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19th July 2022

PQ 35943/22 * To ask the Minister for Health further to Parliamentary Question No. 1785 of 14 June 2022, the exact features of the premises (details supplied: Owenacurra Centre) were such that no amount of building works could be guaranteed to bring those premises to a building regulation standard; the way that these features were identified; the person or body that identified same; when the features were identified; and if he will make a statement on the matter.
-Neasa Hourigan

Dear Deputy Hourigan,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

The sub structure of the property referred to as the Owenacurra Centre is that of a raft foundation, supporting steel framing, block work and stud walling. The property has an outer leaf of precast concrete panels and a pitched roof. The general condition of the building fabric is poor, taking in to account that it is a Rohcon part pre-fabricated building, which was developed in the 1970's, with a useful lifespan of approximately forty years. The building has been operating for almost fifty years. The structure makes use of some of the walling and most of the steel framing to provide a vertical and horizontal load carrying structure. These structural elements are supported from the raft (i.e. foundation and sub floor), which also supports a 50 mm non-structural screed.

In order to meet the targets established by Government and set out in the Climate Action, Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill 2021, the subfloor, i.e. the foundation would need to be removed and a new foundation and insulated floor constructed. Since the foundation and sub floor carries all the load from the super structure, replacing these while attempting to support the structure would require a very complex and extremely costly engineering solution.

An alternate option would be to review the ground floor level to see if it could be raised, i.e. install a new insulated floor over the existing floor. However, there is an existing floor to ceiling height of 2.4m, and reducing this would render it non-compliant with current building standards. In considering this alternate option, the existing roof would need to be removed and replaced, along with requiring the structural elements supporting the roof and wall to be raised to allow an acceptable internal ceiling

height be reinstated. Similar to the previous option, this option also requires a very complex and extremely costly engineering solution.

Other elements and features that would need to be considered and addressed include:

- The extent of fire protection works;
- The extent of asbestos removal works;
- The extent of work required to the mechanical and electrical infrastructure;
- The layout and bedroom sizes within the property;
- The absence of en-suite facilities in the property;
- The overall requirement to upgrade the facility to comply with the minimum standards of the current building regulations.

It is the opinion of HSE Capital and Estates that all of the above issues would need to be addressed to render the property compliant with current building regulations and to provide a 'fit for purpose' facility from a service perspective.

The identification of these elements and features was primarily through on-site inspections undertaken by the staff of HSE Capital and Estates in conjunction with a review of the expert internal and external reports.

The body that identified the said features as referenced to in this Parliamentary Question, were staff of HSE Capital and Estates and the commissioned external consultants. The inspection process was undertaken during Quarter 2, 2021

Yours sincerely,



Paul de Freine
National Director,
Capital & Estates