

Delegated Report

Planning Application

Planning Application No: 20250064

Location: 27 Cobham Street Gravesend Kent DA11 0SB

Description: Retrospective application for the replacement windows at ground and first floor.

Applicant: Quota Ltd

Site Visit Date: 14.02.2025

Submitted Documents/Plans

- Application form;
- Drawing no. 3545 – 001 Rev. A – Plan and Elevations;
- Location Plan;
- Quotation;
- Covering Letter;
- Planning & Heritage Statement.

Relevant Planning History

None.

Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy (2014)

- CS01 – Sustainable Development
- CS02 – Scale & Distribution of Development
- CS18 – Climate Change
- CS19 - Development & Design Principles

- CS20 – Heritage and the Historic Environment

Gravesham Local Plan: First Review (1994)

- TC3 – Development Affecting Conservation Areas

Paragraph 34 of the NPPF (2024) sets out that policies within adopted local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years, and should then be updated as necessary. Such reviews are also a legal requirement as set out in Regulation 10A of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) England Regulations 2012.

The Council undertook such a review in September 2019 and found that the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy is in need of a partial review in terms of Policy CS02, due to the increased need for housing since the Local Plan Core Strategy was adopted and the need to ensure that a sufficient land supply exists to meet this need. Whilst saved policies from the Local Plan 1st Review (1994) generally conform with the NPPF (2024), the Council will also seek to replace these.

Other material considerations

Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended which states that, with respect to 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 Framework (2021)

- 2 – Achieving Sustainable Development
- 12 – Achieving sustainable development and well-designed places
- 16 Conserving and enhancing the historic environment

Supplementary Planning Guidance

- Pelham Road/The Avenue Conservation Area Appraisal (2009)
- Management Plan Gravesend's 19th Century Suburban Conservation Areas (2009)
- Conservation Areas Maintenance/Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2020)

Other Guidance

- Historic England Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading (2017)

Consultations, Publicity and Representations

Consultees

No response from:

- GBC Conservation Officer

Neighbouring properties

11 surrounding properties were consulted plus site and press notices – overall consultation date was 07.03.2025 – one response received (object) the comments of which can be summarised as follows:

- Object to this application, if the windows are not replaced with appropriate sash windows.

Officer's Analysis

The application site consists of a semi-detached building which is situated in the Darnley Road Conservation Area. The building is in use as flats and as such planning permission is required to replace the windows. There is an Article 4 Direction on the Conservation Area which applies to all single family

dwelling.

The proposal is for retention of the replacement windows at ground and first floor levels on the front elevation. It is stated in the submission that it is not known exactly when the windows were replaced but a date of 01/11/2022 has been given. It refers to the most recent Google Streetview imagery showing modern replacement windows and that although those were since replaced, it was considered more relevant to note the original date of modern windows going in rather than the subsequent replacement ones.

The principal issue in the determination of this application is whether the windows would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Darnley Road Conservation Area.

The previous windows can be seen in Google Streetview imagery from December 2020 as follows:



(No. 27 is on the right)

The windows that have been installed at ground and first floor levels can be seen as follows:



Site photo February 2025

It is also noted that the basement window has been replaced although that is not part of this application.

The ground and first floor level windows which have been removed appear to have been the original windows. The windows that were removed were timber, single glazed sliding sash windows. The windows that have been installed are uPVC, double glazed casement windows with top hung opening on the lower part.

The Council's Conservation Areas Maintenance/Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance

Supplementary Planning Document (2020) sets out the criteria for different examples of replacement windows depending on the age of the property and what the existing and proposed windows are:

The Council has adopted the following criteria for assessing applications for window alterations/replacements in unlisted buildings where an Article 4 Direction is in place:

