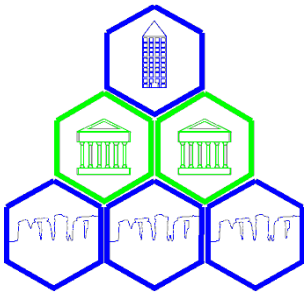
The Historic Environment Consultancy



For

Swindon United Charities Almshouses (Christ Church Cottages / Anderson's Hostel)

Cricklade Street
Swindon

Dr Peter Wardle
9/10/2008

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Conservation Statement For
Swindon United Charities Almshouses
(Christ Church Cottages / Anderson's Hostel)
Cricklade Street, Old Town,Swindon

In connection with planning application
reference number: S/LBC/08/1674
by
Dr Peter Wardle
9/10/2008

1. Introduction

This report relates to a listed building consent for the repair of windows in the listed building known as Christchurch Cottages. This building is a Victorian charity building which was extended in 1989. The Borough Council, Thamesdown Borough, presented a conservation award for this extension to Swindon United Charities. The citation reads

The judges consider the scheme to be "A project which successfully combines the preservation of this important historic building with the need to provide elderly residents with modern facilities"

At that time some windows were replaced with modern casement windows which are out of keeping with the character of the building.

There can be no doubt that extensive repairs to the original windows are necessary – this is obvious. Some of the windows are "dangerous" in that excessive force is needed to open them and inevitably a hand is placed on thin Victorian glass to add more force. Another window cannot be secured. Most leak and there is extensive mould present. All, apart from one, are difficult to open.

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For a number of years attempts have been made to repair these windows but these repairs have been unsuccessful. The specialist firm, Cotswold Casements, considers that they are "beyond repair". It is emphasised that the proposal is to replace some elements of the windows on an exact like with like basis.

This report has been commissioned following a request from the planning conservation officer:

> *Elinor has specifically requested the following in order to justify the replacement of the windows: Detail as to why the windows are beyond repair Which have been recently refurbished (and how). Professional advice sought. The quinquennial report gives no information as to the person conducting the report - do they have expertise and experience with historic buildings? I can find no evidence of which windows have been repaired/refurbished in recent years and I note no explanation or evidence as to why the windows are beyond repair. Considering this application is for the replacement of almost all of the original windows I am apprehensive to agree on the detail submitted.*

Email from Heather Carlisle 22/9/2008.

In addition pre-listed building consent consultations took place and the Conservation Officer's comments were as follows:

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SENIOR, Christine - MW

From: suc.almshouses@senior-walcot.co.uk
Sent: 09 January 2008 18:56
To: SENIOR, Christine - MW
Subject: Fwd: Re: 27-30 Cricklade Street Almshouses

---------- Forwarded message ----------
From: suc.almshouses@senior-walcot.co.uk
To: Elinor Croxall
Subject: Re: 27-30 Cricklade Street Almshouses
Date: 18 Dec 2007 18:21:11 +0000

Thank you Best wishes for Christmas and New Year Christine Senior On Dec 17 2007, Elinor Croxall wrote: Dear Christine It was good to meet you on site on Friday (14th), many thanks for showing me around the building. From our discussions I understand that you would like to replace the eight south facing windows and the single first floor windows to the east and west, all with metal framed / bars. The worst affected are the centre casements but the deterioration of the glazing bars on the other lights is causing the glass to crack and therefore you are also considering these for replacement. National guidance strongly advises that windows in historic buildings be repaired, but if beyond repair they be replaced like-for-like. Although the windows do not appear visually to be in a state beyond repair I note problems of warping and corrosion, and given the repair of some of the windows approximately five years previously I would not necessarily object to an application requesting their replacement, depending on the details submitted. I would recommend that a Listed Building Consent application detail why the windows are beyond repair, and which have been recently refurbished but are still failing. Please include copies of any professional advice you have received. An LBC application for replacement windows should follow the existing design as closely as possible. Double glazing is rarely acceptable for listed buildings as a result of the larger frame and bar sizes required and the reflective properties of double glazed windows. The window to the east is not original, and may be a later addition to the building as there are no ashlar window dressings. I would expect a replacement window here to be sympathetic to those elsewhere in the building and perhaps with a side, rather than top, opening casement. Some of the casement catches may be original, there is a particularly attractive spiral example on the first floor. Full details of the retention or replacement of catches should be included with an LBC application. I hope this is of assistance, please contact me should you have any further queries. Seasons greetings, Elinor Elinor Croxall Assistant Conservation Officer Swindon Borough Council Environment & Regeneration Premier House Swindon SN1 1TZ Direct Dial: 01793 466326 Fax: 01793 466459 Email: ecroxall@swindon.gov.uk "The views expressed in this email are personal and may not necessarily [redacted] Council unless explicitly stated otherwise. This email and any [redacted] individual or entity to

