

PLANNING COMMITTEE AGENDA



Thursday 18 December 2008

at 2.00 pm

**in the Council Chamber
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS OF PLANNING COMMITTEE:

Councillors Akers-Belcher, Allison, R Cook, S Cook, Fleet, Flintoff, Kaiser, Laffey, G Lilley, Morris, Payne, Plant, Richardson, Simmons, Sutheran and Wright

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 3. MINUTES**

None.
- 4. ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**
 - 4.1 Conservation Policy Review – *Assistant Director (Planning and Economic Development)*
- 5. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**
- 6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

EXEMPT ITEMS

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs referred to below of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 7. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT**

Report of: Assistant Director (Planning & Economic Development)

Subject: CONSERVATION POLICY REVIEW

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Members will recall at the meeting held on 3rd September it was agreed that the draft Conservation Policy Guidelines relating to the use of modern windows in conservation areas would be taken out to public consultation.
- 1.2 The consultation took place throughout the month of November and this report will outline the response from residents and interested parties.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Planning Working Group over a number of months discussed proposed amendments to the existing Conservation Policy Guidelines on windows. The discussions suggested that four criteria should be considered when looking at replacement windows. These are:
 - Design
 - Dimensions
 - Detailing
 - Opening mechanism
- 2.2 These criteria are felt to be the key details that, if achieved, will result in a window similar to a traditional solution. The rationale behind the use of the four criteria is examined in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 These four criteria were used as the basis of the amendments of the existing planning policy (endorsed by Planning Committee on the 10th March 2004). The proposed amendments in relation to unlisted buildings in conservation areas, subject to an Article 4 Direction allow the incorporation of modern materials. The recommended new policy guidelines are set out in full in Appendix 2 and the proposed amendments are highlighted below:

B(i) Any planning application for replacement or alteration of traditional joinery items on the building on front, side or rear elevations which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building (**in terms of design and detailing**) and the character and appearance of the conservation area

should be denied consent. **The use of traditional materials will be favoured, however the use of modern material will be accepted provided that the window is of design, dimensions, detailing and opening mechanism matching those of the original window.**

- (ii) Any planning application for replacement or alteration of non-traditional joinery items on the building on front, side or rear elevations which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building **(in terms of design and detailing)** and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent. **The use of traditional materials will be favoured, however the use of modern material will be accepted provided that the window is of design, dimensions, detailing and opening mechanism matching those of a traditional window appropriate to the character of the property.**

3 CONSULTATION

- 3.1 As Committee members and ward councillors were advised in advance, the public consultation took place in November. All properties in the eight conservation areas received a leaflet providing information about the proposed policy amendments. In addition residents were invited to one of the six consultation sessions that were held between 2:30pm – 7:00pm. Further to this, information was posted on the Council website regarding the consultation and an online questionnaire was also available. Attached to these papers are copies of the leaflet, letter and questionnaire sent out to residents.
- 3.2 The consultation sessions were held in those conservation areas which are predominantly residential (Elwick, Grange, Greatham, Headland, Park, Seaton Carew). However it should be noted that this amended policy will only affect properties subject to an Article 4 Direction. These properties can be found in the following conservation areas:
- Elwick
 - Grange
 - Greatham (Prospect Farm only i.e. one property)
 - Headland
 - Seaton Carew (The Green only)
- 3.3 The consultation sessions were held over a three week period with two sessions held each week on a Tuesday and Thursday. Attendance at the sessions was low, with the Headland response being highest (27 residents attending) but with attendances at the other five venues each being in single figures.
- 3.4 At the consultation sessions a display was provided giving information on the proposed policy alongside background information on the merits

of timber and UPVC windows and energy efficiency facts relating to homes. Leaflets were also available in the form of English Heritage Guidance on energy efficiency in historic properties and timber windows.