1. Use of purpose made or high quality factory made timber sash/casement windows. Planning permission not required if windows are an exact copy, like for like, or replica.
2. Use of factory made timber sash windows or uPVC vertical sliding sash windows as replacements for Victorian/Edwardian one over one or two over two sash windows (i.e. windows with one or two panes, not Georgian style multi-paned windows which are commonly divided into six or eight small panes for each sash). Approve subject to choice of manufacturer and detailing; ensure that vertically sliding sashes are proposed.
3. Use of factory made timber or uPVC casements as replacements for Victorian/Edwardian casement windows. Approve subject to choice of manufacturer and detailing and ensure that casement is flush with the frame or recessed when closed. Use of aluminium profile casement windows in suburban houses (post 1920). Approve subject to choice of window style. In many cases aluminium replacements can match the appearance of original metal framed [Crittall] windows.
4. Applications to replace inappropriate modern windows in pre 1920 houses (i.e. houses originally built with timber sashes and casements) or post 1920 (i.e. houses originally built with metal framed [Crittall] windows. Approve subject to choice of style of replacement unit. The replacement should match the appearance of traditional sashes/casements/metal framed windows as far as possible.
5. Applications to replace traditional vertical sliding timber sash/casements windows with standard uPVC units (i.e. side hung, top hung, bottom hung, horizontal pivot, vertical pivot or louvre) will be refused.
6. uPVC or aluminium finish sliding sashes and casement windows which meet the colour, positioning and hanging criteria set out above, on non-principal or non-public elevations (elevations with no street frontage or open to public view) where it can be demonstrated that they do not harm the character or appearance of the conservation area and taking into consideration the age and style of the building and its immediate surroundings will be considered acceptable

The point relevant to this proposal is no. 5 as it is an application for replacement of traditional vertical sliding sash timber sash windows with standard uPVC units (side hung in this case). It is stated that in such circumstances applications will be refused.

Further to this position, the below sets out the reasons why the windows which have been installed are unacceptable. As stated, the previous windows that have been removed appeared to be the original timber sliding sash windows which were of elegant and fine proportions with single glazing. The original windows can still be seen at second floor level. The windows that have been installed are uPVC top hung casement windows. The casement opening is completely at odds with the sliding sash windows removed and those still remaining at second floor level and in the windows in the neighbouring semi no. 25. This makes the windows have a particularly jarring appearance completely incongruous to the style of window in this building and the pair of semis. The incongruous and harmful nature of the windows continues with the windows at first floor level having a straight head and not following the rounded arches of the window openings they sit within. Furthermore, the trickle vents in the ground and first floor windows are an unauthentic feature and also no horn feature which the previous windows had. The window proportions are thick and chunky much more so than the previous timber windows, as evident from the thickness and depth of the frame and the lower opening panes sitting much further forward than the rest of the window creating further chunkiness. The windows are of thick double glazing of the 4-20-4 arrangement with a highly reflective quality to the glass further adding to the visual harm of the windows. The windows which have been installed are crude and low quality uPVC windows of great visual harm and make no attempt to

respect the character of the building or the area.

The windows are unacceptable principally in terms of their style of opening. As evident from the assessment criteria for replacement windows, the advice is that the use of factory made timber or uPVC sliding sash windows as replacements for Victorian/Edwardian one over one sash windows is recommended to be approved subject to the choice of manufacturer and details and ensuring that vertical sliding sash windows are proposed. In this case, the replacement of the timber sliding sash windows with uPVC sliding sash windows would have therefore been acceptable subject to manufacturer and detailing. The replacement of the timber sliding sash windows with top hung casement windows which bear no resemblance to a sash window is completely unacceptable made worse by the windows not respecting the shape of the window openings at first floor level, extremely thick and chunky proportions and unauthentic features.

The proposed replacement windows in terms of their style of opening, thick proportions, poor design detailing and lack of finesse compared to the previous windows would therefore not preserve the character or appearance of the Darnley Road Conservation Area but would cause harm to it.

The agent in the Planning & Heritage Statement focusses on the other windows in Cobham Street. It is noted that there are other plastic and unsympathetic windows in Cobham Street but no applications have been permitted since the adoption of the Conservation Areas Maintenance/Replacement Windows and Doors Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (2020), or indeed since the current Development Plan, for replacement of timber sliding sash windows with uPVC casement windows.

From looking at applications for replacement windows in Cobham Street since the current Development Plan it can be seen that there have been the following cases:

20240218 - 37A Cobham Street (Permitted): This was replacement of a uPVC double glazed casement window at first floor and a modern timber sliding sash double glazed window at second floor level with timber sliding sash double glazed windows. Neither of the windows were original and the proposal was an enhancement to the Conservation Area. The windows were acceptable as they were a sympathetic material, sliding sashes and followed the shape and proportions of the arched openings

20211007 - 52A-C Cobham Street (Permitted): This was for replacement timber sliding sash double glazed windows, i.e. of appropriate material and style of window.

