

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
24/01328/LBC	Replacement of three windows; two to the front elevation and one to the side of the front porch with 8.15mm slim vacuum units and with 22mm glazing bars (as amended by drawing nos. sch-1 Rev 1 received on 05/12/2024 and sch-2 Rev 2 received on 16/12/2024).	2 Crown Cottages Ley Green Kings Walden Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 8LU

Submitted Plan Nos

TQRQM22251085638139 TQRQM22251085509842 Mar-004 Mar-003 sch - 1 Rev 1
Proposed Windows Designs sch - 2 Rev 2 Proposed Windows Specifications

1.0 Policies

HE1	Designated heritage assets
SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment

2.0 Site History

2.1 The only relevant application at no.2 Crown Cottages is the following:

22/02398/LBC - Replace 3no. single-glazed, timber windows (2no. front elevation and 1no. on side elevation of front porch) with double-glazed, timber windows.
R 30.11.2022 Appeal Dismissed 13.12.2023

Whilst the following application relating to no.3 Crown Cottages is also relevant:

18/02154/LBC - Replace 5 single-glazed timber windows to front elevation and one single-glazed timber window to side elevation with double glazed upvc framed "Residence 9" windows.
R 31/10/2018

3.0 Policies

3.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework:

- 1.0 **200** (local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting)
- 2.0 **203** (desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness),
- 3.0 **205** (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation),
- 4.0 **206** (clear and convincing justification), and
- 5.0 **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 **Kings Walden Parish Council – No comments received.**

Press & site notices – No representations received.

5.0 **Planning Considerations**

5.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 5.1.1 Nos.1 to 3 (odd only) Crown Cottages, Kings Walden are grade II listed and are described in the list entry as follows:

3 adjoining houses. No. 1 at W C17, Nos. 2 and 3 early C18 built at same time. No. 1 timber frame, roughcast, Nos. 2 and 3 painted Flemish-bond brickwork. Old red tile roofs, Nos. 1 and 2 have a diaper pattern of lighter red tiles on roofs. A picturesque row of 1 storey houses along slope below road level facing S. No. 1 has a long-gabled wing running down slope to rear. S front of No. 1 has 3 casement windows with lobby entrance opposite internal chimney a third from W end. 2-lights gabled dormer window at eaves. Nos. 2 and 3 have a continuous plat-band, stucco plinth, 3 casement windows to ground floor, 3 gabled dormers at eaves, gabled porch to No. 2 opposite internal chimney, gabled SE corner porch to No. 2 with entrance beside large projecting E gable chimney.

The terrace is a Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the Revised NPPF.

5.2 **Proposal**

- 5.2.1 The proposal is: **Replacement of three windows; two to the front elevation and one to the side of the front porch with 8.15mm slim vacuum units and with 22mm glazing bars (as amended by drawing nos. sch-1 Rev 1 received on 05/12/2024 and sch - 2 Rev 2 received on 16/12/2024).**

5.3 **Key Issues**

- 5.3.1 The main issue is to consider the impact of the works on the special character of the listed building.
- 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:

- 1.0 Evidence of craftsmanship
- 2.0 Use of old or rare materials
- 3.0 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.

Historic England guidance entitled 'Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading' published in 2017.

5.3.3 At page 54 of this guidance it states:

"If used in multi-paned windows, IGUs will generally be less efficient than secondary glazing since even the most efficient units will not overcome thermal bridging through the frame and glazing bars. This is particularly an issue when IGUs are added to steel windows. For this reason and for cost effectiveness, many replacement windows are made instead with a single IGU with timber glazing bars or leaded lights applied to the surface. This loss of historic fabric and detailing and change in appearance are likely to reduce the significance of the window and the host building."

5.3.4 Further on, 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.

5.3.5 Thermal upgrading of windows is considered in some detail. Historic England refers to recent research which has shown that by using secondary glazing with low emissivity coating, heat loss can be reduced by over 60%. It does not rule out the use of double-glazed windows in listed buildings but explains that conventional double-glazed units which are between 22 and 28mm thick, or slim profile double-glazed units which are between 10 and 16mm thick, differ from traditional glass which is normally between 2 and 3mm thick.

- 5.3.6 The Listed Property Owners Club acknowledges the above Historic England guidance which specifically addresses the subject of thermal upgrading of windows and double glazing. It 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, Historic England 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.

Guidance on Alterations to Listed Buildings **IHBC Toolbox Guidance Note GN2021/1 - January 2021**

- 5.3.7 At 4.3.4 it states

“Proposals to double-glaze existing windows are often inappropriate as well as having a surprisingly high carbon impact and a short lifespan. Thicker glazing units require glazing bars to be modified to accommodate them and the window will then have a very different appearance.”

Whilst at 4.3.5 it states

“Applied glazing bars to the surface of windows or sandwiched between panes of double-glazing are generally inappropriate. Secondary glazing may be acceptable subject to careful location of the framing elements so as not to be disruptive to the visual appearance when seen from the exterior.”

Impact on the listed building

- 5.3.8 At paragraph 4 of the decision notice pursuant to the appeal relating to ref: 22/02398/LBC, the Inspector writes:

The main parties agree that the four-light single-glazed timber casement windows to the front of the building are not original. Nevertheless, and while they are not totally identical to one another, their similar style and traditional construction complements the historic building and adds to the unified character of the group.

