

## IV. Condition Analysis

The house was assessed on the following scale: poor to fair to good to excellent. “Poor” indicates major failure is occurring in the building, either structurally or on the building envelope and that the situation should be addressed immediately. “Fair” indicates the condition of the building is sound but beginning to show signs of failure or the need for routine maintenance. “Good” indicates the building is sound, showing no signs of failure, and only general weathering (wooden window surrounds for example, which often may need repainting). “Excellent” indicates the building is sound, as are most if not all of its architectural details.

Overall, the house is in fair to good condition. While the house was not examined by a structural engineer, it appears to be structurally sound. The water conduction system warrants immediate attention. While the roof is relatively sound, the water conduction has failed, helping to make the house extremely damp, especially in the basement and the entire north section. Other key areas of failure are the woodwork, particularly the cornice molding and window surrounds, as well as the deterioration of many brick in the center section. The damp basement has contributed to the fair to poor condition of the joists supporting the flooring above. Furthermore, birds, bats, and insects inhabit the cornice system and attic. While all these issues would be addressed in a restoration / rehabilitation, those such as the water conduction and overall dampness should be addressed immediately. A more specific analysis follows, described by section.

### Main Block

The main block is in fair to good condition. Its water conduction system (mentioned above) needs attention, including the replacement of windows and doors. Other observations:

1. The roof appears to be in good condition, although the flashing around the chimney needs to be replaced; it is allowing water to penetrate the building envelope in the attic.
2. All vegetation should be removed from the building envelope, including the vines on the east wall and trimming the tree branches on the west elevation.
3. The cornice system needs major repair, particularly on the south end. A bird nest in the cornice return on the southwestern corner should be removed.
4. The stuccoed walls need to be patched. Spalling stucco is evident on all three walls; it should be scraped off before re-stuccoing. Re-stuccoing would also address the many cracks, mostly originating from the corners of windows or from the corners of the section; none of the cracks appear to be structural, but removing the stucco would help determine the nature of the cracks. Several stucco patches found on the section appear to have a high Portland cement content; these patches should be carefully removed as well. Replacement stucco should have a low percentage of Portland cement and should match the original stucco treatment in texture.
5. The stone walls appear generally intact. The only instance where the stonework appears to warrant attention is on the east elevation near the basement door, where a

hole is evident in the wall. Instances of holes drilled for electrical or plumbing purposes should be sealed.

6. The condition of the brick walls needs to be addressed. The house was constructed with lesser quality brick. Many of the bricks have lost their patina and are exfoliating (Photo 36). One repair option would be to use a compound to fill holes in the brick, re-point with soft mortar as necessary, then re-paint the entire surface. This process would result in the paint serving as the exterior material rather than the brick and should prolong the life of the brick. Another repair option, of course, would be to replace the most damaged brick.



**Photo 36. Deteriorating brick on south wall of main block.**

7. Windows and doors should be repaired or replaced as necessary. Although all windows on the main block are 1x1 units, they are replacements. The original window pattern was probably 6x6, and optimally the new windows would reflect this window type. An appropriate muntin profile for new windows would be that found on the basement windows in the north section.
8. Many window surrounds are rotting. The application of the sill plates in the late nineteenth century helped to preserve the older sills, but in many cases both the sill and the plate need to be replaced. Metal flashing strips were installed over the window lintels, especially on the north end; many of these strips are rusting and need to be replaced.
9. The marble sill on the west elevation is cracked.
10. The bay on the south wall should be completely replaced or removed. If it is to be removed, the developer should consider placing either a window or door in its place.
11. The north section's basement door needs major repairs. This important door, apparently original to the section, is the only Dutch door (two-leaf door) in the house. It is suffering from water damage.
12. The yard north and east of the frame section should be re-graded. Rising damp is evident under the frame section, which is bringing moisture to the window. Re-grading to drain water away from the house would address this problem.
13. The porch on the west elevation presents a number of challenges. It suffers from water damage in several areas and should be either replaced or removed.
  - a. The water conduction system is not operating well. Portions of the gutters are missing, which is allowing water to damage the porch from the roof down. Both the soffit and the rafter plate are rotting.

