

Heritage Statement

Replacement of Two First-Floor Windows at St Agnes, Grove Hill, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8PN



1. Introduction

This Heritage Statement has been prepared to support an application for listed building consent for the replacement of two first-floor windows at St Agnes, Grove Hill, Emmer Green, Reading, RG4 8PN.

The purpose of the statement is to describe the site and heritage context, identify the relevant planning and listed building considerations, explain the design rationale for the proposed development, and assess the likely effect of the works on the significance of the listed building.

2. Site and Heritage Context

2.1 Property Description

St Agnes is a detached residential property on Grove Hill in Emmer Green, Reading. The building was Grade II listed in 1978 and is entered on the National Heritage List for England as list entry 1155897:

Circa 1835. Tudor cottage with scalloped bargeboards to gables, and hoodmoulds to windows. Two storeys flint with brick quoins and dressings to north. Stucco fronted to south with central gable which has vent in shape of cross-arrow loop. Two ranges of windows, casements. Modern sun porch. West front has three gables of uneven size, cross-arrow loop vent in left hand one. Three windows on first floor, glazing bar sashes. Central projecting gable porch with hoodmould to round-headed doorway. Two light mullion window to left.

It is understood the building consists of principally three distinct periods of development:

Tudor Cottage

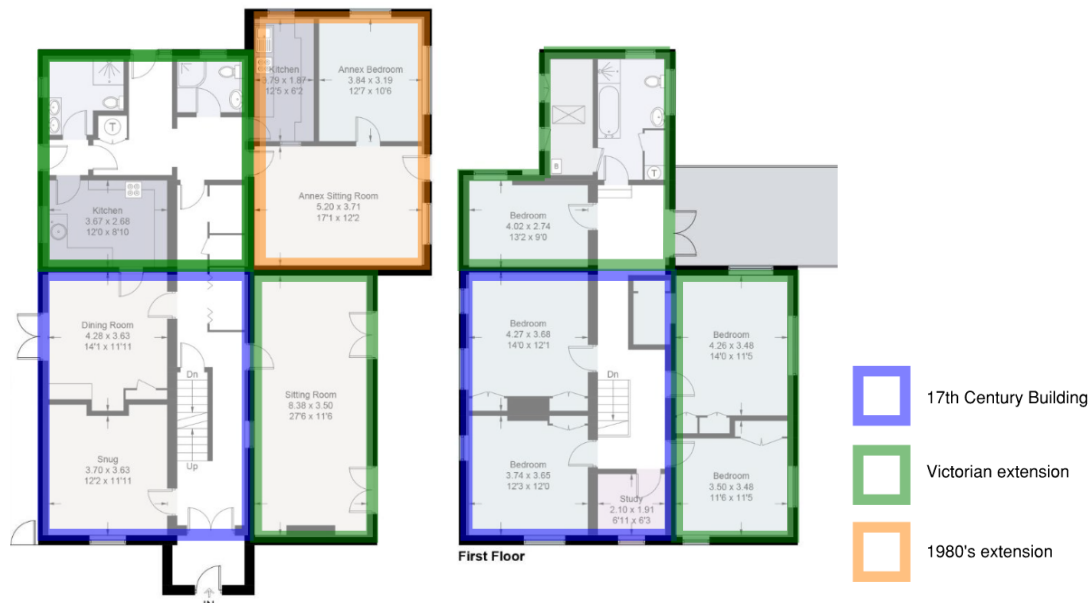
The two storey northern portion of the property is traditional solid-wall construction, comprising a flint outer leaf with red brick quoins and dressings to corners and openings. Internally, the wall construction incorporates a chalk rubble core/inner wall. The combination of flint, brick and chalk reflects traditional local building practices and forms an important element of the building's architectural and historic significance.

19th Century Victorian Extension

In the 19th Century the property was significantly extended to the south and east with a two-story front and side extension including sun porch. The construction of this element is stucco fronted brick construction.

1980s Ground Floor Extension

In 1980 planning was granted (application number 79/TP/1304) to demolish a lean-to workshop and boiler house and the sun porch to the south-east corner of the property and construct a single-storey self-contained connected annex, consisting of lounge, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom, with balcony above accessed from the first floor. A new double garage was also erected.



2.2 Planning History

The available planning history for the property is as follows:

- 79/TP/1304 (conditional consent dated 25 March 1980): Listed Building Consent to demolish a lean-to workshop and boiler house and erect a new double garage and extension for lounge, bedroom and kitchen to form a “granny flat” with balcony.
- 02/00772/LBC (conditional consent dated 8 August 2002): Installation of solar water heating collectors to the rear roof elevation.
- 10/00691/LBC and 10/00690/FUL (conditional consent dated 3 September 2010): Installation of a 10 panel solar photovoltaic system to the front elevation of the property.
- 130334/LBC (5 August 2013): Replacement of five first floor windows. The search records this application as “not determined”.
- PL/24/1007 (25 September 2024): Proposed changes to listed building – advice given (not to current property owners).