- 5.3.9 Crucial to the decision on the current application is paragraph 6 of the Inspector’s decision (my emphasis in bold):

*The appeal proposes replacement of three windows; two to the front of the appeal dwelling and one to the side of the front porch. The proposed windows would have timber frames and would reflect the proportions of the existing windows to be replaced with glazing bars of appropriate width. However, **they would be double-glazed in contrast to the existing single-glazed windows**. The units would be thinner than conventional double-glazing, but not substantially so, and **with a depth of around 20mm across the two panes of glass and cavity, they would have a considerably thicker profile than the existing single-glazed windows**. The presence of two panes would also result in a double reflection that would not be present with single-glazing. Furthermore, **the glazing bars would be applied to the glass rather than comprising through-glazing bars between individual lights**. Given the depth of the cavity, I consider that this would be readily discernible, even if the spacers were of similar colour to the glazing bars. **Noting also the lack of a puttied finish to the bars, the proposal would not convincingly replicate traditional fixtures***

- 5.3.10 At paragraph 7 the Inspector says:

The cumulative effect of these differences mean that the replacement windows would be appreciable as obviously modern fixtures.

5.3.11 Whilst at paragraph 15, the Inspector says (my emphasis in bold):

*There is also no detailed assessment of the condition of the existing windows or other firm information before me to substantiate the appellant's assertion that they are beyond economical repair. Nor to demonstrate that their thermal efficiency could not be improved through measures such as secondary glazing. **Even if I were to accept that the existing windows are beyond repair and require replacement, the Council refers to examples of slimmer double-glazed window products with individually glazed panes. It seems to me that these could more closely replicate the qualities of the existing windows which would help to reduce the effect of the proposal on the special interest of the listed building and there is no compelling evidence before me to demonstrate that these would have an unacceptable failure rate or requirement for maintenance.** Nor that they would otherwise be unsuited or inappropriate to the dwelling. From the information before me, I am not therefore satisfied that similar benefits could not be achieved by a proposal that would be less harmful to the special interest of the listed building.*

5.3.12 The section entitled 'Justification' in the submitted Heritage Statement says:

Standard double-glazing (28mm) has visual differences compared to single glazing, particularly older glazing, in terms of the flatter glass and thicker astragals and transoms. Some planning authorities historically considered double-glazing unsuitable for listed buildings, leading to the misconception that no double-glazing is suitable for historic buildings. However, due to increasing pressure to meet carbon emission reduction targets and mitigate the effects of climate change, as well as help combat rising energy costs, planning authorities are increasingly looking at 14mm double-glazing solutions to improve the energy efficiency of windows in protected buildings. The project has demonstrated that appropriate double-glazing can be successfully incorporated into listed buildings and conservation areas, improving their thermal performance and lowering their CO2 emissions without detracting from their historic character or appearance.

The aim of the upgrade to 14mm units is to show that such systems can be successfully installed in listed buildings and conservation areas to reduce their energy consumption, fuel bills and CO2 emissions, without detracting from their historic appearance. Many projects in conservation areas or listed buildings across the country were carried out with 14mm double glazing units.

In summary, it should be made clear that all systems installed had a very negligible impact, if at all, on the appearance of the buildings. The house has no original windows and doors which have been replaced in the late 1970s-80s and doesn't have any historical value. Such an upgrade will improve the building's appearance and when balanced against the need for significant CO2 reductions in all existing housing, these variations should not prevent change. Regarding building conservation as 'management of change' allows perspective to be maintained. The variations in appearance mentioned above are only visible when an individual window is scrutinized close-up. Taking a holistic approach becomes important when considering how to improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of these culturally valuable buildings.

5.3.13 It is considered that the existing windows fall within the second category of 5.3.4 above i.e. replacement windows whose design follows historic patterns and make a positive contribution to the significance of the listed building. As such, the guidance implies that such windows should be retained and repaired where possible. If beyond repair, they should be replaced with accurate copies. Whilst criteria 5 says that 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. No other properties in this terrace of four have double-glazed windows to the front elevation.

5.3.14 If some form of double-glazing is to be considered acceptable consideration should be given to the cumulative effect of these differences to see if the replacement windows would or would not be appreciable as obviously modern fixtures.

5.3.15 The current proposal originally sought consent for 14mm units as opposed to the previous 20mm and with through bars which is a further improvement when compared with the previous applied glazing bars. The casements would be flush (which is good) and the only element not incorporated is an external putty finish, but the external bars are chamfered to mimic this. Despite this, the windows would have been to an acceptable standard.

5.4 **Alternative Options**

5.4.1 Just prior to determination, the agent requested that the 14mm slimlite system be substituted with a 8.15mm vacuum glazed system. The downside of this being that the panes are not individually glazed with through-bars but then again, the cavity for the alternative system is very small. The agent brought a sample window to the Council Offices for discussion. As the Council's Conservation Officer, I suggested that three modifications needed to be made for such a window to be considered acceptable: i) change the method of opening to butt hinges, ii) change the ironmongery to black monkey-tail and iii) omit the trickle vent. These have been addressed on drawing sch-2 Rev 2 received on 16 December 2024.

5.5 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

5.5.1 None applicable.

5.6 **Conclusion**

5.6.1 The existing windows are in relatively poor condition and thermal improvements could be made by introducing secondary glazing. However, the applicant has justified their replacement by suggesting that the existing windows are non-original, functionally inefficient, some do not open whilst others are draughty, but his case is not particularly compelling. Having said that and considering that the windows are non-original, there is scope to improve the building's thermal performance by introducing the glazing system proposed.

5.6.2 It is considered that the detailing of the new windows will preserve the listed building's special character, thereby, satisfying the provisions of 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.

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. As set out on approved drawing no. SCH-2 Rev 2 received on 16 December 2024, the new windows shall be manufactured in timber and shall have flush casements with black butt hinges with no trickle vents and shall receive 8.15mm vacuum glazing with 23mm wide glazing bars and black monkey tail ironmongery (handles and stays) 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 the grade II listed building under Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and Policy HE1 of the Local Plan.

Signed  Shaun Greaves Determining Officer	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Date: 16 December 2024	