- b. All five columns supporting the western end of the porch have suffered water damage. The bases of all five columns have disappeared. The northernmost column has lost its dossier. Of the five columns, the southernmost one has suffered the most water damage and will need to be completely replaced.
- c. The pilaster under the northeastern corner of the porch has separated from the wall surface.
- d. The concrete pad is in fair condition. Its arris has weathered and has lost its sharp edge (Photo 36a). In many places, its edges have broken. Furthermore, towards its north end, the pad has sunk two inches. The pad is not original and should be replaced with a frame porch.
- e. The wall of the center section under the porch roof needs to be re-stuccoed. A large section of the stucco is completely missing on the bay, allowing the exposed soft brick to deteriorate (Photo 36b). Several cracks appear in the brick bay, two of which appear to be structural. If the bay is to be retained, the structural cracks should be addressed, followed by a re-application of scored stucco.
- f. The high baseboard molding found along the wall surface needs repair and/or replacement. The northernmost section,



**Photo 36a. View of the concrete pad on the porch, west elevation, showing deterioration.**



**Photo 36b. Damage on the west elevation of bay window.**



**Photo 36c. Damaged baseboard molding on exterior wall, porch on west elevation.**

between the door and the northern pilaster, has completely separated from the wall and should be replaced. Other sections of the baseboard molding appear in better condition, although the base shows some signs of water damage. This molding should be replaced if the bay window is to be retained.



**Photo 37. Damaged joist in center section, facing south.**

14. The porch on the east elevation requires replacement.
  - a. First, the stone foundation wall should be rebuilt. This wall is collapsing due to improper drainage and has begun to separate into two sections.
  - b. The entire framing is in fair to poor condition. The flashing along the wall surface is failing, contributing to the failure of the framing materials and the porch floor. Replacement of materials should be in kind.
  - c. If the frame section is to be removed, the porch should be extended along the entire east elevation of the main block.
15. In the basement, many of the joists have suffered damage and will need to be replaced (Photo 37). This is a priority, as its current condition may be structurally unsound.
16. The two end chimneys are not supported from below and may be structurally unsound. Where the chimney is visible in the attic, the brick should be repaired where it has suffered water damage.
17. The entire building needs to be better ventilated, particularly the north section.
18. All rugs and carpets should be removed, especially in the north section where the dampness has encouraged rot to set in.

## South Section

The South Section is in fair condition. Overall, its condition is fair to good. An area of water ingress in the attic and indications of animals in the attic area are matters of concern, as is the lack of ventilation. The heavy alterations and the construction of the passage do not appear to have contributed to structural problems for the section.

1. There is a major leak originating near the northeast corner of the section. This has destroyed plaster in the interior and is allowing dampness and rot into the building envelope.
2. Bats and other animals have infested the roof areas. This is creating a heavy odor throughout the section and should be addressed when the roof is repaired.
3. The cornice system needs repair. The bargeboards are broken in several places, with sections missing on each elevation (Photo 38). The resulting water damage is visible on the interior (Photo 39).
4. The walls need stucco patches at a minimum or a complete re-stuccoing if determined necessary. Existing stucco patches with a high Portland cement content should be removed, and all cracks in the stucco should be addressed. None of the cracks appear to be structural, although removing some stucco will help determine the nature of these cracks as well as the building's history. The second floor of the north elevation particularly needs to be re-stuccoed.



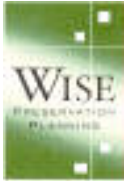
Photo 38. Damage to the cornice, south section.



Photo 39. Dampness in attic of south section.



Photo 39a. Water damage in the hallway of the south section.



5. A structural engineer should examine a crack system on the west elevation. This crack system appears to be centered among the two windows and the door, and its derivation may date to the enlargement of the window on the first floor.
6. The door on the west elevation should be replaced. Its framing is rotting (the lintel board is missing altogether) and should be replaced. The door itself should be replaced with a historically appropriate unit.
7. Windows on the section need to be repaired as necessary. Many windows have rotting sills and jambs. If possible, new surrounds should repeat the older type found on the window on the north elevation facing the porch.
8. Vines and trees on the east elevation should be removed. (The Historical Society has started this process already.)