

## Sharon Craig

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**From:** Joanne Needham <joanne.needham@spab.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 27 January 2021 11:47  
**To:** Adrian Dowd; Planning  
**Subject:** Re: NC2/3/2020/0763 - Brabins Shop and Gallery, 20-22 Talbot Street, Chipping, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 2QE - SPAB Response

**Categories:** Yellow Category

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Dear Adrian,

**Application ref: NC2/3/2020/0763**

**Address: Brabins Shop and Gallery, 20-22 Talbot Street, Chipping, Preston, Lancashire, PR3 2QE**

**Proposal: Application for listed building consent to undertake works to the building, insertion of replacement windows (like for like), replacement of roof coverings and the erection of new rainwater goods.**

**Our ref: SPAB/JN/163087/21**

Thank you for consulting the SPAB on the above application and for the extension of time in which to submit our comments. Having reviewed the documents available on your Council's website we now offer the following advice.

### **SPAB Advice**

The application has been considered by the Society's Casework Team and expert member (structural engineer) of the Society's Technical Panel.

The Society warmly welcomes the proposition to undertake works to rectify the structural problems at Brabins and the wider programme of repairs. We also wish to positively acknowledge the comprehensive suite of documentation provided with the application and the clarity with which the proposed works are set out.

On this occasion the Society wishes to concentrate its advice on just two aspects of the current application, namely the structural works and the windows.

Clearly, there is a high survival of historic fabric at Brabins, both internally and externally, and some of which appears to be of high significance. We recognise that the proposals are well intentioned and seek to retain and repair as much fabric as possible; however, we regret to advise that we are not convinced of the present proposals. We set out the reasons for our position below.

### ***Structural works***

The proposed works would be a significant intervention that would, unintentionally, result in considerable harm and loss. The structural failure is clear, and we do not question the need for intervention, we wonder however if a less harmful solution is possible.

From the information provided, we believe that the option of a bespoke vertical steel splice (installed from the underside) to strengthen and repair the existing beam (and gently raising the beam to straighten it out slightly) may be possible (and may be possible with minimal disruption). A similar repair might also be possible to the dining room beam. We strongly encourage that these options be fully explored.

We also strongly encourage significantly reducing the loadings on the first floor (including the removal of the very heavy water tank). These additional/increased loads appear to have been a factor in the failure of the floor which has survived some considerable time.

Notwithstanding the above, it is perhaps also worth noting that we also do not support the approach to clad and decorate modern interventions (in this case - the steel beams) to mimic the historic beams.

### ***Window Replacements***

The mixture of styles and ages of the joinery to Brabins is part of the building's special interest and we commend the applicant for not seeking to change this to create a uniform appearance which is often desired. We also positively acknowledge the commissioning of the joinery report which also considers the condition of the existing joinery. However, we are not presently convinced of the proposed replacements and the reasons given in justification thereof. We also note that the report advises that specialist window manufacturer would be needed for manufacturing new units and we wonder if appraisal of the existing units, with a view to conservative repair, would also be beneficial?

### **Summary**

We regret not to be able to offer a wholly favourable response to this application at this time, which is clearly very well intentioned.

In light of the harmful impact and loss resulting from the proposed structural works, we urge the authority seek an alternative engineering solution be explored (that repairs and strengthens the existing structure), and that further consideration be given to the possibility of the repairing more of the existing windows.

We hope that this response is helpful to the authority.

Regards,

Joanne.

Joanne Needham  
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Wed)

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