

To Will Hopcroft
From Joanne McKay – Growth Lancashire
Subject Conservation Comments
Date 20 March 2023

Ref: 3/2022/1159

Proposal: **Listed Building Consent for external repairs to right-hand (NE) gable comprising lining stone copings, replacement of chimney flashing, re-rendering, re-pointing and redecoration, internal re-plastering, redecoration and installation of extraction fan and ventilation, gutter and downpipe repairs.**

Site Address: **4 Alms Houses, Stydd Lane, Ribchester PR3 3YQ**

Site / Building / Location

The proposal site is part of two storey Almshouses constructed from brick and decorative Sandstone dressings including a truncated shaped gable, a first floor arcade of three semi-circular moulded arches and central flight of steps, curving outwards at the bottom. The sides and rear of the building is pebble-dashed and it has a stone slate roof. The property originally contained 6no. dwellings. In the late C20 was converted into 4no. apartments.

The site is located on the west side of Stydd Lane, set back within its own substantial gardens and is in a rural setting to the north-east of Ribchester and to the south and west of Stydd Brook and the west of Dudell Brook.

Designations

The proposal site is Grade II* Listed Building (GV) (List Entry: 1308488).

The proposal site lies within the Ribchester Conservation Area.

The proposal site lies within close proximity to the Grade II Listed:

Wellhead in Garden East of Almshouses (List Entry: 1362238)

Church of St Peter and St Paul (List Entry: 1308523)

Stydd Lodge, Presbytery to Church of St Peter and St Paul, and Attached Outbuilding (List Entry: 1072262).

Legislation

The principle statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is to preserve the special character of heritage assets, including

their setting. LPA's should, in coming to decisions, consider the principle Act, which states the following;

Listed Buildings - Section 66(1)

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall 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.

Planning Guidance and Policy

NPFF

In determining planning applications LPA's should take account of;

- a. The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b. The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

P.199 states that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be applied. This is irrespective of whether any harm is identified as being substantial, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Local Plan

Ribble Valley Borough Council - Core Strategy 2008 – 2028- A Local Plan for Ribble Valley:

- Policy DMG1: General Considerations
- Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets
- Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets

Assessment

I have reviewed the supporting documents, which includes the existing and proposed plans a Design and Accesses Statement and a Heritage Statement.

The key heritage issue for the LPA to consider is:

1. Whether the proposal would harm the significance of the listed building.

It is noted that the potential impacts of the work on either the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, or the impact to the setting of other nearby listed buildings, cannot be assessed under an LBC. These issues would be

considered as part of the assessment on a planning application. However, as the works are largely remedial works to the property, it is unlikely they will result in any harm, to the wider area.

The Proposal

The proposal seeks a range of interior and exterior works to remedy damp issues and damage to No.4 Alms Houses. The proposed works are focused on the right hand gable and relate to the rainwater goods, copings, render, pointing, ventilation and internal plasters. These include:

Gutters and downpipes

The gutters on the rear elevation are to be cleaned out; there is no intended works to replace or alter the material or colour of existing rainwater or waste system. However, if leaks are identified they will be repaired in accordance with cast iron rainwater goods manufacturer's recommendations. Any decoration is to be made good using black gloss paint.

Coping

The proposed works include the removal and marking of each coping (to ensure reinstated as original), to lay a lead damp proof course over the wall and dressed nominally down over uppermost edge of render, prior to reinstating the removed coping, which will be bedded and pointed in a lime mortar. Lead has been chosen as it is a traditional material, in keeping with the original building.

Additionally, the works involve the repair of the outermost stone edge with *Remmers Restoration Mortar System*, used for restoring, supplementing and re-profiling mineral substrates such as natural stone, brick, concrete and synthetic stone. Once fully cured, the final treatment will be to treat the entire stone surface with *Remmers Hydrophobic impregnation* (Remmers SNL for sandstone or SL for Limestone); the colour is to match existing. The proposed stone repair work will include the cutting out of all loose and damaged stone to achieve a sound load bearing substrate. Stainless steel dowels to be used where required and/ or temporary formwork for extra support.

Render

There is currently cracking within dashed render on west gable elevation noted as due to water ingress predominantly around junctions with verge copings. The proposal is remove the defective render around the cracks and replace render locally to match existing material, texture, and finish, assumed to be lime based and breathable. However, to ensure the correct mix and material used, specialised sampling of render is being obtained and recommendations will be followed.

Pointing

Where there are gaps evident between render and quoins/kneeler stones. It is proposed to cut back, make good and/or point around quoins where render sitting proud of the stone quoins. The proposed Chimney stonework pointing is to be NHL5 1:2 mix and the coping stonework pointing, NHL3.5 1:2 mix or NHL5 1:3

mix. Mortar mix to general brickwork 2 sand/1 grit: 1 NHL3.5 (i.e. 3:1 NHL3.5 mix). It is noted that the selection of sand is essential to the final colour.

Paint

The northeast gable elevation is painted, on completion of repairs the gable will be repainted using mineral based breathable paint system (keim) colour matched to existing.

Ventilation

Currently, the existing bathroom is unventilated and has secondary glazed windows, which is noted as increasing airtightness. As such, the proposal includes the installation of mechanical extract ventilation, to be vented through clay airbrick rather than modern flue.

