Windows & Doors - Repair and Replacement:

189 Oxford Road,
Reading,
RG1 7UZ

On behalf of

Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing Association

Prepared by

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1 Introduction

Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP have been commissioned by Metropolitan Thames Valley to produce a heritage design and access statement in support of a Planning Application and Listed Building Consent for the window and door repair and replacement at 189 Oxford Road, Reading, RG1 7UZ.

Figure 1 – Front Elevation

In conjunction with the Heritage Statement, FFT carried out a Window and Door Condition Survey included with the application to determine the outcome of the submission to Reading Borough Council for the replacement and repair of windows at 189 Oxford Road.

The statement aims to evaluate, consider implications of the proposed works to the windows, highlight their significance as heritage assets and justify the replacement of these elements.

2 Existing Property

The existing property, 189 Oxford Road, houses four residential flats across three storeys and a basement level. It has one communal entrance at the front of the property. The property was constructed in the early 19th century and is Grade II Listed, designated on 14th of December 1978.

The existing windows to the front elevation are painted white single-glazed timber sash and casements with integral glazing bars. The rear and side elevation windows are double-glazed, non-original timber sliding sash and casement windows with applied glazing bars with the condition of the windows being poor and lacking thermal performance.

The surrounding properties along Oxford Road, excluding MTVH-owned 191 and 193 have a mixture of window types and design in single-glazed timber as well as non-original double-glazed UPVC replacements.

3 Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

3.1 Introduction

The site is located within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, under the jurisdiction of Reading Borough Council. The following has been prepared in accordance with the Russel Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal (2020).

The Russel Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area has played a key role in Reading's residential expansion since the 17th Century. The Conservation Area comprises a microcosm of residential building styles throughout history, ranging from cottages to villas from each of the Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian periods.

The image below outlines the boundary of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area, with the location of 189 Oxford Road marked in blue.

