



---

BELVEDERE ORPHANAGE, TYRRELLSPASS, CO.  
WESTMEATH.

STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING STAIRS TO  
"MATRON'S HOUSE"

---



HOUSING CAPITAL SECTION  
WESTMEATH COUNTY COUNCIL  
**MARCH 2026**

## CONTENTS OF REPORT

1.0 Introduction pg 3

---

2.0 Location pg 4

---

3.0 Building Details pg 5

---

4.0 Inspection pg 6

---

5.0 Recommendations & Conclusions pg 9

---

6.0 Appendix A – Inspection Photos pg 10

---

# STRUCTURAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

---

## "MATRON'S HOUSE", BELVEDERE ORPHANAGE, TYRRELLSPASS, CO. WESTMEATH.

---

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Structural inspection report for existing timber stairs within the property at Belvedere Orphanage, Tyrrellspass, Co Westmeath.

This report is based on a site visit carried out on the 11th of March 2026, see Appendix A for site photos from this inspection.

The report is for the private and confidential use of the client for whom it is prepared together with their professional advisors as appropriate. It may not be reproduced in whole or in part or relied upon by any other party, under any circumstances. We do not accept liability to any other party.

The report is compiled specifically to consider the condition of the building structure, as it now exists. It is not intended to be treated as a generalised inspection and does not cover the deterioration of structural members through dampness, fungal or insect attack nor does it deal with problems and defects of a non-structural nature. The survey does not cover the detection of Asbestos Containing Materials (ACMs). The survey is based on a visual inspection of the surface areas only and does not take into account dimensional surveys, structural calculations or covered areas not accessible at the time of inspection. We did not inspect woodwork or other parts of the structure, which are covered, unexposed or inaccessible and are therefore unable to report that any such part of the property is free from defect.

The report has been prepared to provide both a text and photographic schedule of the condition of the existing stairs at the time of inspection. The text description or photographic record should not be considered in isolation.

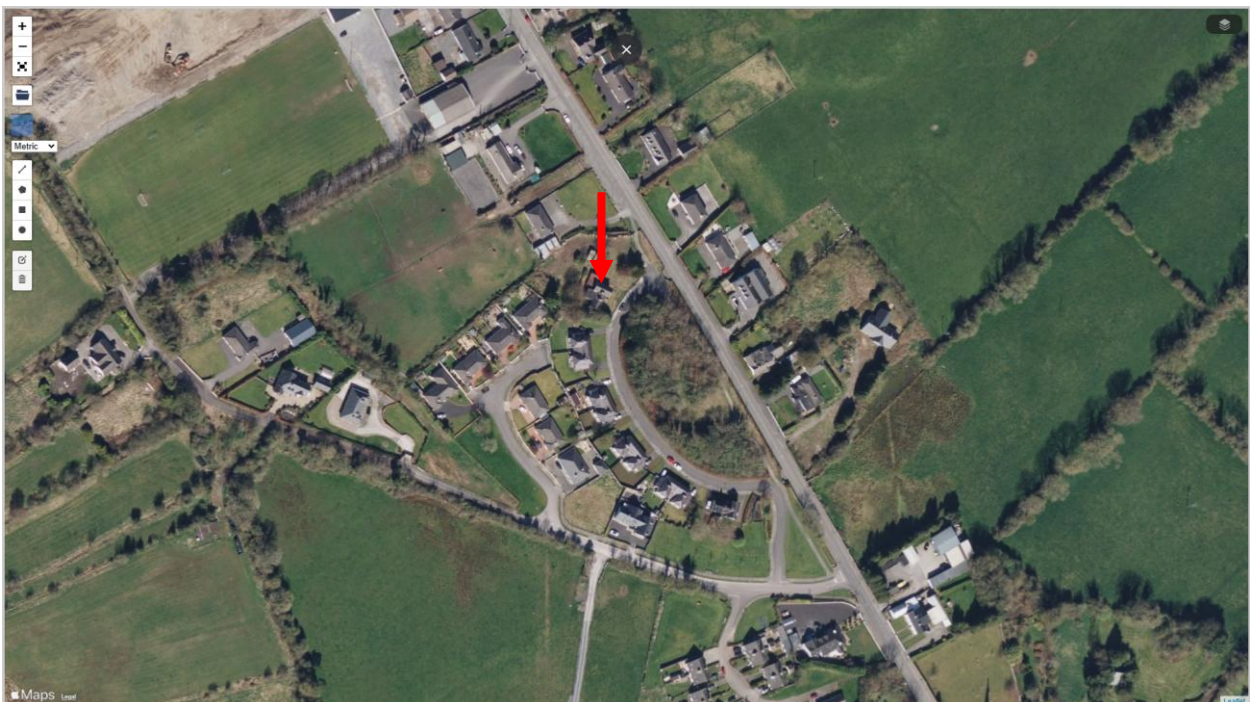
The survey has been carried out as a structural inspection of the existing timber stairs. It is to be used as a record of condition of the timber stairs at the time of the inspection.

