1844 Town Hall

North Hampton, NH

Exterior Conditions Assessment Report

February 2018

Prepared By

Schnitzler Historic Building Analysis

Outline

Introduction

On January 11 and 18, 2018, I inspected the exterior of the North Hampton Town Hall at the request of the Town of North Hampton officials.

The focus of the inspections in the resulting Condition Report was to identify problematic areas requiring restoration and repair. Additionally, I was asked to give recommendations on how to fix these conditions.

In the following report, I have organized findings and recommendations about the Town Hall structure into south, east, west and north facades, steeple and back ell. Findings are written in regular text, followed immediately by recommendations, written in italics for easy reference.

I have also addressed proper material selections for repairs and restorations; mandated ways in dealing with lead paint and prioritized a work list, placing those areas in the most fragile conditions at the top.

South Façade, North Hampton Town Hall

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South Façade/Findings and Recommendations

1. Checked lead flashing on two windows and on the front door.

   These flashings are cracked need to be changed to include an overhang; they need to extend out further.

2. Checked condition of all front woodwork – trims, casings, doorway upper woodwork.

The left and right corner pilasters require minor re-nailing at the bottoms; nails are rusting and loose. Use galvanized cut nails.

3. The window frames are fine; the door frame is okay. The door casing has an applied material plaster that is cracking and falling off. It's either hiding a problem or is a poor covering treatment.

It needs to come off and casings should be re-painted.

4. The fan light clapboard siding is new, however the window frame itself is original. The sill has dropped substantially. Overall, with a gap of 3/8 inches from the right to left corner. The sill is very loose; no doubt that the fasteners are rusted out. Casing corners, where they meet the sill, are broken.

   The sill needs to be removed and then re-positioned and re-fastened. Casing needs repairs. Curve header should be flashed.

5. The lead flashing installed on the top of the water table is good.

6. The returns and miters are sound but many are gapping and opening.

   They require re-nailing while others need better fillers in the open-mitered gaps and then paint. You may want to consider flashing the tops of the mitered pilaster capitals.

7. Inspection of the roof front gable, rakes and soffits revealed that both raking cornice mouldings are good with no obvious problems. The horizontal soffit cover board displays good wood though it is showing signs of wear and age.

   A l*eaded copper flashing over the entire length would extend the life of this element.*

East Façade

East Façade/Findings and Recommendations

Upon inspection two serious issues were discovered.

1. On the left side bottom of the building, above the basement double doors with sashes, there's approximately 22 feet of water table that is completely rotted out; 2 x 9 x 22 feet.

   Replace this section of water table, matching profile and sizing. Lead flash top of entire length of water table.

   What is behind this rot? Does it go through to the sheathing and/or the building sill?

   Inspection could not determine this condition.

Recommend cutting out a foot-long window into the water table – three or four of them. To see what's behind them and to see how deep the rot goes and repair accordingly.

