

**BUILDING SURVEY INSPECTION REPORT ON**

**ON**

**Tabor Methodist Chapel, Davies Street, Brynmawr,  
Blaenau Gwent, NP23 4AD.**

Prepared by

M.P.S. Surveying & Architectural Design Ltd,  
23a Monk Street,  
Abergavenny,  
Monmouthshire,  
NP7 5LD

**1. NAME AND ADDRESS OF CLIENT.**

Mr. Philip Wood. 97 Holland Street, Ebbw Vale, Blaenau Gwent, NP23 6HY

**2. ADDRESS OF PROPERTY INSPECTED.**

Tabor Methodist Chapel, Davies Street, Brynmawr, Blaenau Gwent, NP23 4AD.

**3. DATE OF INSPECTION.**

Friday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2012

**4. WEATHER.**

Cloudy with some light drizzle.

**5. TENURE.**

We are advised the property is freehold, however this should be verified by your solicitor.

**6. DESCRIPTION.**

6a The property is an old Chapel constructed in 1835. It lies in a mixed use area of residential, commercial and retail premises. Davies Street is located just off the main town centre of Brynmawr which is just a few metres walk. Car parking, Shops and schools are located close by. The property has good access to road networks.

6b Generally the accommodation is as follows:

**GROUND FLOOR**

Main entrance, and gallery stairs, Sanctuary, chancel (altar area), Store room 1 & 2, meeting room, kitchen, W.C. 1 & 2. Side porch/side entrance.

**FIRST FLOOR.**

Chapel gallery

Identification Floor plans are shown in the Appendix to this report.

**EXTERNALLY**

A small yard serves the front of the chapel. The front boundary wall is stone with iron fencing over.

To the rear of the property steps lead down to the overgrown garden. Access can also be gained from a timber gate via the street. Neighbouring properties make up the boundary walls. From the rear garden area, access can be gained to the underside of the ground suspended floor.

Photographs of the property are shown in the Appendix to this report.

## **INSPECTION EXTERNALLY**

### **7. FLASHINGS AND SOAKERS.**

The lead flashings, valleys and valley gutter have been replaced in recent years. The leadwork to the wall/roof abutments have been chased into the walls. The lead flashings appeared in good condition with expansion joints and overlaps in accordance with good building practice. Some sealing of the wall where the lead flashing is chased into the wall over the side porch area is needed.

The sloping lead valleys and lead valley gutter have also been provided with expansion joints in line with good building practice. Routine maintenance will be needed to the valley gutter by periodically clearing moss and other growth etc. from the leadwork to allow surface water to flow freely to the gutter.

### **8. ROOFS**

#### **Pitched roofs.**

The original roof finishes to the property have been replaced with fibre cement slates and concrete ridge tiles. These were in good condition apart from a couple of slipped and raised slates on the rear single storey roof which need re-fixing. Generally fibre cement slates have a life span of between 40 - 60 years depending on the make of the slates. There is no sagging or deflection in the roof to indicate any weakness in the timbers making up the roof structure.

### **9. Fascia's, soffits and barge boards**

The Fascia's, soffits and barge boards to the property (excluding the rear fascia of the main Chapel) are timber and were in poor condition. There are gaps within fascia/soffit boards and between the fascia/soffit boards and wall abutments that will allow egress for birds/wasps etc. These gaps need to be closed off.

Wet rot has occurred to a number of the boards especially at corner locations. The soffit boards to the North East corner (front left side of the property) do not appear to be adequately secured. These should be fixed immediately to avoid the soffit boards coming off.

The original fascia boards to the rear of the single storey have been replaced, however the soffit boards have not and wood decay has occurred.

Due to the amount of wet rot and gaps, we would advise that the fascia's, soffits and bargeboards are replaced to the complete property. (see also rain water goods)

The fascia boards to the rear of the main Chapel have been replaced with a metal capping which was in good order where seen.