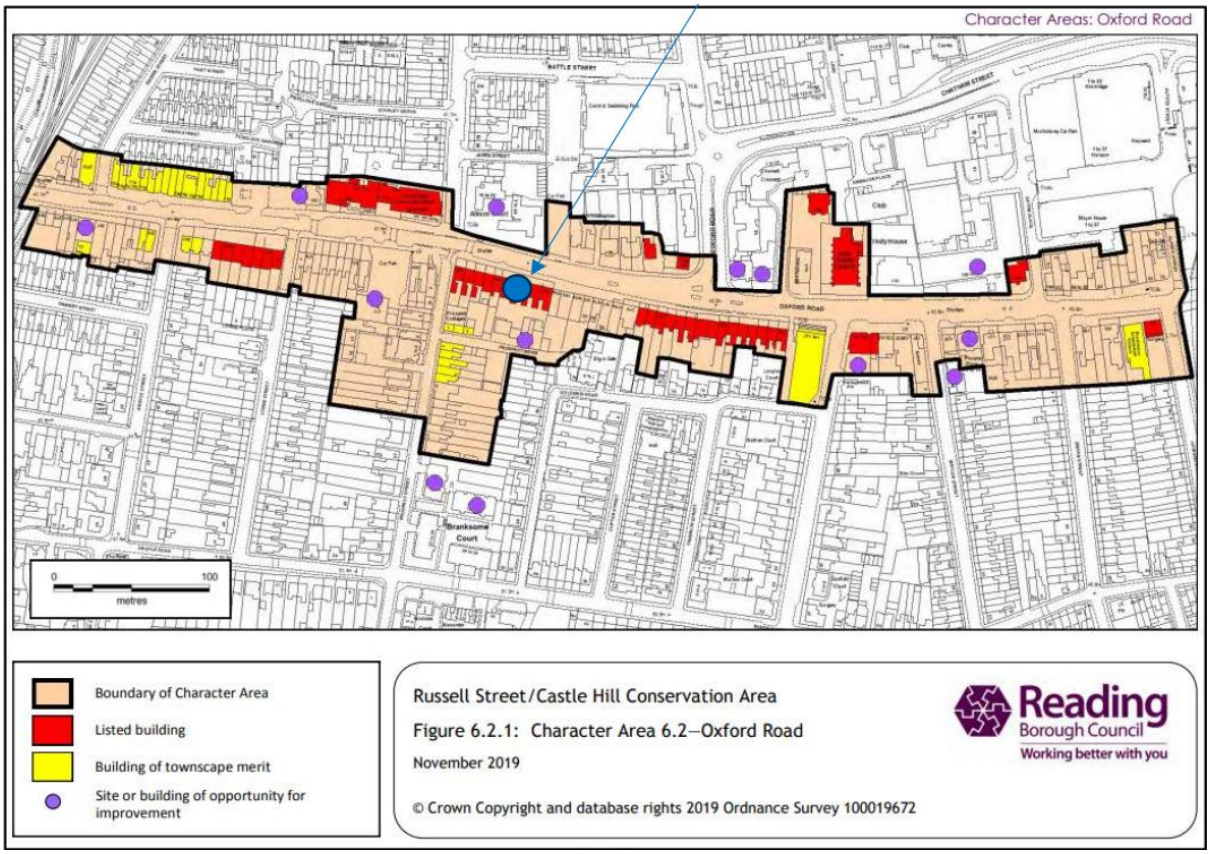


Figure 2 – Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area

3.2 Archaeological Significance

There is no evidence of significant archaeological remains within the conservation area.

3.3 Character Appraisal

Oxford Road is a significant character area within the Conservation Area, being one of Reading's earliest roads leading out of the town, south of the River Thames and on to Oxford. It contains a long terrace of listed buildings dating to the early 19th century, interspersed with late 19th century developments. Many buildings have been converted into offices or feature modern shopfronts, such as Nos. 169/171, which retain altered late 19th century shopfronts.

Oxford Road is defined by a mix of Georgian terraces, Victorian houses, and shops, forming a varied streetscape of two and three-storey buildings. While the area retains much of its historic character, modern ad-hoc alterations and poor public realm maintenance have introduced a degree of visual discordance.

Oxford Road showcases Reading's dominant building material—red brick, along with polychrome brickwork, terracotta embellishments, and stucco façades. Roofs are predominantly slate, with occasional exceptions such as the red tiled roof of Oxford Road Community School.

Many of the early residential terraces that define the area's character are in poor to moderate condition, with several converted to shops at ground level. The Russell Street/Castle Hill Character Appraisal (2020) notes that many of the windows along the terraced front are original fittings.

4 Overview of Heritage Asset

189 Oxford Road form part of an imposing terrace made up of four houses constructed during the 1820s, later converted into four flats. The terrace is a prime example of Georgian architecture and contributes significantly to the character of the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area.

The building is constructed of red brick laid in a Flemish style bond with a stucco plat band running across the frontage at the cill of the first floor. The front garden's boundary is defined by late 20th century iron railings. Each property features three storeys and a basement arranged under a slate hipped roof, punctuated by ridgeline chimney stacks on the western party wall. Each property features a basement entrance accessed via steps from the front area as well as a main entrance at the raised ground level.

The principal entrance is located to the east of the raised ground floor and exhibits a six panelled door, set within a rendered, round-arched recess, highlighted by the fanlight above which displays the house number. The fenestration on the front elevation remains original, traditionally arranged with a gauged brick head style soldier course and stucco

cills. The windows on the basement and second floor are traditional 3/3 timber sash units, while the ground and first floor contain 6/6 timber sash windows.

The rear elevation includes matching three-storey brick extensions with pitched roofs, added during the 1990s. The two lower floors of the rear façade are rendered, with a mix of sash windows and later/non-original double-glazed insertions. The remainder of the rear elevation has double-glazed timber sash and casement windows with applied glazing bars that are later additions and are not original units.

5 Planning History

5.1 Current Planning Application

FFT are applying for planning permission and listed building consent on behalf of MTVH to retain and repair the single glazed timber sash window and doors on the front elevation of the property. In addition to replace the existing double-glazed timber and casement deteriorating side and rear windows and door, which are not visible to the public, with slimline timber double-glazed sash and casement windows.

