

MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	242661 + 242662
Address:	2 Ruscombe Road, Twyford, RG10 9JS.		
Proposal:	242661: Householder application for the proposed replacement of all windows and doors to the main dwelling and annexe. 242662: Application for Listed Building Consent for the proposed replacement of all windows and doors to the main dwelling and annexe.		
Heritage Asset:	Lime Tree Cottage, 2 Ruscombe Road – grade II listed building since 1984. Twyford Conservation Area. Listed Buildings along with Conservation Areas are classed as designated heritage assets under the NPPF (Dec.2024) and in the Council's Local Plan policies.		
Site Visit Made:	Yes.		

Summary Of Recommendations

Further information required to be able adequately assess effect of the proposed works to the significance about the property as a designated heritage asset.

As such, Built Heritage advise that until further details have been provided and found to be appropriate that the applications not be determined until then.

Comments On Proposal

No.2 Ruscombe Road is set slightly back from the road, behind a low brick boundary with the gravelled forecourt driveway and front garden. The property has fairly extensive grounds to it, with a large rear garden. There are several outbuildings set along the eastern side of the site, which include a small historic timber barn, a twin garage and a detached single storey rectilinear brick built outbuilding that along with the dwelling house is the subject of the applications.

The large detached two-storey dwelling, built in a red brick, with slate hipped roof was originally built in the early 19th century. When originally built the property would have been of a design typical of architectural favoured design of the day, that of a symmetrical arrange to the layout of the principle front elevation and in the use of multi-pane vertical wooden sash windows, a distinctive and common feature of Georgian era house of this status. It appears not long after the property was built a full width two-storey extension of a matching form was added to its SW end of the

dwelling in the mid/late 19 century. A small flat roofed single storey extension to the rear appears to have been added sometime around the mid-20th century. More recently the dwelling house has been further enlarged early this century with the addition of a single storey extension on the mid/late 19th century.

No.2 Ruscombe Road lies within the eastern extremity of the Twyford Conservation Area, the boundary of which having been intentionally drawn so as to include this property and its grounds.

The applications for listed building consent and planning under consideration here two elements of works to them. The main element being to the listed building itself where the intension is replace with new double glazed replacements all 14 no. traditional multi-pane sash windows (including a Yorkshire sash - GW5) of the historic original early 19th century dwelling, including the mid/late 19th century extension to it , along with replacement of a set of French doors (GD 1)to the rear and the four unit casement window (GW4) of the rear small flat roofed single storey addition.

The second element of works is for new double glazed replacement of the exterior door and all 10no. windows of the detached outbuilding situated approximately 10m east of the NE end of the dwelling house.

Under paragraph 207 of the NPPF (Dec. 2024) states that ‘in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting’ and that ‘the level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.’ With the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary.’

Whilst paragraph 213 of the NPPF states that ‘any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.’

Windows of 2 Ruscombe Road

In terms of the replacement of the sash windows of the listed building there are heritage concerns, both to the intention to replace the existing windows, and in the nature and value of the supporting details for the applications.

Although a heritage assessment has been provided, it appears focused on establishing chronically the phases of development in the enlargement of this Georgian era property. There however appears to be little, if at all, evaluation made as to the age and relevance of these existing sash windows.

From a cursory viewing of the windows, their appearance and detailing does suggest they hold a degree age to them and could well be contemporary with when the building was first built and first extended. Were that to be the case then these windows would be considered to be of historic significance, as original features, whilst otherwise also being believed important architectural detailing, which very

much contributes to the appearance and form of this Georgian era property. That said none of these sash windows appeared to contain historic glass glazing to them.

The heritage statement states that 'the windows and doors to the existing property require work to be completed in order to fix existing draughts, the opening mechanisms to the windows as well as cracks and repairs to the woodwork and paint work...' Reportedly windows that cannot be opened safely due to no functioning fault sash cords, and rot in the wooden frames reported evident.

With respect to the replacing windows to listed buildings, from a heritage stance there is a well-established expectation, where windows are of historic age and/or significance that they are to be retained and repaired in an appropriate manner. In those cases where a historic window is shown to be longer capable of being retained and repaired, the expectation then is for an identical replacement, in materials, design and profiles, so as to be a faithful reproduction of the one to be replace. Typically this also includes the use of single glazing. However, recent guidance from Historic England in its Advice Note titled 'Adapting Historic Buildings for Energy and Carbon Efficiency' (July 2024) would indicate an appropriate form of glazing, such as slim profile or vacuum double glazing that would improve the thermal efficiency of a window, could prove acceptable. As where it would be found acceptable to introduce such glazing retrospectively into existing windows, with the case of like for like replacement windows, there is the expectation for use of traditional integral glazing bars, into which the glazing is fitted (as stuck-on or applied glazing bars rarely replicate the character of historic windows).

At the time of visiting the property, whilst a number of the ground floor sash windows were noted to exhibit signs of previous scarfed repairs to their box frame surrounds, it was not otherwise evident from viewing from the ground and first floor windows from the grounds from outside the property it was not evident the sash windows had rotten woodwork to them. This it is noted It noted is in part due to these windows having had their woodwork repainted quite recently. The only visible rotten woodwork was seen on the side hung four casement kitchen window (GW4) where there was unmistakable evidence of areas of decay to the frames and glazing bars. This kitchen window being to the mid-20th century rear flat -roofed extension is however of no great age and holds no particular d historic value in itself. Visually, it did not appear this kitchen window was in such a poor state that could not be addressed by undertaking localised repairs to the timber frames and glazing bars.