## 10. ROOF SPACES.

### **In the loft. (main roof void in the Chapel)**

The main roof structure to the property is of traditional construction with five King post Trusses. These support the six timber purlins between the trusses which support the rafters. Ceiling joists span between the trusses. The property has a new roof finish and has been underfelted. There is no roof insulation and the property would benefit from insulation to the loft.

The timbers making up the roof structure were in good order there being no rot / wood decay where seen.

There are two large vertical air vents within the roof space constructed with timber boarding and these were in good order.

Some debris has been left in the back left corner of the roof void from replacement of the roof finish. This should be removed before it attracts rodents, birds, wasps etc. and also to remove the weight it is placing on the timber ceiling boards.

### **Roof void over meeting room/kitchen**

We could not gain access to this roof void due to the suspended ceiling obstructing access to the main roof area and are therefore unable to comment on its condition. However the roof finish has been replaced – see roofs above.

## 11. GUTTERS, DOWNPIPES AND GULLIES.

The gutters and downpipes on the main chapel are OG metal gutters with 100mm pvc downpipes. The gutters are in a poor condition with most of the joints showing signs of leaking. A section of gutter approx. one meter long is missing to the North East (front left) corner of the property and water from the roof is damaging external/internal finishes. This should be replaced as soon as possible along with the existing gutters on the main chapel.

The gutters and downpipes to the single storey roof are black uPVC types which we assume replaced the originals at the same time the roof finish was replaced. These rain water goods were in good condition.

It was noted that there is no end cap to the gutter collecting the rain water from the valley gutter and one should be fitted to stop any over spilling of water. It should be noted that it is normal practice to provide a hopper head to collect rain water from valley gutters.

## **12. MAIN WALLS.**

The property was constructed in 1835 and the walls are of natural solid stone construction with a render internal and external finish. The rear wall has been re-rendered at some point with a spar dash render. We do not know why this was but it could possibly have been carried out to conceal cracking or replace defective render.

There was some bowing to the main rear wall of the chapel and the rear kitchen wall. The cause is likely to be a lack of lateral restraint. It is noted that the ground floor suspended joists ends have decayed where these are built into the external walls and are not providing any restraint to the rear wall. There also appears to be no lateral restraint provided via the high level ceiling joists. We would advise you to contact a Structural Engineer to advise on this further and any remedial works needed. A photo is shown in the Appendix.

A significant amount of hollowing and cracking was noted to indicate defective render to the property. Damage has occurred over a long period of time. Some of this will have resulted from poor rain water goods spilling water onto rendered walls. Large areas of defective render will need to be hacked off and the underlying wall structure re-pointed as needed and re-rendered. Isolated repairs to the underlying wall structure are likely.

When undertaking re-rendering works the external cornices should be examined and any remedial works carried out.

Stress cracks are evident between ground and first floor openings and also between first floor openings and the roof. These are likely to have occurred over a long period of time due to the age of the property. The render finish will need to be hacked off and the underlying stone wall re-pointed and rendered.

The wall structure behind the kitchen is in poor condition. The complete render to the wall will need hacking off, re-pointing and re-rendering. (see also floor structure). A further inspection is advised once the render has been hacked off from this wall.

Some gaps are evident between fascia's/wall abutments and these need closing off to prevent birds, wasps etc. entering.

Air bricks have been provided to ventilate the sub floor void below the floor. However some air bricks from the East Elevation were missing and need replacement.

## **13. SETTLEMENT AND SUBSIDENCE**

Apart from that noted above there is no evidence of progressive settlement or subsidence to the property.

## **14. DAMP PROOF COURSE**

### **Damp course.**

Due to the age of this property there would not be a damp proof course.

## **15. EXTERNAL JOINERY**

As noted above wet rot has occurred over the years to the timber fascia's, soffit and barge boards and we advise these are replaced.

The majority of windows have been replaced with uPVC, however six single glazed timber windows remain to the main chapel. These windows have all suffered from wet rot. We consider that two of these windows will need replacement in the next few months due to the amount of decay.

The remaining timber windows have wet rot but are likely to be repairable in the short term. You should anticipate replacement of the remaining timber windows in the next five years. One of the windows has a cracked window pane and will need to be replaced.

