

# MOOT HALL, APPLEBY-IN-WESTMORLAND

## Condition Report



FOR APPLEBY TOWN COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 2016

Elaine Blackett-Ord MA RIBA IHBC AABC

Blackett-Ord Conservation Architecture

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**1. DETAILS OF OWNER**

Appleby Town Council

Moot Hall, Boroughgate, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria, CA16 6YB

Tel : 017683 51177

**2. DETAILS OF PROPERTY**

Moot Hall, Boroughgate, Appleby-in Westmorland, Cumbria, CA16 6YB.

Grid reference: NY 68352, 20349

**3. DETAILS OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISER**

Elaine Blackett-Ord MA RIBA IHBC AABC

Blackett-Ord Conservation Architecture

33 Chapel Street

Appleby-in-Westmorland

Cumbria, CA16 6QR

Tel: (017683) 52572

**4. DETAILS OF INSPECTIONS**

The property was inspected on 18th November 2016, and again on several subsequent days. A high level Inspection was undertaken using a MEWP on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

**5. LIMITATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS**

The building was inspected visually internally and externally. No services were tested. No manholes were lifted

Some areas were inaccessible due to the presence of fixtures and fittings against internal walls.

## 6. PREVIOUS SURVEYS: DRAWINGS

The drawings in this report have been produced by Blackett-Ord Conservation based on those issued by William Binney, RIBA, for a development scheme in 1968. For the purposes of orientation in this report the principal elevation to Boroughgate is taken to be the East elevation.

## 7. DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY

The Moot Hall is located in the centre of Appleby-in-Westmorland, and is bordered to the east by the main road through the town, to the west by a subsidiary road serving a car park, and to the north and south by areas of paving.

The building, which dates from 1596, retains its historic use as meeting place for the Town Council, with a large and well-appointed Meeting Chamber occupying much of the first floor. An adjacent Mayor's Parlour also serves to house artefacts and documents relating to the history of Appleby and its local government. The remainder of the first floor is given over to an office and storage space for the Town Council. The ground floor is divided into two principal areas, one of which houses the Tourist Information Centre and Exhibition Space, together with a public Accessible WC. The remaining space is a retail unit, formed from the amalgamation of two earlier shop units.

The building is of conventional construction, with solid walls of rubble sandstone which are rendered externally and plastered internally. The roof is based on simple triangular trusses supporting purlins and rafters, with Westmorland green graduated slate covering. The roof runs to a gable at the south end, and to a hipped end at the north. An intermediate cross-wall rises above the roof line and marks the line of an original external gable wall from an earlier phase of development. The ground floor is characterised by a number of traditional shopfronts to the east elevation and a diverse range of windows and doors to the west. An external public access stairway, serving the Hall, to the south is enclosed in a semi-circular wall to form a raised terrace. At the north end a classically styled brick and render single storey extension of 1968 provides an entrance lobby to the Tourist Information Centre and an accessible W.C. with Radar Key operated access.

## 8. DESCRIPTION OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

There appear to have been at least three main phases of development in the building. The earliest phase would appear to include that part of the building which currently houses the council chamber and Mayor's Parlour. There is evidence in the roof space that the roofline of this early building was at a lower level than presently. The extension of the building to the north, with the creation of a hipped roof over, may relate to the 1769 rebuilding referred to in the Listing. Pevsner (2010) states that the windows in the Council Chamber are C18th; a major rebuilding at this time may have included raising the main hall roof as well

as adding the northern extension. The north extension was considerably altered in 1968 by the changes to the office accommodation. This phase included the removal of an earlier staircase, the alteration of the doorway into the Mayor's Parlour, and the rearrangement of windows in that part of the building. It is likely that many minor piecemeal developments will have taken place in the preceding years, particularly in the ground floor of the original building as these evolved through a series of uses as shops and workshops. The diverse range of window and door apertures provides some evidence of the developments – it is likely that many changes took place in the Victorian era as the arrival of the railway in 1876 altered Appleby's status as a centre of commerce within the district. Most recently there has been re-roofing and refurbishment of the Tourist Information Centre in the 1990's, and alterations to the remaining shop unit in 2014.

