

Method Statement for the repairs at Curson Lodge, 47 St. Nicholas Street, Ipswich, Suffolk.

Number 47 St. Nicholas Street is a grade II* listed building of the later 15th century. On 12th February 2013 a car crashed into the front entrance of the building and dislodged the carved corner post as well as badly damaging the pair of oak entrance doors.



Immediately after the crash. East Anglian Daily Times photograph.

Investigations over the subsequent days have allowed us to speculate on changes to the fabric of the framing from the start of the 20th century.

After the crash the remains of a small blue glass bottle were found in the debris, the bottle had contained a few papers that suggested the present shop front largely dated from 1902 when the property was Palmer's the chemists. It named the carpenters and bricklayer responsible for the works as well as including a printed picture of the shop from that time; these items have been taken away by Ipswich Borough Council for safe keeping.

Despite the large size of the corner post, it was quite simply fixed into position; it had three short locating tenons and two skewed dowels that fixed it to the floor frame and jetty plates above. Underneath the bottom of the post was more recent brickwork with the brickwork also continuing up the inside of the post as in section it is actually "L" shaped (see pic. below). Hidden within the brick "infill" was a cast iron tubular strut of the same section as the two that still flank the doorway. It seems that the impact had sheared the strut and dislodged the whole assembly, this then being carried into the front doors along with the front of the car causing significant impact damage to them.



Inside the property a few days after the crash. The “L” section of the corner post can clearly be seen; to the right is a bracket and the 1902 (?) repaired section from the top of the post. In the background the damaged front doors still in-situ.



The damaged front doors. Remarkably the door frame itself has survived intact as have the two adjacent cast iron struts.



Looking up at the floor frame. Running diagonally is the dragon beam, a large sectioned primary joist that has smaller sectioned common joists tenoned into it. The irregular shape of the Burgage plot can be clearly seen from the angles of each elevation. The original jetty plate can be seen on the right (Silent Street elevation) whereas the St. Nicholas Street jetty plate has been replaced by a steel beam and both elevations then boxed in with thin oak planking. One of the two brackets is still in position but further investigation seems to suggest that they are not original to the building as they are fixed into position with relatively modern nails. This is odd as the corner post has joinery for a pair of brackets so perhaps this post came from elsewhere?

The reinstatement works.

We propose to erect a small hoarding to the corner of the building and with this in place we can safely dig out the concrete at pavement level to remove the remains of the sheared off cast iron strut. Once this has been done we propose to insert a new mild steel tubular strut of 114mm diameter, 6.3mm thickness with a 10mm thick plate to the head. This will have one or two locating screws to fix it into the underside of the dragon beam and (if possible) one or two steel tabs welded to the side of the strut to locate it to the jetty plates. We will shore this into place and then pour concrete into the excavated hole at pavement level (minimum of 200mm deep) to cast the strut into position. Please see the attached drawings for further details.

We will clean up the corner post and re-fix the 1902 repaired section back into position. There is another small patch that we will either re-cut or re-fix; all using two part epoxy glue for adhesive. This will be done off site in our workshop and once the post is repaired and we have the dragon beam supported we will bring the post back to site for reassembly.

The post was simply located into position with simple, unpegged tenons. Our intention is not to change this arrangement but if it proves unsatisfactory we will consider simple and hidden mechanical fixings for a more positive location.

Having fixed the timber post into place (with some temporary shoring as well) we can reinstate the brick and mortar plinth below. We will use cut soft reds laid in a hydraulic lime mortar for a shorter cure time.

We propose to reinstate the infill behind/within the post using cut red bricks; these can be keyed to the post using stainless steel screws (they seem to have used cut nails) and the whole masonry assembly then rendered over with a haired two-coat hydraulic lime render.

