

Listed Building Consent Application HPK/2023/0268.

Refurbishment of No.2 Almshouse and External Repairs to the gable of No.2 and No.3.

Response to Conservation Officer's Consultation Comments.

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The items below provide clarification and further information except items 2 a)ii and 2e)i where alternative specifications are proposed.

1. Survey and Investigation work.

A damp and timber survey was carried out by Robinson Preservation Ltd to the property prior to the application submission and at the time No.2 was occupied. It only became vacant in April 2023 after many years of occupation by the same tenant.

This survey identified localised damp and condensation issues to specific areas which are described below:

- a) Damp penetration was identified to the lower portion of the plaster to the walls in the kitchen which was diagnosed as the plaster being in contact with the solid concrete floor in this room and the lack of extract ventilation in the kitchen.
- b) Damp and black mould growth were identified in the lounge projecting bay and its return walls.
The survey highlighted the lack of any kitchen or bathroom extract ventilation in the property as the likely cause of mould growth. In addition the following defects have been identified causing damp and moisture penetration to the projecting lounge bays.
 - i) It was discovered that a blocked downpipe at the front of No. 2 adjacent to the projecting bay was overflowing at the gutter level (this has since been cleared).
 - ii) It was noted that there are missing sections of lead dpc under the parapet gables.
 - iii) There is an inadequate lead up-stand to the soakers at the back of the parapet gables to No.2 and No. 3 leading to some rain penetration in heavy driven rain.
 - iv) The ashlar stonework to the projecting bays has open masonry joints.
- c) The timber and damp survey did not highlight long term issues with woodworm or wet rot. The inclusion of *like for like* repairs and treatments is included as precautionary to cover possible repairs to concealed floor joist timbers and floorboards once the carpets and floor finishes are removed. It could be anticipated that due to the age of the almshouses some floor joist embedded ends could have decay and as working amendments to consents are not possible it was deemed sensible to include for this possible scenario.

2. Proposed Specifications.

- a) **Vertical membranes.**
 - i) The vertical membrane shown within the application is proposed to those localised areas in the kitchen and lounge resulting from the damp survey. The proposed membrane is an “air gap” membrane, the Delta PT3 sheet has a cavity at the point on contact between the masonry allowing any trapped moisture to escape to the sub floor zone. For information the Delta PT3 air gap membrane has been used on many listed properties including at Castle Howard and Hampton Court. However, should this specification not be deemed acceptable then we would propose a three coat limelite plaster system but we do have concerns about the potential migration of salts affecting the new plaster which the use of the membrane in these localised areas would resist.
 - ii) We confirm that we will omit the injected dpc to the kitchen and lounge bay as you have requested.

b) Lead detailing to the Lounge Gables.

To address the water penetration issues the lead detailing around the gable parapets to the lounge's is proposed to be improved by carrying out the following:

Temporarily lifting off the copings to renew the lead and ensuring the lead dpc's under the copings is complete across the wall head. At the rear of the parapet copings replacing the lead soakers which only have a 50mm up stand to give a 100mm up stand and introduce a 75mm deep and 75mm wide cover flashing over the soakers onto the rear top of the surface of the parapet copings.

c) Lining paper and decorations.

Following the removal of the existing modern wallpaper we anticipate there being some damage to plaster surfaces so the lining paper application is intended to make good internal finishes to reach a fair standard without the need to remove potentially areas of plaster and then replaster with the resultant loss of fabric. The proposed lining paper Wallrock fibreliner 150 is an air permeable product and our intention would be to decorate with a Lakeland matt emulsion (Sd value 0.04) or a matt emulsion paint with similar vapour permeable characteristics. Applying lining paper does give the Almshouse Trust control of the application of internal finishes and one benefit of this lining paper, although not a conservation matter, is that it is fire rated product.

d) Mineral Paint on Stonework.

The mineral paint specification to the internal faces of the stone mullions is Beeck product Maxil Pro which does not contain any plastic based materials.

e) Plasterboard Materials.

i) We would propose substituting the ceiling lining materials for repairs/ reinstatement in the kitchen, lounge and bedroom with lime plaster.

ii) The use of the vertical plasterboard in the kitchen on the party wall (drawing 12 and 13) to the adjacent almshouse we wish to retain for the following reasons:

The plasterboard is battened off the wall by 50mm and provides fixings for the new kitchen units and tiling but also enables waste pipework and other services to be accommodated in the 50mm zone without cutting chases in the existing party wall between the properties. The plasterboard lining will terminate below worktop level with an open end providing a 50mm ventilated area.

f) Rear extension- Shower room.