5.2 Previous Planning History

The following information has been obtained from Reading Borough Council online planning database. No other records were checked other than a desktop search.

5.2.1 Application No: 231193

FFT applied for full planning permission for *the 'Full replacement of existing white single glazed timber sash and casement windows with white single glazed timber sash and casement windows'* on the 21/08/2023. Subsequently, on the 30/10/2023, Reading Borough Council refused the application. The given reasons for refusal are as follows:

Insufficient information has been submitted to justify replacement of original windows, without which it is not possible to ascertain that the listed buildings would not be degraded or harmed. The proposal is contrary to Policies EN1 and EN3 of the Reading Borough Local Plan 2019 and NPPF paragraphs 194 and 200.

6 Planning Policies and Guidance

6.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) outlines the Government's planning policies for England, including specific guidance on the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment, as set out in Chapter 16. In line with this guidance, the proposed works at 189 Oxford Road, comprising the repair and replacement of windows and doors, will be undertaken in a manner that respects the significance of the building, ensuring its continued positive contribution to the character of the area and its appreciation by both current and future generations.

The proposal seeks to retain and repair the original timber sash windows and doors on the front elevation, thereby preserving the most publicly visible and architecturally significant elements of the building. The replacement of the deteriorated side and rear elevation windows and doors with like-for-like slimline timber units with additional double glazing, will enhance the building's thermal performance and overall condition for residents, while remaining sensitive to the original design and materials. These elevations are not visible from the public realm and, as such, the proposed changes will have no detrimental impact on the streetscape or the wider conservation area.

In response to the previously refused planning application, it is important to consider Paragraphs 192 and 194 of the NPPF. Paragraph 194 emphasises the need to afford the highest level of protection to heritage assets, including listed buildings and those within conservation areas. Paragraph 192 further outlines the principles that should guide development in such contexts:

a) Identify, map, and safeguard heritage components to support their management, enhancement, and restoration.
b) Promote conservation and restoration and seek opportunities for measurable improvement.
c) Avoid significant harm to heritage assets; where harm is unavoidable, it must be minimised or appropriately mitigated.
d) Prevent development on sites of special interest unless the benefits clearly outweigh the potential impacts.
e) Prevent the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable heritage assets, except in wholly exceptional circumstances.

The proposed works align with these principles in the following ways:

a) The retention and repair of the original front elevation windows safeguard key elements of the building's historic character.
b) The proposal actively promotes conservation by addressing areas of deterioration and delivering improvements in thermal efficiency and residential comfort.
c) All replacement units will be like-for-like in material, profile, and detailing, ensuring the architectural integrity of the building is preserved and that no harm is caused to its significance.
d) The benefits of the scheme—including improved energy performance, enhanced living standards, and the continued viability of the property—clearly outweigh any limited impact on less visible parts of the building.
e) No irreplaceable heritage features will be lost; rather, the proposals involve restoring and replicating original features where necessary to maintain the building's historic character and ensure its long-term sustainability.

6.2 The Local Plan

The Reading Borough Local Plan (adopted 2019) has been written in line with the NPPF and aims to set out policies for how Reading will develop up until 2036. It also highlights the amount of development that will take place, the sites where development will be accommodated and where it will be restricted.

After reviewing Policies EN1 to EN4 as suggested in the previous planning permission refusal notice FFT have set out how the proposed window and door replacement will adhere to these policies.

Policy EN1: Protection and Enhancement of the Historic Environment, states that historic features such as listed buildings or conservation areas must be protected and enhanced where possible therefore planners must seek to avoid harm to the site. Furthermore, any harm that may be caused by a project must be accompanied by a clear and convincing justification, usually in the form of public benefit. This policy also states that the council will monitor heritage assets that are at risk through neglect, decay or other threats, placing importance on finding solutions that foster repair and maintenance of an asset.

Policy EN3: Enhancement of Conservation Areas states that's the architecture and character must be preserved. Reading Borough Council will positively consider proposals which take opportunities to enhance the character of conservation areas. One relevant opportunity listed in the policy is 'restoring original building features', which, by definition, means returning them to their original condition.

