

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

CASE OFFICER: ...Mark Simmons.....

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/01237/LBC	Replace 20no. windows (18no. single-glazed and 2no. double-glazed - W6 & W7) with 4:4:4 double-glazed, hardwood framed windows	Walnut Tree Farm Luffenhall Luffenhall Stevenage Hertfordshire SG2 7PX

Submitted Plan Nos

20079-P005 20079-P006A 20079-P007 20079-P008 20079-P009A 20079-S005A 0079-S006

HE1 Designated heritage assets

SECN16 Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 **Site History**

2.1 The full planning history can be viewed on file and only a selection of recent applications is provided below:

22/01720/FPH - Single storey rear extension together with internal and external alterations to farmhouse. Internal and external alterations to curtilage-listed outbuilding including replacing existing corrugated roof sheeting with natural slates, replacement windows and new boarded entrance door (as amended by plans received on 15/03/23 and 17/03/23).

CP 21.03.2023

22/01721/LBC - Single storey rear extension together with internal and external alterations to farmhouse. Internal and external alterations to curtilage-listed outbuilding including replacing existing corrugated roof sheeting with natural slates, replacement windows and new boarded entrance door (as amended by plans received on 15/03/23 and 17/03/23)

CCON 21.03.2023

24/01063/LBC - Remove existing cementitious render followed by applying a lime-based render onto wood fibre board with an embedded fibre mesh.

CCON 23.07.2024

3.0 **Policies**

3.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of the NPPF (2023 version):

- ☐ 200 (local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting)
- ☐ 203 (desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness),
- ☐ 205 (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation),
- ☐ 206 (clear and convincing justification), and
- ☐ 208 (harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use).

4.0 **Representations**

4.1 **Clothall with Luffenhall Parish Meeting** – No comments received.

Press & site notices – No comments received.

5.0 **Planning Considerations**

5.1 **Site & Surroundings**

- 5.1.1 Walnut Tree Farmhouse is grade II listed and is a Designated Heritage Asset for the purpose of applying the aims of the NPPF. The list entry reads as follows:

Farmhouse. C15-16 hall house with a jettied cross wing on S side. Floor and stack inserted in C17. Timber frame. Roughcast walls. Weatherboarded plinth. Plain tile roof. 2 storeys. 3 wood glazing bar casements. Large square stack on front slope of roof. Plank door to right of stack with an early C19 moulded frame and segmental hood. 2 box casement dormers. Right return gable end has C18 chequered red brick ground floor. Beyond this is a C17 rear wing in the gable end stack. The left return gable end has a late C18 external stack. The interior ground floor wall behind this stack shows large curved tension braces and a heavy chamfered floor beam. Curved brackets to jetty.

5.2 **Proposal**

- 5.2.1 The proposal is ***'Replace 20no. windows (18no. single-glazed and 2no. double-glazed - W6 & W7) with 4:4:4 double-glazed, hardwood framed windows'***.

5.3 **Key Issues**

- 5.3.1 Energy performance of listed buildings is normally at the forefront of several applications for listed building consent recently and each case is considered on its own merits. The key issue here is to consider the impact of the proposed replacement windows on the special character of this grade II listed building. With reference to Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the following should be noted: *"In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special interest or historic interest which it possesses".*
- 5.3.2 Windows are often a significant feature of listed buildings. They strongly contribute to a building's interest and appearance. Any changes can noticeably alter how the building and area looks. There is much by the way of guidance provided by local planning authorities which discourages the installation of double-glazed windows into listed buildings and whilst North Herts does not have specific guidance on this matter, it is important that the following are considered when considering replacement of windows:
- ☐ Evidence of craftsmanship
 - ☐ Use of old or rare materials
 - ☐ Detail of design

If the existing windows contribute positively to the building's special character and the frames are capable of repair, this should normally be the way forward.

5.3.3 Historic England's general approach to the alteration or replacement of windows is set out below:

1. Where historic windows, whether original or later insertions, make a positive contribution to the significance of a listed building they should be retained and repaired where possible. If beyond repair, they should be replaced with accurate copies.

2. Where historic windows have already been replaced with windows whose design follows historic patterns, these usually make a positive contribution to the significance of listed buildings. When they do, they should therefore be retained and repaired where possible. If beyond repair, they should be replaced with accurate copies.