## 2.0 LOCATION

The property is located at the end of the Belvedere Orphanage cul-de-sac crescent road, which is accessed off the Mullingar Road to the North of Tyrrellspass village in a semi-rural setting. The property consists of a detached two-storey dwelling. The following image in Figure 1 is a general location of the property in relation to Tyrrellspass village.



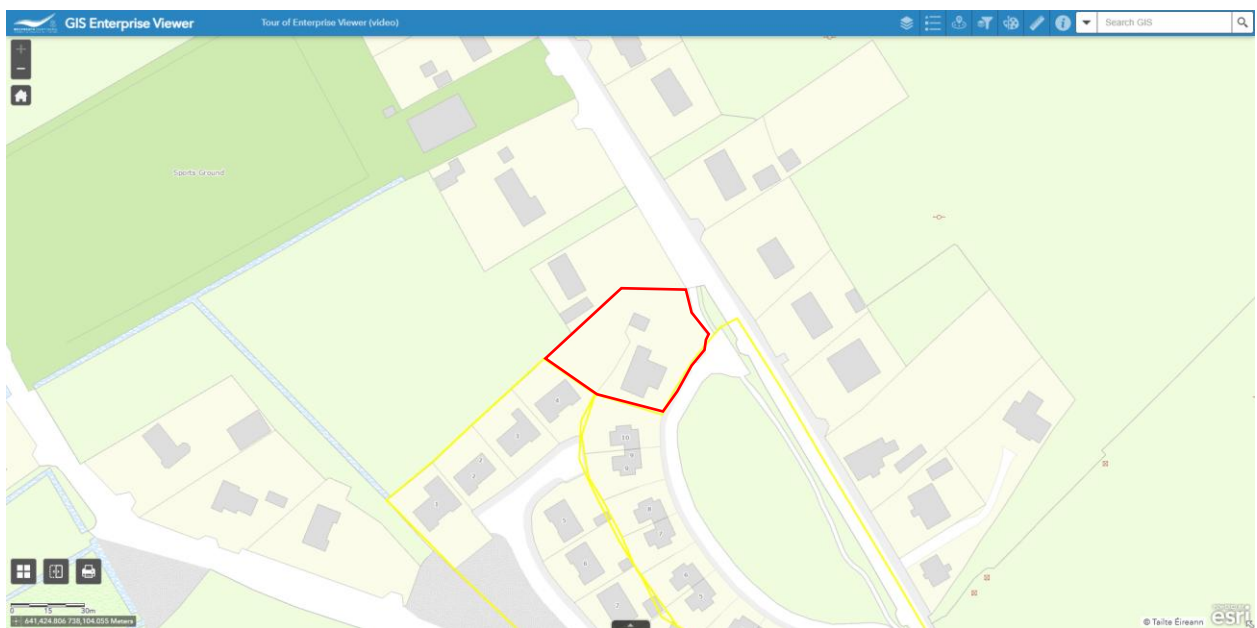
**Figure 1 Tyrrellspass local area**



**Figure 2 Image of Property set amongst neighbouring houses**



**Figure 3 Image of Site**



**Figure 4 Site Location Map**

### 3.0 BUILDING DETAILS

“Detached three-bay two-storey former orphanage matron's house on L-shaped plan, built c.1840, with projecting single-bay gable-fronted entrance porch to centre of front façade (southeast). Now in the ownership of Westmeath County Council and currently out of use. Pitched natural slate roof with roughcast rendered chimneystack and terracotta pots. Ornate timber bargeboards to gable-fronted

