Janice Chapman

From: Ian Wightman [redacted]
Sent: 31 October 2012 10:43
To: Peter Mullans
Cc: Janice Chapman; Martyn White
Subject: RE: Replacement windows. BE13712L (ADC)

Dear Mr Mullans,

RE: listed building application BE13712L (ADC)

Thank you for your email. Whilst I appreciate your view, single glazing is fundamental to the integrity, character and appearance of an historic building. Once replaced with double-glazing the building's special interest and character is severely compromised and the appearance harmed. This is not normally acceptable for most listed buildings which are of course statutory protected. There are exceptions to this, but these are usually structures which require large areas of glazing such as conservatories and in some cases barn conversions. For most domestic buildings with normal fenestration there are very few.

Secondary glazing is considered largely acceptable because it does not interfere with the integrity and fabric of the building. It is a fitting like a curtain and can be easily removed without causing long term damage. Secondary glazing does vary in quality and appearance, but has improved significantly. It also reduces draughts, which double-glazing does not necessarily do.

The fact that your windows cannot be broadly seen, is not a consideration in this case. The value of a building's appearance and setting is not determined by its public amenity. As mentioned above, it is the historic integrity of the building that we seek to maintain and enhance where possible.

With regards to other cases, I am afraid these cannot be used as a precedent here. Every case involving a listed building is site specific and the justification for each will have its own merits. I appreciate that an authority elsewhere may have promoted double-glazing in one instance, but we would argue that this outcome could have been achieved through secondary glazing. As a general rule authorities retain single glazing and where possible seek to remove double glazing that has been installed illegally, or in some cases prior to their listing. This is because the historic integrity of the building and its special interest normally outweigh environmental considerations which can be mitigated in other ways.

The broader reasoning behind our approach, is that historic windows are constantly under threat and their performance generally misunderstood. English Heritage has been doing a lot of work on the thermal performance of windows, some of which is now published and makes interesting reading. The culture of replacement is the biggest threat as it can often result in historic windows being removed and replaced with an inferior material, ie modern softwood. In these instances, where the life of the original window may have had another 100 or 200 years plus, a new window may need replacing every 20 to 30 years which is not sustainable.

Whilst I appreciate your windows may not be particularly old, the consistency in our approach is important to maintain historic integrity and promote repair and good management.

I hope this clarifies our position.

Kind regards,

Dr Ian Wightman
Historic Buildings Adviser -
Design & Implementation
Chichester District Council
[redacted]

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL BE/137/12/L

From: Peter Mullan [redacted]
Sent: 28 October 2012 17:11
To: Ian Wightman
Subject: listed building application BE13712L (ADC)

Dear Dr Wightman,

re: Application for listed building consent BE13712L (ADC)

I was contacted by Mrs Chapman from Arun District Council, in reference to the above application, to say that you had recommended that listed building consent to fit double glazing be refused, and I expressed some disappointment about that, so she suggested I contact you directly to discuss.

I'm very much in sympathy with the aims of keeping listed buildings as original as possible, and all the improvements we have made to our house over the years have been done with this in mind. However, it does seem odd that double glazing is not allowed, even though it doesn't alter the appearance, and even if the windows can't be seen by the public, and do not in any way detract from the character of the house or its setting.

I would be very grateful if you would be kind enough to have another look at this application and perhaps reconsider your advice. I would ensure that the replacement windows were identical, in terms of the depths and widths of glazing bars, rebates, transoms, etc, and of course would submit samples (or dimensioned diagrams where samples are not practicable). So the only difference would be in the glazing, and there would be minimal change in the appearance of the glass, in terms of its reflective qualities, as the glass in the existing windows is modern flat plate glass.

There is also the fact that the windows in question are not visible to the public, as the house is side-on to the street and there are very tall hedges around the whole property.

I believe this situation, of people wanting to fit double-glazing to listed buildings, is becoming more common around the country, probably due to rising energy prices, which I know only too well. We only heat two rooms of our house during the winter, but our annual bill is still around £2,500.

There are some local authorities who have given listed building consent for double-glazing. For example in a project report (detailed at www.changeworks.org.uk) an account is given of fitting several different types of thin double-glazed units in important listed buildings of grades 1 and 2 in a conservation area which is also part of a World Heritage Site. In the Executive Summary it states:

"...The project has demonstrated that appropriate double glazing can be successfully incorporated into listed buildings, improving their thermal performance and lowering their CO2 emissions without detracting from their historic character or appearance. This report recommends that such systems should be permitted in listed buildings, both in Edinburgh and further afield, where there would not be a significant loss of historic material..."

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The report stresses the fact that very slim and efficient types of double-glazed units can now be obtained, and it goes on to recommend that double-glazing should be permitted in listed buildings, with appropriate safeguards. Its conclusions state:

"...In summary, it should be made clear that to all intents and purposes all systems installed had a very negligible impact, if at all, on the appearance of the buildings in question..."

"...Clearly, on close inspection the differences from single glazing may be discernable. However, when balanced against the need for significant CO2 reductions in all existing housing, these variations should not prevent change. Regarding building conservation as 'management of change' allows perspective to be maintained..."

"...Most of the variations in appearance mentioned above are only visible when an individual window is scrutinised close-up. Taking a holistic approach becomes important when considering how to improve the sustainability and energy efficiency of these culturally valuable buildings. This project has demonstrated that slim-profile double glazing can be successfully installed with no easily apparent visual impact..."

"...Energy-saving measures such as secondary glazing are currently permitted without the need for any permissions (where their installation does not alter any building fabric). ... these can have a far greater visual impact than sensitively-installed double glazing. Equality should therefore be awarded to appropriate modern double-glazing technologies,.."

It is also interesting to see that in an appeal case (ref: 45/3/179, on www.communities.gov.uk) a Council argued in favour of double-glazed panels on a listed building when the owner wanted single-glazing. The Council made this point, among several others:

"...aesthetic considerations... should be balanced with the need to reduce CO2 emissions and to consider what is in the best overall interests of the building and the health of its occupants..."

The Secretary of State accepted this argument and found in favour of the council.

In conclusion, I do hope that you will be able to reconsider your advice to ADC in the light of the information presented here. In particular the assurance that the dimensions of the window elements will not be changed, so the appearance will remain identical to the existing windows, and that the position of the house is such that the windows are not visible to the public.

Best regards, Peter Mullans

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[redacted]

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL BE/137/12/L

Charlotte Burrows

From: Peter Mullans [redacted]
Sent: 31 October 2012 14:18
To: Charlotte Burrows
Subject: Application BE/137/12/L

Dear Ms Burrows,

I've had a reply from Dr Wightman, essentially saying the same thing, that in spite of there being no visual difference, and in spite of the windows not being in public view, he will not modify his advice.

I believe there are several developments on the horizon, both technical developments in double-glazing and also challenges to the present advice given by some local authorities, so I think the best thing would be to withdraw the application and I will make another application in about six months. By that time the situation should have become clearer, and hopefully there will then be a better possibility of obtaining consent.

Best regards, Peter Mullans

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