

Ribble Valley Borough Council
Development Department
Council Offices
Church Walk
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 2RA

12 December 2023

Dear Sir/ Madam,

HERITAGE STATEMENT INCLUDING JUSTIFICATION FOR REPLACEMENT

Proposal: Listed building consent for replacement of windows to front elevation

Site address: 6 Main Street, Bolton by Bowland, BB7 4NW

Introduction

This Heritage Statement is submitted on behalf of Mrs Plant (the Applicant) in support of the above proposal for listed building consent (LBC). It follows on from an earlier pre-application enquiry (ref. RV/2023/ENQ/00045) for the same proposal.

Below I outlined the legislative and policy context; describe the significance of the building and its contribution to Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area; assess the impact of the proposal; and address outstanding matters raised by the pre-application enquiry response dated 21 November 2023. Photographs are included at appendix 1.

Legislative & Policy Context

Legislative context is provided by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act 1990), with the most relevant statutory duty set by section 16:

“In considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses”.

Furthermore, section 72 requires that when exercising planning duties “with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area”.

National planning policy for conserving and enhancing the historic environment, is set out within chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (up-dated 2021). The general thrust of the NPPF, with respect to this proposal, is that:

- heritage significance should be described and understood, in sufficient detail to understand potential impact (paras 194 and 195);
- the LPA should take into account the desirability of sustaining and enhancing significance (para 197);
- when considering impacts great weight should be given to an asset's conservation (para 199);
- any harm or loss of significance should require clear and convincing justification (para 200);
- less than substantial harm should be weighed against public benefits (para 202); and
- LPAs should look for opportunities for new development to enhance conservation areas and the setting of listed buildings.

In determining applications for LBC, there is no statutory duty to have regard to the development plan, which the Courts and Planning Inspectors may consider to be irrelevant. However, some Local Planning Authorities take a different view, with the pre-application enquiry response identifying Ribble Valley Core Strategy policies EN5 and DM4 as being of relevance. As these are entirely consistent with the NPPF there is no conflict or dilemma to resolve.

There is, however, an inconsistency between the LBCA Act 1990 and more recent policy and guidance, with the former using the term “preservation” or “preserving” and the latter deliberately avoiding this in favour of the term “conservation”. “Conservation” (for heritage policy) is defined by the NPPF glossary as

“the process of maintaining and managing change to a heritage asset in a way that sustains, and where appropriate, enhances its significance”.

In the past “preservation” or “preserving” had often been interpreted as a requirement to avoid or strictly limit change. However, Historic England advise the Courts to have ruled that “preservation” should now be interpreted as “preserve from harm” and that it is not therefore incompatible with current policy and guidance which advocates “conservation”¹.

The pre-application enquiry response identifies some useful guidance provided by Historic England and the IHBC, which is consistent with current national and local policy.

¹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/hpg/generalintro/heritage-conservation-defined/> (accessed 06/12/2023)

The Building & Conservation Area

6 Main Street is one half of a listed building that comprises 4 to 6 Main Street. The building was grade II listed in 1954 and its list description (entry no. [1163227](#)) is as follows:

GV II Pair of houses, formerly one, 1716. Slobbered rubble with stone slate roof. Two storeys. No. 6 (to the left) of one bay with four-light mullioned windows. The ground-floor one has an inner cyma moulding and outer chamfer, the first floor one being double chamfered. Door to the right. The moulding of the jambs forms an elaborate shape on the lintel. Above is a plaque 'YRY IM 1716'. Lintel and plaque are enclosed by a hood. No. 4, to the right, is of one bay. The ground-floor window is reconstructed, with the remains of chamfered jambs, with a central square mullion and with glazing bars. On the first floor is a four-light double-chamfered mullioned window. The door, with plain stone surround, is to the left. Chimney to the right.

The building clearly justifies its grade II listing. In my opinion, its interest can be attributed to its age, rarity, the retention of historic fabric, and its rugged vernacular aesthetic. Additionally, it is of 'group value' as recognised by the inclusion of "GV II" in the list description.

The building sits at the heart of Bolton by Bowland Conservation Area, the interest of which is summarised by its Conservation Area Appraisal (CAA). The CAA identifies 4 to 6 Main Street as being one of the area's most significant and oldest buildings with important features identified including stone slate roof, mullioned windows, and an interesting door lintel and date plaque. Furthermore, it features in a view along Main Street that is identified as being important. The front elevation is therefore sensitive and change requires careful consideration.