The Listing for the building is as follows:

*NY 6820 APPLEBY IN WESTMORLAND C.P. BOROUGHGATE (Centre) 1/47 Nos. 63 to 66 (Consec) (Moot Hall) 6.6.51 GV II\* Dated 1596. Two storeys, stuccoed over stone. A door (approached by external steps) in the upper story of the south end is chamfered with a four-centred head, and with initials and date 1596 R.A.W. The ground floor is occupied by small shops, the upper storey has late C17 features including panelled council chamber. Island site in wide main street. North end has modern low addition in classical style. Bell turret and south end. Said to have been rebuilt 1769.*

## 9. DESCRIPTION OF CONDITION

The building is generally in a good structural condition, with little evidence of significant structural defects. The roof structure appears to be generally sound. The roof covering of green slate is generally good, although the arrangement of secret gutters at the verges gives some cause for concern and there is some damage to slates at the north end of the roof. The detailing of the north section of the roof could be improved.

The walls are substantially built of local rubble sandstone laid in lime mortar which is rendered without and plastered within. There is an area of outward distortion above one shopfront on the east elevation, although this appears to be historic and not active. Some areas of lime roughcast are extant, although the current external surface is a patchwork of renders of different periods and types. There is a considerable build up of limewash on some parts of the building, and the whole has been overpainted with modern finishes.

The windows and doors are generally in fair condition, with most being protected by being set deeply into their apertures. The windows to the Council Chamber are believed to date from the C18th, and are in fair condition. On the street side an array of shopfronts exhibit a diverse range of details typical of the Victorian period, themselves altered by later repairs and developments. On the 'back' elevation there is a range of windows including a fine bow fronted window which may be of the Georgian period. The 1968 additions are rather bland in comparison, if inoffensive.

The rainwater goods appear to be of the late C19th or early C20th and are in need of replacement. Resurfacing of the adjacent roads and pavements has led to an incremental rise in ground level against the building; this, in combination with rain rebound and traffic splash, has led to damp problems in various areas of the ground floor.

The curved staircase and landing structure to the south of the building provides external access to the first floor Council Chamber. The construction appears to be brick, and most probably dates for the early C20th. It is structurally independent of the rest of the building. There is a significant horizontal crack running through the entire structure at landing level which requires further investigation.

## 10. SUMMARY OF DEFECTS

Roofs	<p>Slates on north extension roof in poor condition. Approximately 5% cracked, broken, slipped or otherwise defective.</p> <p>Rooflights on north section of roof corroding, with poorly detailed flashings to slating.</p> <p>Pointing to north roof ridge and hips in poor condition.</p> <p>Lead detailing to chimneys and upstand wall copings of uncertain integrity</p> <p>Chimneys need capping to provide ventilation whilst excluding rainwater.</p> <p>Secret gutter to south gable has moss and vegetation growing in it, and is difficult to inspect and clean.</p> <p>Extensive moss &amp; algae growth on chimneys, copings, ridges and hips.</p>
Rainwater goods	<p>Gutters subject to thinning by corrosion. Poorly aligned to slates, and are inadequately sized. Discharge to hoppers poorly detailed.</p> <p>Downpipes undersized and with poorly detailed outlets. Evidence of leakage into masonry behind hopper on west elevation.</p> <p>Gutters clogged with silt, moss, vegetation.</p>
Render	<p>Extensive cracking and detachment of areas of rough cast render, especially on the south, west and east elevations, around apertures, below shopfronts, and close to ground level. Green algal growth particularly on west elevation indicative of high moisture levels in render.</p>