Of importance is the statement:

> *"Although the windows do not appear visually to be in a state beyond repair I note the problems of warping and corrosion and given the repair of some of the windows approximately five years previously I would not necessarily object to their replacement depending on the details submitted."*

This report attempts to set out the situation in more detail.

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2. Legal, Policy and Guidance Considerations

The relevant statute is Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas **Act** 1990 in particular Chapter 2, Section 7:

> Subject to the following provisions of this Act, no person shall execute or cause to be executed any works for the demolition of a listed building or for its alteration or extension in any manner which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, unless the works are authorised.

Section 9:

> In proceedings for an offence under this section it shall be a defence to prove the following matters—
> (a) that works to the building were urgently necessary in the interests of safety or health or for the preservation of the building;
> (b) that it was not practicable to secure safety or health or, as the case may be, the preservation of the building by works of repair or works for affording temporary support or shelter;
> (c) that the works carried out were limited to the minimum measures immediately necessary; and
> (d) that notice in writing justifying in detail the carrying out of the works was given to the local planning authority as soon as reasonably practicable.

The relevant planning policy is PPG 15: Planning and The Historic Environment. Of importance are the following statements.

> Paragraph 3.2:
> Controls apply to all works, both external and internal, that would affect a building's special interest, whether or not the particular feature concerned is specifically mentioned in the list description. Consent is not normally required for repairs, but, where repairs involve alterations which would affect the character of the listed building, consent is required. Whether repairs actually constitute alterations which require consent is a matter of fact and degree which must be determined in each case.
>
> Annex C:
> **C.9 Openings:** Door and window openings establish the character of an elevation; they should not generally be altered in their proportions or details, especially where they are a conspicuous element of the design. The depth to which window frames are recessed within a wall is a varying historical feature of importance and greatly affects the character of a building: this too should be respected. Rubbed gauged brick or stone voussoir arches should be kept wherever possible or copied and the original design repeated in any new work or repairs. Historic cill and lintel details should be retained.
> **C.40** As a rule, windows in historic buildings should be repaired, or if beyond repair should be replaced 'like for like'. If listed building consent is given for additional windows it is important that their design, scale and proportion should be sympathetic to the character of the building.
>
> **C.41** Within the broad window types such as sash or casement there is a wide

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variation of detail according to date, function and region. Standardisation to one pattern - such as the many new 'Georgian' sashes which adopt early 19th century details - should be avoided. The thickness and moulding of glazing bars, the size and arrangement of panes and other details should be appropriate to the date of the building or to the date when the window aperture was made.

C.42 If a building has been re-windowed there may be a desire to return to the original glazing pattern. In general the existing windows should be retained, unless they are obviously inappropriate or in very poor condition. There may be some cases, particularly in uniform urban terraces, where a return to earlier glazing patterns following a specific local pattern is appropriate.

C.43 Window types vary according to the region and its building tradition. Mullioned and transomed casement windows continued into the 18th century in some areas. In the North of England, particularly West Yorkshire and the Pennines, mullioned windows were standard for vernacular buildings until the mid 19th century: the mullions should therefore not be cut out.

C.44 Leaded and other metal-framed casements in 19th century and particularly earlier buildings are an increasing rarity and should be repaired or re-leaded rather than replaced.