4 RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The response to the public consultation is outlined in Appendix 3. In total 87 responses were received from the 2,200 delivered across the eight conservation areas. This is a response of just under 4% of residents.
- 4.2 The majority of the responses have come from those areas outlined above which will be directly affected by the proposed policy change. Just over half of the respondents (57%) were from residents with a property covered by an Article 4 Direction.
- 4.3 The majority of the respondents (78%) supported the proposed new policy with 20% against the proposed amendments (2% not indicating a view). Considering responses from those areas affected directly by the policy there was 100% support in Elwick, whilst in the Headland and Grange the policy was supported by 73% and 76% respondents (respectively). The level of response from the other conservation areas, with little or no Article 4 coverage, was very low.
- 4.4 Space was provided for residents to write any comments that they had on the proposed policy. In summary the comments covered the following points:

Those supporting the policy highlighted the following

- Leeway should be given on detailing and opening mechanisms
- Maintaining the appearance of the property should be the prime concern not materials
- Need for double glazing and it can look old to keep in with the area
- This policy should also be applied to listed buildings
- The policy will allow residents to maximise heat retention
- The proposal does not go far enough – the policy should allow an appearance similar to the original design.
- Proposed changes appear to be a pragmatic balance between the desire to maintain the character of the area and the benefits of using modern materials.
- A template to work from should be provided to enable continuity of design

Those objecting to the policy highlighted the following

- UPVC windows have a limited life, well made and fitted wood windows can have a life far in excess of UPVC

- Lack of variation in colours will bring some standardisation which may ruin the very appearance and certainly variety within a conservation area.
- A relaxation of the policy is a sign that the policy is flawed. The conservation area [Grange] should be removed altogether
- Modern materials should only be used to the rear of the property
- Good quality repair and modern draught proofing materials can give equal comfort to UPVC windows.
- Modern windows have no place in historic buildings, they are an eyesore.

The comments can be viewed in full in Appendix 3, and copies of the returned questionnaires are available in the Members Room.

- 4.5 In addition to the comments of residents the views of the Headland Conservation Area Advisory Group, the Conservation Area Advisory Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability were sought. All of these parties have an interest in the historic environment in Hartlepool.
- 4.6 This matter was reported to the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Liveability on 26th September. The Portfolio Holder acknowledged that there had been difficult negotiations around this subject and noted that 'this appeared to be a good compromise. He added that he hoped that there would be a robust policy so that the character of the headland would be preserved and hoped that the use of traditional materials would be actively encouraged' (minute 10).
- 4.7 The Headland Conservation Area Advisory Group met on 21st November and considered the draft policy. The group stated that it agreed with the proposed policy change and felt that if it was adopted it 'would provide residents of Conservation Areas with choice in terms of materials that they can use in order to replace windows.' In addition it stated that 'In using modern materials it is vitally important that the policy does reflect the need to have appropriate design, detailing, dimensions and opening mechanisms, thereby allowing the character of the conservation areas to be promoted' The comments of the group can be viewed in full in Appendix 4.
- 4.8 The Conservation Area Advisory Committee met on 4th December and considered the draft policy guidance. The group stated that they were in favour of the new proposed policy and hoped that it would be supported by Planning Committee in the future when applications for windows in conservation areas are received, recognising the need for consistent application of the policy.
- 4.9 English Heritage have been consulted on the proposed amended policy. They have received copies of the leaflet circulated to householders and a copy of the full policy showing the amendments.

Their response is awaited and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

- 4.10 As had been previously indicated to the Committee, prior to this consultation as part of the Headland Conservation Area appraisal this issue was also considered. The consultation was extensive with three rounds gauging residents' thoughts on the conservation area. It was clear from the first two consultation events that a major issue in the area was the use of UPVC. In the third round of consultation the majority of respondents (65%) agreed that, in the case of Article 4 properties, 'modern materials on these properties may be considered, but only where these materials are in keeping with the design, detailing, dimensions and the opening mechanism of the original window.'

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 It is clear that the majority of resident respondents and relevant interest groups within Hartlepool support the proposed amended policy. The majority of comments received from residents supporting the policy welcomed the opportunity to make their homes more energy efficient by introducing double glazing.
- 5.2 Eight residents have raised concerns that the amended policy is too prescriptive. They have suggested that the requirements should be relaxed to allow windows of different opening mechanisms to be used. Whilst it is acknowledged that the policy is specific regarding the four criteria which must be considered it is felt that this is required to ensure that windows of an appropriate design and style are used. It is hoped that such a requirement will minimise the impact of the modern materials within the conservation area.
- 5.3 The concerns of those residents who do not support the policy are noted however it is clear that the majority of residents who responded do support the policy. It is hoped that, subject to a budget being available the Conservation Grant Scheme can continue to support those residents who wish to choose a traditional option.

