

Heritage Statement

Ladyshawe House is grade two listed building dating from at least 1740. It is a three storey former farm house set below Bridge Street, New Mills, in a small cluster of buildings, primarily converted former farm buildings. It is most notable for its fine Georgian frontage, which is likely the main element of its heritage interest.

The floors on the first and second storeys are supported by timber beams. These are partially exposed and thus visible in the ceilings of the rooms below them. These appear to be of variable quality, and over time these have been subject to stresses, wear and tear and decay, and some are showing significant signs of cracking and, in some cases, bowing (illustrative photographs are appended to the application). Floors above them are in some cases 'sagging' and excessively 'springy'. As householders we were becoming increasingly concerned about this, and the safety implications, and engaged the services of a structural engineer. As can be seen from the engineer's report (appended to this application) he has recommended urgent remedial work.

As detailed on his plan (appended to the application), the engineer has recommended that six of the beams be strengthened with steel channels running on either side of their length, and into the walls at each end. It is recognized that steel would not have been a material available to the original builders of the house, and as such this work represents a departure from the original look. This is of course unfortunate, and we would very much rather it were not necessary, but it seems unavoidable given the nature and urgency of the remedial work required.

Consideration has been given to alternative approaches, but as is clear from the engineer's report that the recommended approach is the only practical solution that will deal with the immediate safety issues and meet the long-term structural needs of the building. It is clear from the report and discussions with the engineer, that other approaches would not provide the levels of structural support required, and, specifically, that concealing the steel supports in the ceiling voids would not be possible due to the limited size of the voids.

From a heritage perspective, the current approach has the merit of leaving the existing timber beams in place and intact (apart from holes for the bolts for the steel) and partially visible. We would be open to discussion to concealing the steel supports with 'boxing off' with sympathetic materials if this is felt to be preferable from a heritage perspective, though this would conceal the timber beams completely, which may not be desirable.

As custodians of this old property, we feel a strong obligation to preserve its heritage. We would not undertake such alterations lightly, but safety concerns seem to us to be paramount. Furthermore the improved structural support provided will enhance the structural integrity of the building and enhance its longevity.