dampness to the front right hand corner of the lower ground floor but also presents a safety hazard during winter months if the water freezes on the steps. An alternative detail needs to be considered.

The downpipe to the rear of the right hand extension roof is also missing.

3.0 External walls

The external walls appear to be of cavity construction, but they are only 250mm thick including the external render, suggesting either that the cavity is of minimal width, in the order of 30mm instead of 50mm, or that the walls are constructed of a single skin of 200mm thick blockwork. We believe the former is more probable.

The render externally is in reasonable condition but there is horizontal cracking to the left-hand elevation, which is in line with the top or bottom of window openings and so suggest some minor movement that is unlikely to be structurally significant. There is also some limited horizontal cracking to the right-hand elevation which might suggest early corrosion of the cavity wall ties. Corrosion creates an expansion of the metal of up to 7 times its original volume. This expansion creates pressure that leads to cracking of the wall, usually at 450mm vertical centres to reflect the positioning of the ties. The only way to ascertain the condition of the ties is to undertake a borescope inspection of the cavities. If they are found to be corroded there are systems that can be employed to replace them.

There is also some mainly vertical or diagonal cracking to the right-hand elevation, along with some internal cracking to the rear left-hand corner of the kitchen (photograph 11). We consider the most likely causes of this cracking are seasonal changes in ground conditions, ground movement caused by the dewatering of the ground by the large trees adjacent the right-hand elevation, root damage from the trees, or even some minor thermal movement. None of the cracking appears to represent a significant structural defect at the present time.

We consider it unlikely that the external walls are insulated. It might be possible to insulate the cavities if they are of sufficient size and are clean enough internally, which would need to be determined by a detailed cavity inspection carried out by any reputable installation company. There are three main types of injected cavity insulation. The first is foam. Problems with foam include pressure exerted by the expansion of the foam, as well as the fact that, over time, the foam decays and diminishes until the cavity is virtually empty again and so this method of insulation is not recommended. The second type is blown mineral or glass fibre, which is a reasonable product but can tend to compact and slump once in the cavity and leave gaps to the higher sections. The third, and generally preferred, method is to spray polystyrene beads mixed with an adhesive to bond the beads together.



A problem with all systems is that it is difficult to ensure that the insulation reaches every corner of the cavity, such as around window openings. If a section is missed, the internal face of the wall at that point becomes the coldest and so is susceptible to warm moist air within the room condensing on that part of the wall, leading to mould growth. There is also a risk with all systems that the cavity could be bridged and allow water to penetrate to the interior.

Alternatively, the walls could be insulated internally or externally. Internal insulation would involve fixing insulated plasterboard to the walls, or creating a timber frame that is filled with insulation and then covered with plasterboard. This option minimises the internal space, as the insulation would most likely need to be at least 50mm thick. A further option would be to apply an insulated external render system. This would only be feasible if the roof coverings were to be replaced as the existing eaves overhang is insufficient to the front and rear and the roof overhang at each end is almost non-existent. For both internal and external insulation systems, very careful detailing is needed around door and window openings. Internal insulation would also require the removal and refitting of the kitchen and toilet facilities, and modification of electrical switches and sockets.

There is condensation mould growth to the walls in the entrance corridor, left-hand storeroom, accessible toilet, and kitchen. As with the ceilings this is the result of inadequate insulation, heating, and ventilation, rather than dampness in the walls and these matters need to be carefully considered.

At the lower ground floor level, we noted dampness in the walls to the front right-hand corner, adjacent the external steps. We note that the steps appear to slope slightly towards the wall, and this is most probably directing water into the wall. The walls are un-plastered internally and so there is no significant damage to internal finishes. As this level is only used for changing and shower facilities it may be considered that minor dampness is acceptable. If not, an internal lining system will need to be installed.

We note that the external ground level is above the height of the floor at the doorway to the lower ground floor changing facilities, and the adjacent bank and steps allow water to flow towards the door, where we assume it then enters the building under the door. The ground level should be lowered, and some form of barrier installed to prevent water running under the door.

The area at the base of the steps, and to the rear, is obviously frequented by youths, as witnessed by the graffiti on the walls and the broken windows and attempted forcing of the metal clad door (photograph 4). There is also a high likelihood of drug abuse taking place in this sheltered location and so some form of enclosure of the steps, as well as security fencing to stop access to the area would be beneficial.

4.0 Internal walls and partitions

We did not identify any significant defects to the internal walls.

5.0 Floors

The ground floor level appears to have raised timber floors and the finishes generally prevented inspection of the structure, except where there is a hole in the lower ground floor ceiling. We did not identify any significant defects with these floors.

The lower ground floor is of concrete construction and painted and in reasonable condition.



