

Re: Plant Farm, Cross Lane, Ramsbottom, Bury, BL8 4LY

Application Ref: 70507

Proposal: Listed building consent for internal alterations to layout of main dwelling.

Statutory Remit: Historic Buildings & Places (HB&P) is a consultee on Listed Building Consent applications, as per the *Arrangements for handling heritage applications – notification to Historic England and National Amenity Societies and the Secretary of State (England) Direction 2021*. We are interested in historic assets of all types and all ages, including conservation areas and undesignated heritage.

Comments: Thank you for consulting HB&P on this application. We have reviewed the documentation available online and have concerns with this application which may harm the significance and architectural interest of this grade II listed heritage asset.

For context, para. 200 of the NPPF (2023) requires suitable information, justification and evidence be submitted in support of any application involving alterations to a listed building, as it is important that the application is informed by a thorough understanding of the existing structure and its fabric. Para. 205 goes on to state that “When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation”. And at para. 206: “Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.”

HB&P note the issues outlined in the timber report regarding the wormwood infestation. While the failed and damaged timber will need to be replaced, the application will need to be carefully conditioned, in collaboration with your conservation officer, to ensure on the necessary timbers are removed and it doesn’t become a blanket replacement of the historic timbers. A full recording should be undertaken and the existing timbers used as templates for the replacement beams and floors to ensure this is a like for like repair, and not a wholesale replacement and modernisation.

HB&P have concerns with the size of the opening of the wall between the kitchen and dining room. This is the exterior wall of the original 1739 house. Given the loss of much of the original timbers, as well as the harmful alterations in the

1970s/80s, the cumulative impact of these internal alterations would result in the loss of significant amount of historic building fabric. A more modest opening would be acceptable and would aid circulation while respecting the significance of the building.

The proposals relating to damp proofing are also a concern. The failure of the previous damp proofing measures, including the cementitious render, suggests it instead actually trapped moisture. Before proceeding, it is important to understand the origin and cause of the damp before applying solution to ensure the historic building fabric can continue to breath. Tanking risks trapping water within historic building fabric, often causing unintended decay and other problems in the future. Prevention, rather than cure would be the best approach.

The building is set on a hill and runoff is one of the causes. The render to the ground floor walls is also cement based, and it would be quite possible that other repairs saw the use of cementitious mortar, restricting the building's ability to breath. What options have been considered? A French drain at the rear would likely be advantageous. We suggest the applicant engage with an appropriate professional and your conservation officer to investigate and establish the cause of the issue and the best steps going forward, in accordance with the Historic England advice note on damp in buildings:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/technical-advice/buildings/damp-in-historic-buildings/investigation-of-moisture-and-its-effects-on-traditional-buildings/>

Policy: Chapter 16 of the NPPF (2023), particularly paragraph 205, that states: 'When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance'.

Section 16 (2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that, in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works 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.

Recommendation: Submission of amended plans and additional information to clarify/ justify the above design and conservation concerns.

Historic Buildings & Places – 07th March 2024