section to east end and to projecting porch. Roughcast rendered walls over smooth rendered plinth course. Recessed smooth rendered horizontal panels/fascia to southeast and northwest facades at first floor level. Square-headed window openings with cut stone sills and metal lattice windows with timber mullions. Oculus window with leaded glass above porch to second floor. Square-headed doorcase to porch with plain cut stone surround, a battened timber door with square-headed overlight above with lattice glazing. Set back from road in own grounds with gates and boundary wall to east (15322032). Four detached single and two-storey almshouses/orphanage buildings of various styles and in various states of repair, arranged around a crescent, to the south. Now boarded-up and no longer in use.

A picturesque small-scale former orphanage matron's house, which retains its original form, character and massing. Features such as the arrangement and the lattice pattern of the glazing and the ornate bargeboards are typical of the period of construction and enhance the architectural quality of this piece. This appealing small-scale building is the best surviving example in an important group of structures associated with the Belvedere Protestant Orphanage, the remaining four buildings in various states of disrepair to the immediate south. This charitable institution was formed at the bequest of Jane, Countess of Belvedere (died 1836) and is arranged around a crescent, mimicking the earlier crescent in the centre of Tyrrellspass to the south. This fine building forms the centerpiece of an important group of structures, the best collection of their type in Westmeath, and remains an integral part of the history and architectural heritage of Tyrrellspass.", (National Built Heritage Service, 2004)

