

HERITAGE STATEMENT

Proposed Works: Replacement of non-original windows, frames and doors with Douglas fir cottage-pane windows and black ironmongery

Property: Grade II Listed Cottage, Holwell, Hertfordshire

Applicant: Gemma Nicolson and Kevin Barton

Date: 18th May 2026 - Application reference – 26/00714/PRELB

1. Introduction & Purpose of the Proposal

This Heritage Statement supports an application for listed building consent to replace non-original John Carr–style window frames and modern doors with traditionally detailed Douglas fir cottage-pane windows, frames and black ironmongery. The intention is to restore the building’s historic character and reinstate joinery appropriate to a 17th-century Grade II listed rural cottage.

Please also note a modern extension was also added to the building 1985 under planning ref 85/00902/1LB. A modern conservatory was also added in 2001 under planning ref 01/00447/1HH.

2. Heritage Significance of the Building

The non extended part of the cottage is a 17th-century timber-framed dwelling of notable vernacular character. Its significance derives from:

- Surviving timber structure and medium-tone exposed beams
- Traditional small-scale domestic form
- Historic village setting
- Contribution to the rural character of Holwell
- Vernacular casement window openings typical of Hertfordshire cottages

The building’s architectural and historic value is rooted in its age, materials, craftsmanship, and contribution to the local historic environment.

3. Existing Windows & Doors (Non-Original and Unsympathetic)

The current windows, frames, and doors are modern replacements that do not reflect the building’s period of significance. They are broken, beyond repair, aged, and unsafe. They feature:

- John Carr–style (off the shelf) proportions inconsistent with rural vernacular cottages
- Larger panes and heavier profiles
- Modern materials and detailing
- Non-traditional ironmongery

These elements detract from the building’s authenticity and dilute its historic character.

4. Proposed Works

The proposal includes:

- Installation of Douglas fir timber windows crafted to traditional cottage-pane proportions
- Slim-profile glazing bars appropriate to the building's age
- Black ironmongery including handles, stays, and hinges
- Replacement timber doors reflecting historic joinery patterns
- Use of breathable heritage paint systems suitable for timber

The works are conservation-led and designed to reinstate historically appropriate detailing.

5. Justification for the Works

5.1 Enhancing Historic Accuracy

The proposed joinery reinstates the correct vernacular style, replacing later additions that are architecturally inconsistent.

5.2 Reversibility

All works are fully reversible, respecting conservation principles of minimal intervention.

5.3 Material Authenticity

Douglas fir is a durable, historically appropriate softwood commonly used in traditional joinery.

5.4 Visual Improvement

The cottage-pane pattern and black ironmongery restore the building's traditional appearance and enhance its contribution to the street scene.

5.5 Condition

The current windows, frames and doors are extremely worn and as also highlighted within our building survey on purchasing the property require replacement. The putty is missing, the wood is rotten and several of the units either can't lock, stay shut or are stuck open causing both a fire and security risk.

6. Impact Assessment

6.1 Impact on Significance

The works will have a positive impact by:

- Removing visually intrusive, non-historic elements
- Reinforcing the building's original character
- Enhancing the legibility of the historic timber frame

- Improving the building's contribution to the wider conservation setting

6.2 No Loss of Historic Fabric

The existing windows and doors are modern and non-original; their removal does not affect historic fabric.

6.3 Policy Compliance

The proposal aligns with:

- NPPF Section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment)
 - Historic England guidance on traditional windows
 - Local conservation policies supporting reinstatement of historically appropriate features
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7. Conclusion

The replacement of the existing non-original windows and doors with Douglas fir cottage-pane joinery and black ironmongery will:

- Enhance the building's historic character
- Restore architectural authenticity
- Improve visual coherence
- Cause no harm to the building's significance
- Deliver a clear heritage benefit
- Provide safety and security within the dwelling

The proposal represents a sensitive, conservation-led improvement fully in keeping with the Grade II listed status of the property.