2.3 Site Heritage Significance

The special interest of the building is understood to derive principally from its Tudor and Victorian cottage character, its picturesque massing, gabled roof form, scalloped bargeboards, flint and brick walling, stucco front, and the composition and detailing of its historic window openings and cross-arrow loops.

3. Planning and Listed Building Policy Context

The building is listed and therefore subject to the controls in the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Section 7 of the Act provides that works for the demolition, alteration or extension of a listed building that would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest must be authorised.

The National Planning Policy Framework requires applicants to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting, with the level of detail proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal.

Historic England Advice Note 12 confirms that statements of heritage significance should provide an objective and proportionate analysis of significance and can form part of a Design and Access Statement where appropriate. The approach taken in this statement reflects that guidance by focusing on the part of the listed building directly affected by the proposed works.

The Reading Borough Local Plan was adopted in November 2019 and forms the principal local planning policy framework for the determination of planning applications in Reading. The application should be considered against the development plan as a whole, including policies relating to the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets.

Heritage England Advice Note 16 Listed Building Consent gives both general advice owners of listed buildings about listed building consent as an application process and on how to make an informed application. It also gives advice on works which may or may not need listed building consent, depending on the works are proposed to be carried out.

4. Proposed Works

4.1 Description of development

Replacement of two first-floor windows on the eastern elevation of the property.

4.2 Existing Window (NE-1)

The window on the first-floor east elevation north-side is a single glazed fixed main pane with openable top pane in a timber frame. Secondary glazing has been added. The window frame is suffering from rot and despite the secondary glazing the window has poor thermal and draft prevention properties.



Figure 1 Window NE-1 Showing Rotten Frame



Figure 2 Window NE-1 in Context of Building

The proposed works are to replace this window with a uPVC sash window. This would match the appearance of the existing windows on the north elevation whilst providing a more

functional window with greater thermal properties. A sash window is preferred to a casement window which would present a different appearance, not in keeping with other windows on this elevation of the property.

4.3 Window (SE-2)

The window on the eastern elevation south-side of the property is a relatively modern double glazed uPVC window (estimated 1980 to 1990). The timber cill has suffered extensive damage and is a source of water ingress and damp to the property. Whilst the cill could be replaced with the existing window in situ, given the age of the window and the lack of thermal and draft prevention performance, the proposal is to replace with a like-for-like uPVC casement window. This will match the uPVC casement windows on the south elevation.

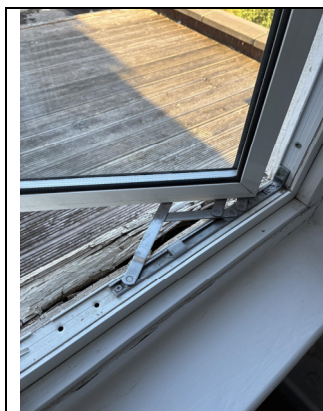


Figure 3 Window SE-2



Figure 4 Internal damp



Figure 5 Extensive Damaged to Cill

4.4 Construction Details

Replacement windows shall comprise high-quality uPVC double-glazed units. Frames shall be finished in a smooth white finish and shall incorporate slim-profile sections with external dimensions matching the existing openings.

Glazing shall comprise clear, low-emissivity double-glazed sealed units with a maximum overall U-value of 1.4 W/m²K. Spacer bars shall be warm-edge type finished in black to minimise visual impact.

All glazing shall be clear and free from tinting, reflective coatings or decorative treatments.

Installation shall be set back within the existing reveals to match the existing window positions and maintain the established shadow lines of the façade.

5. Heritage Significance and Impact Assessment

The overall significance of St Agnes lies in its Tudor and Victorian cottage character, its picturesque massing, gabled roof form, scalloped bargeboards, flint and brick walling, stucco front, and the composition and detailing of its historic window openings and cross-arrow loops.

The existing two first-floor window units proposed for replacement are demonstrably modern additions and are themselves of little or no significance to the listed building. They have degraded to a condition where repair is not practical. Their replacement would therefore not result in the loss of significant historic window fabric.

This replacement of the windows with uPVC frames is in keeping with existing windows elsewhere in the property.

The windows that are proposed to be replaced are on elevations which are not prominent when viewing the property from public viewpoints. Window NE-1 is only visible from the neighbouring property, whose western flank wall has no windows. Window SE-2 is only visible from far away public viewpoints (50m+) as the property is elevated, where the window detailing is not visible.

The heritage impact of the proposal is expected to be neutral to low. The removal of degraded modern frames would not harm the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. The proposal is therefore a necessary replacement of failed modern fabric rather than an avoidable loss of historic material.

The replacement of the windows will be done in the existing window openings with no disturbance or change to the existing window openings. Removal and installation works will be undertaken in a manner that avoids unnecessary disturbance to surrounding wall fabric, reveals, sills, heads, internal finishes and adjacent decorative elements.

6. Supporting Information

This Heritage Statement is being submitted as part of the Listed Building Consent application with the following supporting information:

- Plans
 - Location Plan (as per planning portal application)
 - Site Plan (as per planning portal application)
 - Existing elevation drawings identifying the two first-floor windows to be replaced
 - Proposed elevations drawings identifying the proposed two first-floor windows