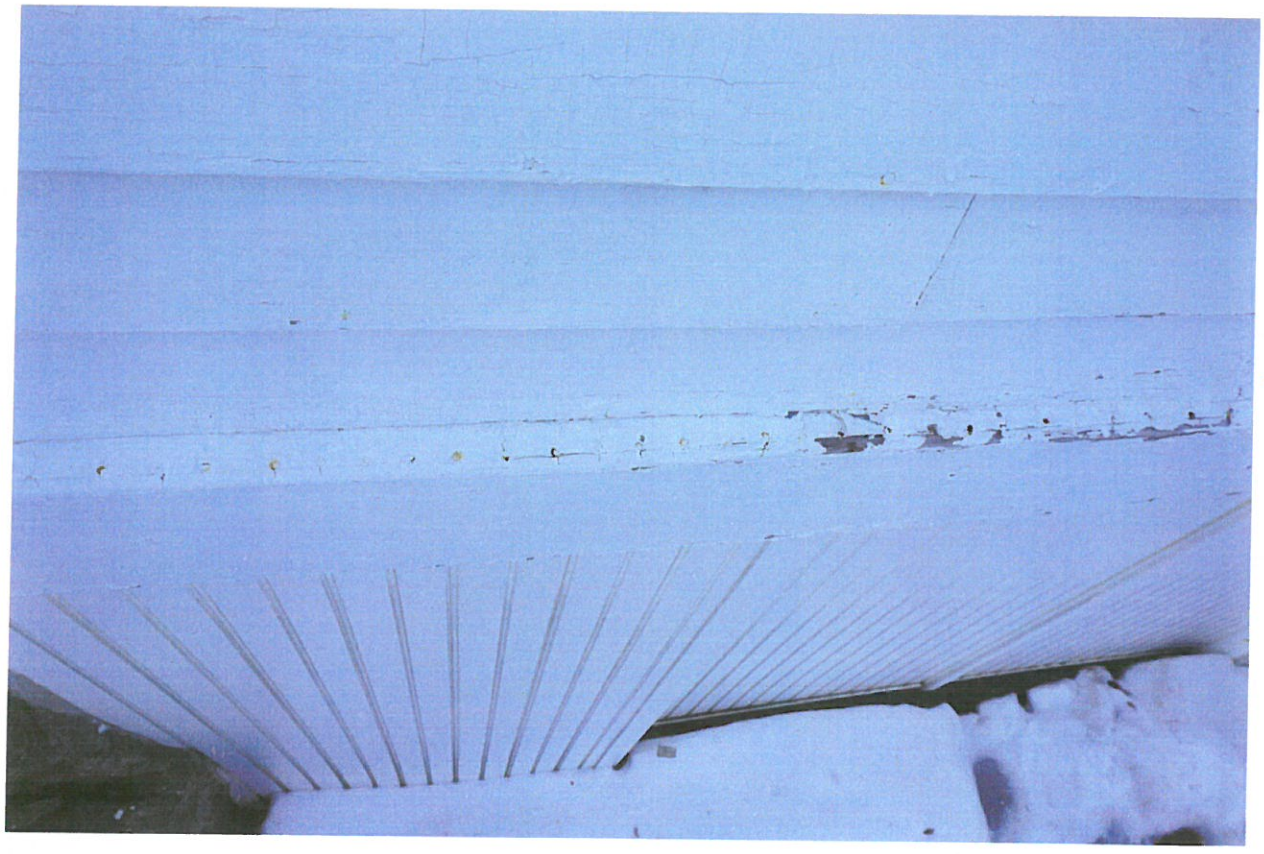
2. In the lower, right hand section, above the other pair of tongue and groove board doors there's an obvious sag in the building. All the woodwork, including the roof eave-line, has shifted. The window headers are pitched out of level. The clapboards have compressed and/or the claps have popped loose.

After further review this condition appears to be an old movement. Possibly caused by the construction of the back bay addition to the building (not the new ell) and the removal of the north rear stone foundation and gable wall. All of these observations suggest that the building sills in the northeast corner may be poorly supported and/or are rotting out. Inspection of sills could not determine their condition.

Recommend creating windows from exterior into the water table to check exterior sill façade.

3. The flashing on window headers and water tables are incomplete and cracking.

Headers and water tables should have flashing along its full length, with overhang.



4. The tops of the building returns (cornerboard and roofline returns) are open-mitered and loose.

   Need to refasten building returns and fill in gapped miters.