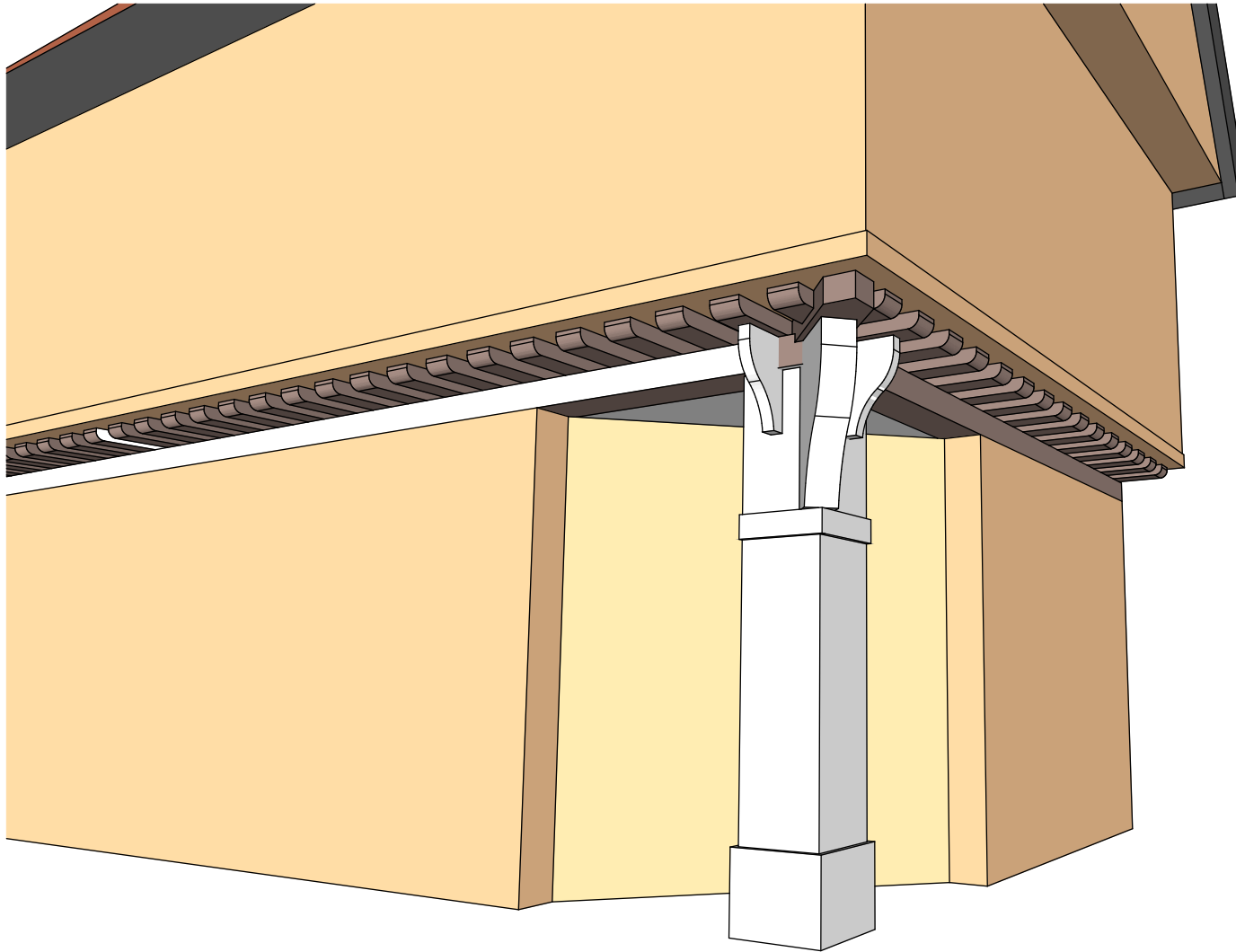
We will then be able to fit new sections of dry oak planking to clad around the jetty plate and at the head of the post as before. This will use dry oak from local sources and will be stained to match the existing work.

The doors are to be removed from site and a joiner will copy them exactly. Any components that can be saved and reused will be incorporated into them for maximum retention of fabric irrespective of antiquity. Once re-hung we will stain them to try and blend them with the existing framing.

Finally we will limewash the corner post and brackets plus some of the surrounding framing to unify the new works with the existing finishes. The hoarding can then be removed and the building handed back to the owner.

Rick Lewis, Traditional Oak Carpentry Ltd. 22nd February 2013. Revised and updated 27th February 2013.





Notes:

These drawings are for illustration purposes only
and are not drawn to scale.