6 FUTURE ACTIONS

- 6.1 Should the Committee decide to approve this amended policy the next step will be to inform residents of the proposed change. It is suggested that initially all residents will be notified via a letter. Alongside this, information will be placed on the Council's website and a press release outlining any new policy will be issued.
- 6.2 Further to this illustrative guidelines will be developed in the form of leaflets which will be distributed to all conservation area households and agents involved in such property matters.

- 6.3 Should members feel that it is appropriate a list of firms which have demonstrated the capability to produce UPVC windows meeting the proposed policy criteria could be compiled, however it should be noted that this would be for information only and inclusion on the list would not form a recommendation for an individual firm. Residents would continue to be advised to consult the Council view the One Stop Shop service before committing to any work.

7 RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 Subject to consideration of views awaited from English Heritage, that the Planning Committee agrees to the following:
- (a) The adoption of the proposed policy guidelines set out in Appendix 2 providing for the use of modern materials in unlisted properties subject to an Article 4 Direction, provided that the specified design criteria are met.
 - (b) The development of guidance for householders to provide information on the new policy and design considerations.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. CONTACT OFFICER

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Planning and Economic Development, Landscape Planning and
Conservation

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APPENDIX 1

1. Design

The design of UPVC windows available on the market varies greatly. It is essential that any replacement window replicates the main design elements of a sash window, namely the appropriate proportions of the two panes with a central meeting rail with the lower window set back.

2. Dimensions

Timber sash windows usually have a slim frame in comparison with double glazed UPVC windows. This slim frame should be achieved in a replacement window.

3. Detailing

In UPVC windows it is usually difficult to re-create the finer detailing found in timber sliding sash windows, in particular elements such as glazing bars. Such parts are often added as applied strips on to a standard UPVC window to attempt to create the desired appearance, but such details lack the profile of “true” glazing bars and often fail to match the traditional dimensions. Where appropriate, additions could include horns and glazing bars however the detailing should be carefully considered and only used where historically accurate.

4. Opening mechanisms

Windows which open outwards differ in appearance from sash windows which slide vertically. The push out opening mechanism usually results in a bulkier, flatter window and the appearance of the ‘mock sash’ is lost once the window is open. For this reason it is suggested that any replacement window should be a sliding sash window to replicate one of the most distinctive elements of the window it is replacing.

APPENDIX 2

PROPOSED POLICY GUIDELINES

A. Listed Buildings:

- (i) Any replacement or alterations of traditional joinery items which is not on an identical basis in terms of design, detailing and materials should be denied consent.
- (ii) Any replacement or alterations of previously altered joinery items which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building (in terms of design, detailing and materials) should be denied consent.
- (iii) Within modern extensions, any replacement or alteration of joinery details which is not of a sympathetic character (in terms of scale, proportions, form and emphasis) should be denied consent.

B. Unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, subject to an Article 4 Direction:

- (i) Any planning application for replacement or alteration of traditional joinery items on the building on front, side or rear elevations which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building **(in terms of design and detailing)** and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent. **The use of traditional materials will be favoured, however the use of modern material will be accepted provided that the window is of design, dimensions, detailing and opening mechanism matching those of the original window.**
- (ii) Any planning application for replacement or alteration of non-traditional joinery items on the building on front, side or rear elevations which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building **(in terms of design and detailing)** and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent. **The use of traditional materials will be favoured, however the use of modern material will be accepted provided that the window is of design, dimensions, detailing and opening mechanism matching those of a traditional window appropriate to the character of the property.**
- (iii) Within modern extensions, any planning application for replacement or alterations of joinery details, which is not of a sympathetic character (in terms of scale, proportion, form and emphasis) should be denied consent.

C. Unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, not subject to an Article 4 Direction:

Any planning application for alterations or extensions which are not of a type sympathetic to the age and character of the building (in terms of scale, proportion, form and emphasis) and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent.

