

Sharon Craig

From: Joanne Needham <joanne.needham@spab.org.uk>
Sent: 11 March 2020 11:03
To: planning
Cc: Adrian Dowd
Subject: RE: 3/2020/0120 - Wiswell Eaves House, Wiswell, Lancashire - SPAB Response

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Dear Ms Eastwood,

Application ref: 3/2020/0120

Proposal: Application for listed building consent to remove pointing and to re-point with new lime pointing and to replace damaged stone mullion.

Address: Wiswell Eaves House, Pendleton Road, Wiswell, Lancashire, BB7 9 BZ

Our ref: SPAB/JN/156935/20

Thank you for notifying the SPAB of the above application. Having reviewed the application documents available on your Council's website we now offer the following advice.

Advice

The Society firstly wishes to commend the owners of Wiswell Eaves House for their endeavours to maintain the building in good condition and to undertake sympathetic repairs.

While we have not visited the site, we believe, based on the images included in the application, that the existing cement pointing is causing damage to the stonework. We therefore support the proposal to remove the existing cement and re-point in lime providing that i. trials are undertaken to determine that the existing cement can be removed without causing damage, and ii. that a suitable specification and method statement for re-pointing can be agreed by the Local Planning Authority. We offer the following technical observations and advice on the proposed specification and method of re-pointing -

The list description identifies the building as being of "Watershot sandstone". This relates to the way in which the walls are constructed - where stones in the external skin were angled to shed water from them (and the mortar joints were stopped back slightly from the wall face). This traditional method of construction is understood to have been used in areas of extreme wind driven rain such as Lancashire, Yorkshire and Cumbria.

It is not possible to determine from the application photographs if the walls of the house are indeed of "Watershot sandstone" but this is an important factor to establish in this case if the re-pointing is to proceed. Given that the rear of the building appears to have earlier origins/surviving fabric than the front (or at least there is one/some windows to the rear that is earlier than those on the front,) we would suggest that each wall is assessed individually to determine its method of construction which should then inform the pointing specification and method for both the mix and the type of joint for each wall. It will be important to establish if the joints originally finished flush or whether they were set back slightly to allow the ledges to shed the water.

Old photographs of the property (if there are any) may give an indication of its original/traditional pointing and finish. It may also be worth exploring if there is any local knowledge (or existing examples in the

vicinity) of this traditional construction and pointing before finalising the specifications and method statement.

We positively note that the supporting statement advises that mortar trials (incl. selection of suitable sand) are planned with the aim of finding the most suitable mix and finish. In this case we would advise going a step further - trying to find some original mortar from the walls (which can often survive in these cases) and have this sent off for analysis and matching. With regard to the current proposed specification for re-pointing - we have significant reservations about the use of an NHL 3.5 which we believe would be too strong in this case.

Turning to the proposal for the replacement of the mullion - it is not clear which of the two mullions is the subject of the application but we suspect the one on the right in the photograph included in the application supporting statement. It is evident that the stone is in a poor condition (made worse by the cement pointing and patching) however, it is very difficult to tell from the photograph whether it could be repaired or whether it needs to be replaced. We would advise therefore that the applicants engage the services of a specialist stone mason (who also specialises in mortar repairs) or a stone conservator to have a look and advise on whether the mullion can be repaired or if it needs to be replaced.

We hope that this response is helpful to both the local authority and the building owners. If needed, further technical advice can be obtained via the Society's Technical Advice Line which is a free, confidential service open to all (020 7456 0916. Weekdays 9.30am-12.30pm). The Technical Advice Line may also be able to suggest names of suitable craftspeople/specialists should this be needed.

With good wishes,

Joanne.

Joanne Needham
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(Usual working days: Mon, Tues,
Wed)

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