Timber elements	<p>Some timber decay (rot) in windows, doors &amp; frames, and shopfronts, particularly near ground level.</p> <p>Operation of sash windows inhibited by build up of paint layers.</p> <p>Loss of details on shopfronts and elsewhere due to poor quality repairs and build up of paint layers.</p> <p>Some joinery items require re-detailing to improve weather resistance.</p>
Walls	<p>Dampness evident in some walls, particularly around window and door apertures, at ground floor level, and to the south elevation of the Council Chamber.</p> <p>Significant horizontal cracking to curved external stair wall at south end.</p> <p>Setting – encroachment of paving and road surfacing up to the building causing damp issues, as well as being visually poor.</p>

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER SURVEYS

Further survey work is recommended at this stage to determine the condition of the suspended timber ground floor, and the drainage and ventilation arrangements in the underfloor void.

Further investigation of the concealed structural elements (shopfront bressumers, first floor joists etc.) should be undertaken in order to more fully understand the development and structural integrity of the building.

Further detailed inspection of joinery (doors, windows, shopfronts) should be undertaken, including opening up areas concealed behind linings, fixtures and fittings, in order fully assess the condition of these elements and to schedule their repair.

Areas of roughcast should be investigated and selectively removed in order to understand the nature, history, and significance of the materials and techniques used, and to assess the potential for retaining some of the historic materials.

The stair structure at the south of the building requires some limited opening up in order to investigate the cause of the cracking in this structure.

A thermal imaging or remote camera survey of the chimneys could reveal useful information about the location and condition of concealed flues.

An architectural history report could be commissioned to further explore the phases of development of the building to inform future maintenance work and development schemes.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPAIRS IN PRIORITY ORDER

PRORITY REPAIRS - 0 – 3 years		Cost
Roofs	<p>Strip &amp; re-slate the north extension, replacing slates as required.</p> <p>Lift the coping stones on the cross-wall, renew the leadwork to all flashings and dpc's as required. Re-bed all ridges and hips.</p> <p>Refurbish and refit 4 no. rooflights with new flashings.</p> <p>Cap 2 no. chimneys to allow ventilation whilst excluding rainwater. Fully repoint chimneys, and fix new flashings at roof level.</p>	
Rainwater goods	<p>Replace all rainwater goods entirely, including all gutters and brackets, all hoppers and rainwater pipes.</p> <p>Make good render to wall tops and behind rainwater pipes if not undertaking full re-rendering at the same time.</p> <p>Clean out rainwater gulleys by high-pressure jetting if required and ensure good operation.</p> <p>New new downpipes and gullies at the south end of the building.</p>	
Render	<p>Strip defective roughcast from all elevations, retaining any intact areas of historically significant material</p> <p>Repair walling stones including replacement of cracked or decayed stones, replace timber cills with stone.</p> <p>Repair/replace timber lintols to window &amp; door apertures.</p> <p>Carry out flush pointing of stonework with deep packing and galleting in preparation for complete re-rendering in lime mortar finished with traditionally applied harl to replicate the oldest areas of existing roughcast.</p> <p>Apply limewash finish to all areas of new render.</p> <p>Allow for full photographic and measured recording of building whilst render removed.</p>	
Drainage	<p>Install linear drain channels to pavement on east elevation, with new surfacing against building.</p> <p>Install new cobbled open channel to roadway on west elevation to deflect surface water.</p> <p>Adapt existing surface water drainage to suit 2 No. new rainwater pipes.</p>	

OTHER REPAIRS (within 5 years)		Cost
Timber elements	<p>Carry out repairs to all joinery elements e.g. bellcote, doors, windows, lintols, pilasters as required to ensure replacement of any decayed timber whilst retaining as much historic material as possible.</p> <p>Improve weatherproofing and water-shedding details to improve the performance of joinery elements. Redecorate completely with an appropriate paint system.</p>	
External Stair	Take down and rebuild the External Stair structure to the south of the building to correct structural defects. Improve the surface water drainage from this feature.	
Ventilation	Improve ventilation provision throughout the building in order to reduce damp and condensation issues and conserve the building fabric.	