APPENDIX 3 RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE

		Elwick	Church St, Stranton, No area indicated	Grange	Greatham	Headland	Park	Seaton Carew	Total	%
Total response to consultation		14	4	18	5	40	2	4	87	
Do you live in a listed building?	Yes	5	1	0		5	1	1	13	15
	no	7	2	17	5	28	1	2	62	
	not sure	1		1		4		1	7	
Do you live in an Article 4 property?	Yes	7	1	14		27		1	50	57
	no	2		2	3	3		2	12	
	not sure	5	3	2	1	8	1	1	21	
Do you agree with the new policy?	Yes	14	3	13	4	29	2	3	68	78
	No		1	4	1	10		1	17	20

COMMENTS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES
Greatham
We do like the idea of new modern windows, as the ones we have in are rotten and hard to open all the time. I am all for new windows in our area.
If replacement windows differ to existing window in size shape style then requests should go through planning for all buildings in a conservation area and allow UPVC in section C. Also bricks used surrounding window to match as wear as to original in colour as possible / should check people's privacy is not affected.
Replacement window in conservation areas should need planning permission if style and size differ. In front Street and High Street front windows should be timber and rear windows modern UPVC allowed. Unlisted buildings section C modern materials e.g. UPVC should be allowed.
Elwick
The conservation policy should be abolished, it failed the day electricity, telephones, satellite dishes and cars were allowed into the area!
Some leeway should be given re-detailing and opening mechanism. Sash windows are not always the best so some other suggestions (providing they are not ridiculous) should perhaps be discussed.
Park
Maintaining the appearance of the property should be the prime concern, not the materials used to achieve the end result
Church Street & Stranton
If previous authorities had adopted the same attitude to the dated materials, we would not have the very buildings the conservation areas are designated to protect. I see no reason why my modern semi-detached should be covered by the rules of no uPVC
There is a need for double glazing and UPVC can look old to keep in the area. With the cost of heating. Also it will make it soundproof.
UPVC windows have a limited life, well made and fitted wood windows can have a life far in excess of UPVC. UPVC are not maintenance free in fact, they loose or change their colour and the working mechanisms are subject to wear and tear and rusting particularly near the sea. They are in addition soon obsolete when parts can be difficult to obtain if at all.
The windows in my building leak water and wind blows thro them. They are terrible.

Seaton Carew
I also feel that this change in policy should also apply to listed buildings as these buildings become even older it becomes more imperative to keep them water-tight, warm and aired with less expense of maintenance. The new materials used today can reproduce exact copies to replace leaky windows - the forward looking past homes owners would have welcomed them.
Article 4 buildings should be allowed to use windows of material and type then a) maximise heat retention and b) ease of escape in fire of emergency circumstances, and not restricted by outdated mechanisms, which impair both of the foregoing and with inevitability increased building maintenance cost. C condition would be completely changed from any type of window to a new more restrictive definition of which public have not been fully informed or consulted. This would be a major change of planning policy contrary to the needs of current economic climate and housing costs and needs.
Whilst been in agreement I do have one concern and that is the question of lack of variation in colour. It appears that all UPVC windows are white only. Extensive use of these windows in conservation areas will bring about some standardisation which may ruin the very appearance and certainly the variety within a conservation area. Perhaps some encouragement towards more acceptance of timber repair/replacement could be the approval of double glazed units within a timber frame. Certainly my near neighbours who have had their wooden windows replaced recently were disillusioned that such an improvement could not be incorporated. The window winds off the sea are extremely cold on the frontage of properties in the Green. This generates the need for secondary double glazing at further expense. Could consideration be given to grant assistance for private properties as a further stimulus to retention of wooden windows where the UPVC problem has not spread too far? The need is to encourage occupiers of conservation properties to be proud of their area and its uniqueness.
Grange
I think if windows have been replaced and are similar in style should be allowed to change like for like widows. Council wishes to find whole replacement sympathetic changes should be allowed to modernise and keep people wanting to buy otherwise they will become too costly and therefore derelict and need to be demolished which would defeat the object of conservation.
Extra expense should be supported by local government grant
If windows need to be replaced I would like to see them replaced exactly as they were originally i.e. wood rather than UPVC

Grange Comments Cont.

I agree reluctantly. In practice it would be almost impossible to replace the wooden frames with matured timber - our house was built in the early 1900's and the timber is in excellent condition. The house is just over 100 years old.

