

CONSERVATION TEAM CONSULTATION APPLICATION RESPONSE

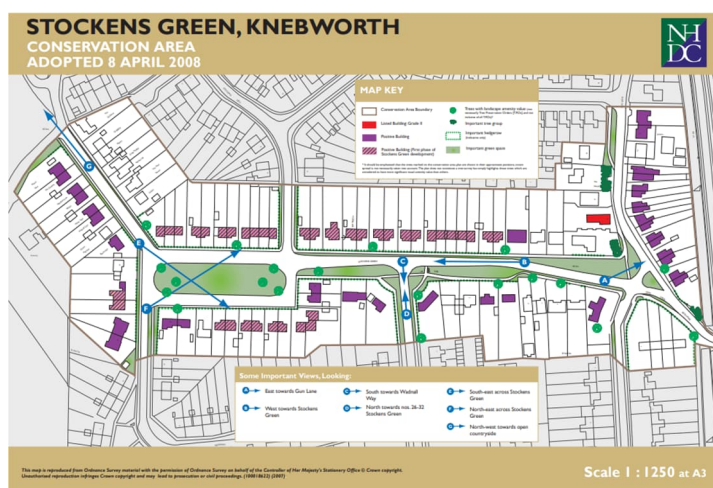
APPLICATION REF:	26/01579/FPH
CASE OFFICER:	MT
APPLICATION SITE:	64 Stockens Green, Knebworth, Hertfordshire SG3 6DQ
DESCRIPTION OF WORKS:	Replace existing windows to front, side and rear elevations.

RECOMMENDATION:

As submitted, the window details are unacceptable. The application fails to demonstrate how this meets the improvements intended by the Article 4 Direction. Although I may have misinterpreted some aspects of the detailing, the proposed windows do not incorporate: i) slimline glazing (the submission currently indicates 28mm glazing), ii) a woodgrain finish, iii) flush casements, or iv) '3D' glazing bars. The proposal falls short of and is of a lower standard than the approved schemes at nos. 19 and 49. I therefore raise an **OBJECTION** on the grounds that the proposal fails to satisfy Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, Section 16 of the NPPF, and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011–2031.

SITE CONTEXT:

No.64 is not listed but is in Stockens Green Conservation Area and is subject to an Article 4 Direction. The building is referred to as a 'Positive Building (First phase of Stockens Green development)' on the conservation area map below.



DETAILED ANALYSIS AND CONSIDERATIONS:

The submitted Design and Access Statement reads as follows:

The majority of the houses on Stockens Green have recently had their article 4 Permitted Development rights removed, limiting the works that can be done to the properties without a planning application. On this basis a planning application is being made for No. 64 Stockens Green, Knebworth for the replacement of the aluminium windows originally installed 35 years ago to be replaced with a more modern UPVC product.

I note Knebworth Parish Council's response on 27 July 2026

Regarding application 26/01579/FPH the Planning Committee of Knebworth Parish Council met on the 22nd of July 2026 and requested that the **Conservation Officer at the Planning Authority check that materials are suitable for the conservation area that this application falls under.** Otherwise, there were no objections to this application.



Whilst I am unsure as to who the present Secretary of Knebworth Tenants Limited is, the applicant was the Secretary at the time that KTL was notified of the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction which was made on 9 October 2012. There have been two applications since for replacement windows, both woodgrain effect Upvc frames.

Under application ref: 16/00312/1HH at no.19 for replacement of 3 existing windows on the front elevation and erection of 1.22m high entrance gates, the case officer wrote:

*4.3.3 The proposed replacement of the windows is acceptable in my view as these have been specified to be the wood grain putty line sashes, commonly found in these properties, whilst these would not be timber windows, **the wood grain replacement has been found acceptable in non-listed dwellings in conservation areas and article 4s.***

Under application ref: 19/01882/FPH at no.49 for replacement windows on front and side elevation and replacement side door, the case officer wrote:

*4.3.3 Due to the site being set within an Article 4 Area and the Stockens Green Conservation Area and therefore it is important for the proposed development to incorporate an improved material and appearance over what is existing, which consists of white UPVC and aluminium window frames which do not contribute beneficially to the Stockens Green Conservation Area. The proposed scheme would see **slim-line Heritage Style windows which are constructed from UPVC with a wood effect be implemented. The windows would incorporate 3D glazing bars both internally and externally and would also feature chamfered glazing bars meeting the window frame at a right angle.** These details and features were requested following extensive consultation and amendments with the applicant, with the current scheme being deemed acceptable subject to comments being made by the Conservation Officer.*

4.3.4 It is acknowledged that the surrounding area consists of UPVC windows similar to those originally proposed. It is also acknowledged that the host dwelling is set back from the road and obscured by a hedge. Despite this, the purpose of the Article 4 area is to improve the materials and character of the surrounding area and therefore the previously proposed window details were not considered to be acceptable. The windows to the rear elevation would not require planning permission, however, those proposed to the side and principal elevation do and it is therefore considered that due to their visibility within the street scene, they must be designed to be beneficial to the character of the host dwelling and surrounding area. The proposed windows and door are considered to be visually acceptable with regards to their impact to the character and design of the Stockens Green Conservation Area.

This is useful background, so I now come to the current proposal. First and foremost, the rear windows are not subject to the Article 4. In terms of submitted drawing P05 it is

unclear as to the glazing system. It does not appear to be a slimlite system, and the Linar brochure refers to 28mm double glazed which is actually wider than that what I may regard as an industry norm of 24mm and no glazing bar profile is provided.

The Linar brochure does say that “*woodgrain effect foils can be factory fitted for an authentic timber façade*” and that the windows can receive flush casements but neither appear to be incorporated into this proposal.

HERITAGE POLICY ASSESSMENT:

Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:
Section 72(1)

North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031:
Policy HE1

NPPF (December 2024):

The following paragraphs are relevant:

- **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*).

CONCLUSION:

It is acknowledged that the surrounding area consists of UPVC windows. It is also acknowledged that the host dwelling is set back from the road and partly obscured by a hedge. Despite this, the purpose of the Article 4 area is to improve the materials and character of the surrounding area. The windows proposed to the side and principal elevation require PP and it is therefore considered that due to their visibility within the street scene, they must be designed to be beneficial to the character of the host dwelling and surrounding area.

Whilst I am prepared to consider Upvc frames I echo the officer's report under ref: 19/01882/FPH at no.49 that it is important for the proposed windows to incorporate improved materials and appearance over what is existing. I encourage, as the officer puts it, 3D glazing bars both internally and externally. I also advise that we seek flush casements with a shallower glazing system i.e. more in line with Slimlite glazing. I cannot say that the windows satisfy the purpose for the Article 4 therefore I do not currently find the windows acceptable.

OFFICER: Mark Simmons

DATE: 14/08/2026