The main timber entrance doors to the chapel were in a satisfactory condition. Some wood rot has occurred to the lower door and frame. This will need cutting out and repairs undertaken.

New timber access doors are needed to both under floor access voids.

## **16. DECORATION**

The external decoration to the property is very poor having been effected by water egress, wet rot, spalling and cracked render. Following remedial works the render, sills, Fascia's, soffits bargeboards, windows and the main external doors/frames will require full decoration.

## **INSPECTION INTERNALLY**

### **17. CEILINGS.**

The main chapel has high level timber boarded ceilings. These appeared in satisfactory condition where inspected.

Ceilings to the main entrance, store A and B were off a board finish. The underside of the ceilings have been tested by applying light pressure. Generally the ceilings are in fair condition.

The ceilings in the meeting room and kitchen have suspended ceiling tiles within an aluminium frame. The tiles are aged and bowed and generally in need of replacement. Above the suspended ceiling is the original part splayed part flat ceiling. This appears to be lath and plaster and is in poor condition with cracking and areas where the ceiling has been previously patched with boarding for temporary repairs. You should anticipate having to replace the ceiling finish in the next couple of years. A sample of the ceiling finish will need to be tested for the presence of any asbestos prior to works being carried out.

### **18. WALL SURFACES INSIDE THE PROPERTY.**

The internal walls are masonry to the ground floor with timber stud partitions to the W.C. 1 & 2. The integrity of the walls were in fair condition.

Wall finishes have been extensively effected by penetrating damp and a substantial amount of hacking off and re-rendering / plastering is needed throughout the property.

The back wall of the chapel has an artex finish. This has been effected by damp penetration and remedial works to hack off and re-plaster are needed. The artex will need to be tested for any presence of asbestos prior to instructing others to carry out works.

### **19. FIREPLACES, FLUES AND CHIMNEY BREASTS.**

N/A

### **20. FLOORS.**

Ground and first floor gallery floors are of timber suspended construction. Generally the ground floors are in poor condition. Floor boarding was found to be rotten to the perimeter where damp has caused decay.

The suspended timber ground floor over the sanctuary is supported by stone and brick pads structures within the sub floor void. These supporting pads are spaced at approx 3.3 metre centres. Timber beams 195 x 275mm span between the pads and these support the floor joists. We would advise that the joints to the brick support pads are raked out and re-pointed.

The ground floor suspended floor joists were inspected from the under floor voids. Inspection of the joists on the Southern (rear) end of the property found the ends of the floor joists and timber wall plate have decayed to such an extent where they were built into the external walls that the majority have no support bearing. Temporary support has been provided by acro's and timber beams. We should advise that areas of the floor are in a dangerous condition of collapse. It should also be noted that the decayed floor joists mean that the rear walls do not have laterally restraint.

An old steel RSJ to provide support to the alter area (positioned in the under floor void) is rusty and will have lost its structural integrity. The steel will need replacement

Floor joists to the Northern (front) of the main chapel over the main entrance area have also suffered from wet rot but not to the same extent as the Southern side. Some repairs will be necessary.

Inspection of the floor joists to the Northern (front) end of the property over the meeting room was not possible as no access to this area was possible however the intermediate stone wall supporting the joists within the sub floor void below the kitchen/meeting room has some voids which need to be filled to ensure support of the joists is maintained. Depending on any rot etc. found under the meeting room it would be worth considering installing a solid ground floor to this area.

Floor boarding needs taking up to allow the joists to be cut back and new sections of treated floor joists installed in accordance with 'TRADA' guidelines/structural engineers recommendations.

Joists away from the main external walls were in a fair condition where seen.

First floors to the gallery are supported via metal posts. The metal posts are supported by the sub floor stone pads in the sub floor void. The metal posts appeared in fair condition. It was not possible to inspect the first floor structure as no access could be gained to see the joists. It was noted that the stair string and some of the seating Pews had rot where these abut the external walls, especially on the Eastern side where water penetration of the walls has occurred. Therefore we would anticipate that the first floor joists will have been effected by wet rot where they are built into the external walls.

