



Historic England

Mr Adrian Dowd
Ribble Valley Borough Council
Planning Department, Council Offices
Church Walk
CLITHEROE
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

Direct Dial: 01612421417

Our ref: L01350650

4 February 2021

Dear Mr Dowd

Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015

20-22 TALBOT STREET CHIPPING PR3 2QE Application No. 3/2020/0763

Thank you for your letter of 11 January 2021 regarding the above application for listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the application.

Summary

Brabin's House dates from c.1668 and is thought to be the oldest continually used shop in England. Original supporting structural beams over the living and dining rooms have been noted as suffering damage, with one beam showing excessive deflection to the point of now requiring local temporary propping.

We do not object to the principle of repairing the beams identified, however, we do have concerns over the proposed method, and recommend that alternative, less invasive options are considered instead. We also have some concerns that the proposals relating to the fenestration would result in the unnecessary loss of historic fabric.

Historic England Advice

Significance

No 20-22 Talbot Street or Brabin's House is a 17th century house and shop named after John Brabin, a philanthropic wool merchant from Chipping, and his affluence is evident in the quality of the architecture and craftsmanship. The building was Brabin's original shop and his home for a time, and is believed to be the oldest continually used shop in England.



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

Telephone 0161 242 1416
HistoricEngland.org.uk





John Brabin left a provision in his will, which established alms houses for the local poor, and education for the young. His legacy is still evident today in the Brabin's Trust which aims to provide affordable housing for the community and funding for education. Brabin's House remains a significant part of the village and community still serving as a shop, tea room and dwelling. The building has high historical and communal value as well as architectural interest.

The building is a vernacular two storey sandstone rubble building under a slate roof with a mix of fenestration to the front and rear. Internally it has a simple plan form; ground floor is divided into living room, dining room and study with kitchens located in rear extensions. Supporting the first floor are three structural timber beams spanning from front to back, these are understood to potentially be original to the 1668 construction.

The significance of the Brabin's House is recognised in its designation as a Grade II* listed building.

Impact

Structural Works

Beam 1, at the left hand end of the building on the submitted plans, has been overloaded, and as a result is suffering from excessive deflection and significant cracking.

It is proposed to rectify the issue through the complete replacement of the beam with steel and re-levelling of the floor. This would require much of the first floor structure to be removed, although much would be reinstated. It would also require the loss of the lower section of a surviving historic wattle and daub panel.

Beam 2, to the right of Beam 1 on plan, has been noted as showing some signs of diagonal cracking at mid-span, horizontal shakes and deflection, though not to the same extent as Beam 1.

Proposals look to remove and completely replace this beam with steel to ensure that it can carry the loads of partitions above and avoid further deterioration. Replacing Beam 2 would also allow for easier re-levelling of the first floor.

Beam 3, within the Dining Room to the right hand end of the building on plan, has suffered a large crack, though it is unclear whether this is historic or live.

Previous attempts to support the beam are evident in the wedges installed below, cantilevering out from the adjacent partition wall to add support to the beam above. These have suffered rotation and are no longer providing support.





Proposals are to install new steel below Beam 3 instead of the supporting wedges. This will have a limited impact on the surrounding fabric where new bearing will need to be provided for the steel beam.

Fenestration

The proposed works include the complete replacement of 5 windows and the renewal of substantial elements of a number of other windows.

Application is supported by a joinery inspection report and window schedule to understand the level of intervention. It was noted in the joinery report that overall, the condition of the timbers used in the windows *“was in a sound condition with only a few instances of rot/decay”*. However, it was also noted that a high proportion of windows were ill fitting and distorted.

The fenestration at Brabin’s House is of different ages and styles and so have differing levels of significance, therefore the proposed interventions will equally have differing levels of impact.

Damp Proofing Works

The scheme at Brabin’s House also includes proposals to remove areas of cementitious mortars and renders in various locations across the property, as well as the provision of new rainwater goods and a drainage run. These works are considered to have a beneficial impact on the long term preservation of historic fabric.

Policy

Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their settings or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess. Government guidance on carrying out this duty is set out in Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Paragraph 189 of the NPPF requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by proposals. This level of detail should be proportionate to the asset’s importance and where necessary appropriate expertise used to make this assessment.

Paragraph 193 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a heritage asset (which includes its setting), local planning authorities should give ‘great weight’ to preserving the asset’s significance.





Paragraph 194 of the NPPF states that any harm to, or loss of significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 196 states that where a development proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

Position

Structural Works

We do not object to the principle of repairing the beams identified. However, we do have concerns over the proposed method being put forward and the level of intervention the works would require to replace Beams 1 and 2.

The beams and first floor level floor structure are potentially part of the original construction and are therefore significant elements of historic fabric dating from 1668. We recommend that less invasive options be considered such as installing steels above the timber beams, taking the weight of the partitions and rendering them structurally redundant. The beams could then be retained in-situ by hangers from the new steels above (as suggested in Section 5.0 (2) of the Structural Report). Along with consideration of other options, we recommend that further analysis of the existing fabric is undertaken to establish its age and significance. This echoes advice we provided at pre-application stage.

We are content with the proposal to support Beam 3.

Fenestration

The general principle from our perspective is for minimal intervention. Replacement fenestration when not carefully considered can have a detrimental effect on a buildings outward appearance and its character. As the joinery report highlights that there is a high proportion of sound timber, with very few instances of rot, we therefore have concerns that the proposals would result in the unnecessary loss of historic fabric.

We would urge the LPA to ensure that they are satisfied that sufficient information and justification for the level of replacement and renewal instead of repair has been provided. If minded to approve that detailed scaled elevation and sectional drawings of the replacement windows are secured.

Recommendation



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

Telephone 0161 242 1416
HistoricEngland.org.uk





Historic England

Historic England has concerns regarding the application on heritage grounds.

We consider that the issues and safeguards outlined in our advice need to be addressed in order for the application to meet the requirements of paragraphs 189, 193, 194 and 196 of the NPPF.

In determining this application you should bear in mind the statutory duty of Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.

Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments, safeguards or further information as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Jones

Inspector of Historic Buildings and Areas

E-mail: Daniel.Jones@HistoricEngland.org.uk



SUITES 3.3 AND 3.4 CANADA HOUSE 3 CHEPSTOW STREET MANCHESTER M1 5FW

Telephone 0161 242 1416
HistoricEngland.org.uk



Historic England is subject to both the Freedom of Information Act (2000) and Environmental Information Regulations (2004). Any Information held by the organisation can be requested for release under this legislation.