### 13. IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF REPAIRS

The heritage significance of the building lies chiefly in its location, footprint, and form, and in its evidential value and historic value. The expression of developmental stages is shown by the copings and chimneys to the cross-wall at roof level, and by the diverse form of the windows, doors, and shopfronts on the ground floor level. The 1968 scheme to update the office accommodation introduced modern window and door apertures and joinery details which have led to a bland uniformity to the northern end of the building. The aesthetic of the building's external envelope is defined by the use of roughcast render coated with numerous layers of limewash. The effect is enhanced by picking out the window and door surrounds in contrasting black paint. It is regrettable that where modern finishes have been applied around windows and in patches these are now failing, trapping moisture and causing damage to the underlying lime-based materials.

The proposed repairs will have minimal impact on the heritage significance of the building if they are correctly undertaken using appropriate materials and high standards of craftsmanship.

Any roofing work should aim to achieve a water-tight covering which will protect the building below. No new materials are to be introduced, with the exception of a breathable roofing membrane which will be completely concealed from view. Lead details must be completed to high aesthetic standard as well as being technically sound.

Rainwater goods are to be replaced with directly equivalent items which have the same material and visual characteristics as those currently fitted, although sized correctly to discharge peak flows.

Repairs to joinery work will aim to retain as much of the existing timber as possible by piecing in (i.e. splicing) new timber to doors, windows, and shopfronts rather than replacing elements in their entirety. It is an advantage that all joinery elements are painted, so that old and new materials can be unified by their finish. Where existing details are seen to be poorly designed (e.g. the use of timber window cills at street level) then more appropriate materials (e.g. stone) will be employed to prevent future deterioration where this can be achieved without visual detriment.

Removal of failed areas of the existing render will inevitably result in the loss of some original material. However the replacement of the failed render is essential to prevent further damage to the fabric of the building by water ingress. The existing render is heavily patched and has been re-worked and overcoated in different phases. Removal will not only allow repairs to be made to the underlying stonework but will ensure that the new render can be applied to a sound background and achieve the highest degree of vapour permeability necessary to assist the drying of the walls and the rapid evaporation of driven rain.

The encroachment of modern pavement materials and road surfacing onto the building is regrettable both visually and in terms of the damage caused by splash and runoff. Providing some form of linear drainage channel to each long elevation of the building will mitigate against these effects and will have the benefit of visually isolating the building from the surrounding modern surfaces.

In all cases the choice of materials and techniques will be informed by a thorough understanding of traditional building practice and materials, coupled with an analysis of building performance and an appreciation of the importance of good detailing.

14. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE MAINTENANCE

		Cost
Daily	<p>Heating kept at reasonable level to keep accommodation aired, especially in unfrequented areas.</p> <p>Windows opened in good weather to purge internal air.</p>	By staff
Monthly	<p>Visual check of all heating services including the boiler, all water services &amp; appliances, all windows &amp; doors for leaks, security &amp; operation.</p> <p>Check electrical appliances &amp; fittings for operation &amp; safety.</p> <p>Externally: visual check of guttering, roof surfaces, rainwater gullies, especially after bad weather. Condition of flagpole, bellcote.</p>	<p>By staff</p> <p>By staff</p> <p>By staff</p>
Annually	Gutter cleaning & visual inspection of roofs inc. chimneys, bellcote, flagpole. Internal inspection of roofspaces.	<p>£300</p> <p>by contractor</p>
Periodically	Test & inspection of electrical system, alarm systems, fire appliances, gas appliances, and undertake any necessary repairs or upgrading.	<p>£300</p> <p>by contractor</p>
Every 5 years	<p>Condition survey &amp; report by a Conservation Architect.</p> <p>Decoration of joinery items. Application of limewash to external walls.</p>	<p>£</p> <p>£</p>

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**15. BUDGET COSTS**

Estimates are given in the Table of Repairs in Section 12 and in the Table of Maintenance in Section 14.