Internal plaster

Internally, the proposed works include the repair of the plaster within the living room and rear bedroom, which has been damaged by the water ingress. The damaged plaster will be removed and replaced with breathable lime based plaster and paint system.

The proposals are described as, *'to minimise the possibility of damp within the property; essential for the continued use as a residence; the proposed methods will ensure that it has no adverse impact on the breathability of the existing structure and no adverse impact on the existing rear elevation'*.

Impact to the significance of the Grade II listed building*

The main issue from a conservation perspective is if the proposal causes any harm to the significance of the listed building. The significance of No.4 Alms Houses lies in its aesthetic and historic context; primarily evidenced in the building's fabric and architectural form/appearance and as former Alms Houses founded under the will of John Shireburne, who died in 1726. In this regard, as a Grade II* Listed Building it can be attributed as having high significance.

On viewing the submission documents including the proposed work details, methodology, materials and supporting photographs; it is evident that remedial works to address water ingress, and the damage caused as a result, is essential. I think the works, in this respect, are justified.

In regards to the gutters and downpipes on the rear elevation, these are to be cleaned out, which is appropriate maintenance. A regular maintenance routine provides an effective way to reduce issues and ensure longevity of the rainwater goods. Whilst there is no intended works to replace or alter the material or colour of existing rainwater or waste system, if leaks are identified repairs should be undertaken using traditional materials and techniques. I would not regard this work as repair and not requiring LBC.

The proposed works to remove the copings, lay new and increased lead flashings and replace existing copings; in my view is appropriate and beneficial work, which should have no impact on the character of the LB. However, the

submission provides no details as to how the copings are to be removed, marked and protected until they are relaid. I would prefer that the removal, marking and storage details are provided prior to the planning decision being made. However, these details can also be secured via a suitably worded (methodology) condition.

In relation to the proposed stone repair works, which involve the repair of the outermost stone edge of the copings. The system proposed is a mortar restoration system. On reviewing the D & A Statement against the proposed plans, it is unclear if the stone repair works relate to other areas of the property. Furthermore, on looking at the variety of specifications for the various preparation applications it is unclear if the proposed products (or some of) are concrete based products. As such, I would recommend further clarification of the individual preparation and finishing products is required.

Additionally, the submission documents do not provide any justification for the mortar repair approach or why this method has been selected instead of other more appropriate conservation techniques, including stone repair (i.e. pinning or indent repairs) or replacing the stone copings with like for like materials. There is no information (Condition survey) on the level of damage to the stone copings, or why they need repairs. This information would allow for a full assessment of the proposed works, materials and appropriateness of the proposed repairs. Whilst, I am not opposed in principle to this type of restoration product being used the preferred option would likely be the use of stone repairs or the replacement of badly damaged stone copings with like for like materials.

In respect of the removal of defective render and replacement (subject to sampling outcome), the proposal to replace with a lime render to match existing material, texture, and finish is satisfactory.

The repairs to the chimneys including lead flashings is acceptable.

The proposal to cut back, make good and/or point around quoins where render is sitting proud (to prevent water tracking behind render internally) with the NHL mortar mix described above is appropriate work.

On completion of repairs to the gable, the proposal to repaint using a Kiem mineral based breathable paint system; colour matched to existing is an appropriate solution that should allow breathability and any moisture to escape.

In regards to the proposed mechanical ventilation for the bathroom, whilst a new intervention, as noted above the works only result in the installation of a clay airbrick externally. The location of the proposed airbrick is on the rear of the listed building, which is rendered, and has modern alterations (windows) and is unremarkable in its design. The reason for the airbrick is understandable and will help moisture to escape the building. In my view, this would be seen as being only a very minor alteration that will only be viewed at close quarters and as such would cause no discernible harm to the building.

For the remedial internal works to the damaged plaster from water ingress, the proposed replacement with breathable lime based plaster and paint system is appropriate and beneficial work.

To conclude, subject to further details being submitted and/or the use of a suitable worded Condition I feel the proposed work is essential, appropriate and suitable repair works, that will help remedy the existing damp and water ingress issues within the building. In this respect, I feel the current proposals have been adequately justified and will be of benefit to the fabric and long term sustainability of the listed building. I am mindful that this should carry some weight in the LPA's planning balance.

Conclusion / recommendation

As I am required to do so, I have given the duty's imposed by s.66(1) of the P(LBCA) Act 1990 considerable weight in my comments.

Subject to further details and/or Conditions, largely the current proposal involves appropriate repair work, which would meet the statutory test 'to preserve', causing no substantive harm to the significance of the listed building.

As indicated above further information and clarification is required with regards the stone repair and/or restoration works proposed to the existing stone copings. I do not feel that this part of the proposals are adequately justified at present. I would like to see the background reports that specifies this type of restoration work/technique be used. It may be that a sample of the mortar restoration is provided by the contractor on a sample coping stone and made available for inspection, prior to a decision being made.

Alternatively if the LPA is minded to approve the application then I would suggest that a suitable worded Condition be used requiring a sample of the stone restoration technique to be provided and agreed prior to commencement on site.

Growth Lancashire

A: Suite 18, The Globe Centre, St. James Square, Accrington, BB5 0RE

T: 01254 304556

E: heritage@growthlancashire.co.uk

W: www.growthlancashire.co.uk