5. Right hand side corner return is falling off.

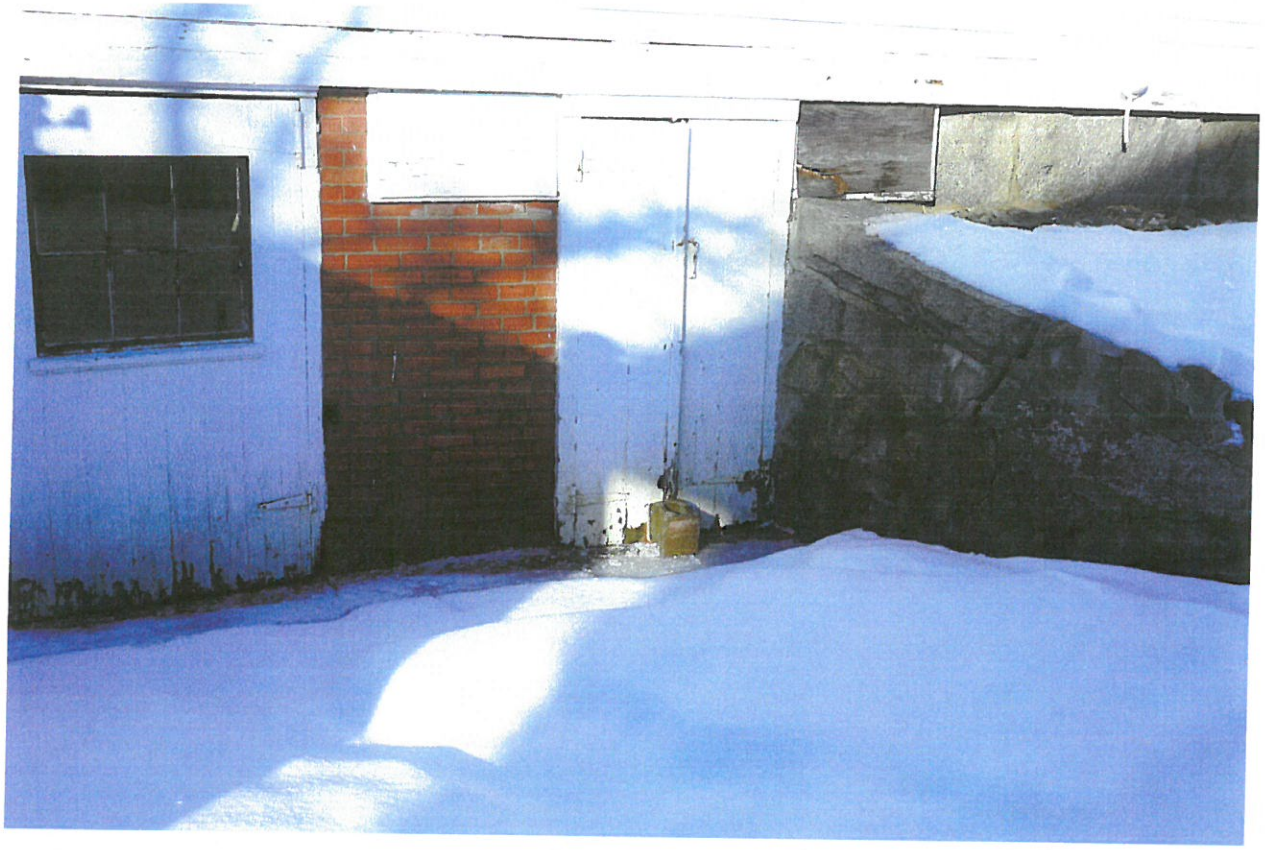
   Re-attach corner return.

6. There are issues with the three sets of basement doors. The first set on the left, southeast corner, are obviously aged, the frame and doors have rot in the bottoms and threshold. Missing glass in sash.

   Replace or repair the door frame and pair of doors. Replace missing sash glass.

7. The middle pair of doors exhibit the same issues and the hinges are rusted out.

   Repair or replace in-kind.



8. The third pair are new and function though they do not conform to the building's historic period. The right hand door has sagged and is not in alignment.

   Consider replacement to match the historic period or re-hang right side door.

9. Two cellar windows are covered with rotting plywood.

   Re-cover or uncover them and repair/restore those windows. Replace missing sash glass.

10. Approximately 80-feet of clapboards need replacing on the façade due to breaks and splits.

    Repair accordingly with proper-sized clapboards. Spot re-nail northeast half of the building.

West Facade

West Façade/ Findings and Recommendations

1. There is approximately 150 linear feet of considerably damaged clapboards. Many are split and broken. (See next page)

   Replace in kind with appropriate materials.

2. Some of the window block headers are loose. Three are missing trim.

   Remove and clean edges then re-fasten all headers and repair square trim. All window headers should be flashed with overhang.

3. A new window located on the far left side is a reproduction. The sill is a three-piece laminate and the fasteners are exposed and cracking.