**16. PROPOSALS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF REPAIR PROGRAMME**

Application for grant funding

Undertake further survey, investigation & development work including building monitoring

Produce contract documentation

Tender contract

Appoint Main & Sub-contractors

Carry out work, including full as-built recording. Roof work, rendering work, drainage work, joinery work, decoration etc.

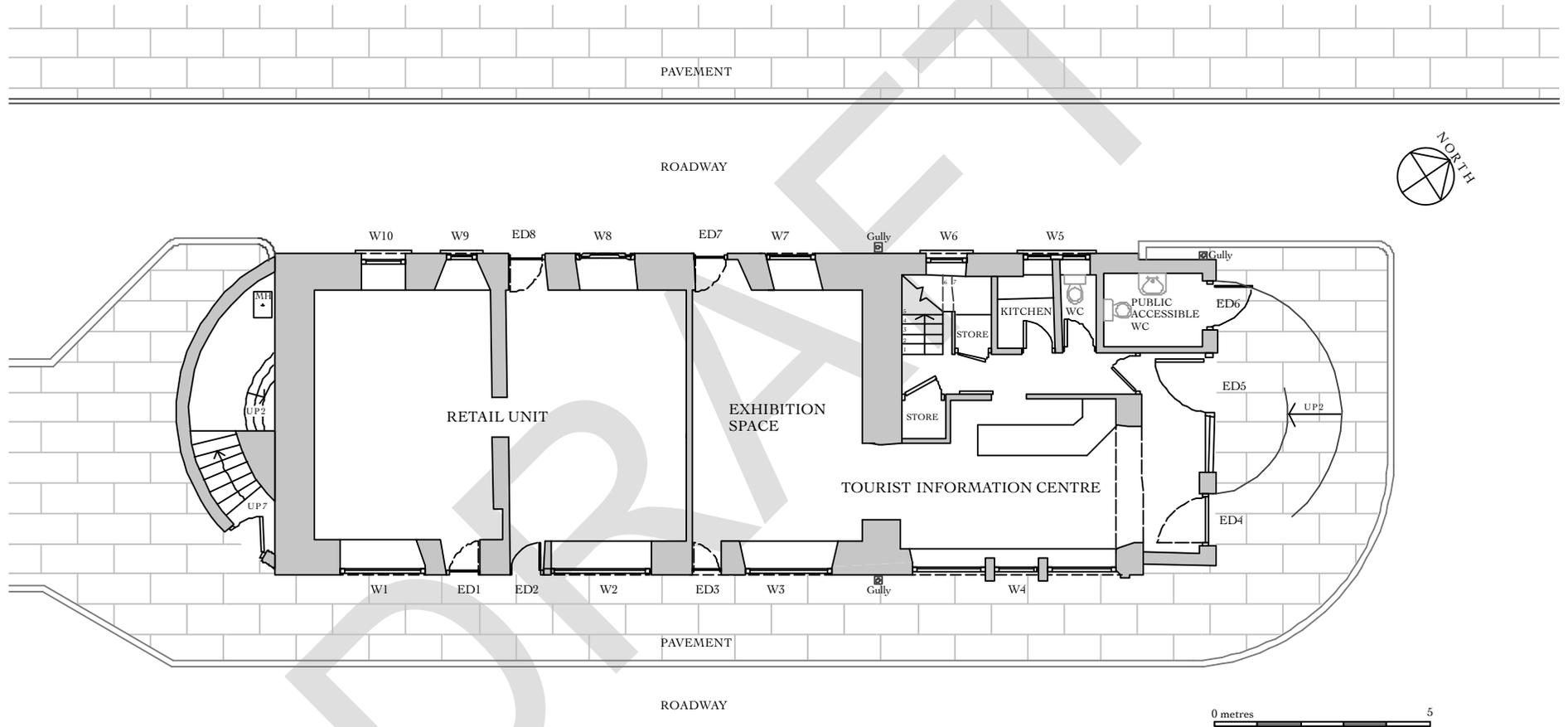
Completion of work, post-contract evaluation

