

Report, relative to the State and Condition of the Brick Building in the Walnut:Tree Court of Queens College.

This Building is certainly in a very bad State of Repair, The outer Walls (besides being very much defaced by Time, the exterior surface of the Bricks having mouldered away) have sustained in some Places very serious Injury, Principally at the upper Part of the Wall next the Court, in the Corner by the Chapel (which extends about six Feet downwards from the Plate) and near all the Chimnies which also are separated Eight or Ten feet downwards, in some Degree from the Main wall of the Building near to Catherine Hall, and as I take it, occasioned by the same cause - that is, the lateral Pressure of a very heavy Roof, incumbered with the Weight of an additional and almost unnecessary Floor and Jeists^[2], and which was at first very injudiciously Framed. This I think appears manifest almost at the first view. It is in almost every case a general Plan in framing roofs for common Purposes, to be careful in well securing the Wall:plates from flying asunder, by the introduction of proper tye:Beams dovetail'd into them - The principal Spars stand upon these Tye:beams, that by the Weight of the Roof the Beams may be pushed down in their Places, and by the Dovetail (well adapted to that use) the Wall:plates kept in their original Situation - the Neglect of which as in this Case would inevitably occasion the Walls of the Building to yield to the outward Pressure. I know of no Reason why the Tye:beams were placed as they are in the Present roof (about two feet above the Plates) but for the Purpose of gaining more height in the third story, and so no doubt it does, but at a very Great Sacrifice of strength - nor are they well contrived for they are tenanted into the Principal spars (by which both are weakened) and all the Power they possess to prevent the Expansion of the Roof, is simply thro the means of the Pins which are driven thro' the mortices of tenants - The roof has also been much hurt by cutting the Wall:plates into many short pieces, to make room for the Garret windows. There are but Two ways of proceeding in this Case - the one to endeavour to Keep the Roof from becoming worse, or continuing to push laterally against the outer Walls, by iron Dogs and Bolts, and the other taking it off and putting on a new One. The first Method might do for a Time, but I can not venture to recommend it as that which in my Opinion it would be more proper to pursue. The Expense I shall state hereafter.

With respect to the Walls before mentioned I am of Opinion that the only Remedy for the shabby, mutilated appearance of the outside is, to case them entirely with new, in some Places four Inches and a half, in others Nine Inches thick, bonded and tyed at proper Intervals to the old - and that Part of the Wall near the Chapel which has bulged (containing about Two hundred and fifty Feet Superficial) should be taken out and rebuilt, as well as the Backs, and Shafts of the Chimnies (a thing very Practicable) in which case the Walls would be as good as they ever were, and as good as need be - for they are every where (except in the Places just mentioned) perfectly perpendicular and sound, and of a Thickness greater by a Foot, than any Architect (let his Predilection for strength be what it may) would deem Necessary.

The Window Frames are completely worn out, and new oak frames should be put in - I say oak because, stone would be nearly five Times as expensive - in fact in the proportion of 1[£].2^s.0^d to 4[£].18^s.0^d. The door cases which are more exposed to the Weather, should be repaired with Stone. There are also some common Repairs which should be done to the stone steps and Floors of the Two Staircases, which I apprehend is all, that will be required to the outside of the Edifice.

I will point out what I think wanting to the Interior of the Building in the order in which I pursued the Investigation.

M^r Scott's rooms – In the Keeping room one new door is wanting, a new Ceiling and some repairs to the window frames – all the other doors, and the floor, good. In the Bed room a new floor and joists and new linings with Lath and Plaister to the Walls.

M^r Brownrig's rooms – The Floor in the keeping room and doors are good, but a new ceiling and linings and Plaistering to the Walls, are wanted, some new Backs and Elbows, Shutters, Architraves and skirting, and in the Bed room, linings and lath and plaistering to the Walls and some repairs to the window seat.

M^r White's rooms – The doors and Floor are good, but the Work about the window places wants a good deal of doing to. There should be a new floor in the Closet, the Bedroom floor is good but the ceiling and side Walls want lining out and Lath and Plaistering, a new floor is necessary in the Slop room, and some Repairs to the Brick work and to the Bins.

Empty rooms – are in an indifferent state, a new Floor, & Joists, ceiling, shutters, window seats &c are necessary. The same in the Bed room, where also a new Partition is wanted, the Windows also, here, and in the Jyp rooms should be mostly new.

M^r Thompson's, Keeping room wants nothing doing to it – the Bed room requires a new ceiling, the small Library the same, & the Slop room a new floor, ceiling, and Lath and Plaistering to the Walls.

M^r Gee's, Keeping room Requires a new Ceiling only, every other Part being in proper Repair. There is a place in the wall in the Slop room, which should be mended, and there should be a new Ceiling in the Bed room and some Repairs to the Window.

M^r Pratt's, Keeping room, wants a new Ceiling, lining, and Lath and Plaistering to the Walls, a new Chimney piece and Shutters, window seats, skirting &c – the same in the Bed room and in this Place a new floor.

M^r Jowett's, rooms, require Repairs to the Great room Floor, a new Ceiling, and Lath and Plaister to the Walls, 4 new sets of door Jambs, and in the Bed room, a new Ceiling lining and Lath and plaistering to the Walls, and repairs to the Window. In the Slop rooms, linigins and Lath and Plaistering to the Walls. In the Coal Place the same and a new rough Floor.