6.0 Stairs

The property has external concrete steps leading down to the lower ground floor changing area (photograph 13). The steps are quite steep and generally covered with vegetation and soil, and so potentially unsafe. They need to be regularly cleared. As there is liability towards trespassers that may use the steps and injure themselves this represents a further reason for enclosing the steps in some way.

7.0 Windows

The windows are relatively modern and of double glazed PVCu framed construction. All of the windows to the ground floor are in good order, other than the frames being a little grubby.

The windows to the lower ground floor level are mostly damaged by vandals. Some protection in the form of metal grilles has been provided to the rear windows, but one has still suffered broken glass, giving further reason to consider security to the lower level of the right-hand side.

The damaged windows need to be re-glazed, but there seems little point until security is improved.

8.0 Doors

The main entrance door is of PVCu framed construction with solid panels and is in reasonably good order.

The secondary door to the right-hand side of the front elevation has rot at the base and requires repair (photograph 14). We assume this door provides a fire escape, but we have not opened it and so cannot confirm if it is in working order.

The door giving access to the lower ground floor is finished externally with a galvanised metal plate but is in working order. The door to the small extension is secured shut.

We did not identify any significant defects to the internal doors.

9.0 External Joinery

The property has timber fascias to the front and rear that appear to be in reasonable condition but in need of redecoration.

10.0 Fixtures, finishes, and decorations

10.1 Ceilings

The ceilings to the hallway consist of the factory lining system and, as stated previously, one tile is damaged and requires replacement.

The plasterboard ceiling to the left-hand section, over the store, toilet, kitchen, and corridor is in reasonable condition, although there is a small area of missing plaster skim to the kitchen ceiling. The ceiling is also affected by condensation mould.

To the lower ground floor level, the ceiling is of cementitious board and a section is broken in the front changing room (photograph 15). There is a possibility this board could contain asbestos. We have taken a sample for testing and will advise the results in due course.



10.2 Walls

At ground floor level the plaster wall finishes are generally in good order other than being affected by condensation mould as discussed earlier in this report.

At lower ground floor level, the walls are of fairfaced concrete blockwork that is painted. They are in reasonable condition.

10.3 Floors

The ground floor appears to be a raised timber floor. We have been unable to inspect the structure due to the presence of fitted floor coverings, other than via the small hole in the ceiling of the lower ground floor, which did not reveal any defects. The floors do not display any excessive sag, deflection, or springiness to suggest any detects.

The lower ground floor has a solid concrete floor that is in reasonable condition, but the paint finish needs to be renewed.

10.4 Internal decorations

Internal decorations are in fair condition, but many areas are affected by condensation mould, and they are generally marked from use. Redecoration internally would remove the health issues from condensation mould, but only if measures are implemented to prevent it recurring.

10.5 External decorations

External decorations are starting to deteriorate, especially to the timber fascias. There is general algae growth on the painted render, particularly under the trees, and the right-hand elevation has suffered from graffiti (photograph 4). External redecoration is required and should be undertaken on a maximum 5 yearly cycle.

11.0 Services

11.1 Gas

The property does not appear to have a mains gas supply.

11.2 Electricity

The property has a mains electricity supply, which is switched from the rear left-hand corner of the kitchen. This is a modern panel fitted with RCBOs (Residual Current Breaker with Over-Current' devices). The supply is fitted with a smart meter. We have not undertaken any testing of the electrical system, although this may be advisable to the lower ground floor level.

The lighting throughout the property is by old fluorescent tubes, which are inefficient and no longer available to purchase. The lighting systems need to be upgraded to efficient LED units.

11.3 Water

The property is fitted with a mains water supply. There is no cold water storage, and all taps are fed direct from the mains. All plumbing appears to be in copper. The water pressure appears adequate.



11.4 Heating and hot water

The property appears to be heated by electric night storage and convection heaters. We have not tested these and cannot comment on their efficiency. The kitchen also has a high-level electric fan heater.

Heating to the lower ground floor appears to be limited to a wall mounted electric fan heater in the front changing room only, and we cannot confirm that it is in working order.

Hot water to the kitchen and accessible toilet is supplied by a wall mounted Heatrae Sadia Electric water heater in the toilet. We have not tested this but a note on the switch suggests it is not working.

Hot water for the showers in the lower ground floor is provided by a large 'Stiebel Eltron' electric hot water cylinder in the rear right-hand corner of the rear changing room (photograph 16). This is controlled by a mechanical timer on the wall. As the showers are not currently used (there is currently a large amount of equipment stored in them) we are unable to determine if this water heater is in working order. None of the pipework is insulated.

11.5 Underground drainage

We have not inspected the underground drainage system.

12.0 Statutory matters

12.1 Fire safety

Fire safety legislation and associated regulations place various duties on owners and occupiers of property to assess, manage and reduce the risk of fire and ensure adequate means of escape. In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire safety) order 2005 it is the duty of anyone with responsibility for property to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment of the property.

