

Wickepin Community Resource Centre

Ultimately the future of the Wickepin Community Resource Centre is in the hands of the Wickepin Council. With this particular building it is a tough call, three (3) options available are,

Sell – Renovate – Demolish and rebuild

NOTE: this building is listed as a Category 2 heritage building and whatever the outcome the heritage listing is of extreme importance.

Points to consider:

1. Selling a Building in a small rural community can be difficult and if sold more than likely, work will be required by the new owners. The return on the sale of the property will probably be reasonably low and there is not a large pool of buyers waiting. **Market value and time to sell.**
2. Renovating can be costly and at the end of the day the Shire of Wickepin will still have an old building that has been prettied up. Cracks etc, will come back **BUT**, consider the community and political ramifications should the building be removed, renovation may be a suitable option. **Early estimate \$450,000-\$500,000.**
3. By re-building from the day when building is finished it will meet the current standards, through good design the building can be repositioned on the block and purpose built to meet the community's needs. A new building in a better location on the block built with appropriate standards could be a more viable proposition. A new building should last for 50 years, the existing building by then would have required a greater level of ongoing maintenance and in 50 years will be 160 years old. **Depending on what was constructed and the level of finish \$600,000-\$700,000.**

From my perspective I would opt for a new building as the building would be more appropriate for our times, but we are also speaking about the heritage of your community and cost will need to be considered. The only way to establish more realistic cost is to have concept plans drafted for the new building and for documentation drafted for pricing purposes of the renovation needs.

The building is 110 years old and has received 2-3 make overs in its life. The replacement of the roof with Zincalume occurred around 15 years ago and appears in a good condition. The walls are a mixture of mostly rendered brick and fibro cement on timber framing with the floor being a mixture of concrete and timber. The over all condition of the building for its age is reasonable.

In 110 years, we have learnt how best to construct buildings and technology has come a long way. i.e. the main road in front of the Resource Centre now carries vehicles of enormous weight and the older building was not constructed with this in mind. The build is in a state of constant movement/vibrations and the building was never designed to endure the constant assault it receives. The walls and stumps sit directly onto the ground which is clay with poor drainage.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE: no investigation occurred in the roof space or under the timber floor. However, the roof and floor both appeared sound and true. I would suggest that these items may have been subjects of a previous restoration. Concerns with both the floor and roof are with termites and rotting of the sub floor due to a moist environment. There was no evidence of either apart from a tiny piece of timber at the rear of the premises with old termite damage. Previous renovations may have dealt with termite damage.

Should the building remain there are three (3) major item that will be the most difficult and costly to resolve.

1. Stormwater drainage:

How do we take the storm water that falls on a sloping clay site which slopes towards the building and get the water off site?

Without a surveyed property it is impossible to know where the building sits in relation to the side boundaries. Visually it would appear that both side walls may be constructed up to the side boundaries on both sides. If this is the case, then there may be less of a reason to keep the building.

If there is perhaps a metre on one side, we stand a chance of altering the levels in the back yard to take the water away from the building and piping it towards the main road with a bubble up pit onto the road. To do this sealing part of the rear yard and install appropriate drainage will be necessary.

2. Rising damp:

How do we control/minimise the rising damp? In the past perhaps 20 years someone thought the rising damp could be hidden by affixing fibro cement sheeting over the lower portions of the internal walls which works for a while. This method treats the symptom and not the cause.

110 years ago bricks or stone foundations were laid directly onto the soil beneath a building. Unlike modern buildings there is no damp proof causes built into walls which through capillary action enables moisture to soak up the walls (rising damp). The rear portion of the building has been changed over many years and little has been done to resolve the stormwater saturating the ground at the back of the building and under the building. Rising damp in this case is interrelated to the stormwater drainage.

3. Accessibility in accordance with Australian Standard AS1428.

110 years ago, we did not consider accessibility in buildings, and it would appear that little has happened since to the Resource Centre to achieve compliance.

Today our accessibility laws consider access from parking areas right the way through the building. Accessible parking needs to be as close as practicable to the main entrance of the building. The parking is configured in a specific way and needs appropriate signposting and safety. There is no ability to provide suitable parking with the current configuration of the building. From a suitable parking area an appropriate path is also required to the front door.

The front entries of the current building have non-compliant ramps and doors. Furthermore, the internal doorways are too narrow throughout the building and there is appropriate ramping required.

The WC at the rear is currently unsuitable for the current staff as it lacks privacy but the space that the room occupies is of sufficient size to modify to enable a suitable accessible WC.

When considering accessibility currently it is a holistic approach and consideration also applies to items like the front desk which is unsuitable.

General Notes

EXTERNAL

Generally, the roof is in good condition and has been replaced probably in the last 10 years. Replacement will be required in 20 years' time.

FRONT VERANDAH

Front verandah is in a reasonable condition a clean and repaint would be required.

The verandah posts have steel shoes which are rusting at ground level and should be replaced. The posts are currently sound for now, but the shoes have a limited life, if they are left, they will continue to rust and should be reviewed in 2 years. When painting the post, they need preparation with a good sanding and filling of imperfections.

Brickwork under the windows is reasonably new and in good condition.

The verandah's gable ends could be sheeted over with new Hardieflex and painted

The rendered vertical panels alongside the windows require removal of any items that may be rusting then sanded imperfections, filling and repainted.

Doors to the front of the building (Most doors throughout are too narrow) the doors require a minimum opening width of 870mm, the current door width do not meet the requirements for accessibility.

Ramps to the door are not configured correctly for people who require accessibility.

Door furniture is not appropriate for people with disabilities.

