

# BREAR ASSOCIATES

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Our Ref.: 2016-34/sb

25<sup>th</sup> September 2019

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## **For the attention of James Kirkham**

Dear James

### **North Arms Pub, Mills lane, Wroxton, 19/01148/F and 19/01149/LB**

Thank you for your email of 16<sup>th</sup> August. We have taken some time to review our design and proposals to try and accommodate all comments made by neighbours, yourself and the Conservation Officer. I have answered the points raised in your email and in the Conservation Officers report below:

#### **Extraction**

We have taken some time to look at the design of the extract system and can now confirm some details of the system. We have redesigned the kitchen equipment layout to reduce the scope and size of extract required. By doing this we believe it is just possible to accommodate the extract ducts into the flue of the gable chimney and take them to the terminate at the top of the stack. Two ducts are required however there are two flues available within the chimney breast.

The existing wall will be opened and the ducts will be inserted into the flues. This can be done from the top feeding them down to the required level. The exact and finished size of the ducts will be confirmed in the detailed design, but initial calculations show two ducts size 315mm dia will be adequate. The two extract ducts will then extract a high level avoiding any unnecessary inconvenience to the adjoining properties.

Intake air will be achieved by using the two proposed louvred dormers. These have also been adjusted to a steeper roof pitch. The roof of each inlet dormer will be finished with slates to match the main roof covering with the gable occupied a painted louvre. It was intended to use opening windows for air intake however using the roof detail means the windows can be kept shut reducing any kitchen noise to neighbouring properties.

I would expect the detailed design of the kitchen extract system to be subject to a condition beyond the detail provided above and on the revised drawings.

### **Smoking Shelter**

The existing smoking shelter is not fit for purpose, stands too close to the boundary with the neighbouring house and is within metres of the building. You cannot view the rear elevation without the timber shelter dominating that view.

As there are no legislative requirements for a smoking shelter to be provided, we have therefore decided to remove the provision of a smoking shelter completely from the scheme. The proposed new shelter has been omitted from the scheme design. Should customers demand a shelter then this would be subject to further and separate application in the future.

### **Ecology Report**

I forwarded the report immediately to you upon our receipt of the survey findings and at that time had not had the opportunity to review the findings and recommendations.

The report makes several recommendations which we will adopt as far as possible.

The proposed specification of the replacement roof of the stable and annexe has been revised to remove breathable sarking membrane and introduce a Type 1F bitumen felt sarking. The concept of a bat void for the full length of the stable roof is though more difficult to achieve as the design was intended to be open to the ridge and leave the existing timber trusses exposed. The ecology report wants a void forming at the ridge of the roof.

The preference is to provide a void above the annexe roof only. The mono pitched roof here is simpler to achieve and will not compromise the proposed scheme design. A flat ceiling will be installed above the kitchen and cold store, accessible with a lockable hatch from within the kitchen. An MF ceiling is proposed. This will not be suitable for storage above and would therefore meet the requirements for the bats to have 'quiet enjoyment' of the space. It will be possible to leave entry and exit points to this roof void at the eaves underneath the profile of the new roof sheeting.

The report recommends the provision of bat boxes and bird nesting boxes. Reference is made to these being positioned on the mature trees. The site does not have any significant or enough mature trees to accommodate the number of boxes proposed. We will work with our Ecology Consultant to position an adequate number of boxes within the grounds of the North Arms and any over and above could be located on trees in the grounds of the College on the opposite side of the road.

## **Conservation Officer report**

### **Disabled WC**

We are happy the proposed design complies with Part M of the Building Regulations. The cubicle meets the minimum size requirements of Pt M. The door width complies with the regulations. The minimum 1500 x 1500 turning space in front of the WC is achieved.

### **Door to street and inner doors**

These will align as the Conservation Officer report. The drawing has been adjusted and annotated to avoid any ambiguity. The external doors are to be used for fire exit only. These would however have been entrance doors at one time.

No new window openings are proposed. The section has been updated to clarify.

The internal partition will be glazed. I propose the design and detail of this should be subject to condition.

There already is a sign on the exterior of the door directing customers to the rear of the building.

### **Internal partitions**

The layout of the second floor has been revised. Using the chimney flues for the extract system means there is no space to drop the soil pipe to ground floor level within the flue nor use that chimney to accommodate the boiler flue pipe. The comments regarding the chimney and office partition position at second floor have been resolved by the redesign.

### **Historic walls at first floor**

By down stand beam we assume the Conservation Officer wishes the head plate of the stud wall to be retained. The drawings have been amended to record this. We do believe this will leave an awkward and poor detail at ceiling level, but the detail is too inconsequential to cause further delay to the scheme.

### **Ceilings**

There are no proposals to alter the existing window arrangement. The window will remain obscured and obstructed at first floor level and open to the existing detail at ground floor level. There is no need for a condition as we are not proposing any change.

