

Conservation Response.

Date: 16/08/2023.

File/Application ref: HPK/2023/0268.

Case Officer: Pet Twigg.

Proposal: 'Listed Building Consent for the Refurbishment of No.2 Ingram Almshouse and external repairs to the stone and lead work to the gable of no.2 and no.3'.

Site Address: 2 and 3 St James Square, New Mills, Derbyshire, SK22 4BB.

Dear Pet,

Objection.

There are a number of issue with the proposal which raises concerns from myself and preventing full support. They are as follows:

- Damp improvement including lining membrane. This is not supported.
- Lime plaster with lining paper.
- Use of foil backed plasterboard and or insulation.
- Use of modern paint with limes or lime plaster.

The terms *wet rot* and *woodworm* indicate substantial long term issues. I would like to see a timber survey that demonstrates these issues and how the conclusion has been reached to identify wet rot etc. It is also not identified what the existing timber is to be able to prescribe like-for-like repair or whether they are original pieces.

Substantial moisture ingress at source will be roofs, rainwater goods, chimneys, rooflights or light tunnels (where applicable), drainage and lastly; lack of ventilation. The scheme does not appear to include any investigation works to identify the source of the moisture ingress, and only prescribes short term remedial works on the interior. I note some works to lead and repointing is mentioned. Unfortunately, redecoration and new plasterwork will not resolve damp issues.

The properties are of solid stone. Consequently, wrapping the interior in plastic lining will exacerbate moisture issues by forcing the moisture further up and into the historic masonry creating a sponge effect. The plastic lining will cause the building to sweat, as the temperature on the interior will be starkly different to the cold stone. There will therefore be an infinite amount of humidity and moisture within the property. I do not support the use of modern plastic membranes, linings, DPCs or Injections on historic fabric.

The use of lime plaster or wash paired with general modern decoration and lining paper is counterintuitive. Limes are sacrificial by their vapour permeable qualities, and are naturally fungicidal. However, using limes then covering them up with thick layers of lining paper and decoration completely halts these qualities and no improvement will be seen.



I do not support the use of foil backed plasterboard, modern plasterboard or foil backed insulation on historic fabric. An alternative is encouraged and could be items such as cork or woodfibre boarding, rockwool, sheepswool, hemp and the like. Modern gypsum plasterboard is not vapour permeable and will absorb moisture until such point damp appears in the form of black spores. This is exacerbated with the further use of plastic based so called 'bathroom' or 'kitchen paint'.

I note the proposed use of a mineral paint, though a specification is required (manufacturer's information etc). Many modern mineral paints still contain plastic and is therefore not vapour permeable as marketed to be. This will also not mitigate damp or moisture issues in kitchens/bathrooms.

The drawings appear to show a rear extension/outbuilding/offshoot to the centre of the footprint of the building. The properties concerned in the project are both directly in relation to this rear offshoot as both are either side. It appears from the existing drawings the two roofs meet in a valley or gully between the main core of the building, and the pitch of the offshoot. There does not seem to be an assessment made of the health of the roof in this portion, as this may be the source of the complaint.

Other items of concern are:

- Ventilation units, more information required. This includes the new cooker hood. Improper extraction of humid conditions simply consists of pushing the moisture in the air around the rooms.
- Tiling to lower portions of the walls and 'extending into reveals'? Further information required. Is this tiling directly onto the stone walls, or with gypsum boarding inbetween? Similarly, in the bathroom too - extensive tiling seen though what is the construction of this in section?
- Shower room. It is advised shower units are not directly affixed to the stone walling and have an enclosure. Thus creating a gap of around 10mm or more if shower is self-contained, for moisture to escape and mitigate sweating. Proposed shower room drwg ref: 1906B.14 does not demonstrate ventilation. Also concerned for 'moisture resistant plasterboard'. This is not compatible with historic fabric.
- Ventilation grille to chimney. Is this chimney in use, or blocked up? What is the condition of the chimney stack/top/cowls etc. Again, this is in the centre of the two properties.
- Details of existing and proposed radiator units required.
- Overall lack of photographs.
- Lack of photographs of the front elevation works including condition of the stone, roof materials etc.
- Lime mortar specification at front elevation works. How has this specification been identified? How much existing modern mortar is to be removed?
- Are window repairs included, as new lime putty etc may be relevant for stone window reveals.

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As it stands, this project has identified substantial moisture ingress issues and unfortunately prescribed further harmful interventions for the historic fabric. I expect a timber and or building fabric condition survey by a Conservation Accredited individual or company to correctly identify issues, their source and their remediation. There are no photographs of the issues that are described extensively in this project, due to this I am limited to what advice and support I can offer at this time. It is pertinent to correctly assess the issues with the health of the building fabric, and its listing status in mind.

There is also no information on how long the properties have suffered from this, how long it has been empty etc. I would also encourage a programme of works for this project. Currently with the status of the properties the first thing that ought to be considered is opening doors and windows in good weather to enable them to dry out. It would not be conducive to tackle new works on saturated masonry, timbers, floors, roofs etc.

Regards,

Miss E Holland.
Principal Conservation Officer.