The existing windows to the front elevation of 6 Main Street date from the second half of the 20th century (probably the 1970s), as indicated by:

- their very simple timber frames and a lack of detail and craftsmanship;
- modern single-glazed glass, which lack the imperfections displayed by historic glass; and
- the history of the property that is known to have been sold by the Bolton Hall Estate in 1977 and extensively renovated around this time, either before or shortly after sale.

Consequently, the windows do not contribute to the interest of the building, but the slim profile of their frames is an important positive characteristic. The windows identified by drawing no. 0477 01 as W3 and W7 have side-opening sashes, whereas the others are all fixed. Photographs are included at appendix 1.

The Proposal

For the reasons explained above the existing single-glazed timber framed windows are of limited merit, with their slim profile frames being their only positive characteristic. They are also towards the end of their life with defects including:

- missing paint, putty and decay to the 1st floor side opening sash;
- cracking to joints and putty which results in swelling and will be followed by decay (once joints start to open and timber swells it is difficult or impossible to remedy and the lifespan of a window will be compromised);
- difficulty in opening and operating the side-hung sashes due to cracking joints, swelling and distortion;
- excessive drafts from the side opening sashes, which have proven difficult to draft-proof; and
- missing handle from the 1st floor side-hung sash.

Other issues associated with the poor thermal performance of the windows include mould and condensation, which require daily attention in the colder months of the year. Without replacing the windows, I do not believe there is a good long-term solution to the various challenges faced. Photographs that illustrate the poor quality and condition of the windows are included at appendix 1.

One solution would be to replace with double-glazed timber frames. However, it would be difficult or impossible to maintain equally slim profiles for the side-opening sashes because the weight of the glass would require a stronger and more substantial frame. This would not therefore be an ideal solution.

The Applicant has undertaken research (including visiting libraries to search for old photographs) but we do not have any firm information about the windows replaced in the second half of the 20th century. However, it is likely these earlier windows (or the original windows) had leaded lights, with some metal framed side-opening sashes. It would have perhaps depended on the craftsman and materials available locally at the time of construction. It is therefore notable that Fox Ghyll (grade II, list entry no. [1072174](#)) a nearby 17th century building that was also part of the Bolton Hall Estate, has chamfered mullioned windows with metal frames. Whilst the existing windows at Fox Ghyll are modern, they are known to have replaced historic metal framed windows (photos included at appendix 1). Furthermore, as highlighted by the pre-application enquiry response, the CAA states that “Seventeenth century stone mullion windows were normally glazed with leaded lights in a thin metal frame”. Finally, the existing timber frames are particularly slender, quite possibly with the aim of trying to replicate earlier windows but on a budget with a cheaper and more readily available material.

Whilst the list description dates the building as 1716 and therefore early 18th century, its architecture is clearly consistent with that described above by the CAA as normally being glazed with leaded lights in a thin metal frame. It should be noted that ‘datestones’ are often unreliable as they can commemorate other events such as marriage or occupation by a new family. Given the inclusion of what appear to be initials one of the latter scenarios is likely. It is the Applicant’s belief that the building probably dates to the 17th century, which is plausible, if not likely, in my opinion.

Taking into account the above, if the windows are to be replaced, slim profile metal framed windows are the best solution both for the building and occupant, in my judgement.

The case set out in the pre-application supporting letter (dated 01 August 2023) and the advice set out in the pre-application response are consistent in their analysis of the building's significance; the merits of slim-profile metal framed windows; and the suitability of the high quality windows proposed that would be manufactured and fitted by heritage specialists, Touchstone Glazing Solutions. However, in order to justify replacement, the pre-application enquiry response requests evidence be provided to demonstrate that the existing windows cannot be repaired.

The approach to replacement advocated by the pre-application enquiry response is clearly logical where windows are original or historic and contribute to the significance of a listed building. This is because replacement, even with faithful replicas, would inevitably result in some loss of historic fabric and therefore significance. However, where windows are not historic and do not contribute to significance, replacement is consistent or even encouraged by current planning policy and guidance. As explained by Historic England²:

“Can I replace non-historic windows?”

