

Liskeard Guildhall Survey, October 2023 (undertaken by Le Page Architects)

We surveyed the lath and plaster from the attic void (the former Mayors Parlour is in modern plasterboard) and there does not appear to be any signs of stress, displacement, or cracks. All principle and secondary/common timbers are in sound condition with all connections appearing robust.

There are one or two slates gone to the roof slopes (north mainly) where day light can be seen (west slope has been re-slatted and has a bitumen roof membrane to it) and as there is no membrane providing secondary protection, these slates should be replaced asap.

Good ventilation is obvious to the roof attic and there are no signs of condensation to the space.

There are no signs of movement to any of the roof timbers.

There are 4 raised principal trusses and 3 lowered beam trusses and these lowered ones form the basis of the ceiling ribs (along with lowered cross beams to provide the east-west ribs)

There are, as we know cracks to the coving and in particular where the ribs meet. Our basic measurements of these lowered truss chords suggest the ceiling coving has been formed out below these from timberwork and lath lattice to give the ribs depth.

Unfortunately we could not access these ceiling ribs and although we now are sure that there is no real concern regarding the roof structure or the main flat ceiling panels , I'm recommending that you get in some access towers to look at these cross points of the ribs in more detail. The cracking from what we have seen in the attic suggests it may well be historic and there currently does not seem to be any connection with any roof defects or movement, but a good look and tapping of them needs to happen.

In any event our recommendation is that the windows to the space are refurbished to allow good air flow into the room. There is a build-up of condensation on the underside of the historic plaster ceilings which in time will become detrimental to the fabric and possibly extremely difficult to remove (as it may well become engrained) or decorate over with a suitable distemper paint system.