Localised areas of floor boarding have split or are loose and need repairs/re-fixing.

## **21. DAMPNESS.**

### **Penetrating dampness.**

We made random tests throughout the property with an electric moisture meter. High moisture readings were recorded in the following areas.

At lower levels around the external walls to the property and the internal wall between the main entrance and Sanctuary.

There are numerous areas of damp to external walls which has caused damage to internal finishes and floor boarding / joists. Defective rain water goods are contributing to the damp penetration and the missing section of guttering should be replaced immediately.



The defective external render is allowing rain water to soak into the walls behind. the render needs to be hacked off and any cracks filled and the walls re-rendered with a lime based render.

To the North (Front) of the Chapel the pavement level is approximately 100mm higher than the internal floor level and the rain water from the down pipes runs straight out onto the pavement. We would advise that all defective render is hacked off and re-rendered with a waterproof render.

Defective Internal finishes to this front wall should be hacked off and walls applied with a 'Vandex' or similar water proofer and replastered with a breathable lime mortar.

### **Condensation**

There was evidence of condensation to the inside of the single glazed timber windows. This is forming water which is causing wet rot to the timber windows and internal timber sills.

## **22. WINDOWS**

The majority of the windows are double glazed uPVC types. These windows were in satisfactory condition.

Six timber single glazed windows remain in the property, however these have wood rot and two of them require replacement with the others needing temporary repairs to cut out wood decay and repair in the short term until replacements can be fitted.

The window to the side porch is of glazed blocks. One of the glazed window blocks is cracked and will require replacement.

## **23. EXTERNAL DOORS**

The main external front doors and frame is timber. The base of the door and frame has some timber decay at its base as a result of poor decoration and requires repair. Apart from this the door is in a satisfactory condition. We would advise a shoot bolt is fitted to the right door for added security. There is no draught proofing as is normal with these older chapels.

The side porch door is uPVC and in working condition. This has a three point locking system.

The rear door to the kitchen is an aluminium double glazed door with two glazed panels. The door is at the end of its life cycle and requires some easing but was in working order.

New doors are needed to both the under floor access points.

## **24. INTERNAL JOINERY, INCLUDING SKIRTINGS, DOORS AND STAIRCASES.**

Internal door joinery was in generally good condition with no evidence of any deterioration. The internal lobby door required easing as it wont shut. The door to W.C. 1 and the door between the main entrance hall/sanctuary also need easing.

The door to the under stairs cupboard that houses the gas meter is not fixed with hinges. The door requires fitting.

There was evidence of some rot to the 'pews' where these abut external walls especially on the East elevation. You should anticipate some repair works.

### **Stairs**

The stairs are of conventional timber construction and found to be in satisfactory condition, however the stair string to the East elevation has wood decay resulting from the penetrating damp. This is where the missing section of gutter is located externally. Repair works will be needed to repair/ replace the stair string to ensure integrity of the stairs is maintained.

The steps leading up to the altar have wood rot and require replacement.

### **Kitchen**

The kitchen was fitted with timber units which were aged but in working order. These would benefit from upgrading.

## **25. INTERNAL DECORATIONS**

The internal decorations to the property are in poor condition from damp penetration. The property will require complete redecoration once repairs to the property have been completed.

## **26. WOODWORM, DRY ROT AND OTHER TIMBER DEFECTS**

Internal joinery where seen was in poor condition. Perimeter floor boards and the ends of joists have been affected by Wet rot. These floorboards and joists will need replacing. (See 19. floors)

## **27. THERMAL INSULATION**

There is no insulation to the roof void. You may want to consider installing insulation to the property to increase its thermal efficiency.

The external walls are of solid construction and no wall insulation is present.

Some windows have been replaced with uPVC double glazed types. Six single glazed timber windows remain of which two need replacing. You may want to consider changing the other timber windows to improve the thermal insulation to the property.

There is no floor insulation to the property.

There is no insulation to water pipes. You should insulate pipework to reduce heat loss and reduce the chance of pipes freezing in cold weather.