   Recommend installation of a better quality, reproduction window sill that matches the others.

4. In one middle window, the sash bar is broken and missing.

   The sash bar needs replacing.

5. Water table has damage in the middle section; a large area is broken and missing a section.

   Dutchman repair in-kind with a new section. All water tables need flashing.

6. The wall area near the electric meter and cable box needs some repairs. There are damaged, split clapboards and an open, two-inch hole in the wall.

   Repair claps, remove empty pipe and check wires for unnecessary ones attached to the building.

7. Northwest corner column return rotted. Northwest 2oth century two-piece repair.

   Replace with one piece of moulding, sized accordingly.

8. Open roof frieze and crown. Some rot in edge.

   Cut and fill gap with Dutchman wood patch putty and paint.

North Façade Roof/ Findings and Recommendations

1. The upper rakes on the roof gable are loose and gapping.

   Re-nail and tighten.

2. Gable sash and window frame have issues.

   The window frame needs a new sill. A large portion of it is missing and very loose, dropping out of frame due to rusted fasteners.

   Replace in-kind.

   The lower sash bottom rail is rotten and sash glazing is falling out.

   Repair sash and re-glaze. Consider installing a storm window for protection of sash.

3. The metal chimney bracket should be removed.

   Holes in the rake need to be filled where the bracket is and install missing flashing section along roof and chimney line.

4. There is a section of approximately 30 linear feet of clapboards that need replacement on north façade gable due to splits and breakage.

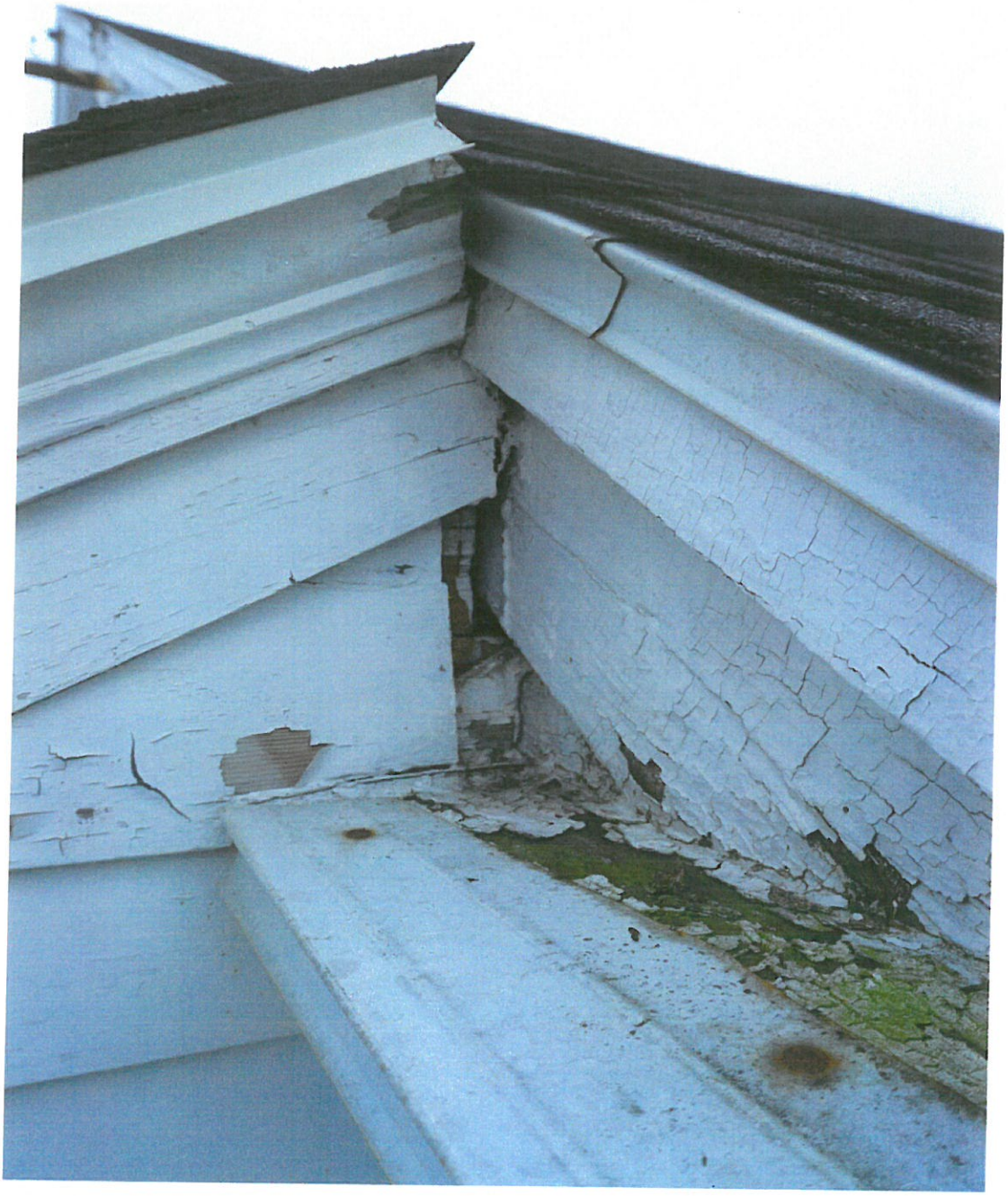
   Replace in-kind with appropriate material and re-nail all existing claps as they are very loose.