UPVC has a limited life. It degrades and discolours to both pink and grey (on the surface). The catches and furniture rusts and is soon obsolete. At the end of its life the only remedy is to replace the whole window.

I would like to see a grant allocated if a new system is fitted.

The proposal does not go far enough. The houses particularly in this area are so diverse all that should be required is that the appearance should be similar to the original. Insulation and energy conservation are far more important than insisting on sash openings and making any improvements too expensive to attempt.

Virtually none of the properties in the Grange area which have already had windows replaced prior to the imposition of Article 4 Direction have sliding sash openings therefore if we wish to replace our old, draughty and environmentally unfriendly windows we are being penalised by having to pay a premium for sash opening when the other types of openings are a fraction of the cost and also do not match other properties in the area

A relaxation of the policy as is being suggested is a sign that the policy is flawed. I would like to see the conservation area removed. The money spent on grants can be re-directed to cover the resident only parking scheme recently removed by the Council. I should also point out that I am very angry to see this idea being put forward after I have installed wooden windows plus used slate on my roof - all at great cost, all to appease this unnecessary policy.

I support the proposed change in policy as it appears to give a pragmatic balance between the desire to maintain the character of the area and the benefits of using modern materials. I would however like to go further - rather than requiring planning permission with the associated administrative overhead, it should be treated as a permitted development, subject to compliance with a 'code of conduct' specifying design constraints etc this would be a much quicker and cheaper system.

Grange Comments Cont.
I don't agree with my property being in a conservation area at all. However I welcome the change in policy as wood windows are very hard to maintain and most of ours were completely rotten when we moved in. It would be silly to replace them with single glazed windows, when double glazing is so much more efficient. Plastic windows can look much smarter than out of condition wooden ones.
Headland
Costs us a fortune in heating bills, through drafty windows and doors
I am concerned regarding the amount of detailing required. How exact do the new windows need to be. The UPVC companies have only a limited styles of UPVC sash windows
If the council decides to adopt the new policy, then this will give residents the choice regarding material types. The provision of choice is extremely important. A policy change will allow conservation area's character to be protected.
Good quality repair and modern draught stopping materials can give equal comfort to PVC windows, and will always look better. It would be cost effective, wood can last 200 years.
The policy is too pedantic regarding the opening style and the glazing bars. Also the policy should relate to present style of windows not original style.
I do not agree with the full proposals if they look similar it would suffice operating and opening mechanisms are not so important.
Would be helpful if grants became available
I don't agree with the sash opening as it is costly and the installation will damage period woodwork on the inside of the properties. I agree with inserts only (I don't agree to a full bay installation or a plastic door). My house is bitterly cold and the windows that we have renovated rain in - I look forward to an energy efficient house as our heating bills are very costly and the heat ineffective.
So called modernisation of period properties by installing UPVC windows and doors ruins the appearance of the area. One of the reasons for buying a period property is the beauty of its features, which include wooden sash windows. If people want modern, why don't they opt for a modern house!

Headland Comments Cont.
We may live in Victorian Houses but this is the 21st century. In relation to (C) this is totally pedantic and should not be considered at all. The design, dimension etc should be as close as possible in UPVC not as shown on the leaflet.
Modern windows have no place in old historic buildings. They are an eyesore. Old buildings are built on the principle of being able to breathe - lime plaster; sash window etc New buildings are more or less sealed. The two do not mix. Many damp problems are caused by trying to mix them.
The map you supplied is good but the blue line isn't obvious enough to I.D. listed buildings, making it a tad confusing. I think the spec on the last page is clear and sensible
Would prefer only the backs of the houses to be allowed UPVC sash windows. The fronts should be kept as wooden and painted; UPVC at the front does not look good.
Plastic windows look awful on old buildings
As long as the appearance is correct the opening mechanism is irrelevant. The more detail the more expensive it will cost. The houses on the Headland are old and need these changes
I believe conservation area buildings should retain their character. Modern plastic windows do not suit the character of the area. Please retain guidelines regarding only using traditional materials.
May we suggest a template to work from for continuity of design windows and perhaps recommend several window manufacturing firms to approach regarding any works as Headland resident had to adhere to at the time of re-roofing our property in the late 1970's early 80's.
The use of modern windows / materials can only help promote improved energy efficiency, over the long term, in these grand 'old' establishments/residences.
As usual you bureaucratic myopia trails behind Government Policy and European Law. Basically energy conservation overrules your petty interference in owners rights to insulate their homes. European Conservation Law pays the upkeep of designated property.