## **28. VENTILATION**

Air vents have been provided to ventilate the sub floor void. Two air bricks are missing and need to be replaced.

Extract ventilation has been provided to W.C. 1 & 2 in accordance with Building Regulations. No extract ventilation has been provided to the kitchen. We would advise that when carrying out remedial works to the property an extract fan is installed to the kitchen.

## **29. SERVICES**

These have only been inspected visually where they were accessible and tests have not been applied. Standards and adequacy of installations can only be ascertained as a result of a test by an appropriate specialist. A general comment only is made.

### **Electricity**

The electricity is supplied from the mains. The electric meter is located on the right hand wall as you enter the meeting room. There is another sub consumer unit located on the wall in the sanctuary.

The electrical circuits utilise a consumer unit. Where visible the installation is carried out using modern wiring, switches and sockets.

Your solicitor is advised to obtain a copy of the latest electrical certificate for the property if available. If this is not available we advise that an appropriate electrical test/report is undertaken.

No earth bonding was seen to the W.C. fittings or kitchen sink or heating/water pipework. It is recommended that earth bonding to these fittings is carried out in line with current electrical regulations.

### **Gas**

The gas is supplied from the mains. The gas meter is located within the under stairs cupboard on the East side of the property.

### **30. Main distribution and heating pipe work.**

The mains water pipe into the property rises in the kitchen. This is in alkathene and then rises into the kitchen in copper pipe work. The water stop valve is beside the sink.

There is no hot water available to the basins in W.C. 1 & 2. You should anticipate upgrading the supply pipework to provide hot water to these areas.

Radiators are provided to ground floor rooms.

The pipe work is in copper and appears to be in a satisfactory condition where seen in the under floor void. However the pipework has not been securely clipped at recommended centres and movement could occur causing joints to loosen and leak. Pipework has not been insulated and will be susceptible to freezing in the winter months.

There are no service valves to isolate fittings to basins, W.C.s or the sink to comply with good practice. We advise that if you intend to update pipework in the foreseeable future then isolation valves should be fitted to pipework at this time.

#### **sanitary fittings**

The sanitary fittings to W.C. 1 & 2 are aged but in working order. Overflow pipes are fitted to the W.C's. however the overflow pipes are not secured with clips at recommended centres and we advise this to be carried out to avoid sagging of the pipes.

#### **Space heating.**

The boiler/heating has not been tested. The boiler is an Ideal Mexico 2 floor mounted boiler. Your solicitor should obtain verification of the boiler service certification. If this is not available the boiler should be serviced by a 'Gas Safe' engineer. The cold water heating storage tank is located at high level in the kitchen. This is not insulated and has no lid and we advise this is fitted.

NOTE: The boiler flue appears to contravene Gas Safe requirements for proximity to openable windows. We would strongly advise that a 'Gas Safe' engineer visits to inspect the installation.

It should also be noted that there are three flues from neighbouring properties where flues and gases terminate into the back of Tabor Chapel site.

In addition to radiators, independent gas fire heaters provide heating to the property. These run of mains gas and can be individually operated. The fire in the meeting room was tested and was in working order.

### **31 UNDERGROUND DRAINAGE**

A drainage camera survey has not been carried out and we cannot comment on the condition of the underground drainage system not seen.

The drainage connects to the mains within the highway. An inspection chamber is located to the Southern area of the site. We were not able to establish if any further inspection chambers exist due to the overgrown site, however visually we could not find any further ones.

The construction of the inspection chamber is in masonry with concrete haunching to its base and clay half round drainage pipes. The neighbouring properties foul drainage terminates within this manhole. No blockages were apparent at the time of the inspection. The manhole was in a satisfactory condition, however the frame to the manhole is loose and should be re-fixed/replaced.

### **32 THE SITE**

The boundaries are clearly defined with a stone wall to the front of the property and neighbouring properties to the rear. A timber side gate allows pedestrian access from the highway to the rear of the site.

