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By email only

21st November 2025

Dear Andrew,

The Council House, North Street, Chichester – Repair and Refurbishment Projects 2025 to 2030

I write further to our site meeting at The Council House in late September this year when you showed me the various elements of disrepair and inadequate design associated with the roof of this fine historic grade II* listed building. These elements include roof safety railings, the OCR rooflight, the gulley above the Crush Bar, the southern stairwell gully/downpipe, and the temporary weathering detail to boiler flues protruding through roofs. You talked through the proposals for addressing these concerns, as well as referring to some of the future projects the council is planning including works to address the condition of the external envelope contained within a priced schedule dated 2020.

As discussed at our meeting, in Copperstone's opinion there are several benefits to grouping the roofing items together in one project and procuring the works via a tender process to a single contractor. Chiefly the advantage is that the responsibility for the repairs is held by one entity so that if there is any failure or defect to the work, there is only one company that it is necessary to contact, the main contractor. A scenario will not arise where two or more contractors are laying the blame for any faults or defects at the door of other contractors. If it is necessary to contact any sub-contractors or materials suppliers this will be handled by the main contractor and not the council.

Another advantage is the efficiencies that will be achieved with the work being undertaken as one contract. There will be one contract and one health and safety plan, not five, so it reduces time and money spent on administration. It will only be necessary to conduct one induction for the site for the main contractor, in which the site rules are explained, as after that the main contractor will induct their own staff and any subcontractors. The main contractor will also co-ordinate all the work to the roof as efficiently as possible such that inconvenience to site staff and visitors to the site will be minimised, and any unintended damage to the roof will be minimised or avoided altogether.

But most importantly is the fact that all of the proposed work is necessary to address disrepair which has or is causing damage to the historic fabric of The Council House. The work is intended to pre-empt the failure of an element which would otherwise lead to much greater work being necessary and potentially on an emergency basis. If this occurs the cost is always much greater as is the inconvenience. Grouping the work will lead to achieving economies of scale and co-ordination. Essentially the work is planned preventative maintenance (PPM) work, which is particularly important on a listed building as if damage occurs to historic fabric it can be the case that it is irreplaceable.



I understand the council is planning for the roof repairs project to be on site in the financial year 2026/27, with a budget of £180,000 excluding vat. I understand there is a further budget of £25,000 excluding vat to address the highest priority works contained in the 2020 external repairs schedule, and the intention would be that this work is included in the contract for the roofing repairs. We entirely agree that the roof must be the priority as it is the first route for water into a building. We understand that over the following three financial years further rounds of work are planned, firstly in 2027/28 with a project focusing on the Assembly Room roof, the Lion Street elevation and North Street façade, as well as a further tranche of work contained in the external repairs schedule.

These 2027/28 works are similar in nature to the 2026/27 project intended to address external defects, and the same reasons for the progressing them apply. In our view these projects to repair the external fabric in order to protect the internal fabric should be brought to site as soon as possible. With it being the second half of November now, the earliest opportunity is realistically the next financial year. This is because of the time it takes to undertake a suitable inspection and any investigative work, then to specify the necessary works and compile a tender package of documents, conduct a tender process and provide a tender analysis report, and finally for the council to undertake their approval process before issuing instructions to the contractor and the latter mobilising.

In 2028/29 the proposed works are a thorough refurbishment of the Assembly Room and a final tranche of work from the external repairs schedule. And in 2029/30 would be a project to refurbish the chamber. The external repairs are the priority. Councillors are best placed to decide on the importance of the refurbishments. For the external repairs work, listed building consent applications must be prepared where necessary and consent received in good time. The work would be tendered on a timely basis such that where it involved external working it can proceed during the spring and summer months, and where it affects the use of the building temporary arrangements can be made. The work would be tendered only to contractors suitably experienced on historic buildings.

I am very happy to discuss further any aspect of the above. It was a pleasure to meet you and to be shown round parts of this fascinating and valuable building.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Clark MSc MRICS IMaPS

for and on behalf of **Copperstone Consultants Ltd**