

September 23, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Frank Armstrong I have been a contractor working in Haldimand and in the industry for over 40 years. I have been involved in the delicate work of restoring historic brick buildings similar to the Cook-Peart House (House).

I have inspected the House, and the following is a summary of my findings. While I believe the House can be saved, repairing what is still there is no longer a practical option, when compared against the more practical solution of demolishing and rebuilding. The structure has been subject to advanced decay for decades. Further, the extent of the required repairs will not be fully revealed until the work of dismantling much of the structure has been undertaken.

Below you will find a list of findings that are apparent from our initial inspection:

Roof

The upper portion of the home is fully exposed to the elements. The roof will need to be fully dismantled. Once dismantled, the structure can be rebuilt, commencing with a full inspection of trusses, the replacement of core-sheeting, weather shielding and finally shingles. Steps will also need to be taken to dissuade birds, and squirrels from continuing to destroy the attic. Further, the eaves (soffit, fascia) are not salvageable and will need to be replaced.

There is vermiculite in the attic space which will potentially have asbestos in it. This will have to be removed/remediated by licenced contractors using positive pressure techniques to ensure safety and the complete removal of all contaminants.

Insulation

There is no insulation in the house, and most if not all the plaster walls and ceilings are damaged and cracked and will need to be replaced with drywall. It is necessary to remove all wall and

ceiling plaster to clean out vermin droppings and to insulate; the structure in this regard is both infested and beyond remediation.

Foundation

The majority of the House features disintegrating and damaged bricks. At some point some years ago it is clear the soil covering the foundation on the east face was removed. This removal has allowed the frost to reach the foundation, causing the walls to dramatically shift, resulting in extensive damage to the core structure of the House. The southeast corner of the house has significant foundation issues where the foundation has shifted, allowing the brick to physically pull away from the remainder of the House-structure. The upper floor in that corner is no longer properly supported by the second floor's joists, which now float freely and are entirely unsupported).

The remediation and backfilling of the foundation will involve the total circumference of the House. Once the foundation is remediated to include proper drainage and insulation, some or all of the House's walls will need to come down and be rebuilt. This will involve the complete de-bricking, as well as refurbishing, of the House's bricks, assuming these bricks do not fall away from the House in an uncontrolled manner in the intervening time, due to decay and further movement of the structure due to natural forces such as wind and ice-action.

Brickwork

There are other foundation issues where the brick is not being properly supported, has shifted, which will also need to be addressed. Several doorways and windows have the brick wall over them sinking well into the opening-area. This will require the wall and brick to be opened, supports to be added above the window/doors and the brick wall will then rebuilt.

Windows

Window jambs/casings/surrounds have deteriorated and rotted to the point these windows are now considered unsalvageable. The owners would like to replace the windows with wood-

inside, fiberglass or vinyl outside with divided lights in the same configuration. Door and windowsills in the house are about half stone and half wood. Those that are wood are beyond repaid and will need to be replaced with stone in order to shore up the structural integrity of these systems.

Trim

All trim, moulding, fireplaces, doors need to be stripped of paint, which is potentially lead-based. This will need to be undertaken by professionals off-site. Floor and trim have been soaked with animal urine for decades and this will have to be addressed.

Flooring - Basement

Similar to the trim, the floors (both first and second) feature extensive urine damage and animal damage and will need to be entirely removed and replaced. The extent of subfloor and beam damage currently is unknown, but based upon our experience will likely require at least some remediation in order to both eliminate the persistence of urine smell and to ensure safe loading of both the first-floor and second-floor structural systems.

The wooden floor in the basement needs to be removed as it sits directly on the earth and has rotted. There is nothing salvageable in respect of this floor. An engineered sub-flooring system along with crawl space thereunder will likely be required as well.

Wiring and Plumbing

The electrical and plumbing in the entirety of the House needs to be replaced. Extensive freezing and thawing damage has rendered all of the plumbing inoperable and the wiring is both old and damaged due to vermin infestation. Both of these aspects of the House are dangerous and inoperable or effectively so.

Addition

The addition behind the house which was added some years after the original structure does not have an adequate foundation, the brick sits on the earth, and the entire structure has shifted/sunk

and is moving away from the house, with large sections of the brick collapsing. It is doubtful if this structure can be repaired and should ideally be removed.

Conclusion

As it stands, the house is in a state of dereliction, and will require a significant investment of resources in order to both secure the structure and then potentially make it habitable.

On balance, the House, in our opinion, should be demolished. The alternative is a complete renovation and salvage of elemental features of the House, with no guarantees in respect of same in terms of the outcome or final result.

Yours truly,

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Frank Armstrong.

Frank Armstrong