5. Roof returns need top flashing.

   Install lead flashing.

6. There needs to be improvement of flashing where the ell roof joins the gable of the main building. I can see daylight in the attic in this area.

   Install flashing and fill gaps in this area.



Steeple

Due to its height, I did not get directly in front of the steeple's four facades though I did inspect all facades with binoculars and feel confident in my discoveries. I also climbed out the shuttle door in the steeple onto the metal ladder and looked at the north side.

The Steeple was restored in 2012, though I do have some concerns.

1. There are wood clock faces on all four sides. The one on the east side is really in rough shape. The mouldings have gapped and split and loosened.

The other clock faces are showing signs of age and are possibly stable for now.

Though the clock face has new hands, the east clock face dial face needs repair and conservation.

2. The wood shingles below the clock dial on the east side do look like they need replacement. They are lifted, gapped and cracked. The shingles on the north, south and west side are in much better condition.

Restore east side wood shingles below the clock dial.

3. All of the new upper restoration woodwork is in place but I can see miter gaps. Cornice moulding gapped. I can see daylight inside of the steeple.

When the steeple is next painted, it needs proper caulking with good quality materials and possibly even epoxy paste.

4. I immediately noticed the open arch windows in the steeple as a factor in continued water infiltration of the steeple. The open arch windows in the steeple may be correct to the period – as evidenced by historic photos – but, without a means of controlling excess water, issues will arise. It's wise to prevent water infiltration into the building because rot follows.

A louvered shutter comes to mind as a possible solution, reducing the water while letting the sound of the bell broadcast or possible acrylic panels over the openings.

5. The roof under the bell has a tinned, steel pan roof tile soldered to one another. This is an early roof type. It has been tarred and/or painted over through the years for additional coverage. The outer edge overhang tiles are rusting, some with holes and cracks. No water leakage inside the bell mechanic room observed.

This material needs to be replaced. Perhaps it can be repaired. Rubber membrane over entire roof area would be better but difficult to install.

Ell Facades

West Side

1. Façade is in good shape. Concerns are roof corners to Main building.

   Make sure corner attachments and returns to the main building are flashed.

North Side

1. This side is more problematic. The soffit and frieze behind the gutter are rotted along its entire length.

These need to be replaced with new material. Install full-length soffit vents.

2. The gutter is sagging and not pitched properly.

Re-hang gutter for proper pitch and consider a second down spout as the existing downspout is blowing past its draining site. The down spout needs to be re-aligned so water drains down the pipe. The connector is broken and needs to be fixed or replaced. Consider second downspout as gutter length is quite long for just one.

East Side

1. A portion of the cellar window sill is missing.

   The sill needs replacement.

2. Below the back door area where the ramp attaches to the ell is a potential rot spot.

   This area needs aeration and cleaning and then the ramp needs to be re-positioned and gapped away from the building to prevent rot.