M^r Clarke's. Keeping room, requires only some slight repairs to the windows – but there should be a new Floor and Joists in the Bed room, and new Shutters and Backs and Elbows to the windows.

M^r Webster's rooms, want four new doors and hinges and Lath and plaistering to the Walls and some Trifling repairs in the Bed room.

M^r Gilbert's, Keeping room requires, a new Floor, three new doors, the linings and Lath and plaistering to the Walls, and skirting and the same to the Bed rooms – it is here that the Wall has Bulged and wants rebuilding.

Empty rooms, These if inhabited, will require new Floors, Ceilings and Linings and Lath and Plaistering to the Walls and Skirting, and Repairs to the Shutters. The Doors are good.

The Expense will be as follows:

			£ s d
M ^r Scott's rooms-----	Carpenter	19.15. 0	} ----- 23. 3. 0
	Bricklayer	3. 8. 0	
M ^r Brownrig's-----	Carpenter	23. 5. 6	} ----- 35.11. 6
	Bricklayer	12. 6. 0	
M ^r White's -----	Carpenter	35.15. 3	} ----- 39. 3. 3
	Bricklayer	5. 8. 0	
Empty rooms -----	Carpenter	55. 0.10½	} ----- 59.12.10½
	Bricklayer	4.12. 0	
		Carr ^d over	£ <u>157.10. 7½</u>

			£ s d
		Br ^t over	£ 157.10. 7½
Mr Thompson's rooms -----	Carpenter	5. 5. 9	} ----- 8.19. 9
	Bricklayer	3.14. 0	
Mr Gee's -----	Carpenter	6. 6. 0	} ----- 8.18. 0
	Bricklayer	2.12. 0	
Mr Pratt's -----	Carpenter	44. 3. 6	} ----- 60.11. 6
	Bricklayer	16. 8. 0	
Mr Jowett's -----	Carpenter	35.16. 7	} ----- 54. 0. 7
	Bricklayer	18. 4. 0	
Mr Clarke's-----	Carpenter	8. 0. 3	} ----- 8. 0. 3
	Bricklayer	0. 0. 0	
Mr Webster's-----	Carpenter	22.10. 0	} ----- 27. 8. 0
	Bricklayer	4.18. 0	
Mr Gilbert's -----	Carpenter	59. 3. 0	} ----- 74. 1. 0
	Bricklayer	14.18. 0	
Empty rooms -----	Carpenter	44. 3. 0	} ----- 57.17. 0
	Bricklayer	13.14. 0	
Staircases-----	Carpenter	20.12. 0	} ----- 34. 9. 0
	Bricklayer	3. 0. 0	
	Mason	10.17. 0	
Total of Interior Repairs -----			£ <u>491:15: 8½</u>
Exterior Repairs -----	Carpenter and Glazier	191.11. 6	} ----- 744.10. 0
	Mason	49. 4. 0	
	Bricklayer	356. 5. 0	
	Plumber	129. 7. 6	
	Painter	18. 2. 0	
			£ <u>1236: 5: 8½</u>

If a new roof be put on without a Parapet wall

There will be an Extra Expense of	Carpenter	215. 1. 0	} -----
	Bricklayer	142. 0. 0	
		<u>357. 1. 0</u>	} ----- 277. 9. 6
But a saving in the Plumber		<u>79. 7. 6</u>	
		<u>277. 9. 6</u>	
		Carried a/c £	<u>1513:15: 2½</u>

	Br ^t a/c £	1513:15: 2½	
If a Parapet wall and Gutters be added There will be a further expense of	Carpenter	3. 8. 0	
	Mason	23. 5. 6	}
	Bricklayer	12. 6. 0	
	Plumber	35.15. 3	

			280. 7. 6
			£ 1794: 2: 8½

Cambridge Dec^r 21st 1804

Chas: Humfrey.

In order to draw a Just comparison between the Present brick building (effectually repaired) and the new Building according to the Plan made by Mr Essex and my Father, it will be perhaps proper to state that it is not proposed to alter (in the Event of the Repairs being set above) the arrangements, or size, of any of the apartments. (tho' the Exterior will be much improved). The Keeping rooms are much of Them about 14 Feet and a half by 17 Feet, those next the Chapel 17 Feet Square, and the Bed rooms, very small the Least 6 F^t by 9 F^t, the largest 9 F^t by 12 F^t and their Height about 9 F^t. The Expense without a Parapet wall and Gutter as above states 1512[£].15^s.2½^d.

The new Building would be in Width 12 F^t greater than the present Building but in Length the same. The Keeping rooms 16 F^t and a half by 17 F^t. The Bedrooms and Studys 16½ F^t by 11 F^t. The Height of the Ground rooms 9 F^t, of the next Floor 10 F^t and of the upper Floor 8½ Feet in the expense 4334[£].2^s.2^d.

The addition of a parapet and Gutters in either case, as above stated 27[£].9^s.6^d. Making the Whole Sum for repairing 1794[£].2^s.8½^d and for Rebuilding 4611[£].11^s.8^d.

Dec^r 24th 1804.

Chas: Humfrey.

[Transcribed from Queens' College Archives Box 101 by R.D.H. Walker July 2018]

[The report's author was Charles Humfrey the Younger, son of the Charles Humfrey who worked with James Essex the Younger].