20171163 - 28 Cobham Street (Permitted) – This was for replacement of uPVC windows with timber sliding sash slim-lite double glazed windows, i.e. of appropriate material and style of window.

20161194 - 28 Cobham Street (Refused) – This was for replacement of timber single glazed sash windows with uPVC, top hung double glazed casement windows.

As can be seen no applications have been granted for replacement of timber sliding sash windows with uPVC casements and there has been one refusal for similar to what is proposed here.

Any other replacement uPVC windows will therefore have either been installed prior to the Article 4 Direction for this conservation area which was in 1999 (ref. 99/4) or it will also need to be checked if any of them were installed without planning permission. On that basis the presence of unsympathetic windows in Cobham Street is not considered to justify permitting this current proposal and those other cases only serve to demonstrate the harm that can be caused by inappropriate replacement windows as does the current proposal which has already been installed. It also reinforces the importance of the Article 4 Direction on the Conservation Area which is to prevent the loss of any original features and reinstate them in an appropriate manner where they have been lost.

The harm that has been caused from the replacement windows is considered to be less than substantial. Paragraph 215 of the NPPF (2024) advises that where a proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits

of the proposal. It is stated in the Heritage Statement that the benefits of the windows are health, security, energy efficiency, sustainability and maintenance reasons.

There has been no window survey submitted with the application from a competent joiner to demonstrate that the previous windows were beyond repair. The Council declared a Climate Emergency in June 2019 and retention and re-use is therefore more important than ever and renovating and reusing old materials is fundamental in helping to tackle these issues. A timber window is very rarely wholly unrepairable needing complete replacement, often it will just be sections or areas that require repair.

Historic England advice (Traditional Windows Their Care, Repair and Upgrading (2017)) sets out that although windows are generally accepted to amount to 10-20% of heat loss from buildings, this will vary greatly from building to building depending on size and number of openings in relation to the external wall area and that in many older buildings, windows are small relative to wall areas so the cost of double glazing will seldom be covered by energy savings within the lifetime of the insulated glazed units. Historic England advise that the thermal performance of traditional windows can be improved significantly by more appropriate methods such as draught proofing and secondary glazing and further benefits can be gained from closing curtains, blinds and shutters. It is stated that some of these measures can enable buildings that retain their historic windows to be more energy efficient than buildings whose windows are simply replaced with double glazed units.

The agent refers to an appeal decision at Milton Hall, 62 Windmill Street (Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/W/24/3348786) which concluded that the proposal for replacement of timber windows with uPVC ones would preserve the character and appearance of the Upper Windmill Street Conservation Area. This case is not considered comparable to the current proposal however. Firstly, Milton Hall is in a different road and Conservation Area to the application site. Milton Hall is also a detached building, the windows were in the side elevation and the replacement windows were sliding sashes. Whereas in the case of this application site the windows are in the front elevation where there are remaining timber sliding sash windows at second floor level and in the adjoining semi it is part of and the replacement windows are casements not sliding sashes so would not match the previous windows. This appeal decision is not therefore considered to justify allowing this current proposal.

Reference is made to an appeal at 28 Darnley Street (APP/K2230/D/20/3245928) which is directly comparable and therefore relevant to this determination, and is attached as appendix 1.

Any Other Material Planning Considerations

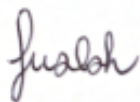
None.

Conclusion

Overall, therefore it is considered that the replacement windows which have been installed by virtue of their design, detailing and material would not preserve the character or appearance of the Darnley Road Conservation Area but would cause harm to it. As such, the proposal is contrary to Policies CS19 and CS20 (LPCS), saved Policy TC3 (LPFR) and section 16 of NPPF (2024).

Recommendation Refusal

(For detailed reasons for refusal and informatives, see draft Decision)

Case Officer:	Ms Rebecca Harrison	Team Leader:	Mrs Faye Walsh
Signed:	<i>Rebecca Harrison</i>	Signed:	
Dated:	24th March 2025	Dated:	25 March 2025

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