

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
26/00333/LBC	Replace all 7no. timber, single-glazed openings on front and side elevations with new timber, double-glazed units (some with modified method of opening).	18 Ridge Road Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 1PN

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan Existing Elevations Proposed Elevations

1.0 Policies

HE1	Designated heritage assets
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SECN16	Conserve + enhance historic environment
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2.0 Site History

- 2.1 There is no relevant site history (conservatory, roof lights and tree works), however the following was received earlier this year:

26/00022/GEN - Replace existing windows.

I replied as follows:

"..... I note that you would like to replace existing timber windows at your property with new 18mm double-glazed timber units.

The Local Authority receives many applications for replacement windows to listed buildings per year and each case is considered on its own merits. In fact, 35+ applications to replace windows at Ridge Road alone have been received since 2010. Several of these were withdrawn, several approved and some refused, for instance the following:

- ☐ **36 Ridge Road (20/02900/LBC)** - Replace single-glazed windows (front and rear dormer windows and front ground floor bay) with 28mm double-glazed Upvc windows.
- ☐ **104 Ridge Road (25/00469/LBC)** - Replacement of existing front and back elevation windows.

Replacing single-glazed windows with double-glazing will require listed building consent. I do not have the benefit of having seen these windows close-up to say whether I would support their replacement but that may possibly be the case. The fact that the proposed windows would be timber framed as opposed to Upvc is a positive. Having said that, there are factors even here that should be considered before you submit your application for listed building consent.

- ☐ *Firstly, any new windows should have flush as opposed to stormproof frames*
- ☐ *Secondly, a key detail (and one that has not always in the past been executed well in the*

Ridge Road development) is to ensure that the transom bar (the central horizontal) is the same width as the existing and runs through from front to back i.e. is a through bar and not applied and that where there are split-transoms that these are the same width as the normal transom bars. Some window manufacturers are able to replicate equal transom/split transom details (which is normally I believe 87-89mm wide) such as Old Manor Cottages at 168 Wilbury Road under ref: 07/02332/1LB (below left). An alternative approach was recently permitted at 28 Ridge Road under ref: 24/01804/LBC where Timber Windows, St Albans omitted the split transom and went with a full-height, central top-hung window (below right). This was a compromise that on balance was considered acceptable but not as successful as the split transom approach."

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 (Dec 2024):

- ☐ **135 c)** (sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment),
- ☐ **207** (local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the

significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting)

- **210** (desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness),
- **212** (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation),
- **213** (clear and convincing justification), and
- **215** (harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use).

4.0 **Representations**

4.1 **Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation – see below**

We have no objection to the proposed window replacements in principle. However, I would question the changes to the method of opening to two of the windows and whether this will retain the visually integrity of the windows when they are in the open position. We would prefer to see the existing method of opening retained (with these two having top-lights) or having the central portion of the windows fixed. I would also ask that the doors retain the style and proportions of the existing doors, which more closely reflect the original 4-light window that was in this position (see 76 Ridge Road which retains the window on same building type).

Press & site notices – No comments received.

5.0 **Planning Considerations**

5.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 5.1.1 Nos. 2 - 122 (evens) Ridge Road, Letchworth Garden City are grade II listed and are located within the Letchworth Conservation Area (LCA). The building and the LCA are designated heritage assets and the list entry for these properties reads as follows:

1906 by B Parker and R Unwin. This pioneer estate was designed for the Garden City Tenants Limited and comprises 13 grouped terraces forming a cul-de-sac and village green layout. One and a half storeys. Mostly one window each with irregular frontages varied by arrangements of large and small dormers and gables. Tiled roofs with multi-form brick stacks. The centre feature of the village green layout is a giant gable taking up Nos 100 and 102. Roughcast walls. Mullioned casement windows with tile labels and glazing bars (some windows altered). Recessed entrances with arched doorways. Included as the earliest estate layout of its type, and the prototype of all future council house developments in the country. The concept of a village green layout was put forward in 1898/9 and published by Parker and Unwin in "The Art of Building a House". The Westholm scheme (qv) was also based on this idea.

5.2 **Proposal**

- 5.2.1 The application is described as: ***Replace all 7no. timber, single-glazed openings on front and side elevations with new timber, double-glazed units (some with modified method of opening).***
- 5.2.2 Unlike some proposals received recently this is not an application based on replacement Upvc windows therefore there is less reliance on the need to refer to Historic England guidance entitled 'Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading' published in 2017 or the Guidance on Alterations to Listed Buildings forming part of IHBC Toolbox Guidance Note GN2021/1 - January 2021.

