

Our Ref: DK180474/KH

9th October 2018

Kent Life
Lock Lane
Sandling
Maidstone
ME14 3AU

FTAO David Guest
DavidGuest@maidstone.gov.uk
ncox@kentlife.org.uk

Dear Sir,

RE: PLAY BARN, KENT LIFE, SANDLING, LOCK LANE, MAIDSTONE, ME14 3AU

An inspection was made of the above property by Kelian Hodge on the 4th of October 2018 specifically for our recommendations for the treatment of wood boring beetle.

The property consists of a timber framed former aisled barn with weather boarded external elevations and a thatched roof. Any directions are given facing the main entrance door from the outside

This report is solely for the use of the person or company named at the head of same and for their professional advisers and no liability to anyone else is accepted. The report may not be provided to anyone else.

The report relates only to instructions given to us by our client(s) and is not intended to be a full survey of the property. Our inspection has been undertaken only to provide a quotation or estimate for relevant remedial works, which may be considered necessary. Comments made in the report and quotations/estimates given are valid for three months only, after which time we reserve the right to modify or cancel same.

Inspections are undertaken using non-destructive methods, unless specific arrangements have been made to the contrary. Although every effort will be made to undertake as comprehensive an inspection as possible we are not at liberty to lift fitted floor coverings or move furniture without the express permission of the owner and inspection would, therefore, be subject to such limitations.

PLAY BARN

The barn was rebuilt in its current position in 1989.

The barn is of five bay aisled construction with cart entrance, the projecting hipped roof of which is braced off the timber posts and finished with tiles.

There are masonry basal walls supporting the timber plates to the perimeter of the barn and separating the aisle sections providing support to the inner sole plates and the internal (arcade) posts.

Internally the perimeter walls of the barn are finished with plasterboard or similar preventing full inspection to the full depth of the external frame timbers.

The underside of the thatched roof is concealed by building paper or similar.

The property is in use as a 'play barn' and has catering facilities and the presence of the equipment prevented a full inspection locally because of restricted access.

As stated the barn was re-erected in 1989 and the frame and roof timbers were presumably in serviceable condition at that time, although, no doubt, subject to some of the usual ravages of time. It is not known whether any treatment of the timbers was undertaken at the time of reconstruction.

A probe was used in conjunction with an electronic moisture meter to accessible areas of vulnerable timbers and generally moisture contents to the timbers were within acceptable limits and, subject to on-going maintenance of the structure, it is unlikely that any progressive decay to the timbers should occur.

However, in conjunction with our inspection, we installed a new 'green' oak strut to the rear left corner of the barn where the original was subject to excessive attack by wood boring (*Xestobium rufovillosum* – death watch beetle in the main part) and such attack would normally require a moisture content to the timber of fourteen per cent or more as noted in our earlier report dated 23rd August 2018.

Wherever possible we inspected sole plate, posts, arcade posts, wall plates, arcade plates, tie beams, rafters, aisle ties, collars, purlins, struts and braces and generally the inspected timbers appeared serviceable at this time.

It is not thought that any additional timber renewal is necessary at present although a case could be made for some augmentation to friable edges of some timbers.

Of more concern is what appears to be an on-going (active) infestation by wood boring beetle (*Xestobium rufovillosum*) – death watch beetle and (*Anobium punctatum*) common furniture beetle, this being particularly noticeable to retained original timbers.

The infestation has extended onto some apparently newer timber to a rafter found centrally to the rear elevation.

To the above areas frass (bore dust) resultant of wood beetle emergence was noted, again the frass being particularly evident to all retained original timbers.

No inspection was made of the weather boarding and we are unable to comment on the condition of same.

The ability of any particular timber to fulfil its intended purpose is outside the scope of the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the above evidence a case could be made for the treatment of the main frame and arcade timbers and the roof timbers for the control of infestation by wood boring beetle. It would not be possible to full treat some timbers because of internal linings.

We would normally prefer to use a solvent based insecticide prior to the local application of a deep penetrating insecticidal paste but, given the usage of the property, residual odour and temporary increased risk of fire this would not be acceptable in this instance. There is also an increased risk of staining to adjacent finishes and some damage to the lining below the thatch.

It would be prudent therefore to use an aqueous insecticide followed by the application of a deep penetrating paste locally (although some degree of odour may persist for a while) to eliminate the above risks, but this may not prove as efficacious.

Because of the extended life cycle of death watch beetle (up to fourteen years) there is the risk of adult beetles emerging from the timber when the efficacy of the applied treatment has diminished and so additional targeted treatment to some timbers may be worthwhile in, perhaps, seven- or eight-years' time and, again, a similar period following that. In the meantime, some emergence of adult beetles may will occur.

The main difficulty is the existing internal fittings.

Whilst the main play area could be temporarily sheeted over, the height of the netted structure would mean that the barn would need to be internally scaffolded to give access to as much of the higher areas as possible. Such scaffolding would be complicated and, hence, expensive but would be necessary if a 'general' treatment is decided upon.

It would also mean that the occupants of the barn would need to vacate for at least one week, possibly longer, with the resultant loss of business revenue. This would, of course, increase the cost to yourselves if 'compensation' were sought unless there is a period when the property is not used for a week or two.

We would, of course, be pleased to discuss the above issues with you or, perhaps, the possibility of a more limited treatment.

There is, of course, a real risk where members of the public and particularly children can encounter recently 'treated' timbers which will need careful consideration.

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We hope our report will meet with your approval, but should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,

Kelian Hodge C.S.R.T

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