

DELEGATED FILE NOTE

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

APPLICATION REFERENCE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DEVELOPMENT	APPLICATION SITE
25/02600/LBC	Replace 3no. single-glazed, leaded-light windows to front elevation with 20mm double-glazed windows with 15mm lead detail applied to outer pane.	32 Sollershott East Letchworth Garden City Hertfordshire SG6 3JN

Submitted Plan Nos

Location Plan WF1 WF2 WF3 Existing Elevations Proposed Elevations

1.0 Policies

HE1	Designated heritage assets
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2.0 **Site History**

- 2.1 **07/00982/1LB** - Two storey rear extension, conversion of roof space to provide bedroom. External and internal alterations.
R 29.06.2007

07/00992/1HH - Two storey rear extension and insertion of dormer window into rear roof slope. Detached single garage at front of dwelling following demolition of existing.
R 28.06.2007

07/02365/1HH - Single storey rear extension and insertion of dormer window into rear roof slope to facilitate loft conversion (as amended by plan received on 29th November 2007).
CP 13.12.2007

07/02366/1LB - Single storey rear extension, insertion of 1 dormer window and 1 roof light in rear roof slope, alterations to external openings at ground floor level. Internal alterations to include modification of ground floor layout, new staircase between first floor and roof space and conversion of roof space into a bedroom with en suite shower room (as amended by plan received on 29th November 2007).
CCON 13.12.2007

13/01297/1HH - Two storey side extension, detached double garage and insertion of dormer window and two roof lights into existing rear roof slope to facilitate conversion of loft into habitable accommodation.
R 16.08.2013

13/01298/1LB - Two storey side extension and insertion of dormer window and two roof lights in existing rear roof slope. Internal alterations involving opening-up of existing external ground and first floor walls into extension and insertion of a staircase between first floor and loft.
R 16.08.2013

23/00864/LBC - Replace existing side (west elevation) door.
CCON 17.07.2023

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 **Press & site notices** – No comments received.

5.0 **Planning Considerations**

5.1 **Site and Surroundings**

- 5.1.1 47, Southview and 32-38, Sollershott East are together grade II listed and are located within the Letchworth Conservation Area. The building and the area are designated heritage assets for the purpose of applying the aims of the NPPF. The list entry is provided at the following link.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1102817?section=official-list-entry>

5.2 **Proposal**

- 5.2.1 The application is described as: ***Replace 3no. single-glazed, leaded-light windows to front elevation with 20mm double-glazed windows with 15mm lead detail applied to outer pane.***

5.3 **Key Issues**

- 5.3.1 The key issues are to assess the impact of the proposal on the listed building's special character and upon the character and appearance of the Letchworth Conservation Area.

- 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.

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

5.3.3 At page 6 of this guidance it states:

“The pressures that threaten traditional windows come from many different sources. Probably the most significant of these is the replacement window industry that relies on PVC-u windows for almost all of its business. The industry has invested heavily in marketing over a long period and as a result has persuaded many home owners that their old timber windows are rotten, draughty, and beyond economic repair, whereas in most cases minor repairs and some upgrading would have allowed them to remain fit for purpose and serviceable for years to come.

Replacement plastic (PVC-u) windows pose one the greatest threats to the heritage value of historic areas, particularly in towns and villages. Despite attempts at improving the design of these windows they are instantly recognisable because they cannot match the sections and proportions of historic joinery.....”

5.3.4 At page 40 of this guidance it states:

Metal windows with leaded lights are found in buildings from many periods. Their repair can be a specialist task and should be approached with caution, particularly if the windows are of historic significance. It may not be sensible even to attempt to repair leaded-light windows to draught-free levels, but secondary glazing can often be added to provide protection and draught-proofing.

At 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.

5.3.5 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.

5.3.6 At page 115 of this guidance it states:

Noise insulation

Windows are one of the most vulnerable parts of a building to noise transmission due to their relatively lightweight construction. Depending on the number of openings and the quality of the seals between the openings, a single glazed window without seals may only achieve a noise reduction of 18-25dBA. When closed, sealed double glazed units perform little better than single glazing because the two panes of glass are rigidly connected with a minimal cavity so the two panes resonate together. A secondary window with an air space of 100mm or more de-couples the movement of the two panes of glass and reduces the resonance between the two. Sound insulation of up to 45dBA can typically be achieved. Higher levels of sound insulation are obtained as the gap increases, particularly if the reveals are lined with an acoustic material, though minimal improvements occur with cavities beyond 200mm. The use of thicker or acoustic laminate glass within the secondary window also improves the acoustic performance of the installation.

5.3.7 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.

