

DELEGATED OFFICER REPORT



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Application Number:	250535
Site Address:	Highway Cottage, Basingstoke Road, Three Mile Cross, Wokingham, RG7 1BA
Expiry Date:	13 June 2025
Advert Publication Date:	9 April 2025
Site Notice Date:	9 April 2025
Site Visit Date:	19 May 2025
Proposal: Application for Listed Building consent for the proposed window replacements.	

PLANNING CONSTRAINTS/STATUS

- Listed Building
- Green Route
- Special Character Area
- Ecology – Bat Roosting Habitat

PLANNING POLICY

National Policy	National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)
MDD Local Plan (MDD)	CC03 - Green Route TB24 - Designated Heritage Assets (where site is within a Conservation Area) TB26 – Special Character Area – Three Mile Cross

PLANNING HISTORY

Application No.	Description	Decision & Date
8/57	Change of Use from PH to Private Residential	20/02/1957
245/57	Alterations	Approved 09/04/1957
R/149/69	Resiting garage and erecting boundary walls	Approved 12/06/1967

CONSULTATION RESPONSES

WBC Built Heritage	Objection raised.
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REPRESENTATIONS

N/A

APPRAISAL

Site Description: A detached Grade 2 Listed Building on Basingstoke Road, a Green Route in the Special Character Area of Three Mile Cross. Highway Cottage (Figures 1-3) is located close to a busy junction with Grazeley Road and Church Lane. It is next to a Petrol Filling Station and was previously the George and Dragon Public House. In 1957, Change of Use to a residential dwelling was approved.



Figure 1 View of Highway Cottage from Basingstoke Road



Figure 2 South side elevation of Highway Cottage



Figure 3 Window detail Highway Cottage

Built Heritage Officer Assessment

The application proposes the replacement of 12 no. existing windows to a Grade II listed building located within the Three Mile Cross Area of Special Character (ASC).

The Council's Built Heritage Officer has assessed this application and provide the following comments: *"Highway Cottage is understood to be primarily an 18th century cottage fronting the old Basingstoke Road, there is however, a good deal of timber framing within the building (although some of this may well be superficial), including some fine box framing. It would not be surprising for the building to an earlier structure which was 'politely' refaced in the Georgian period, as was the fashion at the time. Likely originally constructed as dwelling, the building was then used as a public house – The George and Dragon – which closed in 1956 and then reverted to a residential function. It is an interesting building, multi-phase with a good deal of layering. Sadly, it has been mistreated, with inappropriate alterations such as cementitious re-pointing of the brickwork, which not only negatively impacts the appearance, but actively harms the building allowing excessive moisture build up, leading to decay of the brick, and – it would be assumed – damp issues internally.*

It is proposed to remove the existing single glazed timber windows and install timber double glazed replacements. The application does not make it clear as to which windows are to be replaced (by way of elevation and plan drawings), however it assumed the 12 no. is all of the windows, it also does not contain an assessment of the age and significance of the extant windows – critical to accepting the principle of loss. From a cursory glance, the windows (at least those fronting the highway) are of an age, possibly 19th century, possibly early 20th century given a few tell-tales – it is probably a mixture of ages. Photographic evidence suggests windows of the extant appearance where in place in c1900. The primary elevation ground floor windows once hand shutters affixed. The pintles remain on the left-hand window, however,

appear to have been removed from the right one – a photographic existing with the shutters still in place in 1999.

