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My Ref: 540
28 February 2025

**Proposed replacement casement windows, 1 The Avenue, Gravesend, DA11 0NA:
Mr & Mrs R. Basra**

Design & Heritage Statement

Number 1 The Avenue, Gravesend, is a detached two-storey late-Victorian or early Edwardian property on the fringes of Gravesend's Town Centre. The plot is roughly triangular and it tapers towards the rear. It is bounded on two sides by The Avenue and Arthur Street West.

The property is located within the Pelham Road / The Avenue Conservation Area and is subject to an Article 4 Direction (Ar/08/02). Although it is not listed, the property is identified by the relevant Conservation Area appraisal as a key unlisted building due to its townscape merit. The Townscape Appraisal Map within the same document also identifies the house as a focal building, presumably due to its prominent location at the junction and its architectural detail.

The property was originally built as a family house of red brick with stone dressings and it has a prominent turret corner feature with castellations. The mixture of casement and sash windows are embellished with leaded and stained windows in the Aesthetic Movement style. There is a distinctive progression and rhythm to the façade facing Arthur Street West, where the eaves line progressively steps down from front to back. The original accommodation included three double bedrooms. It is now a five bedroom property.

My clients purchased this property about 15 years ago when it had been unused for some time and after it had suffered from a large degree of vandalism and neglect. Acts of vandalism included the stripping out of the heating system and its copper pipework, which exacerbated the damage to the property. It had been used as a staffed hostel for handicapped adults for several years prior

to that. Two concrete ramps were constructed during its life as an institution to provide wheelchair access to the front and back doors. The ramps were provided with galvanised steel railings, which had rusted and additional railings had also been placed around the house alongside paths. These additions were unsympathetic and detracted from the intrinsic architectural quality of the property. At some time, the original roof covering was replaced by single-lap interlocking concrete tiles, which were not historically appropriate and which most likely overstressed the roof structure (*figure 1*).



Figure 1: 1 The Avenue, October 2011

I was commissioned to prepare proposals to alter and extend the property following a planning refusal issued on 31 May 2011 for proposals prepared by another company (planning reference 20110087). The proposals included for the demolition of a modern existing garage and conservatory, the erection of a two-storey side and a single-storey rear extension to form a breakfast area,

garage, utility room and wet room at ground floor level and two bedrooms and a bathroom/wc at first floor level. Planning approval was granted by Gravesham Borough Council for these proposals on 08 March 2012 under reference 20120045.

My clients have sympathetically restored the property to its former grandeur and they have brought it back into residential use for their family (*figure 2*). Its current appearance is a great credit to them and their efforts.



Figure 2: 1 The Avenue, August 2014

The existing windows with their Aesthetic Movement leaded lights and stained glass and the crumbling stone dressings were repaired. The existing replacement concrete tiles were also replaced by slates with terracotta ridge and hip tiles to bring back the correct period detail.



Figure 3: Internal view of one of the first floor turret windows.

My clients have now lived at this property for 12 years and it has been extremely well-maintained by them. The existing casement windows are however, of a great concern. They are the original windows dating back over 120 years but, despite them being well-maintained by my clients, the years of neglect prior to this have taken their toll (*figure 3*). The timberwork of the casements has deteriorated, some of the quadrant mouldings to the top casement corners have rotted away and some of the leaded lights have cracked. The windows are single-glazed without any weatherstripping. They are very draughty and the rooms are cold in winter.

The most severely affected windows are the following:

- The en-suite casement window to the en-suite bathroom over the entrance door
- The ground and first floor turret windows on the front corner.
- The ground and first floor casement windows fronting The Avenue which serve the living room and bedroom 1.

The affected casements are now beyond practical repair.

My clients propose to retain the window frames of these windows which are repairable and to replace the casements. The replacement casements will be made by a skilled local joiner from Sapele using identical sections and mouldings to the existing casements and they will have a painted finish to match the existing that is suitable for this particular species. The existing casement stiles have overall measurements of 57mm width and 40mm depth. The replacement casement stiles will maintain this profile so that they still fit in the window frames but the rebates will be slightly deeper to enable them to accommodate slim-profile double-glazing. Where there are leaded-lights (mainly to the top fanlights but also to the side hung casements of the en-suite bathroom window), they will be renewed to replicate the same patterns and colours as existing and they will form the outer sheet of the replacement double-glazed units (4mm glass with a 6mm argon-filled cavity). The existing window frames will be weather-stripped with silicone rubber seals to reduce draughts.

The replacement casements and the stained glass leaded lights will look identical to the existing casements. The double-glazed units, together with the new weatherstripping will reduce draughts and bring a level of thermal comfort to my clients.

I respectfully request that Full Planning Permission is granted for this application.

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