The front stone wall has been rendered on its rear face and is defective. The render needs to be hacked off and the joints re-pointed and re-rendered. Localised areas of re-pointing are needed to the front face of the wall.

The iron fence on top of the wall has severely rusted. This needs to be rubbed down to the metal and treated with an approved rust inhibitor and redecorated with a suitable paint. Alternatively you may like to consider replacing the fence.

The fence is secured to the entrance pillars. The securing fixings have rusted causing expansion and lifting of the entrance pillar. The brick pillars will need to be rebuilt.

The front yard is concrete and is in fair condition.

Steps lead from the kitchen, down to the rear garden with a brick wall to the side of the steps. The steps are uneven and steep and we would advise these be re-laid to avoid the risk of tripping. The pointing to the brick side wall is in poor condition and the joints need raking out and the re-pointing.

The rear garden is overgrown and would benefit from a general clean up.

### 33. SUMMARY OF MAIN ITEMS

- Wood decay/gaps to fascia's/soffits
- Leaking gutter joints and missing section of gutter
- Damp to the property
- Defective pointing, external render and stress cracks.
- Defective internal rendered walls from damp.
- Wet rot to timber windows
- Bowing back wall
- Defective floor joists/boarding
- Boiler flue close to openable window.

### 33 General items for your solicitor.

The following points should be checked with your solicitor to ensure retention of any rights or guarantees which should be reserved for you and to clarify any liabilities you may have to others.

- Obtain Service certification and any warranty for the gas boiler, if available.
- Obtain a copy of the Electrical Test Certificate if available.
- Obtain any warranties if available for the new roof coverings and lead flashings.

### 34. LIMITATIONS AND DISCLAIMER

In making this report, the following assumptions have been made.

No liability can be accepted for areas of the property that could not be inspected, i.e. floor voids, cavities, fixings, underground drainage etc. Carpets/floor coverings have not been lifted.

Foundations and floor substructures have not been exposed.

That no deleterious or hazardous materials or techniques have been used.

That the property is not subject to any unusual or especially onerous restrictions, encumbrances or outgoings and that good title can be shown.

The survey report is provided for the sole use of the named client and where the Surveyor is so notified, his Mortgagee, and is confidential to the client and his professional advisers. The Surveyor accepts no responsibility whatsoever to any person other than the client himself.