### **Historic timber floors to first floor and second floor**

There are no proposals to overboard any part of the first floor. The proposal at first floor is to carefully take up the boards, to allow access to the joist, level the top of the joists using timber firings, lay a T&G board to the joists and then to relay the existing historical boards as the finished surface. This will ensure the open joints between the older butt joint boards will be sealed and will prevent anything dropping into the floor void through the open joints. This surely does not need to be conditioned as the proposal is clear and we cannot confirm the proposal in any other way.

At second floor level the plan is to level the floor by leaving the existing historical boards in place. The risk of damaging the existing boards by lifting them is too great because of the bow in them. The floor has sunk here badly here due to the failure of the support under the first floor ceiling below. It is necessary to level the floor to make it safe to use. There are no plans to insulate the second floor just simply overboard on battens to create a level floor with levels set out from the staircase door. No existing doors would then need to be adjusted or affected by the work.

### **Staircase from ground floor to first floor**

We are happy for the detail design of the balustrade to be subject to condition.

### **Stair from first floor to attic**

The under-stair cupboard is to be locked off and the door sealed. This is the preferred detail to prevent rubbish and other goods being stored under the only staircase from the second floor. This is the only means of escape and interventions could have to be more intrusive to the staircase if we don't create the fire protection via the partition line. If the underside of the staircase is accessible, then the staircase itself would have to be upgraded to achieve the prescribed fire resistance.

The less intrusive detail, in our opinion is to undertake minimum work to the staircase and close off the cupboard. We are happy with the detail being subject to condition.

### **M&E Services**

We note the recommendation regarding the use of wood burning stoves. The chimneys have already been raised in height. The flues appear to have been lined however any new installation will be in full accordance with HETAS regulation and will include the provision of new flue liners.

### **Boiler flue**

The term cut into the existing flue refers to creating an opening into the flue and nothing more.

The Heritage Report contains a grainy photo looking up Mills Lane from the Duck Pond. It is not clear if the chimney referred to is on the pub or the adjoining house. Both parts of the two buildings have been rebuilt.

There is however no need to erect a further chimney on the boundary to Woodcote. The boiler has now been relocated to the opposite end of the second floor and we will use one of the two unused flues in the central stack for the boiler flue. It should also be noted that there is not enough space in the new kitchen to accommodate the boiler.

### **Stack for WC**

We have chosen to remove the staff WC from the second floor. The principal reason to run the soil pipe in the former chimney flue was for the drop to ground floor rather than for the

ventilated element of the stack. The stack could have been fitted with an admittance valve above the height of the basin.

The use of the chimney flues on the gable for the kitchen extract means the potential to use them for the soil pipe has been eliminated. The only other option would be a surface fixed stack inside the building or a new external stack. Neither offers a good solution. There is no easy way to drop a soil stack down within the unused flues of the central chimney stack.

A sink is still proposed at second floor level for beverage making and washing up. The waste for this is easier to accommodate. We must retain the existing stack that is on the rear (garden) elevation. This will be changed to cast iron pipe rather than the existing plastic pipes.

### **Mechanical extraction for WC's**

The new extract outlet proposed to the gable wall above the North Arms sign has been deleted from the project. This is no longer required because the second floor WC has been deleted from the scheme.

### **Electrical work**

We note the preference to reuse existing chases. The building has been rewired in the last 40 years and is mostly uPVC sheathed cabling. It is almost impossible to pull new cables through the metal cable conduit underneath the plaster without risk of damage to the sheathing protecting the new cables. In the case of lighting circuits, the cables may well be bigger than the existing cables as modern cabling also contains an earth whereas the older plastic cabling often did not. We have no intention of cutting numerous new chases into the existing plaster because the respective making good of any chases never achieves a satisfactory wall finish. New chases will only be cut where necessary to provide a suitable provision of outlets to suit the requirements of a modern facility.

### **The Barn/Stable**

We are happy for conditions to be applied to the roof detailing. The requirements of the ecology report to have a non breathable sarking means the detailing of the roof cladding requires further design attention.

We are happy for the floor finishes in the main stable to be subject to condition.

We don't quite understand where the Conservation Officer suggests the cobbles should be reused. There are not enough stones to relay them within the stable. Cobbles create an uneven surface which is unsuitable for disabled, elderly or any one with walking impairments and thus would not be suitable for the bar, dining areas or toilets in the main building.

### **Doors/windows**

We are happy for these to be subject to conditions.

## **Nesting Boxes**

We have not opened any nesting boxes and believe these have been left to decay and deteriorate being within what must have been a vehicle garage more recently. We are happy for these to be subject to condition.

## **Landscaping**

No plans have been proposed for landscaping. It is not intended to undertake any landscaping of the gardens.

## **Fencing**

Comment noted. This detail is of little design or functional importance. The fence will be as suggested by the Conservation Officer. The drawings have been amended accordingly.