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

5.3.8 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 and conservation area

- 5.3.9 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".
- 5.3.10 Within a Conservation Area, the Council has a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area, in accordance with Section 72 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act (1990). Furthermore, Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out guidance relating to sustaining and enhancing heritage assets.
- 5.3.11 The windows affected are as follows:
- WG1** - This is the ground floor window to the two-storey hipped projecting bay. The left-hand return is fixed light, the front is combination of fixed, side-hung and top-hung lights and the right-hand return is a top-opening light over a fixed light.
- WF1** – This window sits directly above WG1 and comprises side-hung casements flanked by fixed lights on both returns.
- WF2** – This window is a set of 4no. side hung casements
- 5.3.12 Before considering the proposed windows, the existing windows need to be assessed, and the case officer conducted a site visit on 19 December 2025 and photographed the existing windows most of which appeared to be original i.e. from 1911 but with some modifications particularly at ground floor. Insulated panels are placed directly behind the ground floor window panels suggestive of a temporary thermal enhancement, but I understand that it is to muffle sound as this front room is used as a drum studio. The mullions to this window may have been replaced in the past as there was no joinery peg detail as could be seen in the construction of the upstairs windows. There is an assortment of ironmongery either original or sympathetic alternatives and the owner had undertaken some minor L-shape plate repairs at the connection between stiles and bottom rails. Externally, there is clear evidence of the frames deteriorating. It is considered that the windows still possess a sufficient degree of special interest to make a positive contribution to the listed building's special character.
- 5.3.13 As noted in the list entry and acknowledged in the submitted Heritage Statement:

The building was, and still is, held up as one of the finest examples of domestic architecture in the Garden City, illustrated in early publications (for example C. B. Purdom's the Garden City, 1913). The building contributes to the overall heritage value of Letchworth as the first Garden City — reflecting the town's ideals of well-designed domestic housing that harmonises with green spaces, high standards of craftsmanship, and attention to detail.

The Heritage Statement goes on to state:

The significance of 32 Sollershott East lies in:

- ☐ *Its architectural character as part of the C M Crickmer design*
- ☐ *Its role within the earliest Garden City layout*
- ☐ *Its contribution to the visual coherence and social concept of the area*
- ☐ *Surviving original features*

The building is protected for its group value, and any changes must preserve the external form, materials, and detailing that contribute to the overall character.

5.3.14 The Heritage Statement says that:

The proposed works involve the replacement of 3 no. external windows with like-for-like timber units.

Positive conservation approach: This is a like-for-like replacement, preserving appearance, form, and materials in keeping with the character of the building.

There will be no loss of historic significance where original features are already beyond repair.

5.3.15 Considering their condition, it is acknowledged that replacement of some of the timber frames may be necessary to retain the windows' structural integrity. However, what is proposed are 20mm double-glazed windows with a clear inner pane and with applied 'faux' leadwork to the inside and outside of the outer pane. The proposed detailing would not be sufficiently like-for-like to be acceptable considering that this is one of the finest examples of domestic architecture in the Garden City.

5.3.16 Furthermore, the Historic England/Historic Environment Scotland windows research referred to at pages 45 and 46 of the Historic England guidance entitled 'Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading' (see below), states that secondary glazing is encouraged if seeking to improve the thermal performance of the openings.

Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland decided to commission research into the thermal performance of traditional windows as they were concerned that calculated U values were not giving a true picture of actual thermal behaviour.

Comparison with slim-profile double-glazing

The heat transfer through the frame greatly limited the improvement that could be gained by replacing single glass with slim-profile double glazing

5.4 **Alternative Options**

5.4.1 Nonapplicable.

5.5 **Pre-Commencement Conditions**

5.5.1 Nonapplicable.

5.6 **Conclusion**

5.6.1 Although the condition of some of the frames is such that replacement is more likely required than repair, overall, all three windows display sufficient quality of detailing to

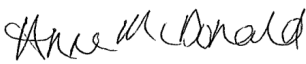
suggest that only true like-for-like leaded-light windows would preserve the special character of this listed building.

- 5.6.2 It is considered that replacing the single-glazed, leaded-lights with a 20mm double-glazed system with faux leadwork to the outer pane would be a significant departure from the existing detailing and would occasion harm to the listed building's special character. The degree of harm would be moderate on the less than substantial harm continuum for which there is no public benefit. The proposal would not satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) and 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 **REFUSED** for the following reason:

1. No.47, Southview and nos. 32-38, Sollershott East are together grade II listed and are located within the Letchworth Conservation Area. This group was considered at the time to be one of the finest achievements of the Garden City domestic architecture. The existing windows are single-glazed leaded lights with fixed lights and flush side-hung and top-hung casements. Although the method opening of the new window would replicate the existing, by reason of the 20mm double-glazed system with faux leadwork to the outer pane the glazing system would harm the listed building's special character and have a small impact upon the Letchworth Conservation Area. The degree of harm would be moderate on the less than substantial harm continuum for which there is no public benefit. The proposal would not satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) and 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.

Signed  Anne McDonald	Development Management North Hertfordshire District Council Council Offices Gernon Road Letchworth Herts SG6 3JF
Determining Officer Date: 6 January 2026	