C.45 Eighteenth and 19th century fancy glazing bars in geometric Gothic or marginal patterns should be retained wherever possible or copied, whether they are original to the building or later additions.

C.46 Twentieth century mild steel windows were often a design feature of Modern Movement and Art Deco buildings. These should be repaired, or replaced like for like if beyond repair.

C.47 Paint is usually the correct finish for timber windows; staining is not a traditional finish and should not normally be used. However, early windows of oak were commonly limewashed or left unpainted and these should not now be painted but left to weather naturally.

C.48 Old glass: All old glass is of interest, whether it be stained, painted or etched glass or early plain glass such as crown glass. Great care should be taken to protect old glass during building works. If it is necessary to remove panes to repair the window frames or infrastructure they should be reset. Where external protection for glass is required, it should be reversible and as unobtrusive as possible.

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3. The Special Character of the Building

The listing description describes the building as follows:

ANDERSON'S HOSTEL, 27-30 CRICKLADE ROAD (east side)
SWINDON, SWINDON, WILTSHIRE
Date listed: 17 February 1970
Date of last amendment: 17 February 1970
Grade II

CRICKLADE STREET SU 1583 NE SWINDON(east side)8/62Nos. 27-30 Consecutive(Anderson's Hostel)

CRICKLADE STREET SU 1583 NE SWINDON (east side) 8/62 Nos. 27-30 Consecutive (Anderson's Hostel) 17.2.70 GV II Almshouses, 1877, by W.H. Read. Rock-faced snecked limestone with ashlar quoins and window dressings. Slate roof. 1-storey and attic, 4 bays. Entrance from rear passage from Cricklade Street. Stacks between bays 1 and 2, and 4 and 5; 4 flues in round-ended ashlar. Ground floor, facing churchyard; 3-light cross windows, tripartite pointed lights above in flush dormers. Carved and braced bargeboards. Mid C20 covered way on south

The Character of the building is obvious and in particular the gothic stone mullioned windows with the glass held in mild steel frames.

Plate 1: Almshouses, 27-30 Cricklade Street, Swindon

The windows on the front elevation are uniformly arranged in groups of three. Those on the first floor are situated in ornate gables. These windows are set into stone surrounds

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with lancet arches. The lower windows are again set in stone surrounds. All window panes are set in metal frames.

There is no evidence to suggest that the windows are original but stylistically they could be original. There is however no evidence to suggest that they are not original. The use of mild steel in windows was introduced after 1856 and quickly gained popularity. As a window type they were at the commonest after the first World War when millions were manufactured and fitted.

As such these windows do not have an importance in their own right their importance is in the context of the building as a whole.

