From: Swithenbank, Arne
Sent: 17 November 2020 08:55
To: Planning (SMDC)
Cc: Bayliss, Gillian
Subject: RE: FAO Arne Swithenbank Re: SMD/2020/0578 Edge End Farm, Buxton Road, Leek Staffordshire, ST13 8TG - SPAB Response

From: Joanne Needham <>
Sent: 16 November 2020 18:13
To: Planning (SMDC) <Planning@staffsmoorlands.gov.uk>
Cc: Bayliss, Gillian <>
Subject: FAO Arne Swithenbank Re: SMD/2020/0578 Edge End Farm, Buxton Road, Leek Staffordshire, ST13 8TG - SPAB Response
Importance: High

Dear Mr Swithenbank,

Application ref: SMD/2020/0578
Site Address: Edge End Farm, Buxton Road, Leek Staffordshire, ST13 8TG

Proposal: Proposed raised ridge height of listed farmhouse in correlation with Listed Building app SMD/2019/0480
Our ref: SPAB/JN/161719/20

Thank you for notifying the SPAB of the above application. Having reviewed the application documents on the Council's website I now write with the Society's advice.

SPAB Advice

Information and justification for the proposed works: While the reason for the proposal is argued on the grounds of a structural need, no structural report has been included in the application documentation. Similarly, while a drawing titled 'Internal Elevations As Proposed' has been provided, no 'As Existing Sections' (or 'As Existing Internal Elevations') have been provided and therefore a comparison, and a complete assessment of the proposals, cannot be made.

We positively note the inclusion of a Heritage Statement in the application, however, the assessments of the building's significance and special interest, and impact of the proposed works, are very limited indeed. The statement is largely just a commentary of the proposed works. Additionally, the Heritage Statement used in this application appears to be the same as that which was used in the 2019 application. This in itself would not be a problem if the statement provided the requisite information in respect of the building's significance, the significance of the fabric/areas/historic plans affected by the proposed works, and a proper assessment of the impact of those works.

Proposed works: Given that a structural report has not been included in this application we have reviewed that which was submitted as part of the 2019 application. It would be helpful if the applicant/agent could clarify if the structural report prepared by Chris Pike Associates (November 2018) is to be used to support the proposed works. If the structural report submitted as part of the 2019 is to be used for this application, then we comment as follows -

The structural report by Chris Pike Associates (November 2018) offers two options for the roof in their Recommendations. It is not clear why the less invasive option of those two recommendations is not being pursued in this application. The chosen option (as set out in this application SMD/2020/0578) not only involves a new roof structure but also the introduction of blockwork walls to the interior of the farmhouse. This would result in harm to the building which it appears could be avoided if a different approach is adopted. We therefore advise that the applicant adopt an alternative approach and a less invasive and harmful solution. However, if the applicant wishes to continue to pursue the current proposals, we advise that the local authority request additional information and justification from the applicant/agent to demonstrate why an alternative and less harmful solution is not possible.

General: We note that the authority's specialist conservation advisor believes unauthorised works have been undertaken at the property including considerable stripping out of the interior. The SPAB was alarmed to see the state of the interior in the photographs that have been including in the supporting documents. We are also alarmed by a number of the proposals (including the lifting of historic floors, replacement of the existing staircase, and partial underpinning) and do not believe that either i. sufficient information and justification has been provided for many works, and/or ii. some of the works are not considered appropriate either technically and/or for their harmful effect on the building's significance and special interest.

Summary and Recommendations:
We regret that we are unable to support the current application but cannot do so for the reasons outlined above. We strongly advise that the local authority seek a less invasive and harmful solution with the applicant and their advisors. Should the applicant wish to continue to pursue the proposals set out in this application we advise that the authority request the requisite additional information and justification. The Society would be pleased to review this application again once additional information, justification and/or revisions are received.

Should the local authority wish for the SPAB to comment on the 2019 application (which we understand has not yet been determined) and the wider proposals - please could you advise accordingly.

We trust that this response is helpful.

Regards,

Joanne.

Joanne Needham

Casework Officer

(Usual working days: Mon, Tues, Wed)

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY

Please send all notifications of listed building consent applications, faculty applications or requests for pre-application advice tocasework@jcnas.org.uk

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