

# Report

**To:** Conservation Area Advisory Group

**From:** Sarah Leete-Groves (Specialist Advisor (Conservation) )

**Date:** Tuesday 24 May 2016

**Sensitivity:** Normal

**Subject:** Windows: A guide to their maintenance, repair and replacement

**Purpose of Report:**

- To provide a summary of the current policies and guidance available to assess the replacement of windows through the planning process.
- To seek Members views on the draft window guidance document which; amalgamates current national guidance, available on windows and identifies the relevant national and local policies and supplementary guidance, referred to as part of the planning process when assessing the replacement or renewal of windows.

**Recommendations and requirements of CAAG:**

- That Members provide their comments on the report

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 It has become apparent in determining applications for the replacement of windows through the planning process that EBC has little guidance available relating to the maintenance, repair, replace and aesthetic value associated with traditional windows.

1.2 This is further emphasised through the number of planning applications received for the replacement of traditional timber windows with uPVC units and their unauthorised replacement, which suggests that there is a lack of awareness of the merits associated with traditional windows. A case in point being a recent enforcement decision against the unauthorised replacement windows to Eastbeach Hotel, a seafront hotel identified as being a building of local interest sited in a conservation area.

## 2.0 Background

2.1 Following discussions between Councillors and the Eastbourne Hospitality

Association, it was decided that a review of the approach in respect of UPVC windows in Conservation Areas should be undertaken.

- 2.2 This document has been produced to provide owners, agents, applicants and other interested parties with an insight into the heritage values attached to the significance of traditional windows, as they would be assessed by EBC, through the planning process. In addition, advice on good practice is offered for the maintenance and repair of traditional windows including their wholesale replacement.

### **3.0 Existing Policy**

- 3.1 It is important to note that EBC does not have a dedicated planning policy which relates specifically to the renewal or replacement of windows. However, replacement windows that require approval through the planning process are considered in accordance with the relevant policies and adopted guidance.
- 3.2 Existing national policy comes from the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] Section 12, which highlights the need for both the applicant and local planning authority to identify the significance of the heritage asset subject to alteration, with weight given to the harm of the identified significance through the proposed alteration.
- 3.3 A key element of significance is design, which is assessed on a local level through Policy D10a: Design, found within the Core Strategy Local Plan 2013, which seeks to achieve a high quality environment where new development makes a positive contribution to the appearance of our townscape and urban heritage.
- 3.4 The assessment of urban heritage is found in Core Strategy Policy D10 Historic Environment. This policy supports the protection and enhancement of all significant heritage assets, where practicable. There is a presumption in favour of protection of all heritage assets from inappropriate change, including both designated (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas) and non-designated assets (Buildings of Local Interest and Areas of High Townscape Value).
- 3.5 In addition, Policies UHT15, UHT16, UHT17 and UHT18, found within the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011 (adopted 2003, saved 2007) further define the value EBC attaches to both designated and non-designated assets through development management policies.
- 3.6 In support of the identified Borough Plan Policies, the adopted Eastbourne Townscape Guide (2004) Guidelines WD1, WD2 and WD3 specifically relate to replacement windows. This Supplementary Planning Guidance has been

tested through the development management and appeal process.

#### **4.0 Contents of Draft Guidance**

- 4.1 In general the draft window guidance document is an amalgamation of national guidance available on the maintenance, repair, replacement and significance of traditional windows. In addition the document highlights the importance of design and highlights both national and local policies including supplementary planning guidance, which are to be considered as part of the planning process when assessing replacement windows in listed buildings, conservation areas, buildings of local interest and areas of high townscape value.
- 4.2 To assist with determining what constitutes the maintenance, repair or replacement of windows through the planning process, a window assessment flowchart of frequently asked questions and a planning process flowchart for replacement windows, has been included within the document.
- 4.3 As a starting point the document highlights the merits associated with a regular maintenance program of cleaning and painting. An approach which will extend the life of a window, besides being more cost effective than installing new windows.
- 4.4 Where repair is required to overcome decay in the frame; the document advised where feasible, the window should be repaired in situ, retaining, as much fabric as possible, which in turn goes towards conserving the visual character and appearance of the building and the contribution it makes, to the immediate and wider area.
- 4.5 In considering the replacement of traditional windows, the document identifies and highlights what constitutes the key components (detailing) of a window that make it significant. Key components that contribute to the buildings original design intent which makes a historic and or architectural contribution to the significance of the building and or area.
- 4.6 In addition the document, offers further advice, on internally fitted secondary glazing units which can be an effective measure, to reduce noise and heat loss.

#### **5.0 Next Steps**

- 5.1 Following consideration and comments from Conservation Area Advisory Group [CAAG], the draft windows guidance will be presented to Planning Committee on 26 July for their comments.
- 5.2 A review of the Tourist Accommodation Retention policy is being undertaken

at the same time as the Windows Guidance, and both documents will be presented to Planning Committee on 26 July for their comments. Following this, both reports will go to Cabinet on 16 September for authority to publish for a six week consultation period. Following the consultation period, the result of the consultation and any proposed amendments will be presented to Local Plan Steering Group and Planning Committee before going to Cabinet and Full Council for adoption in February 2017.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

- 6.1 Whilst there is not a planning policy that specifically relates to the replacement of windows, the existing policies and supplementary planning guidelines have been successfully tried and tested at appeal, demonstrating EBC existing policies in relation to design and heritage are adequate when dealing with the renewal or replacement windows through the planning process.
  - 6.2 There is no absolute answer to whether UPVC windows are acceptable in Conservation Areas and each case will be judged on its merits, but it is anticipated that the draft guidance will provide a clearer understanding on the assessment of windows through the development management process and address issues of inconsistency.
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