WEST END

There are RCDs in the meter box which would indicate some electrical rewiring may have taken place in the past 20 years.

Brickwork at and around ground level requires re-pointing.

If the west end wall is on or near the boundary, I would brick up the window after removing the steel lintel. Today's legislation would not allow an (Fire) unprotected window in this location as windows

are not permitted on boundaries and the window would be in a fire wall that requires a fire resistance level of 90/90/90.

Around the window the brick work is cracking for 3 possible reasons.

1. The lintel is rusting and when steel rusts it expands exploding/cracking brittle elements like concrete or brickwork.
2. The Building is under constant movement due to modern heavy transport.
3. Built on clay there is movement and cracks will form on the part of a wall with the least resistance. The brickwork is at its narrowest point above the window which offers the least resistance.

The windowsill is loose and should be relayed.

Similarly, there are some vertical cracks and is near an attached pier. The cracking at this point has been caused by the lack of suitable bedding and constant movement of the building. With the external wall cracks they could be scratched out and the gaps injected with expandable grout the walls can be cleaned and repainted.

The external west wall appears to have been constructed on the boundary if this is the case there are items pertaining to this building that are over the boundary i.e the old electrical connection point and a disused tap. All disused items should be removed. Also, perhaps downpipes and guttering may be over the boundary.

One panel of corrugated fibre glass to the end of the carport requires refixing.

EAST END

This side of the building is in a slightly better condition than the west end due to less weathering.

Being similar in some items as to the west end. Cracking is caused by the same reasons and method of treatment is the same.

The window lintel requires replacement, or the window could be bricked up after removing the lintel.

Some drainage is shared with the post office. This is not practicable, and the CRC building should be independent from other properties.

Cleaning and painting is required.

REAR

Many of this building's problems are caused by drainage to the rear of the building. For this building to last and to have fewer problems, stormwater drainage needs to be addressed appropriately.

There will be considerable cost to improve the situation and at this point it is unknown where the side boundaries of the building are. The water is to be piped away from the site with a bubble up system subsoil drainage and a bitumen carpark graded away from the building. The stormwater is a problem because the site slope from the rear of the lot towards the main road and the clay soil does not allow the water to drain.

Should this Building have been constructed from side boundary to side boundary I would recommend demolition of the building as there would be few options available to pipe the water to the front right-hand side of the lot where the water could be disposed of onto the street infrastructure.

One of the two chimneys has missing capping bricks and if the chimneys are not being used, I would recommend that metal capping's are install over the chimney openings, to help keep excessive water out and birds and animals being caught inside.

The add on framed fibro cement portion of the building looks untidy and requires a makeover this part of the building may contain asbestos, so any work needs to be undertaken appropriately with caution. Also, note the outside soil level may require assessment the levels may be too high.

There was no obvious signs of active termite damage only old minor damage to one piece of timber on the carport corner of the framed room.

The rear brick wall has cracking over a window and doors as with previous cracking over windows and doors the causes are the same and by scratching them out possibly replacing the lintels bars and point up with expanding grout and cleaning/repainting the wall.

Near an air conditioner there is a half-bricked window and damage to the wall caused by plumbing, the brickwork requires completing the window with another leaf of brickwork and patching around the plumbing.

The carport structure appears to be in a reasonable condition however the paving and drainage to this area needs substantial work and replacement of the paving and drainage mentioned elsewhere within this report

INTERNAL

Throughout there are signs of rising damp with substantial damage to the lower portion of many of the walls covered up with Hardieflex (fibro cement) The rising damp problem can be improved with correct drainage to the site. Once the drainage problem is eliminated the walls can be cleaned, patched, and painted.

As mentioned elsewhere in this report the building predates current standards for accessibility and there are a number of items i.e. widening of doorways ramps and proper toilet facilities, furniture that are required.

The floors throughout appear to have been subject to an earlier restoration as they appear to be flat and reasonably sound.

Painting and patching and new floor coverings will be required once works are complete.

It is recommended that security is improved.

Northwest room

The West wall has some vertical cracking which relates to the external cracking which can be dealt with similarly.

Ceiling boards look to be in a satisfactory condition and around an air conditioning vent there are 2 small pieces of moulding missing.

The access into this room appears to meet the opening required of accessibility.

There was limited access to view the walls behind the furniture however as this room is used for a library rising damp is not appropriate as it will damage the books, and there is evidence of rising damp in this area.

Entry office

All doors leading into and out of this room apart from the opening to the library require work to make them wider and to meet the Australian Standard AS1428 this also includes ramping and door furniture. Also note the front desk/counter is not appropriate.

Rear west office

Cracking around windows the same as for previous.

Obvious signs of rising damp, doorway widths etc the same.

Central front office

As mentioned elsewhere the floors appear sound and there was previous sheeting over of rising damp, the doors are too narrow and have incorrect door furniture.

Some minor carpentry is required to fill gaps with mouldings etc around the old shop front

Middle centre room

As previous

Rear Centre room

Unable to see the walls, the floor appears to be concrete, and the walls are framed please note wall may contain asbestos.

Wc and Cleaner store

Both rooms appear to be after thoughts and are not appropriate. There is enough room in this part of the building to remove the current rooms and redesign. The Wc which is there currently offers limited privacy, is old with a constantly running cistern and is not setup for accessibility.

Like the rest of the building once works are complete patching and painting are required.

Front east room

Is generally ok with patching and painting and some minor carpentry work

Centre east room

Similar to elsewhere rising damp patching and painting.

Please see attached Heritage and title documentation

Report by Gary Bruhn, Building Surveyor Oct 2021.