



STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS

www.cookebrown.com

215.654.0105

7 East Skippack Pike
Suite 310
Broad Axe, PA 19002

David J. Brown, P.E.
Principal

Joseph W. Cooke, P.E.
Founder/Associate

Léonid Chackes, P.E.
Associate

December 5, 2011

John J. Di Benedetto Associates, Inc.
201 Old York Road
Jenkintown, PA 19046-3200
Attn: John Di Benedetto

**Ref: Ashbourne & Oak Lane, Cheltenham, PA
#11059**

Dear John:

At your request, we have made a number of visits to the "unoccupied" property at the south corner of Oak Lane Road and Ashbourn Road, Cheltenham, to review the condition, structural adequacy of the remaining support elements and to determine the structural engineering services that may be necessary to preserve the shell of the main structure.

By some estimates portions of the house may date from the late 17th century. Certainly there are at least two additions whose age is well over one hundred years. There was a third addition that appeared to be late 19th century but which has since been removed.

The structure is in a state of severe disrepair and apparently has not been used for two decades or more. Other than the stone and brick walls, it does not appear that any of the structural elements of the building are of a state where repair is possible. The walls were built with the weak mortar used at the period of construction. The years of neglect have allowed the interior plaster or exterior pointing to disintegrate, thus many portions of the walls are no longer structurally sound.

Between our visits there have been collapses of portions of the wall and one large area of roof.

Soon after we were engaged, you asked that we provide a fee for services to assist the preservation by designing a structural steel frame to brace any substantial portion of the shell which the owner might want to retain as a historic "reminder". At that time we were strong in our terminology that we must be held harmless for any responsibility beyond the adequacy of the steel we would design.

We noted then, and continue to advise, that the deterioration has reached a point where it is not safe for workmen to be in the shell and certainly even more unsafe for them to start removing debris and fallen structural members. Yes, there are sections of walls that can remain but there are other areas where removal of already fallen timber will cause portions of the wall to suddenly fall.

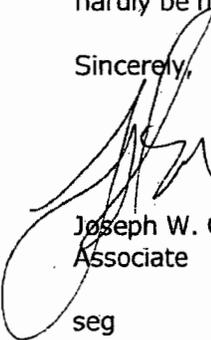
December 5, 2011
John J. Di Benedetto Associates, Inc.
Page 2 of 2

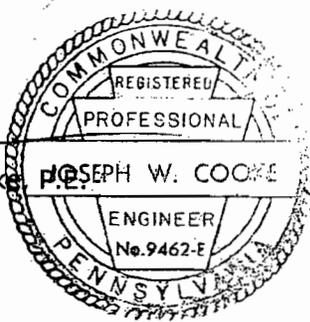
There is no point in trying to spell out all of the dangerous conditions.

We recognize the historic significance this structure once held, but as an individual licensed by the Commonwealth to protect its citizens, we cannot recommend or be party to putting individual workers at risk by allowing them access to the structure and attempt to remove sufficient materials to allow preservation of other materials.

It is our advice that any effort at preserving any materials be limited to having the workmen at a distance from the building using equipment that will keep the workmen safe if and when portions collapse. These demolition techniques may allow parts of one level of stable wall to remain albeit in need of mortar to prevent even their collapse. These portions would hardly be historical or significant.

Sincerely,


Joseph W. Cooke
Associate



seg