Continued monitoring of effectiveness of interventions

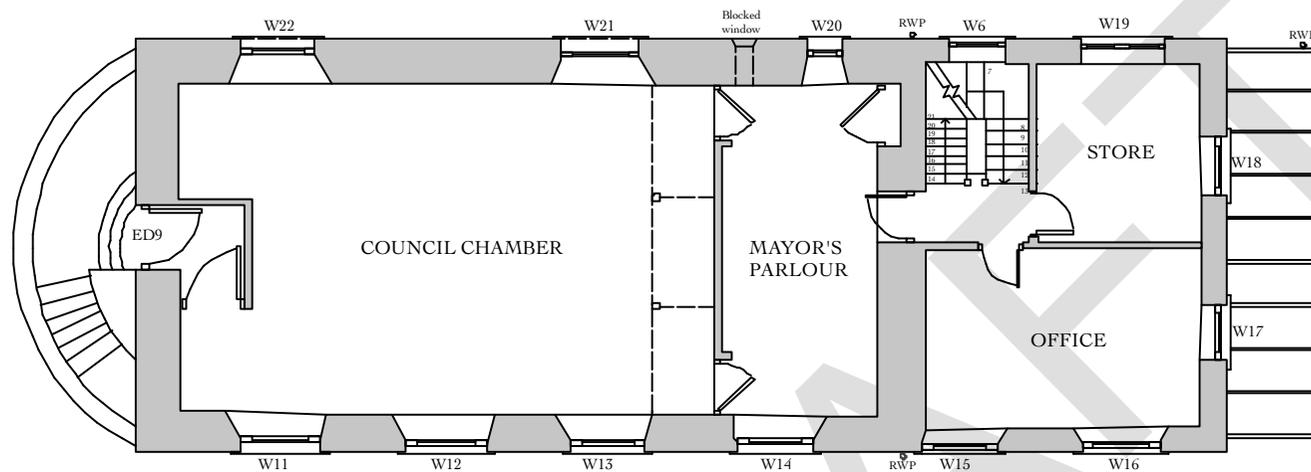
**17. PUBLIC ACCESS ARRANGEMENTS**

The Moot Hall is a prominent feature in the townscape of Appleby, being sited on the main thoroughfare. All elevations are readily viewed and accessible to the public, although the island location, sloping site and narrow pavements make access a little difficult for those with impaired mobility. The Tourist Information Centre is open to the public on a daily basis, as is the ground floor retail unit. The TIC and Disabled Toilet has level access, but there are steps down into the shop unit. There is currently no provision for wheelchair users to access the first floor accommodation, however there is scope to provide an external lift to the first floor Council Chamber at the south end of the building. The differing floor levels through the first floor would make full access difficult to achieve from a single lift. A second lift might be accommodated to serve the first floor office accommodation, subject to employee requirements and future needs to provide public access to this area.

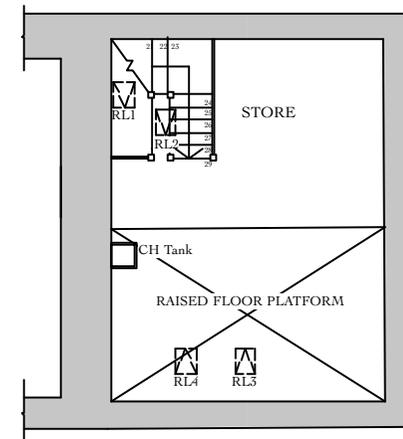
18. GROUND FLOOR, FIRST FLOOR & SECOND FLOOR PLANS



MOOT HALL  
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



MOOT HALL  
GROUND FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

