

From: [Customer Services \(HPBC\)](#)
To: [Planning \(HPBC\)](#)
Subject: FW: HPK/2023/0531 - Highgate Hall, Highgate Road, Hayfield, Derbyshire, SK22 2JW - SPAB Response
Date: 18 January 2024 15:10:08
Attachments: [Outlook-hedv5vlh.png](#)

From: Joanne Needham <>

Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2024 11:44 AM

To: Customer Services (HPBC) <>

Subject: Re: HPK/2023/0531 - Highgate Hall, Highgate Road, Hayfield, Derbyshire, SK22 2JW - SPAB Response

Dear Declan Clery,

Application ref: HPK/2023/0531

Address: Highgate Hall, Highgate Road, Hayfield, Derbyshire, SK22 2JW

Proposal: Removal of internal wall.

Our ref: SPAB/JN/190582/24

Thank you for notifying SPAB of the above application. Having considered the documents on your Council's website I now write with the Society's response. Unfortunately, the Society regrets to advise that it is unable to offer support on this occasion and registers its **objection** to the application for the following reasons:

- insufficient description and assessment of the building's significance, and insufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the building's significance.
- the proposals would appear not preserve the building and its features of special architectural or historic interest, and would result in harm/loss to the building's significance.

- no clear and convincing justification has been provided for the harm/loss to significance, and the proposal would not result in any public benefits.

We expand on these points below.

While a Heritage Impact Assessment has been provided in the application, it largely comprises details of the planning application history, references to policy, and describes the proposed scheme. Very little is provided by way of a description and assessment of the building's significance, and the significance of the areas and fabric directly affected by the proposals. Consequently, we advise that the Assessment fails to fulfil the requirement of paragraph 200 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). We also further advise that this lack of a sufficient description and assessment of the building's significance (and the area and fabric directly affected by the proposals) will likely prevent your authority from fulfilling NPPF paragraph 201.

Where the Assessment does reference the wall (proposed for demolition), it states that it the *"architectural and historic value"* of it is *"low"*. However, there is no analysis and evidence to support this view. The paragraph also mistakenly, in our view, goes on to argue that *"The wall (brick) to be removed is clearly a late addition to the original massive stone structural walls and carries no heritage value."* Firstly, it is not correct to state that a construction of a differing material automatically means that the structure/particular fabric in non-original/of a later date. Secondly, later alterations/additions/interventions/repairs/extensions have often added interest and significance to many historic buildings. The fact that *"Some of the interior has been remodeled and progressively repaired since its construction"* is not necessarily a negative, and certainly not justification in itself for further removal/alteration of historic fabric.

The Assessment also makes the mistake of misunderstanding of the extent of listing and the purpose of the list description as evidenced by the statement that *"The internal wall is not mentioned in the listing"*.

The age, materials & construction details, structural role, and significance of the wall (individual, and its contribution to the significance of the historic planform and building as a whole) needs to be determined and evidenced. The existing structural report advises that the interior was not inspected and that the survey was undertaken from the exterior of the property at ground level only. Yet it concludes that there will be no detrimental effect on the building with the introduction of an adequately sized structural beam to support the floor structure. It is also not possible from the current information to fully understand the potential impact of the structural works on any surround historic fabric that will remain. An internal inspection and revised/new structural report is therefore required.

The supposed benefits resulting from the proposal (as detailed in section 4.3 of the Heritage Impact Assessment) are also highly questionable:

- The light levels in the playroom have probably been hampered by the garden room extension, and there may be less harmful (and more successful) ways to improve them than the removal of the internal wall. It is also not clear how the proposal would purportedly "*better enable efficient heating*" and as the proposal involves going from two smaller spaces to one large one.

- While it is possible to rebuild a wall, it is not possible to rebuild history and significance. So if the existing wall is historic fabric, its loss is most certainly not "*highly reversible*". Hence the need to fully understand the extant fabric and its contribution to the building properly from the outset.

- The cellular plan (and significance thereof) of the historic parts of the dwelling should be fully understood in order to inform if, and where, any further change may be possible. Additionally, while the point about investment in the property is noted, the dwelling has already benefitted from extensions which have provided several open plan spaces.

- Lastly, and as already noted above, the structural report is based on a limited inspection (external, and from ground level only) and therefore fails to provide the necessary information and evidence about the wall, and its structural role/relationship within the building.

In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, local planning authorities have a statutory duty under Section 16(2) of the Planning(Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas)Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The authority should also consider if the application meets the requirements of national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

For the reasons outlined in this response, we do not agree that it is possible to conclude on the basis of the current information that "*The removal of the internal wall will have a low impact on the Grade II listed building*" and "*that the proposal will not detract from the significance of the existing Grade II Listed structure*". We advise that there is presently insufficient understanding of the building and the wall proposed for demolition; that the proposal would appear to result in harm to/loss of significance; and for which there is no clear and convincing justification, and no public benefits.

We advise that the authority request the necessary additional information and justification so that the proposal can be reassessed. Should this not be forthcoming, we advise that the application be refused on the grounds that it is contrary to:

- the aim of Section 16(2) of the Planning(Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

and

- Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework, in particular paragraphs 195, 200, 201, 203, 205, 206, 208.

We trust that this response is helpful.

Joanne Needham

Casework Officer

(Usual working days: Mon, Tues, Wed)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY

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