**SURVEYOR** Michael Swain BSc (Hons) FBEng, RICS, FPWS

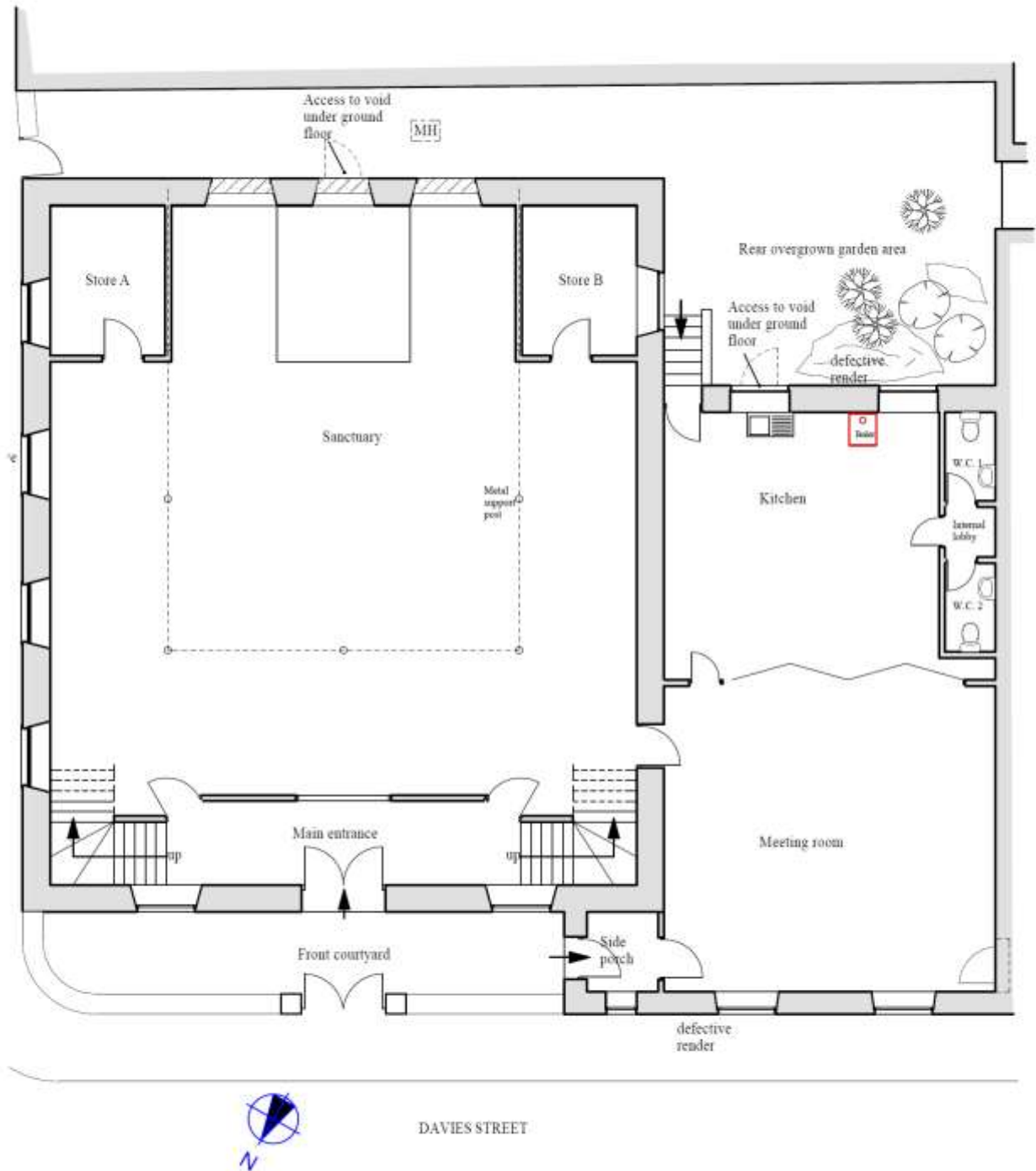
**COMPANY:** M.P.S. Surveying & Architectural Design Ltd

**ADDRESS:** 23A Monk Street, Abergavenny, Mon. NP7 5LD

**Dated:** 5<sup>th</sup> November 2012

Signed:

