



FAO: Planning Department,  
Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council

Ref: 6/2018/0136/LB  
Date: 22/10/2019

## HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND CONSERVATION ADVICE

Dear Sir / Madam,

**RE: *Oshwal Centre, Coopers Lane, Northaw, Potters Bar, EN6 4DG***

The application is for external refurbishment including replacing the existing windows.

Oshwal House (formerly The Hook House) is a grade II listed building dating from 1839 (list entry no. 1173884) with later alterations and extensions. It is an imposing, asymmetrical former country house in an Italianate style with rendered elevations under slate roofs. The earliest element of the building stands at two storeys, with a later 19<sup>th</sup> century four-storey gabled tower and extensions at two storeys with attics.

Following previous advice, the initial proposal to replace all existing windows with hybrid aluminium and timber framed windows has been amended. The wholesale replacement of the windows was not acceptable. It is now proposed to replace approximately 35 windows and repair approximately 28 windows (as per paragraph nos. 2.10 – 2.21 of the *Heritage Statement Annex 1 (R09)*). It is proposed to replace all glazing, within retained and replacement windows, with slim double glazed units.

The repair of window nos. 1, 2, 3, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 (refer to paragraph no. 2.11 of the *Heritage Statement Annex 1* and drawing no. 6842-78-P0) is supported. These windows appear to be original to the 1839 section of the house and therefore relate to the primary phase of the building. However, further detail is required on the repair needed to these windows as the *Heritage Statement* is quite general. Detail is required as to the extent of the repair work, the technique/methodology materials to be used. The proposed replacement of the single glazing with slim double glazing is not acceptable because of the potential loss of historic glass and the untraditional modern appearance of double glazing.

Window nos. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 49, 50, 51, 52, 60, 61, 62 (paragraph no. 2.12 of *Heritage Statement*) appear to relate to a later phase of building work dating to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are still of interest as historic elements of the building and their difference to the windows above is important in denoting the historic evolution of the building. Whilst not part of the primary phase, they are still of historic interest. It is recommended that these windows are also repaired and



only replaced if beyond viable repair. The replacements should be on a like-for-like basis including single glazing. Double glazing will not be acceptable.

Window nos. 34, 35, 36, 37, 56, 57, 58 (paragraph no. 2.13 of Heritage Statement) may also be of some interest, as above, in demonstrating another phase of the building. The same approach should be taken; repaired and only replaced on a like-for-like basis if beyond viable repair.

The replacement of the mid-late twentieth century windows (nos. .10, 11b, 11c, 33, 33b, 53, 54, 55 as per paragraph no. 2.14) raises no objection in principle but their replacements should be of a design more appropriate to the historic building, taking reference from the existing historic windows. Elevation and section details of the proposed windows is required to judge their impact on the listed building.

Historic England guidance is clear on the best practice approach to replacing windows. Their guidance on *Traditional Windows: Their Care, Repair and Upgrading* (<https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/heag039-traditional-windows-revfeb17/>) sets out the general principles with regards to the replacement of historic windows, and these principles should be adhered to (p62):

- 1. Where historic windows, whether original or later insertions, make a positive contribution to the significance of a listed building they should be retained and repaired where possible. If beyond repair they should be replaced with accurate copies.*
- 2. Where historic windows have already been replaced with windows whose design follows historic patterns, these usually make a positive contribution to the significance of listed buildings. When they do, they should therefore be retained and repaired where possible. If beyond repair they should be replaced with accurate copies.*
- 3. Where historic windows or replacement windows of historic pattern survive without historic glass it may be possible to introduce slim-profile double-glazing without harming the significance of the listed building. There are compatibility issues to consider as the introduction of double-glazing can require the renewal of the window frame to accommodate thicker glazing, thereby harming significance.*
- 4. Where historic windows have been replaced with ones whose design does not follow historic patterns, these are unlikely to contribute to the significance of listed buildings. Replacing such windows with new windows of a sympathetic historic pattern, whether single-glazed or incorporating slim-profile double-glazing, may cause no additional harm. It also provides an opportunity to enhance the significance of the building, which is the desired outcome under national policy.*
- 5. Where a new window or re-glazing is agreed, the reflective properties of secondary and double-glazing as compared to modern, polished single-glazing, do not usually harm the significance of the building. But when new multi-paned windows are proposed, the desirability of reproducing broken reflections by individually glazing each pane should be considered. Where the aesthetic value of the building is high, then the impact on the whole of the relevant elevation should be considered, including the desirability of accurately matching other windows.*

Whilst improvements have been made to the proposal, there are still concerns regarding the loss of historic fabric and the incongruous modern appearance of double glazed units throughout which would detract from the building's traditional character and appearance. There is also a lack of information on which to judge the impact of the repairs to the retained windows and the impact of the design of the replacement windows. The proposal will result in 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the listed building under the provisions of the NPPF (paragraph 196). In addition, paragraph 194 requires 'clear and convincing justification' for any harm caused and paragraph 193 affords 'great weight' to the conservation of heritage assets.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M. R. Kitts". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized.

Maria Kitts BA (Hons) MA PGCert  
Senior Built Heritage Consultant  
Place Services

*Note: This letter is advisory and should only be considered as the opinion formed by specialist staff in relation to this particular matter*