Conversion of existing buildings at Crow Edge

1. Introduction and Principles

The buildings were surveyed by C. T. surveys. Drawings Nos 2014CT/3 and 2014CT/2 are relevant and included in the application.

Planning Policy GS8A required that any building proposed for conversion is structurally sound and capable of conversion without the need for substantial alterations. This report deals with the current condition of the building and issues arising from its conversion and rehabilitation.

2. General Description

The buildings form an L shaped and consist of attractive, probably mid to late C18, stone barn areas and former residences. The former residential areas occupy the ends of the L shaped block with barn areas linking the two units.

The main arm of the L shape is 9.5m x 28.5m and the smaller area is 5.3, x 18.5m.

The walls are generally in coursed stone approximately 500mm thick and mainly with rubble or compacted earth floors at ground level. The buildings are mainly 2/3 stories high with a main roof ridge height of approximately 9 m.

The buildings have been unused for some time and, in spite of some disrepair and lack of maintenance, are in remarkably sound condition given the age and neglect. The properties were acquired mainly as part of a general land purchase for mineral rights but now are to be refurbished as residences. The condition of the walls is probably due to initial sound construction on good building ground and the open nature of the buildings has vented the building to the benefit of main timber elements.

3. Walls – General Description

The walls are generally in good condition, straight and true with no significant fractures or faults. Guttering generally is missing and re-pointing is required in most areas.

a) North Elevation.

All main wall areas are in sound condition and all window openings are without failure.

b) East Elevation

The masonry is generally sound and the main arch feature to the central barn is in good order. A stone mullion is missing from the first floor window to the left hand dwelling. All openings and lintels are undamaged. A stone staircase to the outside of the right hand dwelling has been removed for safety reasons but will be restored.

c) South Elevation

The 3 storey element has been partly slate hung on battons. This may have been an issue of historic damp penetration but will disappear on re-pointing, adequate heating and other modern methodology if required. The masonry is sound with all lintels undamaged but slight damage to some cills on this element. The masonry is sound overall but timber lintels to some areas will be replaced.

d) West Elevation

Some battens and slates are also evident on the right hand house element but the same comments above apply. All masonry is without structural fault. The ground floor door opening to the central barn will require rebuilding internally as the inner skin has been damaged. A small area of render is also present.

4. Roof

The roof is of traditional stone slate on timber sub structure. No sarking felt or insulation is present.

The barn area roof features King Post roof trusses which appear sound and the balance of other timber primary roof timbers throughout are largely intact and appear satisfactory probably because the roof skin is mainly still in place, although some 10% of the tiles are loose or missing overall. On conversion a closer detailed examination will confirm initial observations.

The roof will require re-tiling with recovered or replacement stone tiles felted on new battons with insulation to modern standards. The height of the ridges will be unaltered. All rain water pipes and gutters will be renewed as part of the repairs.

5. Floors

The residential elements have retained internal floors in timber which appear structurally sound but will probably require repair or replacement and insulation. New solid floors will be required to the barn elements

Conclusion

A visual inspection confirms that the building is capable of economic restoration and that the bulk of the building is structurally sound. Repair and rebuilding as necessary can be achieved with normal scaffolding and building techniques. Only small areas of new masonry are required (to the utility space of unit 3) as this space is only partly standing. No major demolition is required.

The building will require effective damp proofing and elements of new floors. The walls will be upgraded to meet modern thermal performance standards as far as practical and within Building Regulations requirements.

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