3. Where historic windows or replacement windows of historic pattern survive without historic glass it may be possible to introduce slim-profile double-glazing without harming the significance of the listed building. There are compatibility issues to consider as the introduction of double-glazing can require the renewal of the window frame to accommodate thicker glazing, thereby harming significance. These issues are covered in Section 4 of this guidance.

4. Where historic windows have been replaced with ones whose design does not follow historic patterns, these are unlikely to contribute to the significance of listed buildings. Replacing such windows with new windows of a sympathetic historic pattern, whether single-glazed or incorporating slim-profile double-glazing, may cause no additional harm. It also provides an opportunity to enhance the significance of the building, which is the desired outcome under national policy.

5. Where a new window or re-glazing is agreed, the reflective properties of secondary and double-glazing as compared to modern, polished single-glazing, do not usually harm the significance of the building. But when new multi-paned windows are proposed, the desirability of reproducing broken reflections by individually glazing each pane should be considered. Where the aesthetic value of the building is high, then the impact on the whole of the relevant elevation should be considered, including the desirability of accurately matching other windows.

5.3.4 The HE guidance describes that assessing the significance of a window and understanding the contribution it makes to the significance of the building is the key first step in deciding the correct approach to any alterations or upgrading. Where historic fenestration survives, HE explains that it is often an irreplaceable resource that should be conserved and repaired wherever possible. It describes how to determine the architectural and historic significance of windows so that decisions about altering them can be made in an informed way.

Impact on the listed building

5.3.5 On 15 December 2022, I commented under refs: 22/01720/FPH & 22/01721/LBC. At 4.6 of my consultation comments, I stated:

“replacing windows in listed buildings is not that straightforward. Nearly all of the windows at the property are single-glazed and most contribute positively to the building's special character Some may be late C19 but I would suggest the majority are probably C20 windows. The exception being 3no. three-light, double-glazed casements with applied glazing bars to the kitchen (one of which is due to be removed to make way for the extension). There is no record as

to when these windows were installed but they clearly post-date listing and I can only but assume that they are unauthorised."

5.3.6 At 4.7 of the same comments I stated:

In my opinion, wholesale replacement of windows (even with a slimlite system for which no details are provided) would occasion some harm to the listed building albeit less than substantial. I would be prepared, however, to accept their limited use as follows:

- ☐ *Replacing the unauthorised kitchen windows;*
- ☐ *New extension windows;*
- ☐ *Boiler/ utility/ WC windows in lean-to; and*
- ☐ *Small east-facing bedroom window*

5.3.7 On 30 January 2023 I offered a third comment with respect to refs: 22/01720/FPH & 22/01721/LBC in which I wrote at 1.2:

I previously said that I am not convinced that the case for replacing so many windows with double-glazing is that well justified. I also said that of the 13no. new windows proposed, 2no windows in the extension together with the 2no. windows in the side lean-to and the first-floor window in the north gable end, can all be justified but this leaves a justification for the other eight. I had previously said that an alternative to improving the building's thermal element and more efficient than slimlite glazing would be secondary glazing.

5.3.8 Subsequently, drawing no. 20079-P001-K was submitted and approved. This allowed for the windows referred to 5.3.6 above to be replaced.

5.3.9 A Heritage Statement (July 2024) prepared by Beams Ltd accompanies this application and at 4.0 Impact Assessment it reads (my emphasis in bold):

*Significance is defined in the glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023) as the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This derives not only from the physical building but also from its setting. It also states that significance has four areas of interest: archaeological, architectural, artistic, or historic. **Walnut Tree Farmhouse is of architectural significance as a good surviving example of a late medieval hall house with service end and cross wing; it is remarkably well preserved, despite the later inevitable alterations to floor the hall.** The rear wing originally dating from c. 1700 has been rebuilt (as far as it is possible to see) with the exception of the interior of the inglenook on the ground floor. Its historic significance lies in its material evidence as an historic farmstead that has evolved in response to the changing history of British farming. Little is known of the history of its ownership and occupation beyond the ownership of the Izard family, wealthy local brewers in 1842.*