5.3 **Key Issues**

- 5.3.1 The key issue here is to consider the impact of this proposal on the special character of this grade II listed building and upon the character or appearance of the Letchworth Conservation Area. 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 Of the 13 grouped terraces, the fenestration of 11 of these are defined by windows having wide transoms and split-transom bars with no narrower glazing bars. There have already been some changes to windows in the terrace of which no.18 is part.
- 5.3.3 An issue here and has been for some recent proposals relating to replacement windows at listed properties in Letchworth Garden City (i.e. 168 Wilbury Way and 14 Ridge Road), is seeking a window manufacturer that is able to reproduce a split transom feature that is the same width as that presently found on the host building and which is normally about 86-89mm wide. So, the question is whether to accept replacement windows with or without split transoms?
- 5.3.4 Interestingly, the quotation submitted with this application is from the same company (Timber Windows) that provided the quotation on appn ref: 24/01804/LBC for 28 Ridge Road which was granted consent on 15 November 2024. It is a challenge finding window manufacturers that are able to reproduce a split transom where the 86mm or thereabout is divided more-or-less equally between the bottom rail of the top-hung light and the top rail of the lower fixed light. A consequence of this being that on some occasions the manufacturer introduces a section of frame is introduced between the bottom and top rails thus increasing the width of the transom overall to an unacceptable extent.
- 5.3.5 Under appn ref: 24/01804/LBC three options were available to the applicant:
- ☐ The LPA to approve the original proposal with overly wide split transoms and with a section of the window frame between the bottom and top rail increasing the depth of the transom,
 - ☐ Seek like-for-like replacement windows and in doing so, refuse listed building consent and advise applicant to consider an alternative window joinery manufacturer,
 - ☐ Seek a compromise whereby the applicant retains his preferred manufacturer, and the windows retain an 86-89mm transom width but with no split transom openings.
- 5.3.6 Under appn ref: 24/01804/LBC, the applicant's chosen window provider could not manufacture an appropriate split-transom detail, and the decision was taken to allow for the omission of split transoms in favour of a singular transom either incorporated within a fixed light or a full height top-hung light. The proposed windows at no.28 have flush casements incorporating 18mm double-glazed units and monkey tail ironmongery.
- 5.3.7 Whilst noting Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation's comments questioning the changes to the method of opening to two of the windows and whether this will retain the visually integrity of the windows when they are in the open position, I have considered this alongside the case at no.28. I agree that traditional split-transom detailing would be preferable, but I am not convinced that this is sufficient to justify refusal. I am also unconvinced of the need for the doors to retain the style and

proportions of the existing doors, which more closely reflect the original 4-light window that was previously in this position.

5.4 **Alternative Options**

- 5.4.1 On 26 March I emailed the applicant drawing attention to the response from the Heritage and Stewardship Manager at LGCHF on 26 February (see 4.1 above) and stating :

I refer in my draft delegated file note to the fact that consent was granted at no.28 without split-transoms so my intention is to be consistent with your application. On the matter of the French Doors I note LGCHF's comment and to an extent I agree with their observation, but I am also mindful that I require sound grounds for recommending refusal of your application and I do not consider this to be such. Having said that, before determination I ask the question as to whether you would consider a door type that had two equal width transoms (top transom in line with windows transoms) rather than the current situation of traditional width top transom with more of a muntin rail below.

- 5.4.2 The applicant responded saying:

Regarding the split transom windows, I am keen to preserve the original appearance regardless of how they open and close. However, in considering LGCHF suggestion of fixing this unit closed in preference to a full length, top hinged alternative, I feel that whilst this retains the aesthetic, this does not preserve the original functionality of the window giving means of ventilation in inclement weather. As the proposed design has already been approved at no.28, I would prefer this option. Interestingly, the example offered (albeit for the doors) at no.76 has a full length top hinged window in place, as can be seen on June 2009 Google Maps.

Concerning the doors, I find LGCHF information interesting as I had not considered these to be a later addition. When the properties were built, it is clear from historic images that access to number 18 would have been from the cul-de-sac, adjacent to no.20 Ridge Road. However, over time, with the implementation of hedgerows and maturing trees, a boundary to the property is well established relocating the entrance off the main road and now shared with no.16 Ridge Road. In this context, the existing doors are not at all visible outside of the property, they look onto a private garden only and therefore I feel not directly comparable to the appearance of the windows at 76 Ridge Road.

I feel the proposed door design is true to the simplistic nature of the Arts and Crafts movement, favouring functionality and purpose. Furthermore, by eliminating the unnecessary horizontal bars which directly obscure a clear sight line to the garden, a better connection to Garden City principles of "Bright homes and gardens" is achieved - To quote Ebenezer Howard, "A utopian city in which people live harmoniously together with nature."

5.5 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

- 5.5.1 Nonapplicable.

5.6 **Conclusion**

- 5.6.1 It is considered that the proposal will neither harm the listed building's special character or harm the character or appearance of the Letchworth Conservation Area, thus, will satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) & 72(1) 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 I recommend 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. The new windows shall be manufactured in timber, receive flush casements, be externally white-painted and have no trickle vents 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: 31 March 2026	