## **Recommendations**

### **Main Building**

We are happy to agree to most of the recommendations made by the Conservation Officer to insert conditions into any consent however we cannot agree to all the recommendations as follows;

### **Recording**

The building has been fully recorded in a comprehensive Heritage Report which has been prepared to the standard of a Level 1-2 'Understanding Historic Building', see page 4 paragraph 1.4 of the Heritage Assessment report. We don't see what purpose a second report prepared to the same methodology as our Heritage Assessment would achieve other than record the same data again. We cannot agree to this as a condition.

### **Damp and decay**

We cannot agree to this as a condition. It is our responsibility to design and specify the scope of the building work and we would as a matter of course refer to specialists where such advice is required. We do not agree to being forced to appoint a company who may not be required.

### **Paint Removal to beams and fire back**

We agree a sample panel should be subject to condition.

### **Timber beam repair area I/J**

We agree this should be subject to condition.

### **Internal partition walls**

We do not agree to all the conditions being imposed.

The new lining to the timber post in area C is to replace the rough softwood timber that has been fixed to a remedial steel post. The post does not define a passageway. We believe the Conservation Officer has misread the drawings and is referring to the posts in Area D. These are not being lined or clad. Only the post Area C is to be reclad. No condition is required.

New internal partitions to toilets – the new walls are specified to be stud walls. The only partition proposed to be masonry, which will be freestanding and could easily be removed in the future are those to the disabled toilet cubicle. These need to be more durable to adequately carry the grab rails. Our preference for these partitions only is to use blockwork built off the new floor slab. Stud walls with boarded finishes are unreliable.

Down stand beams to cross passage – as this will involve simply leaving the sawn timber head plate of the partition then does this really need to be subject to condition?

### **Ceilings**

Ceilings are to be repaired already on a like for like basis. Many of the ceilings have already been replaced with plasterboard. We do not agree to paint finishes being subject to any condition. Such a condition would be pointless and at first redecoration would not be applicable.

### **Plaster**

If a room does not have any historic plaster then we object to the need to use historic plaster. The property is grade 2 listed only and whilst we agree and have always planned and proposed to repair using appropriate heritage materials, we cannot be forced to remove modern finishes. We do not agree to any conditions being imposed that would force reinstatement of materials that do not match existing.

### **Floors**

Is a method statement really required to remove a concrete floor?  
Does the Conservation Officer really want a sample of the latex flooring material to be used as preparation for a vinyl floor finish?  
Conditions related to the repair of timber floors are acceptable as this is significant fabric repair.

### **Joinery**

Conditions related to the joinery are acceptable subject to consent not being withheld unreasonably.

### **Ironmongery**

The proposed condition is acceptable and what we would have intended anyway.

### **Repointing**

Condition related to pointing and masonry are acceptable and expected.

## **RWG's**

Most will not be replaced and will be simply repainted and cleaned out. We accept a condition related to materials being on a like for like basis. There is no intent to use plastic or modern materials.

## **Fire proofing**

We accept this condition subject to any approval not being unreasonably withheld.

## **Decoration**

We strongly object to any condition being imposed related to the interior colour scheme.

We fully accept and would expect a condition to be imposed related to any external colour scheme.

## **M&E**

Toilet extract to second floor now omitted.

We do not recognise where the vent axia referred to is located unless this refers to the one in the bar then this is existing. There are no proposals to remove this.

## **Structural**

The tie rods are existing. We need to lower them because currently at least one rod runs partly above the floor level in area G/H. This cannot be retained in that position because it would be a trip hazard to staff and customers. There are no plans to install any additional tie rods. Existing endplates are to be reused.

The drawings refer to new tie rods because the threaded rods itself will be new, but the end plates will be the existing ones reused.

## **Signage**

We assume this refers to any external signage to which we have no objection to being conditional. There are no plans to replace or install a new external signage.

We do not agree to any internal building signage being subject to condition.

## **Barn**

## **Recording**

See comments regarding main building. This level of recording has already been done.

## **Ecology**

Agree to conditions suggested



**Paint removal**

Agree to suggested condition

**Repointing/masonry**

Agree to suggested condition

**Structural**

Agree to suggested condition

**Joinery details**

Agree to suggested condition

**RWG**

Agree to suggested condition

**Roofing**

Agree to suggested condition

**Floor**

Agree to suggested condition

**Condition landscaping**

No landscaping is proposed. We have revised the proposals for the short section of fencing, see attached drawings.

**Smoking Shelter**

Now omitted from the project.

With the small changes and clarifications referred to above we have revised the drawings accordingly and therefore enclosed the following updated drawings:

- 04G Proposed Ground Floor Plan
- 05G Proposed First Floor plan
- 06D Proposed Elevations
- 07D Proposed Barn
- 08B Proposed site plan and drainage
- 09B Section AA
- 10B Section AA
- 11F Proposed Second Floor Plan

We trust the above and the updated drawings will now satisfy all the comments received related to the application and consents can be progressed for the scheme.

Yours sincerely



Stephen Brear  
**Brear Associates Ltd**