



## BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY OF AN AGRICULTURAL BUILDING

At Earlsway Farm, Rushton Spencer,  
Macclesfield, SK11 0RU for Tom Woolley

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## **1.0 INSTRUCTIONS**

Strauss Structural Design Ltd was instructed by Tom Woolley to provide a report on the current structural condition of a former agricultural building located at Earlsway Farm, Rushton Spencer, Macclesfield, SK11 0RU.

To achieve the purpose for which it is intended, the survey has been conducted with particular regard to the main loadbearing elements of the construction. Therefore, in the interests of clarity and determining the suitability of the property for refurbishment or rebuilding, matters of relatively minor detail have been omitted.

While the subsoil or footings were not investigated, above ground structural elements allow us to draw assumptions of how the foundations might be performing, particularly given the age and construction of the building.

The inspection has been visual only; no practical tests have been carried out. The report summarises the state of repair and condition seen at the time of inspection; defects that have developed since that time are not covered.

The inspection was carried out on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2025 by Darren Sahota MEng (Hons) MBA CEng MStructE of Strauss Structural Design Ltd. This report is prepared for the sole use of Tom Woolley and his professional advisers and the liability of Strauss Structural Design Ltd does not extend to any third parties. The report is intended for use to support a prior notification application for conversion of the building to residential use.

Standard scope of limitations are in Appendix A.

## **2.0 GENERAL DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Location and Orientation**

The building is located off Beat Lane. The right-hand elevation of the building overlooks a field whereas the front elevation, forming the main entrance, faces south towards Beat Lane.

## **3.0 OBSERVATIONS**

### **3.1 General Observations**

The existing structure comprises a braced timber portal frame with frames at approximately 3m centres. The building, originally constructed in 1969, presents a sound foundation for the proposed conversion. Externally, minor remnants of its former use remain, which do not impede the proposed alterations. The surrounding land provides ample space for practical modifications. The existing foundations, which currently support masonry and lightweight sheeting, are considered to be suitable for the proposed conversion.

### **3.2 Portal Frame**

The frame did not show any signs of excessive deflection, therefore almost indicates that any proposed strengthening would likely be minor. The timber portal frames are in generally sound condition. While minor strengthening may be necessary to confirm the adequacy of the rafters and columns under the proposed conversion, we anticipate that ply gusset reinforcement will be sufficient, particularly if existing column locations are retained as shown on the proposed plans.

A new wall structure will be introduced partway within the existing shed to separate the habitable area from the retained non-habitable portion. This wall will, in part, be formed using insulation and timber studwork, which will integrate with the existing timber frame. Rather than introducing a significant structural demand, the addition of this wall, within an already built timber frame, is expected to contribute positively to the rigidity and long-term integrity of the building envelope.

### **3.3 Eaves Connection**

The existing steel bracket eaves connections exhibit surface rust. However, based on our initial assessment, we believe that alternative methods, such as rust treatment and reinforcement, can be implemented to ensure adequate support.

### **3.4 Foundation and Column Base Connections**

While dampness was noted at the column bases, which are currently obscured by the concrete floor slab, we anticipate that the drier, warmer environment post-conversion will mitigate moisture retention. Based on our preliminary observations, it is feasible that routine measures, such as surface treatment following the installation of steelwork post supports, will be sufficient to address any potential concerns.

### **3.5 Floor Slab and Foundations**

The concrete slab appears to be in good condition and appears adequate for domestic loading. The observed perimeter masonry suggests the presence of a foundation. Given the use of lightweight blockwork and timber framing for the new wall structure, we do not anticipate excessive stresses, as such the existing foundations are likely to be sufficient.

## **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on our initial assessment, the existing structure presents a sound basis for the proposed conversion. We do not anticipate the need for major structural works beyond routine enhancements and localised reinforcement. Once the plans for Building Regulations are being produced, we will provide further guidance to inform the construction requirements. However, at this stage, no significant structural impediments to the proposed conversion have been identified.

We are satisfied that the existing building is sufficiently robust and structurally suitable to support conversion to residential use under the provisions of prior approval (Class Q).

## **APPENDIX A            STANDARD SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY**

This document provides a general overview of the agricultural building's condition based on a visual assessment of accessible areas during our site visit. As a visual assessment, it does not involve moving items, intrusive investigations, or the removal of finishes to inspect hidden elements.

The following were outside the scope of this visual assessment:

Our instructions did not include:

1. Decorative condition.
2. As stated elsewhere in this report, the apparent stability of the building, given its age and construction type, suggests that the foundations are currently performing well. Although, please note that our assessment did not include the excavation of trial holes to establish the depth of foundations.
3. Below-ground drainage.
4. Gas and electrical services.
5. Inaccessible or concealed parts of the structure, and therefore their condition cannot be reported on.
6. While a full visual survey was undertaken, and no noticeable asbestos and other non-structural or hazardous materials (including invasive plants), as well as mechanical and electrical installations were identified, this survey did not involve the detailed analysis that would typically be required at the Building Regulations stage. The responsibility for further investigation to ensure their status before any conversion works commence rests with the construction workers undertaking the project.
7. The scope of this report is outlined in Section 1.0. Please note that this report is not designed to be used as a Homebuyers Report, Valuation, or Schedule of Refurbishment. Unless specifically referenced, the assessment of structural

elements, materials, or type of construction does not, at this stage, consider the conversion alongside the current British Standards, Codes of Practice, or Building Regulations, which will be addressed at a later stage. Furthermore, no enquiries have been made to the Local Authority as part of this initial report.

8. Environmental contamination or pollution testing.
9. This assessment was conducted with reasonable skill and care, at the time of this review, the building was observed to be in a condition that led to the conclusion that it is currently capable of conversion into residential. It should be noted that this assessment reflects the condition at a specific point in time and does not provide guarantees against future defects or ongoing deterioration.
10. Observations are referenced relative to the front of the property externally, and internal observations in dark areas relied on a handheld light.

Measurements referred to in the report are approximate and are recorded for the purpose of the report only and should not be used where accurate dimensions are required or are otherwise to be relied upon.

This report is for the private and confidential use of the Client for whom it is prepared.



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**Chartered Structural Engineer**

*This report shall be for the benefit of Tom Woolley only. We cannot accept any responsibility to any other party who may seek to rely upon the whole, or any part, of this report.*