

CW

Wendy Strangeway

From: planning@northyorkmoors.org.uk
Sent: 03 February 2016 15:20
To: Planning
Subject: Comments on NYM/2016/0010/LB - Case Officer Mrs C Ward - Received from Building Conservation at The Old Vicarage, Bondgate, Helmsley, York, YO62 5BP, Via Email: building@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Please see comments emailed on 3.2.2016 BD

Comments made by Building Conservation of The Old Vicarage Bondgate Helmsley York YO62 5BP
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Comment Type is Raise Concerns
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- 3 FEB 2016
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NYM/2016/0010/LB: Lowdale Hall, Sleights

The proposal to return the building to a single dwelling is welcomed. The associated work will remove low quality, piecemeal internal alterations and reinstate the original floor plan thus exposing, to a greater degree, the significance and legibility of this listed building.

The replacement timber windows to the rear elevation are not ideal but will enhance the appearance of the building and the replacement rear porch and internal screen to the entrance lobby will also constitute enhancements.

Despite the positive aspects of the application outlined above there are, however, elements of the proposals which raise concern. These are:

Internal lining

The applicant was advised at pre-application stage that the proposed lining was unlikely to be supported. The applicant has not satisfied this team that the insulation proposed is compatible with the natural performance of the building fabric. No details have been submitted concerning the technical construction of the system but from what was seen on site at pre-application stage the proposed system is not considered to be comparable to the breathability of masonry.

The concern is that the proposed system, which is being applied selectively, could cause areas of suppressed moisture which might build up and damage historic fabric or create conditions for unhealthy decay. There is considerable scope for cold bridging and cold spots in the installation detail supplied, around windows and doors, and the possibility of creating conditions for interstitial condensation. The implications are that the timber architraves and door linings which are in direct contact with the masonry may become damp and decay, as moisture levels in the wall build up.

Ideally the applicant should consider woodfibre insulation boards, which have a resistivity of c. 25MN s/g m (equitable to that of masonry) or the use of hemp-lime plaster, so that the insulation that is added directly to the wall is fully compatible with the wall and cannot facilitate trapped moisture or condensation.

The applicant cites an article that states that a different Local Planning Authority has authorised use of this system in a Listed Building. It should be noted that this Authority is not bound by the decisions of other Authorities, especially if it is felt that the decision was potentially flawed.

The application includes for the installation of secondary glazing to these rooms and pre-application advice given recommended that the applicant address the fact that there is currently no insulation in the attic spaces above. These measures will have a far greater impact on the thermal efficiency of the building than lining the walls and the applicant is advised to carry out these measures before deciding whether wall insulation is really required.

-3 FEB 2016

Rear and side doors

The proposed doors are very 'cottagey' and not appropriate for a building of this status. Four or six panelled doors with the top two glazed would be far more appropriate architecturally and would facilitate greater levels of light ingress than the doors proposed.

Fireplaces

It is disappointing that the advice offered at pre-application stage regarding appropriate style fireplaces for this age and style of property has been ignored. Again the proposed fireplace treatments are totally inappropriate for the architectural style of the house and do not even represent a vernacular style of fireplace that would be found in lower status dwellings in this area. The 'floating' mantel is a recent fashion that has no historical precedent. The existing fireplace in the Drawing Room, whilst modern, is more architecturally appropriate than what is proposed and as such the removal of this element of the proposals is recommended.

The existing fire in the Sitting Room is very poor quality in design terms and its removal to facilitate the opening up of the hearth behind is accepted. The 'floating' lintol however should be omitted and replaced with a simple timber mantel shelf or a traditional fire surround. The alternative would be to simply plaster the opening and leave it without a surround or mantel.

Render rear elevation

The rendering of the rear elevation is not supported as it would undermine the original architectural intent of the building and damage historic stonework. It would also obscure archaeological evidence within the wall that helps describe changes to the building over time and therefore informs our understanding of the building's evolution. Unless carried out using a pure lime the render would also likely lead to internal damp issues.

Ventilation grilles

Mechanical ventilation is supported as this will help minimise damp related issues within the building. There is concern, however, about the introduction of a ventilation grille to the main façade of this otherwise symmetrical elevation. As an alternative a slate roof vent should be utilised. This would necessitate the installation of internal ducting into the roof space which is itself a compromise but one that is considered to be less harmful to the architectural and historic character of the listed building than the grille proposed.

Please condition details of how secondary glazing will be fitted to avoid damage to historic architrave, slate to rear canopy to be submitted for approval and to be a geological match to slate on main roof, glazing to balustrade to be approved and all new joinery to outbuildings to be painted or dark stained within 6 months of the approval being granted to preclude enforcement action being taken. BD

APPROVED
- 3 FEB 2016