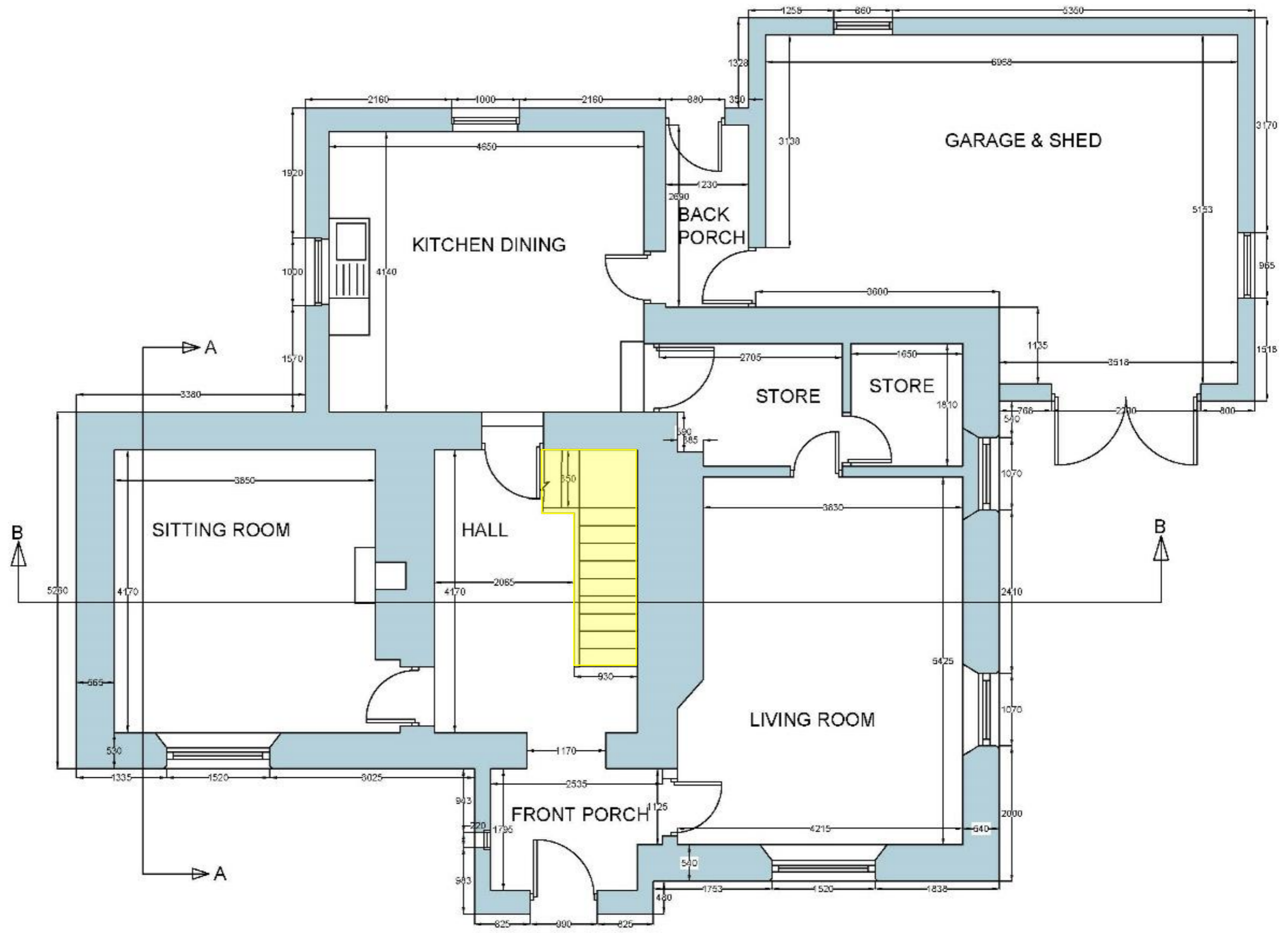
## 4.0 INSPECTION

Photographs of stairs inspection carried out on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2024 are recorded in appendix A of this report.

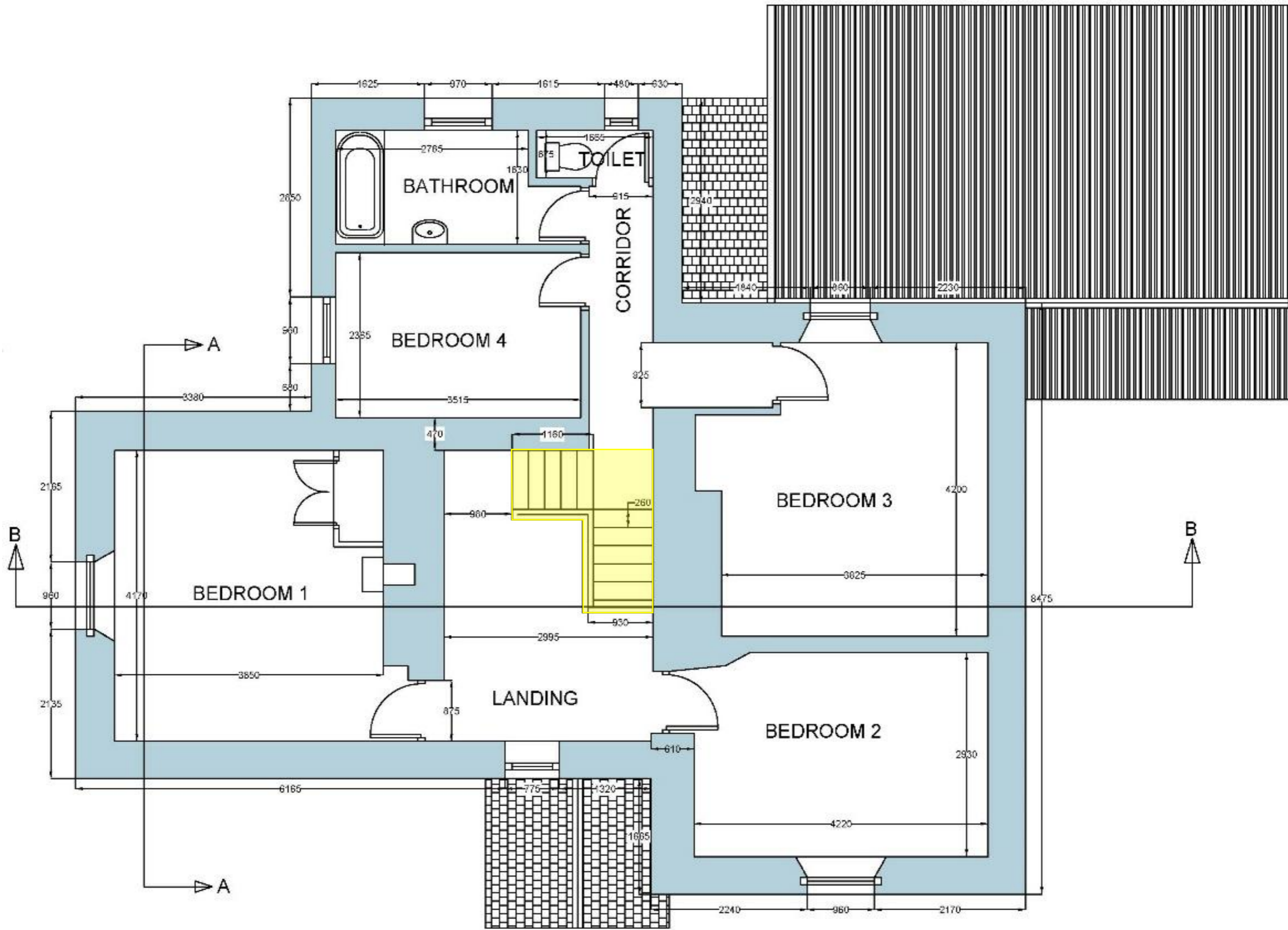
During the inspection, a visual examination of the Balustrade, Stair finished surfaces and soffit structure (where uncovered) was carried out.

