

Egyptian Halls Deterioration Timeline 1980-2020

The following details a chronological pattern of increasing and accelerating deterioration, which has impacted upon the now completed WRD survey.

December 2019 - Existing building 100% preservation ergo Year 2000 approved scheme, all but impossible to achieve due to approximately 85% of the structure will need to be replaced and the fact the magnificent façade is then not self supporting and it's also commercially non fundable.

And lets go back many, many years to 1998 to where it all began and where one single error 22 years ago relating to a unilaterally imposed, legally irreversible CPO Amendment, which was founded upon inaccurate structural assessment has all but sealed the fate of the Grade A world renowned Egyptian Halls.

December 1990: External inspection reveals the building to be in **poor condition**, with the upper floors vacant for over 10 years. Developers have expressed an interest but the principal owner lives in Hong Kong and does not wish to sell.

January 1991: A Repairs Notice is served. Glasgow District Council considers compulsory purchase.

September 1995: Local planners report that the condition is deteriorating with **extensive stone repairs required**. Repairs are subsequently undertaken following an Urgent Works Notice.

August 1995: The Scotsman reports consent has been granted for restoration. The building currently **suffers from weakened concrete floors and rotten windows and the external walls require stabilisation**.

March 1996: A Compulsory Purchase Order is announced to the press. (An integral part of this agreement is GCC becoming liable for Maintenance as per CPO Terms and Conditions)

Extracts from GCC Buildings at Risk Register

Development Works Summary 1998 - 2010

The following are extracts from the presentation to GCC and HES in July 2014 by TMP/ADDISON CONSERVATION. Which support the indications appeared to be that GCC had not been carrying out planned or comprehensive Repairs and Maintenance works during the CPO process in 1996 to 2010.

1997 – Many of the then owners and tenants (Client Group) in the Building had a design team appointed. They also had proposals to Repair the Building progressed, tenders obtained and a contractor about to be appointed to undertake the repair works. Those clients and their architect made the following statements to TMP.

- 1. The façade was not tied to the rest of the building and could collapse into Union Street at any time.*
- 2. The concrete floors had been tested and the concrete was of such poor quality it was incapable of carrying a load.*
- 3. Historic Scotland and City of Glasgow Council had accepted those proposals including items 1 and 2 above. As a result substantial grant support was offered.*

1999 – TMP in conjunction with John Addison (Structural Engineer) undertook detailed inspections of the building and historical record sources. Detailed information and repair proposals followed. TMP and John Addison then informed the various parties that:

- a) The front elevation was tied to the rest of the building.
- b) The lime concrete floor slabs were not load bearing slabs but had other purposes, and as such the material was acceptable.
- c) The building was not about to fall down, and that it could be repaired and saved.

1999 - TMP on behalf of the upper floor owners cleared the interior of the upper floors of all later fit outs and rubbish:

- a) The building interior was left clean with substantial areas of plaster remaining on the walls and ceilings as sound finishes. The timber floors were also sound.
- b) There was little evidence of water leaks through the roof.
- c) Many of the windows were arranged in a semi – open position to allow necessary ventilation of the building.

YEAR 2000: Mike Fraser at City of Glasgow Council sent a letter expressing concerns about the condition of the building and the need for action.

2002 - 2008: At different times over that period TMP had steeplejacks remove items of loose stone from the façade to a place of safety inside the building.

2002 - 2009: On a few occasions during that period Historic Scotland, Building Control and the Planning Department reluctantly visited the building with us. Building Control resisted going through the building while declaring the building safe and sound.

2002 - 2011: TMP over this period produced relevant reports (detailed earlier) on the building at the request of both Building Control and in particular the Planning Department.

2004 - 2006: Glasgow Council did some temporary repairs to the flat roof. They shored up some windows and closed the windows. Structural bracing was fixed to the rear wall.

Circa 2006: TMP noted the Council had closed the building with no through ventilation. Internal conditions got very bad due to no cross ventilation and continuing water ingress. The result of which was spreading rot, plaster falling off walls and ceilings, as well as timber floors rotting and collapsing. Deflection in the roof structure was noted. Corrosion occurred in the iron frame. Masonry walls, concrete floor slabs etc were saturated in several areas.

2002 - 2008: Water ingress was getting worse and on occasions reaching the basement. Large areas of the building fabric became saturated.

Circa 2008: Union Street Properties achieved early resolution of the CPO to assist City of Glasgow Council. Meanwhile Union Street Properties had internal rainwater pipes repaired and blockages cleared. That greatly reduced the water ingress.

Jan 2010: GCC confirms USP has reconciled the CPO title transfer problems GCC's CPO Amendment had caused. However this had caused a very avoidable decade long delay during which deterioration had increased significantly costs had trebled and all preservation schemes had become commercially non viable according to both GCC and Historic Scotland.

Conservation/Preservation opinions and advice by TMP/Addison Cons.

2013 - 2014: *Glasgow City Council applying extreme pressure to remove the scaffold. They wanted to cover the façade in netting. TMP and JA repeatedly advising that the scaffold should not be removed. It would be detrimental to the building and create risks to the public. Reinforced by a detailed technical report, submitted, to the Planning Dept explaining the issues and why the scaffold had to stay on the building.*

Circa 2016: *The Planning Dept and Building Control decided to undertake a detailed inspection of the façade from the scaffold. GM accompanied them from TMP. At one of the intermediate levels on the scaffold a small piece of masonry fell unexpectedly from an upper level and landed beside Ms S. Connolly (Senior Planning Officer). Understandably it caused a real concern. These events demonstrating that failures in various aspects of the masonry façade will continue to be random and likely without warning, until such time as the comprehensive, integrated scheme to repair the fabric and develop new uses for the building are complete.*

8 January 2019 - *“Derek, I think it is reasonable to define the scaffolding as a key part of significant and essential on going building works having particular reference to the façade and safety.” Kind Regards- George Morrison-THE MORRISON PARTNERSHIP-Edinburgh.*

August 2019 - WRD (new Structural Surveyors) opinion outlined earlier reinforces comprehensively the long given but ignored expert advice and commentary provided by TMP/Addison Cons to GCC that the Scaffolding has both a structural role and also an even more important safety role. Why GCC fails to take proper cognisance of this is worrying. Why GCC chooses to found their internal opinions on non-expert advice is perhaps even more worrying.

Sept 2019 - given the WRD recommendation as follows *“We would also note as per our previous recommendations that the sides of the scaffolding at each end are closed up so the risk of any falling stone at these ends is contained within the scaffolding. In addition we would also suggest that the top scaffolding boards are enhanced to act as a crash deck in the event of any of the larger stone parapet elements falling onto it “*

Dec 2019 - the scaffolding platform has now been strengthened for combined structural and public safety reasons based on following expert advice from now a second conservation accredited expert structural engineer. And to repeat compare this with GCC's non-expert advice/recommendations/demands that with repairs to the façade the scaffold can then be removed safely and thereafter the floors and walls can be sorted!!

December - 2019 WRD Structural Survey now issued - Top Line Conclusions

- *The Egyptian Halls is now **structurally unpredictable.***
- ***Progressive collapse a growing issue**, hence a Protection Platform has been designed and Installed as of 12th December.*
- *The floors have an **average strength of 15%** and now are recommended to not be walked upon.*
- ***The parapet is not tied to any part of the building** and is perched on top of a façade tied to 15% strength floors and potentially could fall onto street.*
- *There is by direct consequence a **diminishing window of opportunity to achieve façade retention.***
- *If not achieved then **Demolition is the only alternative.***