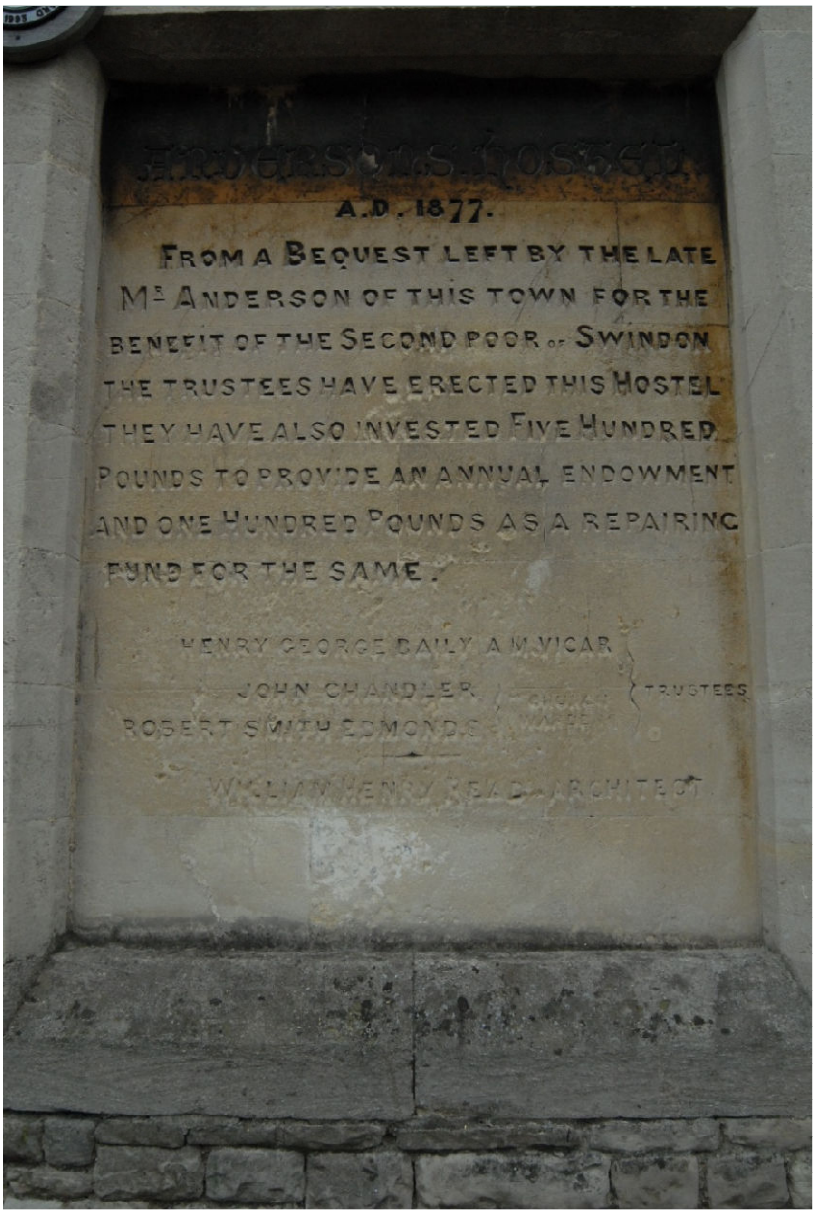

Plate 2: Dedication plaque, Almshouses, Cricklade Street, Swindon

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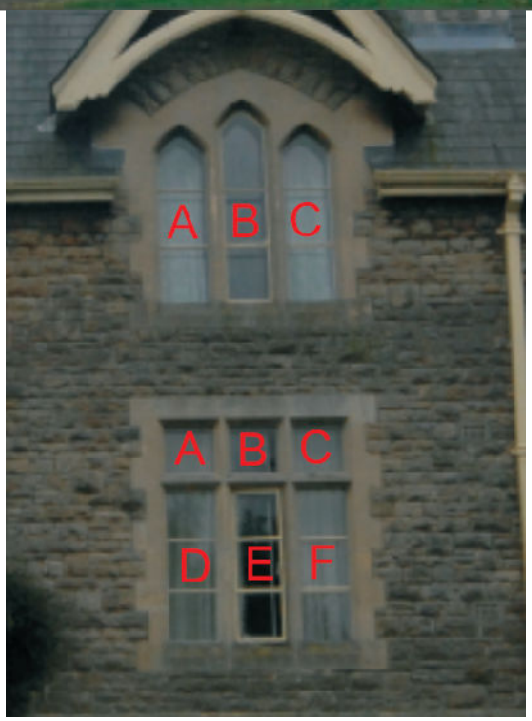
4. The Windows

Taxonomy: Windows are numbered from left to right, top to bottom. Windows are subdivided by letter according to the presence of stone mullions and transoms.



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4.1 Front (North) Elevation

The windows on the front elevation are uniformly arranged in groups of three. Those on the first floor are situated in ornate gables. These windows are set into stone surrounds with lancet arches. The lower windows are again set in stone surrounds. All window panes are set in metal frames.

There is no evidence to suggest that the windows are original but stylistically they could be original. There is however no evidence to suggest that they are not original. The use of mild steel in windows was introduced after 1856 and quickly gained popularity. As a window type they were at the commonest after the first World War when millions were manufactured and fitted.

As such these windows do not have an importance in their own right their importance is in the context of the building as a whole.