*As is typical with many historic buildings the various windows to Walnut Tree Farmhouse are not 'original' to the fifteenth / sixteenth century property and are later replacements. **Some of the windows within the front range may occupy historic openings** but the larger, ground floor window openings on the front elevation look to have been significantly enlarged. The flush side hung timber casement windows to the front range look to date to the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries, whilst those to the rebuilt rear wing and twentieth century extension to the side of the rear wing are all twentieth century. The windows contain single glazed panes held within the frames with putty. **None of the timber windows are of any particular architectural significance but they represent a traditional style of casement window design seen upon historic buildings.***

The windows are generally in poor condition, and the majority have rotted, particularly to the bottom parts of the windows which are most exposed and where moisture collects. Many of the window cills are also rotten and beyond repair. For a more detailed report on the condition of the windows see the plans accompanying the application. Figures 14 to 17 show examples of the poor condition of the windows. Figure 18 shows that water is penetrating the interior and collecting on the window ledge.

The windows are all to be replaced on a like-for-like basis in hardwood versions, painted white and incorporating slim profile double glazed units (comprising two 4mm panes with a 4mm air gap between).

The replacement of the existing windows, which are in poor condition, with well-designed and detailed flush timber casements, to match the existing will fully preserve the character and appearance of the listed building. The applicant is also keen to improve the thermal efficiency of their home through the introduction of slim profile double glazed units, set within the replacement windows. The slim profile of the double-glazed units will ensure the double glazing is not easily discernible and the windows are all appropriately designed and detailed. The significance of the listed building will be preserved, and the resulting improved thermal performance will provide a modest public benefit.

5.3.10 The following sets out the type of windows under consideration:

- ☐ **W1, W2, W3, W4 and W5** – Single-glazed, triple-light, casement windows with single central horizontal glazing bar
- ☐ **W6 and W7** – Double-glazed, triple-light, quarter-pane casement windows
- ☐ **W9, W10, W11 and W15** – Single-glazed pairs of side-hung casements with single central horizontal glazing bar
- ☐ **W12, W13, W14, W16, W17, W18 and W19** – Single-glazed pairs of side-hung quarter-pane casements
- ☐ **W20** – Single-glazed pair of side-hung C20 casements with no glazing bars
- ☐ **W21** – Single-glazed C20 window with no glazing bars

5.3.11 It should be noted that windows W6, W7, W16, W19 and W21 were all consented to be replaced under ref: 22/01721/LBC and there is no objection to well-detailed 12mm slimlite units with through glazing bars being installed in place of these windows and window W20. Furthermore, windows W12, W13 and W14 relate to the rebuilt and modified rear wing and their replacement with well-detailed 12mm slimlite units with through glazing bars is also considered unobjectionable. The focus therefore turns to the other 12no. windows W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, W9, W10, W11, W15, W16, W17 and W18 which all relate to the late medieval hall house on the Phased Plan (Fig.13, page 7 of the HS) which equates to 60% of those windows proposed to be changed.

5.3.12 Careful consideration has been given to this case and I have reviewed my consultation comments from December 2022. The main concern is with respect to the significance of the principal ground floor rooms and whether these would be affected by replacing windows W1, W2, W3, W4 and W5 with slimlite units. There is a heritage case to suggest that these remain single-glazed.

5.4 **Alternative Options**

5.4.1 None applicable.

5.5 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

5.5.1 None applicable.

5.6 **Conclusion**

5.6.1 Considering that 5no. of the 20no. windows have previously been consented to be replaced and that the case for a further 10no. windows being retained as single-glazed, is not compelling, the recommendation rests on whether the other 5no. windows should be retained or replaced as single-glazed units.

5.6.2 On balance, and contrary to my previous advice in 2022/23, it is considered that the replacement of all 20no. windows will not harm the listed building's special character and on balance, they will satisfy Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF and the aims of Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031, and is, therefore, **UNOBJECTIONABLE.**

6.0 **Recommendation**

6.1 That listed building consent be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The work to which this consent relates shall be begun by not later than the expiration of the period of 3 years from the date of this notice.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. In accordance with the approved drawings, all replacement windows shall receive 4-4-4 glazing, monkey tail handles, through glazing bars with internal ovolo profile and shall be constructed with no trickle vents and externally finished with white-painted casements and black-painted outer frames unless otherwise agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that special regard is paid to protecting the special architectural and historic interest and integrity of this grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031.

Signed  Anne McDonald Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 24 September 2024	