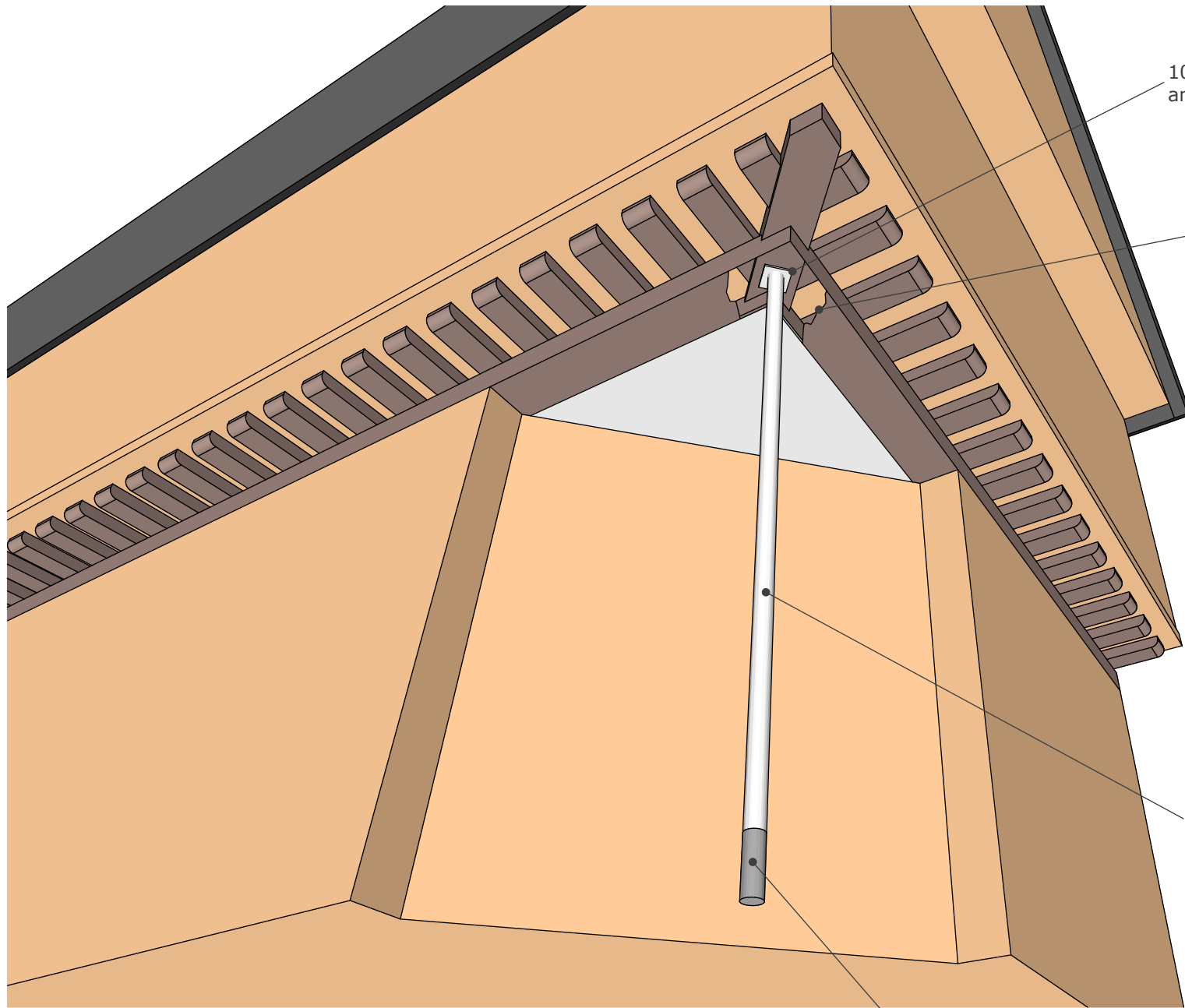


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Curson Lodge
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10mm Thk Plate welded to top of tube and screwed into underside of Dragon Beam.

Reinstate broken boxing with new dry oak planking.

MS Tube DIA 114 x 6.3mm Thk

Min 200mm cast in concrete below pavement level