3. Northeast corner board rotten on ends.

   Patch northeast corner boards with wood repair.

Miscellaneous Recommendations

Attic

To accommodate ease of inspections and maintenance, I recommend a cat walk with railing from south to north gable.

Steeple

I recommend the ladder area to the steeple have a board floor installed and be free of debris for better access.

Artifacts

Attic has some nice early if not original woodwork fragments, one door and pair of sashes (1844). I recommend it is collected for future care and examples.

Job Priority List

I recommend repairs are made in the following order based on condition and urgency of repair.

1. East side woodwork and clapboards
2. North ell roof line
3. Steeple tin roof
4. West façade
5. North gable

Suggested Materials

The wood to use, historically, would be white pine. If you can obtain this super quality heart wood – white pine – that would be my choice though it is often difficult to find. Other durable woods would be mahogany, Spanish cedar or red cedar. For clapboards go with red cedar or heart wood white pine (no sap wood!). I would use galvanized cut nails and yellow or red cedar for shingles.

Offsets to Water Infiltration

Remove plant material, such as shrubs, from the south and west façades of the building. Plant materials located near the building allow water infiltration into the fabric of the building.

Ramp area needs aeration.

North façade requires a better draining gutter and possible second downspout.

West side grade could be pitched better from foundation into the roadway.

Lead Paint

All four facades of the building are encrusted/entombed in layers of lead paint. To a great degree, this has staved off considerable wear to the building. The building does not need its paint removed, though disturbance of the paint will occur during many of the suggested repairs or replacements.

Recommendation: All contractors must be vetted in their knowledge and experience working in compliance of the federally mandated lead paint laws. Any scraping of paint, removal of claps, any place where the painted building needs repair, must include consideration of the contractors' ability and training around the lead paint law.

Though you will not need a lead paint abatement specialist/contractor, many top end contractors will have completed the lead paint training course and become a certified, EPA Lead Paint-licensed and -experienced tradesman. If you do hire a painter, that person *must* be licensed and certified in the federal lead paint law.

For more information about the EPA Lead Paint Law visit:

https://www.epa.gov/lead/renovation-repair-and-painting-program

Further Services

After taking delivery of this Condition Report and reading it, you may desire further clarifications or explanations of findings or recommendations with an on-site tour given by me with your staff, board and/or members.

A tour may be the most effective way to dovetail report information to the building itself, and in this regard, may generate more questions and answers.

A flash drive containing my entire photo archive of the building is being provided along with this report.

John Schnitzler CV

John Schnitzler is an award-winning master restoration carpenter specializing in historic structures. He has worked at Strawbery Banke Museum in Portsmouth, NH for more than four decades and has participated in the planning, budgeting and restoration of more than 15 structures on museum grounds. He is the lead carpenter, coordinator and designer of the museum's Heritage House Project (HHP) on the restoration/rehab and conversion to rental space at the three-story Shapley Townhouse (1814), Leonard Cotton House (1836), Yeaton House (1795) and Winn House (1795). Additionally, John served on the Boards of the John Paul Jones House and Wentworth Gardner House in Portsmouth and restored elements of the Portsmouth Athenaeum.

In a freelance capacity, he has repaired and restored many historic homes in the Seacoast – including many Georgian and Federal ones in the South End of Portsmouth – including the Jacob Wendell mansion (1789), Cooper-Brodrick House (1766), Treadwell-Jenness House (1818), Henry Sherburne House (1768) and the Boardman-Clark House (1803).

John has lectured on many aspects of historic restoration at the museum and at NH Preservation Alliance conferences and taught students at museum field schools and workshops. He served as the Lost Arts columnist for *Old House Journal* magazine, co-authored an article about the museum's buildings for *Antiques* magazine and appeared in two Bob Villa videos on house restoration. His services include building forensics and surveys to determine dates and conditions of historic structures.

His current restoration projects include the restoration of his 1852 Greek Revival home and barn in Eliot, Maine, the site the historic Bartlett-Staples dairy, orchard and farmers' union businesses.