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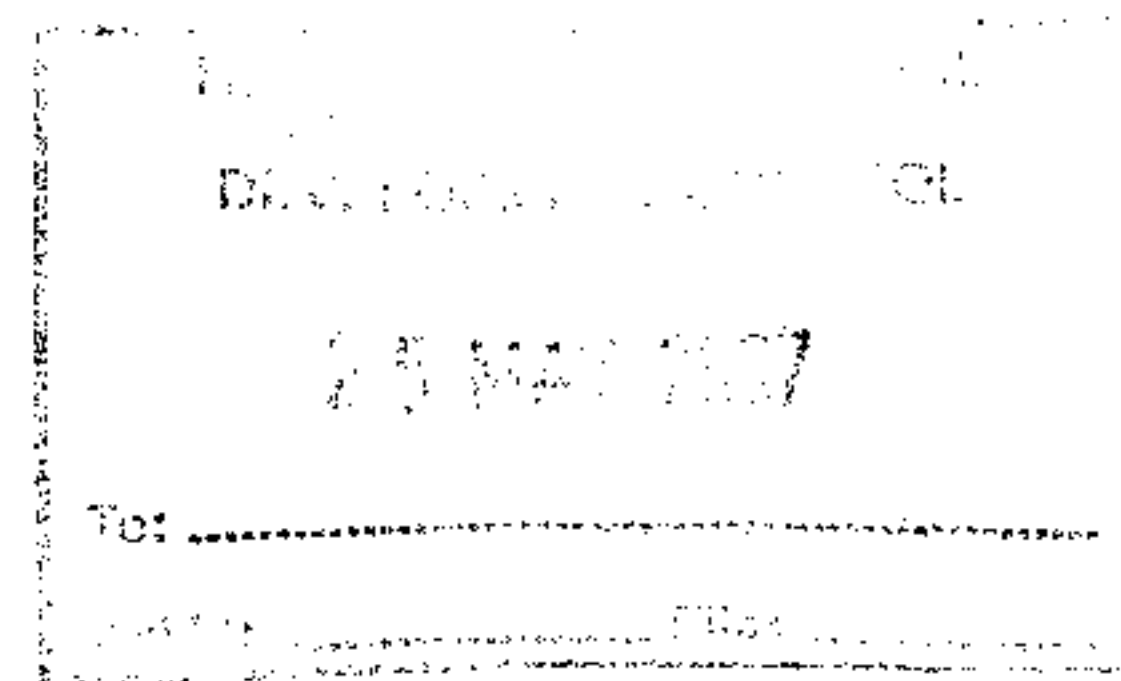
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CE07 / 1655, 0



19 February, 2007

Dear Mr O'Conner

Buildings at Holmer Trading Estate, Hereford

I am writing in response to your request for a Structural Engineer's report on the buildings at Holmer Trading Estate, as requested by the planning officer from Herefordshire Council. You are proposing submitting a Planning Application for re-development of the whole site. The report is on the condition of the existing buildings.

I made inspections on 14th and 15th December.

I have not carried out a full and detailed inspection each and every building but I have inspected sufficiently to be able to make general comments on the conditions of the buildings and their structural conditions.

I have made a walk through inspection of almost all of the buildings on this site and I can say that almost all have reached the end of their useful life and have little to commend any sort of restoration or improvement. Almost all should be replaced.

Often, my difficulty answering the question about the condition and life of buildings is that I spend a considerable amount of my time preserving and restoring buildings but this is generally on the basis that the buildings are either listed or preservation of the structure without excessive repair is a necessary condition of the re-development. Buildings can almost always be retained, restored or converted. In this context it is quite normal for me to walk into a building and get an instant feeling for the building and its needs. Sometimes the reverse is the case and the buildings on this site all fall into this category.

The following comments should be read with the annotated diagram of the site.

1. At the west end of the site is a low single storey building, Units A1 to A22 and are part of the original tile works, that is in use for industrial and retail purposes. The building is most unsuitable for its present purpose with a very low ceiling

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height, a floor that slopes and a steel frame with stanchions on a restrictive spacing.

2. On the south side is a row of brick buildings, Units 210 to 218, with a tiled roof that are in retail, industrial and office use. The buildings are part of the original tile works and are about 100 years old. They are not suitable for their present use being quite small, poorly insulated, in need of modernisation but their size and height are such that they have limited use as part of a modern industrial complex.
3. The group of buildings in the centre, Units 210 to 214, are either industrial warehouse buildings of about 50 years old which would be difficult to upgrade because of their construction or are modern industrial extensions. I would advise that the 50 year old buildings are beyond their useful life and should be replaced.
4. The group of buildings, Units 5 to 9, can only be described as small sheds of no value whatever except that Unit 60 is a modern industrial building of about 5 years old, a building built to replace a burnt down unit.
5. The group of buildings at the north east corner Units 101 to 113, are the original tile works buildings with some later extensions. The original construction is brick walls with traditional timber roof trusses and tiled roofs. The extensions are either brickwork with flat roofs or 30 year old industrial sheds.

Typically the buildings traditional timber roof trusses and purlins are weak and would be unable to support the additional load from upgrade roof construction including insulation etc. The present roof condition with very significant sag in the slopes more than demonstrates my concerns.

The arrangement of the buildings most with low headroom to the underside of the trusses makes them unsuitable for modern usage. The only space with reasonable headroom, Unit 105, is too high and probably too small for reasonable usage.

Overall the arrangement of spaces and buildings is difficult to adapt to a modern usage with suitable external spaces and access. A number of the units are empty at the present presumably for these reasons.

6. There are two modern industrial buildings that have a useful life. The detached house on the site is also modern in construction.

My conclusion is that almost all the buildings are well beyond their economic useful life, with the exception of the two modern buildings, few appear to have useful or reasonable improvement potential.

I have indicated on the attached plan of the site the building types with some comments. Also following are some examples of the defects in the buildings.

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I would also advice that many of the buildings are on the point or beyond the point of becoming uninsurable because of their condition and history.

I hope that these comment meet with your requirements. If necessary I can amplify on any of the points made.

Yours

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