6.3 Justification

The proposal complies with Reading Borough Local Plan Policies EN1 and EN3 by prioritising the preservation and enhancement of the architectural character of 189 Oxford Road. The approach focuses on maintaining and renewing the front elevation windows using appropriate traditional materials to ensure they remain functional, efficient, and free from defects. This not only safeguards the building's historic integrity but also enhances its condition in line with policy objectives.

Historic England guidance (2017) supports this approach, noting that repairing timber sash windows can reduce air infiltration by up to 80%, significantly improving energy efficiency while retaining original fabric. This reinforces the principle that repair should be prioritised wherever possible.

For the side and rear elevations, which are not visible from the public realm, the proposal includes replacing deteriorated windows with slimline double-glazed timber sash and casement units. These replacements replicate the original design and detailing while delivering improved thermal performance, thereby enhancing the building's sustainability without compromising its historic character.

The proposal also aligns with Policy EN1 by ensuring that the repair and replacement of decayed windows will not damage or harm the property. Timber sash and casement windows are inherently repairable; their components can be removed from the frame for repair either on-site or at a joinery workshop, as recommended by Historic England (2017).

However, it is important to acknowledge that timber sash windows typically have a lifespan of 60–80 years if properly maintained. Without regular painting and upkeep, these windows are likely to become rotten, draughty, and beyond economical repair, even if they remain visually in keeping with the heritage setting.

In summary, this application represents a maintenance-led solution that complies with both local and national heritage policies. It preserves the character and significance of the listed building while introducing sensitive improvements that ensure its continued viability and comfort for future generations.

7 Proposed Works, Its Impact and Justification to the Heritage Asset

As demonstrated in the accompanying Photo Schedule in Appendix A and Condition Survey provided with the application, the existing windows, both sash and casement, single-glazed and double-glazed, are generally in a state of significant decay. Many are draught-prone and offer poor thermal performance, which negatively impacts the building's energy efficiency, occupant comfort, and overall appearance, giving the property a neglected and deteriorated character, in line with much of the Russell Street/Castle Hill, agreed by Reading Borough Council in the Character Appraisal (2020.)

The proposed works involve repairing and maintaining the original windows and doors on the front elevation to improve their functionality as weather barriers while preserving the building's historic character. This approach ensures that the most visible and architecturally significant elements remain intact and in keeping with the heritage value of the property.

We propose to install internal secondary glazing to the front elevation windows as a low-risk solution to improve thermal performance. The secondary glazing will not harm or damage any of the existing window frames.

For the rear and side elevations, where many windows are already non-original and some double-glazed, MTVH proposes replacing these units with like-for-like timber sash and casement windows incorporating slimline double glazing. These replacements will replicate the original design and detailing while significantly improving thermal efficiency and occupant comfort. As these elevations are not visible from the public realm, the proposed changes will not affect the building's contribution to the streetscape or the wider conservation area.

This approach is consistent with both local and national heritage policies, as it prioritises repair and retention of original fabric where possible, introduces sensitive enhancements where necessary, and ensures that the building remains fit for purpose without compromising its historic significance.

8 Conclusion

The proposed repair and replacement of windows at 189 Oxford Road, Reading, has been carefully considered in relation to the condition of the existing units and the impact on the building's heritage significance within the Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area. This Heritage Statement demonstrates that the works are a necessary intervention to maintain the property in line with modern standards, improving comfort for residents while supporting the continued enhancement of the area. The proposed works will improve the

building's long-term thermal performance and overall sustainability, contributing to better living conditions for occupants.

Importantly, the proposed windows will respect the architectural and historical significance of the property. The front elevation windows will be repaired and retained using traditional materials and methods, preserving the original character. The side and rear elevation windows, which are not visible from the public realm, will be replaced on a like-for-like basis in terms of design, material, and fenestration, with the sensitive introduction of slimline double glazing to meet contemporary performance standards. This approach ensures that the building's heritage value is maintained while delivering measurable improvements in energy efficiency.