As a historic architectural feature, the windows positively contribute to the special interest of the listed building and to the character and appearance of the Area of Special Character (ASC). The proposed replacement windows would be double glazed, and whilst seeking to ‘replicate’ the existing, the newly manufactured appearance would betray any historic integrity. As the windows appear to be historic and thus contribute to the significance of the listed building, physically demonstrating changes to the building, enabling the chronological development to be read as well as being of appropriate material properties commensurate with a statutorily protected historic structure. In recognition of this, a briefing note published by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) states:

- Old windows and doors are an intrinsic part of our heritage. They bring texture and life to many old buildings, helping to stir our spirits and perceptions. Even the plainest windows are more than a mere assembly of mouldings and fittings: their surfaces may be time-worn, sometimes there is handmade glass and forged ironmongery, with frames that have accommodated gentle distortion in the building. At a simpler level, they are rare, beautiful items, equivalent to an antique chair or table in historic, cultural and aesthetic value.*
- The SPAB has long championed these significant, irreplaceable features. Not everyone appreciates their attributes, some see old doors and windows as worthless, troublesome and replaceable. Others fail to realise that retention is viable through care, repair and a few, often straightforward, steps to enhance energy efficiency or security; and that this conservative approach frequently means lower long-term costs. Sadly, there is a rash of inappropriate replacement double-glazed windows that scar the faces of buildings across the UK, are emotionally cold and, however well executed, generally bland; the new but lifeless glass tending to stand out like a false eye. So often, people are seduced to buy these replacement products by high-pressure sales techniques and remain blind to the reality of their decision because of limited knowledge and misguided efforts to ‘do the right thing’. Outdated perceptions have not helped.”*

Following the above assessment and concerns identified by the Council’s Heritage Officer, the applicant was invited to submit an independent survey report and scaled elevation drawings showing the location and number of windows to be replaced. However, the requested information has not been submitted.

Conclusion

Windows of listed buildings are important historic architectural features that make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. It follows that they should be retained and repaired rather than replaced, unless it has been clearly demonstrated that the window is beyond repair. Most of the windows are in good order and merely require regular maintenance and minor repair. It has not been demonstrated, by way of an independent specialist surveyor’s report, that the windows are in an overly poor condition. In the absence of such information, the principle of replacing the windows has not been justified. Paragraph 209 of the NPPF

(Dec 2024), states “*where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, a deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision.*” Neglect of maintenance routine required for historic buildings and their features encompasses “deliberate neglect”.

Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated the proposal is the ‘least worse option’ – as per the requirements set out in para. 213 of the NPPF (Dec 2024) harm to a heritage asset “*should require clear and convincing justification*”. As it appears the existing windows could be repaired, draft-proofed, secondary glazing installed etc., all with lower financial and ecological cost. Further advice can be found here: [SPAB - Timber windows](#) and here: [Traditional Windows: their care, repair and upgrading | Historic England](#)

As such, the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the identified heritage asset. Given the loss of historic fabric and inappropriately detailed proposed replacement windows this harm would result in the erosion to the overall significance of the designated heritage asset (Section 16, NPPF). Through the loss of historic fabric and inappropriately detailed proposed replacement windows, the proposals would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building (S16/66, P(LBCA)A 90).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan.

Taken as a whole, the as proposed alterations would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the identified heritage asset. Through the unsympathetic architectural form and detailing, loss of historic fabric and erosion to the plan form resulting in dilution to the special interest, this harm would be at a moderate level to the identified significance of 47 The Terrace. No public benefits have been identified that would outweigh this harm (Section 16, NPPF). Through the loss of historic fabric, erosion to the plan form, unsympathetic architectural form and detailing, the proposed alterations would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building (S16 and S66, P(LBCA)A 90).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would be contrary to the Section 16 of the NPPF (2023), Section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (1990), Policy CP3 of the Core Strategy (2010) and Policy TB24 of the MDD Local Plan (2014).

The proposal fails to comply in terms of:

Impact on heritage asset:



The Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010):

In determining this application, the Council is required to have due regard to its obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The key equalities protected characteristics include age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief. There is no indication or evidence (including from consultation on the application) that persons with protected

characteristics as identified by the Act have or will have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to this particular planning application and there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of the development.

RECOMMENDATION

Conditions agreed:	Not required
Recommendation:	Refuse
Date:	4 June 2025
Earliest date for decision:	16 May 2025

Recommendation agreed by: (Authorised Officer)	
Date:	25/06/25