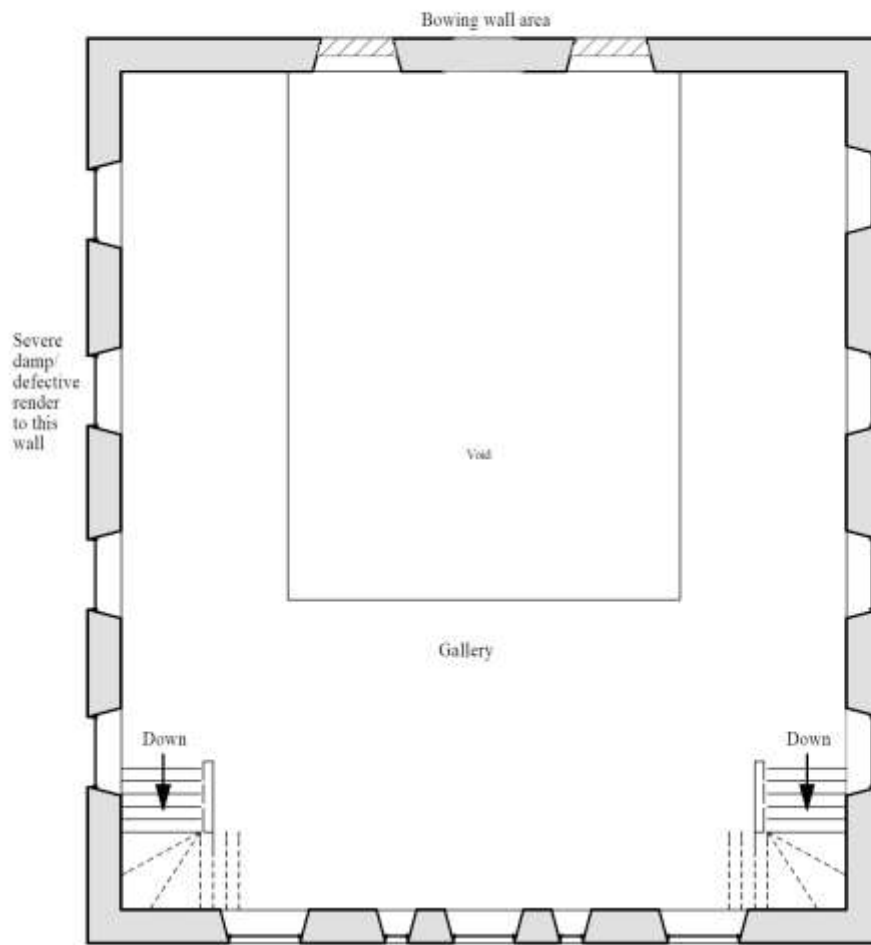
# APPENDIX



## Ground Floor

Tabor Methodist Chapel, Davies Street, Brynmawr, Blaenau Gwent, NP23 4AD.  
NOTE: Not to scale - For room identification purposes only





First floor

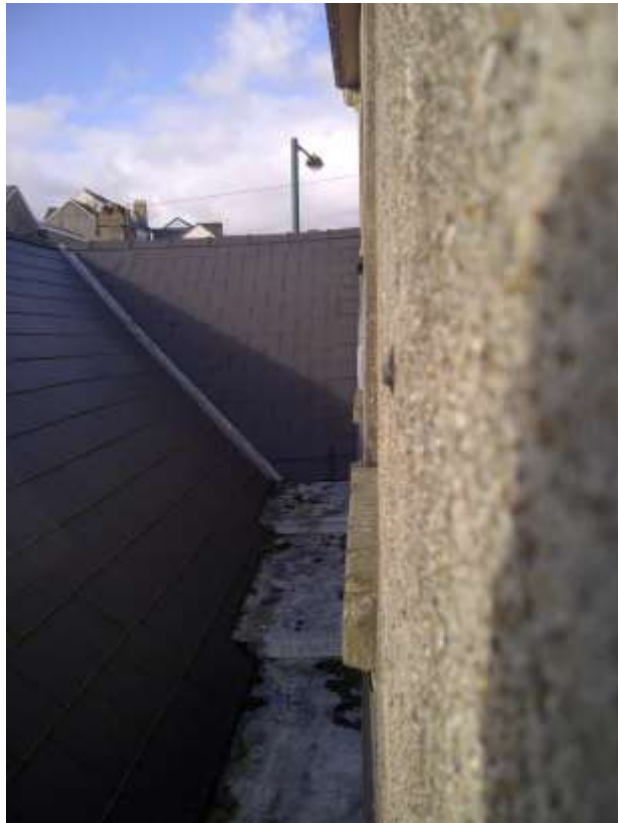
Tabor Methodist Chapel, Davies Street, Brynmawr, Blaenau Gwent, NP23 4AD.  
NOTE: Not to scale - For room identification purposes only



Front of Chapel (North)



Side of Chapel (East)



View of rear valley gutter and single storey roof finish



Front wall with water damage from missing gutter section



Missing gutter end cap and defective pointing to wall. Steps are uneven



Bowing back wall



Defective render & wall to rear of kitchen. Joist ends have rotted.



Overgrowth to rear garden





Propping of floor over kitchen



Decayed timber joist end



Floor void under meeting room.



Ceiling area above the suspended ceiling in the meeting room.



Suspended ceiling tiles over meeting room.



Defective joists over sanctuary (Southern end)





Internal finishes effected by damp



Defective internal finishes to window areas.



Main chapel roof space



King truss and floor noggins over main chapel