

FAO Sharon Holman, Wrexham Borough Council.

By email: sharon.holman@wrexham.gov.uk

1st September 2017

Your ref. P/2017 /0671

Our ref. 34026.

Dear Sharon,

Conversion of barn into an residential use at Esclusham Hall Farm, Wrexham.

Thank you for notifying the SPAB of the application to convert the Grade II listed barn at Esclusham Hall Farm. Whilst we have not had an opportunity to visit the site, we have studied the documentation provided online and would like to provide the following comments.

It is our understanding that this application seeks consent for minor amendment to the approved application. We would like to take this opportunity to provide comments on the technical detailing and specification in executing the work. We have some strong concerns at some of the proposed methods for upgrading this building could be hugely damaging to historic fabric and character of the space.

Firstly, we would strongly object to the proposed new concrete slab and floor build. The application does not state if there is a historic floor covering in situ or if it is bare earth. Instead of the concrete slab the applicant should consider the use of a limecrete floor as this will continue to allow the building structure to breathe in the traditional manner, thus avoiding future issues with moisture and damp being displaced to the perimeter of the wall and affecting the lower sections of the masonry and internal plaster.

Additionally, the thermal upgrading of the walls and roof will also require great care to ensure that the chosen materials and techniques do not trap moisture within the fabric. There is a substantial risk of interstitial condensation occurring if the materials are not specified appropriately. Further advice on responsible approaches to upgrading the fabric of older properties can be found on the following websites and we strongly recommend that the applicant and agent make use of these resources if they have not done so already:

- SPAB: <https://www.spab.org.uk/advice/energy-efficiency/>
- Sustainable Traditional Buildings Alliance (STBA): <http://stbauk.org/>
- Responsible Retrofit Knowledge Centre: <http://responsible-retrofit.org/>
- English Heritage: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/your-home/saving-energy/guidance/>

In this instance, a more traditional lime based finish instead of the dry lined system could be more suitable as this will also aid the breathable nature of the walls and help to reduce any long term damp issues. A dry lined system will also seriously impact the character of the internal space.

THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF ANCIENT BUILDINGS
37 Spital Square London E1 6DY Telephone 020 7377 1644 info@spab.org.uk



We are supportive of the principle of converting this barn into but feel that there are a number of details which need revisiting in order to protect the historic fabric. We trust that our comments are helpful to you. Please let us know the outcome of this application in due course.

Yours sincerely

Mr Elgan Jones BA(Hons) DipArch ADDPPA RIBA AABC
Casework Officer (Wales) *Email: casework@spab.org.uk*