

Dear Nicola Hopkins

I submit concerns about the planning application number 3/2024/0071 and 3/2024/0072 affecting number 34 York Street, Clitheroe, BB7 2DL, namely the proposed works and detail submitted in the Construction Method Statement. The proposed method of preventing water ingress into the basement via "tanking" using a "**proprietary HDPE membrane system**", "finished with a dot and dab plasterboard finish", followed by a "**floor membrane laid over the existing slab**". These methods will undoubtedly cause irreversible damage to the historical fabric of the Grade II listed building and could cause damage to the adjoining, shared party walls with neighbouring properties. The internal basement may currently be plastered with a traditional lime plaster or may incorporate an original Georgian basement drainage system. These systems allow the building to breath and allow water ingress to be managed. Often these are covered over by inappropriate modern materials and air vents/coal holes bricked up etc prior to 1950 leading eventually to internal damp.

The property adjoins and shares party walls with other listed buildings in the terrace and on the adjacent road which may also feature the original Georgian or breathable lime plaster walls and may rely on the benefits seen by more traditional, sympathetic, breathable materials which offer great improvements to damp management in stone and masonry buildings, particularly listed buildings, built pre 1919.

My worry with incorporating HDPE membranes, floor membranes and non breathable internal wall insulations, particularly in damp cellars but also on the other internal party walls will cause damp problems to be exacerbated, especially if the neighbouring walls rely on traditional, tried and tested over centuries, breathable lime based systems. Not to mention the terrible long term damage caused by tanking solutions to the historic masonry foundations and timbers.

Fantastic further information on which can be found by consulting any historic building body such as Historic England, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, The Georgian Group, The Building Conservation Directory etc, etc or any competent historic building specialist builder/architect, or by consulting a conservation officer.

For example, [REDACTED] and a trustee of [REDACTED] when writing in The Building Conservation Directory, 2008 states specifically about damp cellars and the modern methods of "making them habitable" with impervious membrane systems:

"Concreting floors, blocking up windows and doorways, and removing or bricking-up flues can reduce air circulation and so increase condensation and reduce evaporation. Replacing floors with a **damp-proof membrane** and concrete overlay will **increase the amount of damp** in the surrounding walls, as they offer the most immediate escape route for ground water trapped below a new floor. **Wall linings** can have an effect on condensation and damp levels by reducing air flow against the walls of the cellar, and they also introduce the **added problem of rot** if, as often happens, a timber framework has been used and is in contact with wet walls or floors."

"The real problem with tanking is that unless it is carried out to the exterior of the fabric, the **damp remains in situ**. Furthermore, a **membrane applied to the inner face** relies on its adhesion alone to resist water pressure. Excessive water pressure can damage or lead to leaking of the membrane material, and any timber such as window frames, lintels, floor joists, skirtings and architraves all need to be wrapped or isolated from the remaining damp source to prevent an outbreak of wet or dry rot. Behind skirtings and other joinery, dry rot can progress un-noticed causing extensive damage, and must be prevented."

Furthermore The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings state when commenting on residential basement developments:

"The simplest and least intrusive approach is to **use a lime plaster on internal wall surface and a limecrete product to the floor**, provided that any features of special interest are retained and not harmed in doing so. However, it is also important to consider that excessive damp is often a

symptom of problems of water ingress and rather than treating the symptom the cause should be full understood and the appropriate action taken.

The SPAB does not support damp treatment methods such as chemical injection or cementitious tanking. **These impermeable 'solutions' are not compatible with traditional, permeable building materials as they do not allow for the passage of moisture through the building. It is likely that moisture will become trapped in the building's fabric or be displaced elsewhere."**

My concern, after consulting with various historic building conservation experts, conservation officers in other councils and researching information provided by the above professional bodies, is that using anything other than traditional lime based systems will exacerbate damp and cause major structural damage to the masonry and timber to the party walls in the neighbouring properties, [REDACTED] to such planning proposals either the construction method statement will need to be amended to reflect the above concerns or we will require [REDACTED] to cover any future masonry, timber and damp problems likely to arise in future as a result of the proposed works.

Yours sincerely,

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