Given the apparent visual evidence on site of the sash windows being in such a poor states so as to need replacing submitted information with the applications to justify window replacement is considered from a heritage stance inadequate. It has not been adequately demonstrated the seemingly historically significant sash windows and fails to establish the show that it is not possible to undertake localised repairs to the windows to rectify the faults.

The replacement of the windows seemingly appears to be driven by a desire to make thermal improvement and address issues of noise from the adjacent road. Sash cords can be replaced, whilst upgrading of draft exclusion measures to the windows along with the introduction of other measures such as secondary glazing and/or

addition of thermal/acoustic lined curtains would result in thermal and acoustic improvements to the dwelling.

Whilst the submitted materials includes brochure details from the company Save the Sash. Com and reference to the frames to be made of accoya wood, and the use of slim profile double glazing for the replacement windows, however there is little in any more specific details to firstly establish whether the intention is actually for the complete replacement of the window units, frames, and all. Although not made clear it does appear the intention is the replacement of the window casements only. This being what the applicant advised at the time of visiting the property that only the window casements are to be replaced. Furthermore, there are no specific measures drawings for the windows provided. The lack of such details raises concern given the statement in the Design & Access Statement that 'the windows to be replaced with a similar colour, style and material to match the existing with the glazing upgraded from single to double...' As such, it is not clear in terms of there being the expectation for any replacement to at least, in design, mouldings profiles to be a true copy of the original or at the least within an acceptable level of variance from the original. Whilst this lack of detail could be left to be dealt by condition although given the current lack of adequate justification for window replacement it is believed to condition window joinery details is believed likely to be unsafe.

Annexe Outbuilding

The detached outbuilding is situated approximately 10m east of the NE end of the dwelling house. It appears the applications for listed building consent and planning permission to replace the windows and the exterior door of this outbuilding is due to the incorrect belief of the Twyford Conservation Area being the subject of an Article 4 Direction, removing specific otherwise permitted development rights.

It appears the submitted heritage statement makes no comment on the outbuilding, its age or significance.

The outbuilding, whilst altered and extended, the structure does appear to be of a pre-1948 date. The 1900 edition of the OS maps depicts a building in the same location and with a roughly matching footprint of the outbuilding and that of the small old barn to the NNE of the house are shown and appear to at that time have been outside the domestic curtilage of the house. By the 1970 edition of the OS maps both these outbuildings are shown within the grounds of the house. As such the outbuilding and the small barn both meet the criteria for them to be considered curtilage listed structures. Therefore, although the wrong justification given by the applicant for listed building consent application, the outbuilding's curtilage listed status does however mean the replacement of its windows and exterior door do require the need for consent.

That said, the outbuilding is considered, in its apparently much altered an extended form and in the fact that evidently it is a turn of the last century structure that lay outside the domestic curtilage previously, to hold only limited historic significance in itself and is limited in its contribution to the setting of the listed house. A number of the windows do however appear to hold a degree of age and potentially original. As with the sash windows of the main dwelling it is believed that it has not been shown

the existing windows cannot be repaired and/or upgraded thermally through measures such as secondary glazing. That said, the outbuilding being of limited significance in itself that the replacement of the windows and the exterior door with double glazed ones could prove acceptable subject to the window design. However as the details for the windows of the dwelling house, the application presently has not provided adequate information as to the historic value of the existing, or why they cannot be repaired, if failing, and/or have their glazing upgraded.

Summary

Further information is required to be able from a heritage stance to determine with a sufficient degree of confidence the impact on the significances of the designated heritage assets of the proposed works.

From a heritage stance insufficient details has presently been provided in order to be able to adequately evaluate what significance held by the existing sash windows of the listed building, the evidence that shows the window sash units could not be repaired and/or fitted with slim profile double glazed or vacuum glass panes.

Further information is considered necessary before it would be possible to provide an informed response to the acceptability of the potential loss of original features the proposed replacement of the windows to the listed building could result in.

Additional information required being:

- An appropriate assessment that establishes the age and as such significance of the existing sash windows and casement windows units
- Clarification as to what exactly are the works being sought permission for in terms of 'replacement of all windows and doors' as to whether the intention is for complete replacement of these elements (including box frames, sills, door frames and thresholds) or just the replacement of the window casement units and the exterior doors?
- Provision of evidence that adequately justifies why it is necessary to replace the sash windows (including the Yorkshire sash) rather than the existing being repaired.
- Confirmation of the thickness of the slim profile glazing intended to be used and that the multi-pane sashes are to have tradition integral glazing bars.
- Scaled drawn joinery details (plan and vertical/horizontal cross-sections views) of the windows, with glazing bar and moulding details - in order to be able to judge that aesthetically the replacement are of an appropriate architectural detailing. The different window designs cross referenced to the elevation drawings and any other document listing them.

Date:

16/12/2024

Signed:

Keith Frost
Built Heritage Officer