We have not undertaken a fire risk assessment or fire safety audit for this property but assume the Parish Council holds a current assessment.

12.2 Electrical safety

The fixed wiring systems need a fixed wiring test to be carried out at least every five years and we assume the Parish Council holds a current certificate.

It is also a requirement that all electrical items in the property are subject to a Portable Appliance Test (PAT) on an annual basis, and we assume the Parish Council has current certificates for all portable appliances.

12.3 Accessibility

We have not undertaken an accessibility audit, but assume the Council has one on their files.

The property has level access to the ground floor, although the ramp appears excessively steep and there is no level access beyond the swing of the door to allow wheelchair users to open the door, nor any handrails for users with mobility issues. The same applies to the right-hand front firs exit door. There is one accessible toilet. There are no accessible facilities at lower ground floor level.



12.4 Public Hygiene

The changing and shower facilities are currently inadequate.

Sport England's Design Guidance in respect of toilet provision in changing spaces recommends that male facilities should provide one WC, two urinals and two wash-hand basins and females facilities should provide two WC's and two wash-hand basins. Currently there is no toilet provision to the lower ground floor changing area.

The changing rooms are also open and there is no provision for male and female use at the same time.

The whole building has just one toilet, which is the accessible one at ground floor level, and this is inadequate for times when the hall is in use.

12.5 Asbestos

We have taken a sample for testing of the broken ceiling boarding from the lower ground floor level and will advise on the results in due course.

We have not undertaken any testing for the presence of Asbestos with respect to any other areas, including the roof sheeting, which we suspect to have an asbestos content.

Asbestos can be found in many materials. The property is of such an age that it could contain asbestos. The Council should maintain an asbestos register for the property, and this should be made available to anyone working at the property.

Should you employ contractors to undertake intrusive works at the property you will need to commission a demolition and refurbishment asbestos report and provide a copy to the contractor prior to works commencing, in accordance with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.



Summary

Our inspection of Rhymes Pavilion has revealed it to be structurally stable but lacking in maintenance and with outdated and inadequate facilities.

The main roof is likely to contain asbestos to the corrugated sheeting, which needs cleaning. It is also very poorly insulated. The internal finishes to the underside of the roof in the hall are dated and in need of some repair.

The rainwater goods require repair or replacement and are all blocked with leaves and conifer needles.

The walls do not appear to be insulated and there is condensation mould on the walls and ceilings. There is some dampness to the lower ground floor level adjacent the external steps.

The windows to the lower ground floor have all been vandalised but are in good order to the ground floor. Better protection is required to the right hand and rear elevations.

The front right hand door into the hall is rotten and needs repair. The door to the right hand extension is sealed shut due to vandalism.

Security is limited to the right-hand end, with graffiti on the walls and smashed windows. There is a risk of youths congregating and also possible drug use, although there was no obvious evidence, such as discarded needles at the time of inspection. The security of this end of the pavilion needs to be reassessed, as does the safety of the steps, which are steep and covered with leaves, etc.

The facilities in the building are inadequate, with only one toilet, which is accessible, no toilets at the changing room level, showers that are out of use, no provision for different sexes to use the changing facilities, and no accessible changing facilities. Accessibility generally is very poor.

Hot water does not appear to be available to the property as the Heatrae Sadia water heater is marked as defective and we are unsure if the water heater in the lower changing rooms is in working order.

The heating and ventilation to the property is either inadequate or used too infrequently, leading to condensation and mould growth to several areas.

There is potential asbestos to the roof sheeting and to the lower ground floor ceilings. We assume the Council maintains an asbestos register for the property.

Maintenance of the property appears to have been limited in recent times and redecoration is required.

We trust the above adequately addresses the matters for which you had concerns but if you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Alpina Property Consultancy Limited 29 September 2023



Photographs



Photograph 1: Front elevation.



Photograph 2: Inaccessible rear elevation.





Photograph 3: Right-hand elevation.



Photograph 4: Right hand extension.





Photograph 5: Left-hand elevation.



Photograph 6: Roof void over the kitchen.





Photograph 7: Leaves accumulating on the roof and in gutters. Note missing front right-hand rainwater downpipe.



Photograph 8: Factory lining system to the roof of the hall.





Photograph 9: Damaged tile to the factory lining system.



Photograph 10: Poorly distributed insulation in the roof void.





Photograph 11: Condensation mould to the kitchen ceiling and crack to the rear left-hand corner.



Photograph 12: Defective joint to the front rainwater gutter.



Building Condition Survey Rhymes Pavilion, Coalpit Road, Batheaston Bath BA1 7NW



Photograph 13: External steps to the right-hand side.



Photograph 14: Rot to the base of the front right-hand door.





Photograph 15: Hole in the cementitious ceiling board to the changing rooms.



Photograph 16: Hot water cylinder to the changing rooms.