Headland Comments Cont.
I agree with the proposed change in policy but I do not agree with the opening mechanism on sash window. You can never make sash windows draught proof, even with UPVC where the two sash windows pass each other creates a draught in the closed position, especially in today's times of saving energy.
I feel that this change in policy would be gladly welcomed by many residents. I for one would be very happy as it will be much more economical and energy efficient for my house to have UPVC windows that fit the traditional style as I'd have more warmth and security without detracting from the house's period appearance.
Should have sorted years ago you should try living on the Headland in winter with sash windows and no double glazing.
It makes sense in order to help conserve energy, the Headland in an extremely exposed area and sash windows are not that effective in storms.
My windows apart from the kitchen are sash all of which require some attention, due to depreciation of surrounds (timber). I would like to replace the kitchen window with a sealed unit keeping the present appearance. Are there grant available?
This would be the thin end of the wedge. The proposed change would substantially alter the appearance of the area.
These houses are not museum pieces they are our houses and we are as entitled as anyone to keep warm and conserve energy. The proposals mentioned are far too expensive for ordinary people.
As I use my central heating and gas fire constantly, due to health problems, with the high prices of gas and electricity, new windows will help so much to keep my house warm, as now it goes out the windows, winds and cold air reduce room temperature considerably.
Whilst it is laudable to retain the external character of the buildings, the practicalities are that these windows and doors are draughty, energy inefficient, and it will become difficult to find companies who are competent to replace wooden frames in the future.

APPENDIX 4

COMMENTS OF THE HEADLAND CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY GROUP

I refer to the above matter which was discussed by the Headland Conservation Area Advisory Group, (“HCAAG”), at its Meeting of Thursday, 20th November, 2008.

I have been asked by the Group to forward to you the Group's comments regarding the Council's proposals to amend its existing policy concerning windows in the Conservation Areas.

The Group's collective comments are set out below, namely, :-

- The Group does agree with the proposed policy change that the Council is presently consulting upon;
- The proposed policy, if adopted, would provide residents of Conservation Areas with choice in terms of the materials that they can use in order to replace windows. The element of choice is welcomed;
- The use of modern materials, (having due regard to design, detailing, dimensions and opening mechanisms), will hopefully generate increased heating efficiencies for properties; and
- In using modern materials, it is vitally important that the policy does reflect to need to have appropriate design, detailing, dimensions and opening mechanisms, thereby allowing the character of Conservation Areas to be promoted.

I would be grateful if the above comments could be considered as part of the current consultation process.

Report of: Assistant Director (Planning & Economic Development)

Subject: Conservation Policy Review – Additional information

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A meeting of the Planning Committee was held on the 18th December to consider the public consultation response to the draft Conservation Policy Guidelines relating to the use of modern windows in conservation areas.
- 1.2 Members adjourned the meeting as it was felt that the issue was of great importance and should be considered at a later date when more Members would be available to attend. In addition this report provides information on typical window costs (briefly discussed at the last meeting) and comments from English Heritage.

2 COST OF REPLACEMENT SASH WINDOWS

- 2.1 A survey of local and national UPVC companies has been carried out to obtain a cost for UPVC windows. A price was obtained for a single one over one double glazed, UPVC sash window in white with horns. The size of the window was based on the average size of an upper floor window in the Grange conservation area. This style and size of window were chosen as this is the area where most of the current applications for windows are emanating.
- 2.2 Ten companies were contacted with responses provided by seven companies; three companies were unable to provide estimates without visiting a property. The cheapest window available was from a local supplier at £450 including VAT for the window and fitting. The most expensive window was from a company outside Hartlepool but located in the north east charging £988. These costs are approximate and may vary depending on the state of the window into which they are fitted. Considering all seven estimates the average cost of a window was £655.
- 2.3 It should be noted that although all of these windows would be deemed to be visually acceptable in planning terms on close inspection they do differ in appearance and in particular the finer detailing. For example the replication of details varies greatly depending on the price of the window. Inevitably those at the higher end of the market provide a more accurate replication of the finer detailing including elements such as integral horns. Other firms add horns to a standard window and the join between the frame and the decorative horn is visible.