The rear extension to the almshouse as described in the design and access statement is a twentieth century addition, probably circa 1970's. It is constructed in masonry with a brick plinth and white rendered walls with a built up flat roof. For confirmation the flat roof intersects with the slated dual pitched roof and there are no issues currently with the roof detailing junction causing any water penetration. For confirmation the wall tiling being applied to the external and party walls in the shower room are being applied to this relatively modern masonry construction.

For confirmation drawing 14 and 15 do show a boxing out for the shower fixtures and fittings referenced in the Conservation Officers response. The use of moisture resistant plasterboard for this boxing in the shower enclosure we consider to be compatible in consideration of the age of the flat roofed extension. For confirmation drawings 14 and 15 do show the extract ventilation fan located above the bathroom cabinet within the shower room.

Please see the photograph 19 in the photographs appendix showing the tiling returned in the window reveal to the meet the window frame, this detail would be duplicated with the new tiling.

g) Kitchen wall tiling.

The kitchen wall tiling is restricted to 500mm high above the kitchen worktops except where the cooker is located. As stated in item e) this is largely applied to linings framed away from the existing wall (shown on drawing 12) . Where the tiling is being applied to the window wall, elevation 14 on drawing 13, it is fixed onto plaster and is not fixed to the stonework window components, see photograph 20 in the photograph appendix showing the existing reveal.

h) Ventilation.

The Client has appointed a Mechanical and Electrical consultant, KGA Ltd to specify the ventilation systems so that products meet the current Building Regulation and relevant standards. Overall to address the lack of ventilation highlighted in the damp and timber report the following items are included.

i) New wall mounted extract fans in both the kitchen and shower room (Vent Axia silhouette). The extract fan in the kitchen is in addition to the cooker hood which is intended primarily to deal with food smells and grease. These fans are 160mm square fan units with a 17mm slim projection from the wall face to minimise their visual impact. The fans cover would be white externally to the shower room where it is fixed to the white render and black externally where it is fixed to the stonework. The black will match the colour of the gutters and downpipes in close proximity.

ii) In addition to these fans a positive pressure fan (Vent Axia Pozidry Pro) is proposed to address potential condensation and mould growth issues in the almshouse by gently circulating filtered clean air into the property. The fan unit will be located in the loft space with a single circular ceiling diffuser located on the lounge flat ceiling which will be the only visible element of the system. The ceiling diffuser is white with a diameter of 250mm.

iii) The Chimney flue is currently used by a modern gas fire and the appliances/ flue are checked on a annual basis. The Chimney stack masonry is in reasonable condition but the Client wishes to move away from gas and provide electric fires. For this reason a 215mm ventilation grille/ air brick is proposed to the base of the chimney stack in the fire location within the lounge.

i) Radiators.

The radiators within the almshouse are all relatively modern fittings (see photographs 14-18 in the photograph appendix) so the proposal is to replace these with radiators to minimise the space taken off the already small rooms. The new radiators in the lounge, and bedroom are proposed as Stelrad Compact radiators in white.

The kitchen radiator is proposed as a slim projection panel radiator to fit within the limited available wall space. The radiator in the shower room is a combined towel rail / radiator in a chrome finish to match the shower enclosure and fittings. See photographs of the radiators in the product appendix.

j) Lime Mortar Repointing works.

The extent of the repointing work is proposed to the two projecting gables and their small returns shown on drawing 21. This will cover the gable pikes down to ground level. Currently the gables are pointed in a hard partially raised pointing with evidence of some red polysulphide pointing as well as open joints to the ashlar stone components.

The repointing specification is based on an assessment of the following factors:

i) The location of the front elevation is very exposed being at the top of the valley and subject to wet conditions.

ii) The stone is moderately tough and it is in a moderate condition.

Taking these factors into consideration an NHL 3.5 lime has been selected. The choice of two sands, Nosterfield and Leighton Buzzard reflects Nosterfield's binding qualities and the Leighton Buzzard colour. Used in equal proportions the colour of the mortar will complement the stone. The proportions of lime:Sand would be 1:2.5.

In addition the use of this mix is similar to its long term use on another listed building with similar stone in New Mills.

k) Windows.

At this stage no window repairs are proposed. The Client is considering an application to renew the windows as a separate application for all 6 almshouses.