Some windows, if they are later replacements, may not contribute to your building's historic interest and may even spoil its appearance.

An exception to this could arise where the replacement windows were installed during an important later phase of construction, even though they do not follow the original historic pattern.

You could consider replacing them with ones that are in keeping with the other historic features of your home. Old photographs, or similar houses nearby, may have examples you can base your replacement windows on.

We will support the removal of non-historic windows provided it is clear that they are not of historic or architectural interest and that the new windows are of an appropriate style that enhances the building.”

Given the limited age and poor quality of the existing windows, even if the windows were in good condition, replacement would be clearly consistent with this guidance, which is based upon current policy. However, in this instance the windows are also towards the end of their life with numerous defects, as outlined above.

² <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/your-home/maintain-repair/windows/#cfe136ee> (accessed 06/12/2023)

Conclusion

I believe that the high quality slim profile metal-framed windows proposed are an excellent solution for 6 Main Street. In my judgement they will conserve or slightly enhance the appearance and significance of the listed building and its important contribution to Bolton in Bowland Conservation Area. Furthermore, although not overriding, there will be an improvement in energy efficiency and occupant comfort and health. The proposal is therefore consistent with the aims underpinning LBCA Act 1990 sections 16 and 72; NPPF chapter 16; Core Strategy policies EN5 and DEM4; and guidance published by Historic England.

Should you require any further information or clarifications, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,

William Cartwright, BA(Hons) DipTRP MRTPI

Chartered Town Planner & Heritage Consultant

APPENDIX 1 – PHOTOGRAPHS

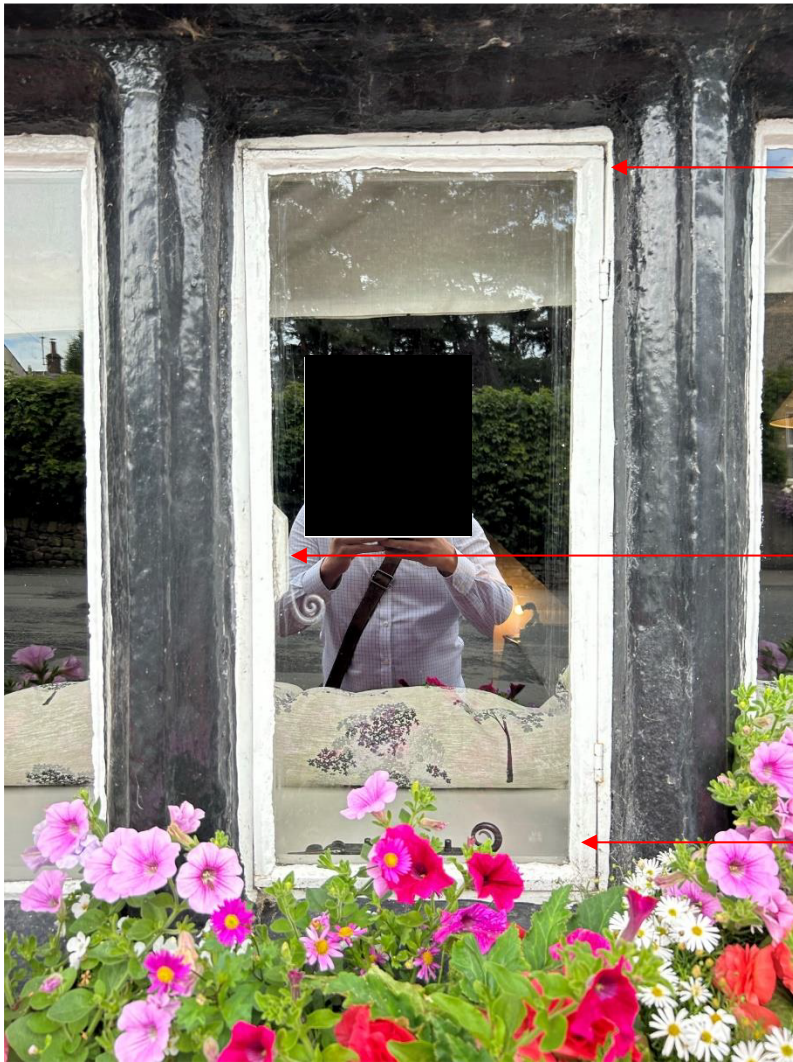
Photo 1: Front elevation (19 July 2023)



