

# D.B. BENNETT

## CONSULTING ENGINEER

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February 14, 2022

Mr. Scott Wilson  
Director of Land Acquisition & Management  
Town of East Hampton  
159 Pantigo Road  
East Hampton, NY 11937

SUBJECT: Supplemental Condition Assessment Report  
Brooks Park Buildings  
128 Neck Path  
Springs, NY  
SCTM# 300-103-8-6  
Purchase Order # 2022-0677

Dear Mr. Wilson

The purpose of this letter is to report my findings from a follow-up assessment of the building conditions.

### Introduction

The Brooks-Park property is an 11 acre parcel in Springs and was once owned by James Brooks and Charlotte Park, artists associated with the Abstract Expressionist movement. The Town of East Hampton purchased the property for open space preservation. The property contains structures used by the artist. These include:

- A 1-story 688 sq.ft. cottage used as a simple residence
- A 1-story 1,318 sq.ft. Brooks studio
- Two less than 200 sq.ft accessory structures (one reportedly used as the Park Studio),
- And two very small sheds and a one car "car-port"

The Town of East Hampton retained DB Bennett, PE, PC, Engineering to conduct a Building Condition Assessment in 2015. The buildings were inspected in June 2015 by Drew B. Bennett, PE. A Condition Assessment Report was issued on 7/15/15.

In January 2022, the Town of East Hampton retained DB Bennett, PE, PC, Engineering to conduct a follow-up assessment. This follow-up inspection was performed by Drew B. Bennett, PE on 2/9/22. This letter report is the subject of the 2/9/22 inspection.

The summary conclusions of the July 2015 Assessment Report were

*The buildings at the property are in fair to poor condition. They are not suitable for use in their present condition. The buildings are in need of obvious repair. However, they have not decayed so far that they cannot be restored. Actions were recommended to help safe-store the buildings if building preservation/restoration was a path to be considered.*

The follow-up assessment took place about 6.5 years after the initial assessment.

Attached are photos from the 2/9/22 inspection by Drew Bennett.

## **Brooks Park Cottage**

The building has been badly vandalized. Nearly every window and door has been smashed out. Plywood has been installed over these smashed openings to help prevent further intrusion and help keep the weather out. Despite the plywood, weather is getting inside and interior moisture damage has occurred. The interior is infested with mold and mildew. A gable end "peak window is smashed out and not boarded up.

The interior has been ransacked by vandals and remaining personal affects have been damaged.

The kitchen ceiling has dropped was water penetration through a roof leak. Several roof leaks have developed and framing rot has developed in local areas. The wall framing remains reasonably plumb, but roof sag is developing from the roof leaks

A pronounced floor sag has developed in the living room/kitchen area suggesting the floor frame is rotting. I did not enter the small cellar on the follow-up inspection because of safety concerns.

No elements of the mechanical-electrical-plumbing systems are salvageable with the exception of the kitchen sink and bath sink.

During the 2015 inspection, we noted that exterior decks and ramps were rotten and should be removed for safety reasons. This has been done. The removal has revealed extensive sill and wall stud rot on the south facing wall.

Overall, this building is in very poor condition.

## **Brooks Studio**

The building is divided into two areas: the studio and the studio/service storage area. The building has been badly vandalized. Doors and windows have been smashed out. Plywood has been placed over openings. The studio roof remains tarped (it was tarped in 2015).

The studio service/storage area roof and walls have a number of rotten holes allowing daylight and weather into the building. The studio service/storage area was found to be flooded with water and leaf debris. Extensive roof and wall framing rot is present in this area and the roof is collapsing.

The main studio area is in the process of collapsing. Water has been penetrating the studio for years. After the 2015, assessment some additional post support was added to roof supporting

beams Continued water penetration has led to floor decay and failure near the perimeter. Roof supporting posts have dropped through the rotten floor. This has resulted in a steel I-beam that supports the roof to drop several feet and roll. This has led to the upper walls to twist and lean inward in a collapsing motion.

The basement area under the studio is flooded with water and reveals the extent of floor and wall frame rot. The foundation remains serviceable.

This building is in very poor and hazardous condition. In my judgment, this building represents imminent danger. All necessary actions should be taken to safe guard the public.

## **Park Studio and Shed**

This is a small accessory building reportedly used as Ms. Park's studio space. It too has been vandalized and openings have been boarded up with plywood. The wood siding has decayed and needs repair. The asphalt roof and skylight are more than 50 years old have relatively small leaks. They need to be replaced. The doors and windows will need to be replaced.

The interior is damaged by vandals and infested with mold and mildew. This building is probably salvageable with a substantial amount of work. It is also small enough, that it is feasible to relocate it to a safer setting.

The second small accessory building appears to have been used for storage. It has been vandalized and is tarped and boarded up. The exterior siding and roof leak and are decayed. The simple structure is leaning. The interior also has rot from water penetration. This building is in poor condition.

The simple car port structure accessory the Cottage has collapsed and no longer functional.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, these buildings are in an advanced decayed and vandalized state and in very poor condition. The Brooks Studio is in imminent danger of collapse. The Cottage would require extraordinary efforts to restore to a habitable condition. The Park Studio may be salvageable as a restoration project.

The remote location of these structures makes them very prone to vandals and other nefarious activities. Perhaps the Park studio could be moved to a more secure setting and restored.

Respectfully submitted,  
**D.B. Bennett, P.E., P.C.**

*Drew B. Bennett*

Drew B. Bennett, P.E.  
(29-24)

## Appendix A

### Brooks Park Cottage Condition Photos

By DB Bennett on 2/9/22



South elevation of cottage





Cottage sill rot



Cottage west wall





Cottage north elevation







Cottage Interior



Cottage interior..center column is punching through the floor due to rot. Beam at roof is rolling



Cottage interior



Cottage kitchen area





Roof leak above kitchen







Collapsed Carport





Brooks Studio Parapet roof beam collapsing







Studio storage area





Studio storage area – daylight through roof







Studio floor





Studio storage roof







Studio floor frame rotted and temporary support rotted



Studio roof leaking through tarp, upper walls are twisting and buckling





Shed







Inside shed, water penetration, sheathing rot



Inside shed





Inside vandalized shed



Park Studio





Park studio



Inside vandalized Park Studio



Inside Park Studio