

Heritage and planning statement

83 London Road Reading

Replacement windows

Preface

The council has sought this application having recently noted the replacement of windows that took place a few years ago.

The evidence attached demonstrates that the buildings' fenestration was replaced in the mid-1970's. When it came to a review in 2019 it was concluded that once again the fenestration was in a bad state (see **attached** email to Mr French of 17/9/19 from Father Rafal Jaroslawski). This time the timber sash windows were replaced like-for-like, save the use of double glazing in timber tripartite sash frames.

Submissions

There is a tendency to argue that new windows do not preserve or enhance a heritage asset by virtue of "failing to replicate" and point to:

- 1 the refractive difference of the glazing, and
- 2 a presumption those being replaced are original.

The Reading policy position is policy EN1 of the adopted local plan. This includes the following extracted text:

EN1:

Historic features, areas of historic importance and other elements of the historic environment, including their settings will be protected and where possible enhanced. All proposals will be expected to protect and where possible enhance the significance of heritage assets and their settings, the historic character and local distinctiveness of the area in which they are located. Proposals should seek to avoid harm in the first instance. Any harm to or loss of a heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefits. Applications which affect Listed Buildings will not have an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic interest including, where appropriate, their settings. Development will not detract from the enjoyment, layout, design, character, appearance. Applications which affect, or have the potential to affect, the significant features of heritage assets should be justified by a Heritage Statement.

The above is conventional text – one is expected to preserve or enhance that which make up the assets special interest, including character, appearance, scale and its original function. The works must be harmless.

Replication is not a term used in any policy where the replaced windows are not "original".

The applicant retained all other original architectural details that contribute to the character and appearance of this building and the area. EN1 does not require one to "match on a like for

like basis” and Historic England Advice Note 2, called *Making Changes to Heritage Assets*, highlights that doors and windows are frequently key to the significance of a listed building. Replacement is therefore generally advisable only where the **original** is beyond repair, it minimises the loss of historic fabric and it matches the **original** in detail and material. It contends that secondary glazing is usually more appropriate and more likely to be feasible than double-glazing **where the window itself is of significance**.

Having **not** replaced original/historic fabric, the first step, as ever is – “determining the significance”. These windows visual interest is retained, indeed enhanced as those replaced were non-matching.

The building’s scale, form and detailing still reflects its origin, and its significance therefore lies in its historic aesthetic and evidential value. None of the replaced windows were of any historic or evidential value as such, having replaced non-original. The new windows are not materially different in the street scene. They are the same design and colour reflecting the form of windows in adjoining listed buildings and respects the hosts character and appearance, and the area. It is not immediately adjacent to the street but set back significantly. Its appreciation from the public realm is not materially different, it harmonizes with the area/surroundings. Thus, the glazing’s refractive properties are not appreciable and neutral in heritage and planning terms.

The HE Advice Note “Traditional Windows” advice is met, as it says this:

Double glazing could be considered in these circumstances:

The introduction of slim-profile IGUs has made it possible to produce new double-glazed windows in traditional materials which may be more sympathetic to the character of older buildings than earlier types of replacement window. (See Section 5, Replacement Windows) In cases where the significance of a building has been harmed by the installation of replacement windows of non-historic design, consideration may be given to the installation of new slim-profile double-glazed replacement windows where:

- *the new windows are of a more sympathetic design and the net impact on significance will be neutral or positive*

- *no incidental damage to the building fabric will result from the removal of the existing windows*

The applicant considers the impact is neutral, if not enhanced, thus public benefit does not need to be demonstrated.

Overall conclusions

No original windows are replaced. They are timber windows of high-quality, the same if not better than the originals would have been – save the kitchen window above the front door, which remains non-original (compare to 85) possibly from the 1970’s. The policy text does not stipulate replication, or like-for-like; it adopts a broader principle which chimes with the Framework, and s72. The use of slim-profile double glazing is not, of itself, in principle, unacceptable. Neutrality is achieved by retaining the same design and pattern of timber sash

windows, of the same colour, coupled with a significant set back from the public footway resulting in a congruous neutral effect on the overall appearance of the building, and the area. Approval should be given as the 2019 replacement windows are harmless.