Photo 2: Ground floor window



Photo 3: Ground floor side-hung casement



Uneven gap due to swelling & distortion

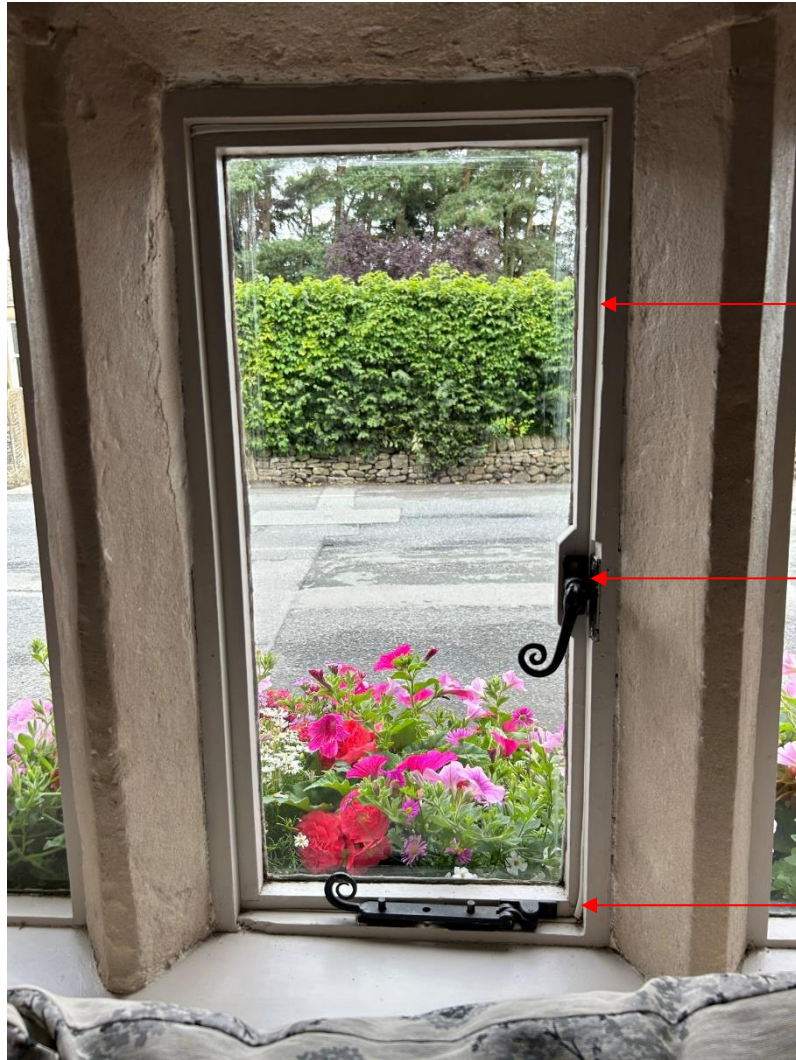
Wood crudely fixed to sash to make space for fastener

Rough uneven putty line

Photo 4: Ground floor window (internal)



Photo 5: Ground floor side-hung casement (internal)



Simple & crude timber profiles which lack the detail typically exhibited by good quality period joinery

Modern period style ironmongery & wood crudely fixed to sash to make space for fastener

Failed attempt to incorporate reasonable draft-proofing

Photo 6: Ground floor fixed window (internal)



Simple & crude timber profiles which lack the detail typically exhibited by good quality period joinery

Photo 7: First floor window



Photo 8: First floor side-hung casement



Cracking and damage to sash

Uneven gap due to swelling & distortion

Missing putty, flaking paint, cracking & decay

Photo 9: First floor window (internal)



Photo 10: First floor side-hung casement (internal)



Damage to sash

Missing window latch that will be difficult to accommodate without fixing an additional block of wood as per the ground floor

Simple & crude timber profiles which lack the detail typically exhibited by good quality period joinery

Photo 11: First floor fixed window (internal)



Simple & crude timber profiles which lack the detail typically exhibited by good quality period joinery

Photo 12: Front elevation of Fox Ghyll



Photo 13: Ground floor metal windows