In summary, the proposed works represent a balanced and justified solution that preserves the character and appearance of the heritage asset while addressing the functional needs of its current and future occupants.

The applicant anticipates that the design proposals and information set out in this document and the supporting documents meet with your approval and looks forward to receiving your decision in due course.

Should you require any further information about this application please contact the undersigned.

Signed by:

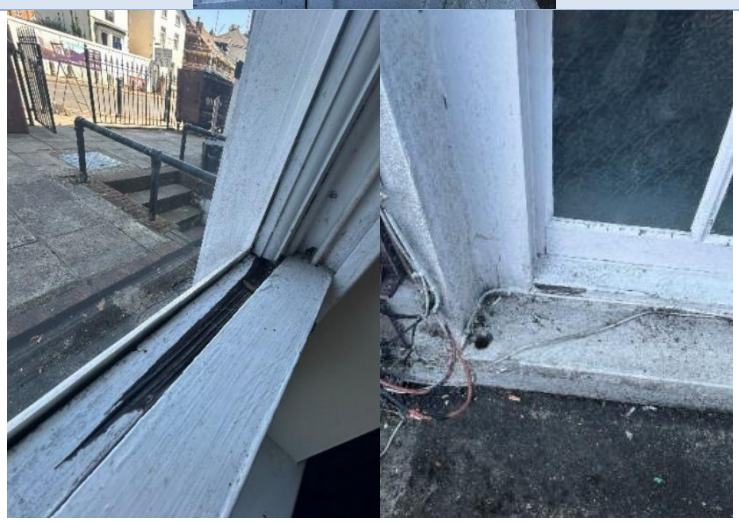
Harvey Steven

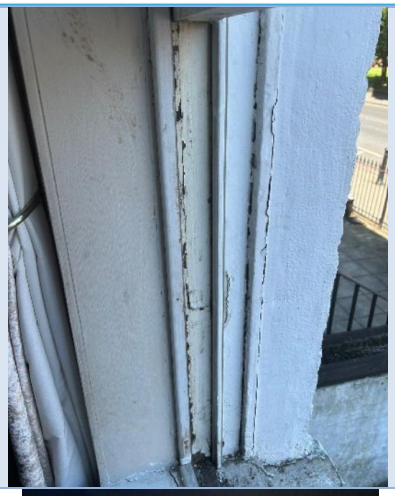
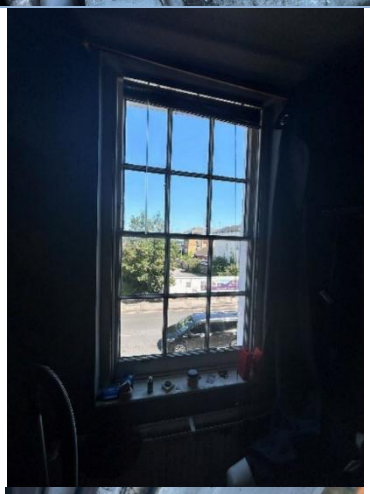
Harvey Steven
Building Surveyor
For and on behalf of
Faithorn Farrell Timms LLP

9 Bibliography

Reading Borough Council, 2020. Russell Street/Castle Hill Conservation Area Appraisal. Reading: Reading Borough Council.
Reading Borough Council, 2019. Reading Borough Local Plan. Reading: Reading Borough Council.
Historic England, 2017. Traditional Windows: Their Care, Repair and Upgrading. London: Historic England.
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2024. National Planning Policy Framework. London: HM Government.

