

MacLeod Consulting

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12 February 2014

The Shire of Melton
P O Box 21
Melton
Vic 3337

Our Ref: 1200

Attention: Ms Sera-Jane Peters, Heritage Advisor

Dear Sera-Jane

DIGGERS REST HOTEL

STRUCTURAL CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT – FOURTH REPORT

Further to your instructions, we confirm our fourth inspection of the property on 10 February 2014, to provide an updated opinion on the structural stability of the fire-damaged building.

This report should be read in conjunction with our first report dated 30 July 2009, our second report dated 3 July 2009 and our third report dated 31 January 2011.

The fire-damaged building has been built from rendered brick and stone masonry walls, generally of substantial thickness. The condition of the building at the time of our fourth viewing on 10 February 2014 remains little different to that described in our earlier reports, except that the northern most chimney has either been taken down or has collapsed. The previously noted plant growth has now become prominent at the top of most walls.

We offer the following comments based on our observations during the inspection on 10 February 2014:

- The site was well fenced so we were unable to closely observe the condition of the renders and mortar. Comparison to photographs from previous inspections have shown that more areas of wall render has fallen off, which is consistent with the building having been left exposed to the elements;
- The external walls and internal walls remain functionally vertical, as was observed in our earlier visits;

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*Fourth Structural Conditions Assessment: Diggers Rest Hotel**Our Ref: 1200*

- Existing cracks in the exterior walls have increased in width as the mortar continues to recede due to weather;
- The vegetation growing in the top of the walls will increase the rate of deterioration of the masonry walls;
- The body of the walls still appears to remain sound and the wall alignment remains generally true; and,
- As the structural integrity of walls of this age is dependent upon the integrity of the mortar we are concerned that continuing to leave the walls uncovered for an extended period will cause the low binder content lime-based mortar to further lose its bonding capacity beyond that caused by the fire and the weathering to date. This will eventually lead to the disassembling of the walls, causing progressive collapse.

In our opinion, as the walls remain functionally vertical, the building remains stable as was previously reported. We are therefore of the opinion that there is no structural impediment to its rehabilitation.

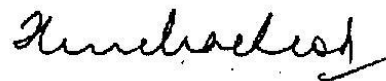
The previously suggested remedial work plan remains and should be implemented at the earliest opportunity, if the building is to be rehabilitated. This should include removing any vegetation at the top of the masonry wall and capping the walls with a metal flashing to prevent any further growth or water ingress.

Yours sincerely



Joe Wilkins
BE(Hons)

Reviewed:



Ken MacLeod
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