- 2.4 To put into context the prices provided above the average price of a sash timber sash window is £886. This compares favourably with the higher end UPVC windows which most closely replicate a traditional sliding sash window. In addition with assistance from the Conservation Grant Scheme the cost of a timber sash window to the individual can be reduced further. The price of a top hung UPVC sash window is approximately £300 this is cheaper than a UPVC window replicating a sash window however the detailing on such windows does not compare favourably with traditional sash windows.

3 COMMENTS OF ENGLISH HERITAGE

- 3.1 English Heritage has been consulted on the proposed amended policy. They have received copies of the leaflet circulated to householders and a copy of the full policy showing the amendments along with a copy of the report presented to this committee on the 18th December. Their response is attached in Appendix 5.
- 3.2 The letter notes that the consistent advice to the Council over the years has been that 'the use of UPVC windows, doors and other features on historic buildings in conservation areas is inappropriate'. They state that their advice is based on the government's policy guidance, PPG15: Planning & the Historic Environment which advocates 'the retention, repair and, if necessary, like-for-like replacement of traditional joinery.' They go on to say that they are 'extremely disappointed that the Council is now proposing the tabled amendments to conservation policy for the borough and must strongly oppose their acceptance.'
- 3.3 With regard to the issue of grant schemes English Heritage states that 'If the management regime and policies of a Local Authority are counterproductive to the aims and objects of a heritage grant scheme, we are obliged to consider the value of allocating public funds towards it. Scarce resources may be more appropriately allocated to areas where there is more of a chance of lasting benefit and sustainable solutions being reached.'
- 3.4 At the time of writing this report English Heritage have been invited to attend this meeting however a response has not yet been provided.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The survey of suppliers of UPVC sliding sash windows shows that the window proposed in the policy can vary in price but those at the lower end of the market are of a comparable price with a timber sliding sash window or a UPVC top hung casement window. The use of UPVC sliding sash windows in conservation areas, in most instances without the benefit of consent, suggests that residents are already considering these as a viable option.

- 4.2 English Heritage have highlighted that the proposed policy is contrary to national guidance and in addition indicated that any submissions to grant schemes would not be looked upon favourably. They do caution however that, should Members be minded to approve the proposed draft policy the wording of the policy should be amended to refer only to windows to ensure that other items of joinery such as doors, bargeboards and fascias are excluded. These proposed amendments have been considered and the draft policy has been amended to reflect these in Appendix 2.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members note the additional information provided and the comments of English Heritage.
- 5.2 Members note the proposed amended policy when considering the recommendations made in the report dated 18th December 2008.

APPENDIX 2

PROPOSED POLICY GUIDELINES (AMENDED TO REFLECT THE COMMENTS OF ENGLISH HERITAGE)

A. Listed Buildings:

- (i) Any replacement or alterations of traditional joinery items which is not on an identical basis in terms of design, detailing and materials should be denied consent.
- (ii) Any replacement or alterations of previously altered joinery items which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building (in terms of design, detailing and materials) should be denied consent.
- (iii) Within modern extensions, any replacement or alteration of joinery details which is not of a sympathetic character (in terms of scale, proportions, form and emphasis) should be denied consent.

B. Unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, subject to an Article 4 Direction:

- (i) Any planning application for replacement or alteration of windows on the building on front, side or rear elevations which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building **(in terms of design and detailing)** and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent. **The use of traditional materials will be favoured, however the use of modern material will be accepted provided that the window is of design (i.e. pattern of glazing bars, horns etc), profile (including that of the frame, the opening element and the positioning within the aperture), and opening mechanism matching those of the original window (ie, hinged or sliding).**
- (ii) Any planning application for replacement or alteration of non-traditional windows on the building on front, side or rear elevations which is not of a type appropriate to the age and character of the building **(in terms of design and detailing)** and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent. **The use of traditional materials will be favoured, however the use of modern material will be accepted provided that the window is of design (i.e. pattern of glazing bars, horns etc), profile (including that of the frame, the opening element and the positioning within the aperture), and opening mechanism matching those of the original window (ie, hinged or sliding)..**

- (iii) Within modern extensions, any planning application for replacement or alterations of joinery details, which is not of a sympathetic character (in terms of scale, proportion, form and emphasis) should be denied consent.

C. Unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas, not subject to an Article 4 Direction:

Any planning application for alterations or extensions which are not of a type sympathetic to the age and character of the building (in terms of scale, proportion, form and emphasis) and the character and appearance of the conservation area should be denied consent.

Appendix 5 copy of comments from English Heritage



ENGLISH HERITAGE

NORTH EAST REGION

Ms Sarah Scarr
Landscape and Conservation Manager
Hartlepool Borough Council
Dept of Environment and Development
Bryan Hanson House
Hanson Square
Hartlepool
TS24 7BT

Direct Dial: 0191 269 1232

Your ref:

Our ref: ADM/02249

Date: 28 January 2009

Dear Sarah

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO CONSERVATION POLICY

Thank you for sending English Heritage a copy of the proposed amended policy relating to conservation in Hartlepool Borough. I understand that the report is to be reconsidered at the meeting on 19 February 2009.

Our consistent advice to the Council over the years has been that the use of uPVC windows, doors and other features on historic buildings in conservation areas is inappropriate. The profile and form of such units almost invariably harms the special character or appearance of the building and, depending on location, the character and appearance of the conservation area. This advice is based on the government's policy guidance, PPG15: *Planning & the Historic Environment* which advocates the retention, repair and, if necessary, like-for-like replacement of traditional joinery. There are also strong environmental reasons why uPVC should not be favoured.

In July 2006, in conjunction with the Council, we jointly held a workshop specifically addressing the issues relating to replacement windows in historic buildings. Following the workshop, we held discussions with the Hartlepool Planning Working Party regarding replacement windows, specifically the technical performance of timber windows (both with secondary and double-glazing) and the negative impact of inappropriate windows upon conservation areas. The workshop was well attended and the outcome of discussions was positive.

This being the case, we are extremely disappointed that the Council is now proposing the tabled amendments to conservation policy for the borough and must strongly oppose their acceptance.

We have provided significant resources to Hartlepool over the past decade, notably Heritage Economic Regeneration Schemes in the Headland and Seaton Carew Conservation Areas. At the time, the issue of uPVC windows and doors was raised as an issue, particularly in relation to the Headland scheme. If the management regime and policies of a Local Authority are counterproductive to the aims and objectives of a heritage grant

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scheme, we are obliged to consider the value of allocating public funds towards it. Scarce resources may be more appropriately allocated to areas where there is more of a chance of lasting benefit and sustainable solutions being reached.

The policy now being promoted broadly proposes an acceptance in principle of uPVC windows, doors and other 'joinery' items within Hartlepool's conservation areas where the proposed changes come under the control of the Local Planning Authority. However, it is unclear from the policy whether it relates to *any* alteration or extension to a building within a conservation area or is confined to the replacement of windows.

Whilst we strongly oppose the recommended actions, we acknowledge in the report to Committee that the proposed amendments have some support from the local community. In light of this, we recommend should the Committee be minded to approve the amended policy, that the following issues are firstly addressed for the purposes of clarity:

- The policy refers to 'traditional joinery items' but appears to only focus on windows – we recommend that the policy is more specific about those features to which it does relate. The replacement of timber doors, window box frames, bargeboards and fascias can also have a significant impact on the character and appearance of a building and/or conservation area.
- The proposition relating to windows centres on four criteria – design, dimensions, detailing and opening mechanism. We are of the opinion that the specifics of the criteria could be open to challenge and so recommend the following alternative criteria for the purposes of clarity:
 - design (pattern of glazing bars, horns etc)
 - profile (including that of the frame, the opening element and the positioning within the aperture)
 - materials and colour/finish
 - method of opening (ie. hinged or sliding).

If you have any queries regarding the above comments, please do not hesitate to contact us. We would welcome the opportunity to meet the Chair of Planning Committee and Head of Planning to discuss conservation policy in Hartlepool and look forward to hearing from you with regard to agreeing a suitable date.

Yours sincerely

Catherine Dewar
Historic Areas Advisor
North East Region