The rainwater disposal system on site is no longer fit for purpose, together with vegetation growth and broken windows from vandalism, is contributing significantly to the deterioration of the building, which is clearly evident compared to the previous structural inspection carried out on the 20<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

The external deterioration of the building includes large structural cracks, which are clearly visible when approaching the building, with clear signs of settlement and distortion of the front porch and front door, loose and missing slates from the porch and main roofs with risk of falling slates, extremely poor condition roof overhangs (upper slated surface, fascia, soffit and lanterns) at front gables to the main house and porch, overgrown and collapsing gutters, missing/damaged downpipes and broken panes of glass to windows.



EXISTING GROUND FLOOR PLAN



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

## 5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The existing stairs flights timber structure is sound under foot and appears in good condition given it's age, based on visual inspection. The upper surfaces of all stair treads and risers were not visible at the time of the inspection due to the carpet finish throughout; therefore, it is unclear if there is any defects associated with the upper surfaces of these timber elements. It is unknown if the timber stairs as it stands is the original stairs to the building or if it has been replaced at some point in the past; however, it is clearly not of modern construction. From inspection of the soffit of the stairs, the timber sections are of assumed native hardwood, with the first flight being reliant on the existing timber stud wall construction to support the outer string.

The existing painted timber handrails and spindles are in good condition. The main newel post at the 90deg crank in the stairs also appears in good condition. There is a significant defect, the first newel post at the foot of the stairs is loose with some damage/split locally to the first tread at the base of the newel post; thus the handrail to the first flight flexes laterally under horizontal barrier loading and will require remedial repairs to make it fit for purpose.

It is recommended that at time of soft strip out works that a further structural condition inspection of the stairs is carried out following removal of carpeting and any removal of studwork below the stairs to assess any required treatments or strengthening measures that may be required as more time will have passed within a building envelop that is recorded as deteriorating due to water and vegetation ingress.

## 6.0 APPENDIX A – INSPECTION PHOTOS













Remedial repair required to secure newel post base













## REFERENCES

Ground Investigations Ireland. (2023). *12072-07-22 - Ground Investigation Report*.

National Built Heritage Service. (2004, 09 16). Retrieved from Buildings of Ireland:  
<https://www.buildingsofireland.ie/buildings-search/building/15322031/belvedere-orphan-institution-mullingar-road-tyrrellspass-tyrrellspass-co-westmeath>

SDS Design Engineers. (2024). *22124 - Structural Survey of Existing Matron's House*.