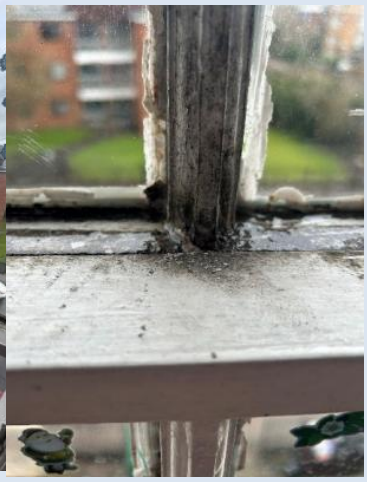
10 Appendix A - Window and Door Photo Schedule

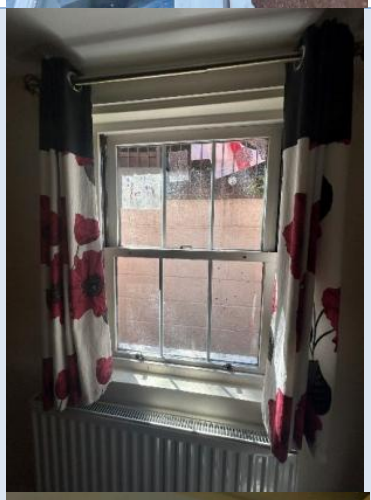
Image	Location and Type
	Front Elevation, Basement D1
	Front Elevation, Basement

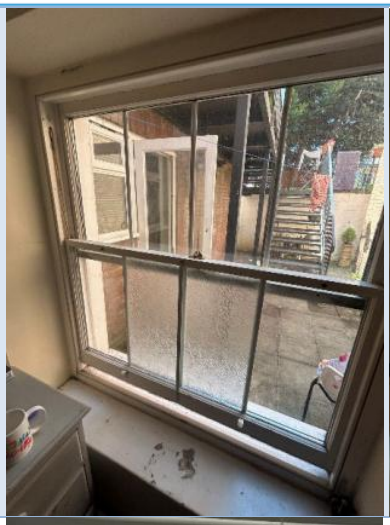
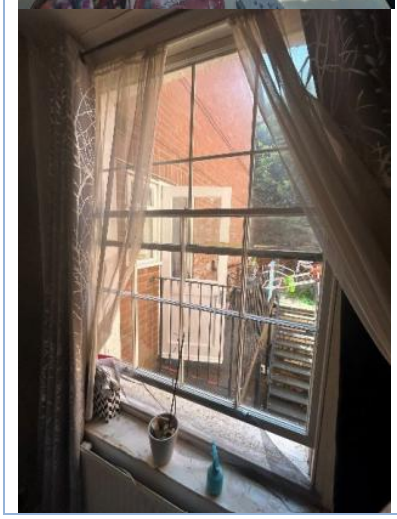
	Front Elevation, Ground Floor
	Front Elevation, First Floor

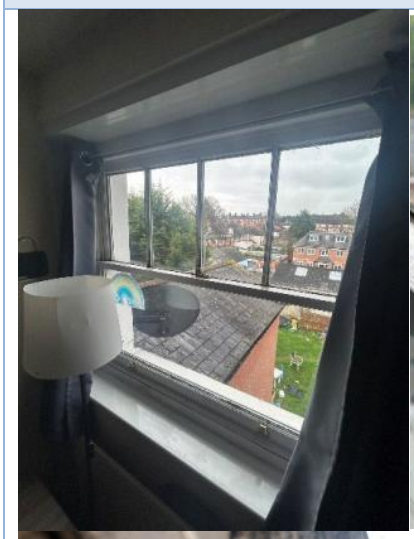
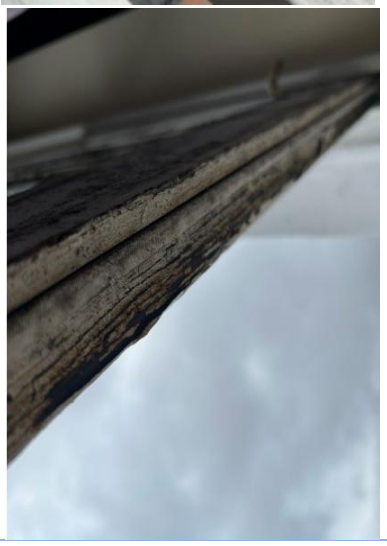
		Front Elevation, Second Floor

BUS
LANE



		Rear Elevation, Basement D2
		Rear Elevation, Basement

		
		Rear Elevation, Ground Floor
		

	Rear Elevation, 1st Floor
 	Rear Elevation, 2nd Floor