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Wall	Front
Window	1
 	
Window ID	1A
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame, loose putty
Window ID	1B
Configuration	1x2 side-hung casement with single pane over, shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	Replacement latch, original stay
Ease of Opening	Difficult
Defects	Top pane cracked in LH and RH lower corners, corroding frame
Window ID	*1C*
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	

Window 1 Detail

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Wall	Front
Window	2
 	
Window ID	2A
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	2B
Configuration	1x2 side-hung casement with single pane over, shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	Original spiral latch, original stay
Ease of Opening	Difficult
Defects	Corroding frame, loose putty, loose stonework adjacent to hinge, ingress of damp
Window ID	2C
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame, missing putty

Window 2 Detail

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Wall	Front
Window	3
 	
Window ID	3A
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	Upper pane cracked, bottom left, corroding frame
Window ID	3B
Configuration	1x2 side-hung casement with single pane over, shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	Replacement latch and stay
Ease of Opening	Opens easily
Defects	Corroding frame, loose putty, latch broken Window cannot be secured
Window ID	3C
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame

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Window 3 Detail

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Wall	Front
Window	4
	
Window ID	4A
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	Upper pane cracked, bottom left, corroding frame
Window ID	4B
Configuration	1x2 side-hung casement with single pane over, shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	Replacement latch and stay
Ease of Opening	Difficult
Defects	Corroding frame, loose putty
Window ID	4C
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame

Window 4 Detail

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Wall	Front
Window	5
 	
Window ID	5A
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	5B
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	5C
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	5D
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	
Defects	Corroding frame, cracked centre pane
Window ID	5E
Configuration	1x3 side-hung casement
Furniture	Replacement latch, original stay
Ease of Opening	Difficult
Defects	Corroding frame, missing putty
Window ID	5F
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame

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Window 5 Detail

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Wall	Front
Window	6
 	
Window ID	6A
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	6B
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	6C
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	6D
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	
Defects	Corroding frame
Window ID	6E
Configuration	1x3 side-hung casement
Furniture	Replacement latch, stay absent
Ease of Opening	Difficult
Defects	Casement stay missing, ingress of damp, corroding frame
Window ID	6F
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame

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Window 6 Detail

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Wall	Front
Window	7
	
Window ID	7A
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	7B
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	7C
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	7D
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	
Defects	
Window ID	7E
Configuration	1x3 side-hung casement
Furniture	Replacement latch, replacement modern stay
Ease of Opening	Very difficult - can only be opened after applying considerable force
Defects	Corroding frame, will not close / open without considerable force
Window ID	7F
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame

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Window 7 Detail

Note screwdriver marks

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Wall	Front
Window	8
 	
Window ID	8A
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	8B
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	8C
Configuration	Single square pane
Furniture	None
Defects	
Window ID	8D
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	
Defects	
Window ID	8E
Configuration	1x3 side-hung casement
Furniture	Replacement latch, replacement modern stay
Ease of Opening	Difficult
Defects	Corroding frame
Window ID	8F
Configuration	1x3
Furniture	None
Defects	Corroding frame

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Window 8 Detail

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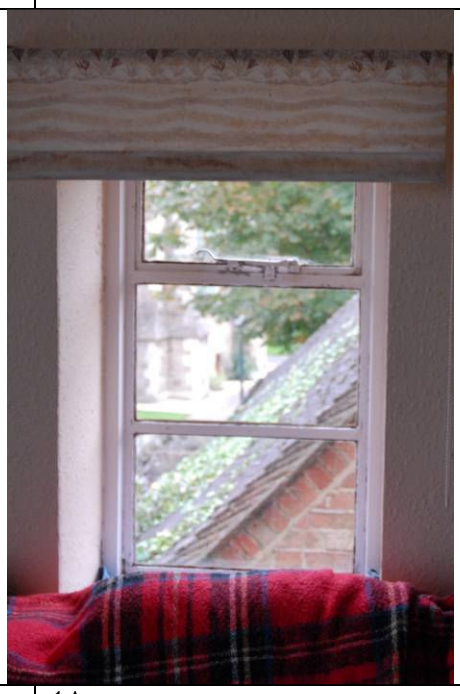
4.2 Side (East) Elevation

The eastern elevation of the almshouses features a single original window at the apex of the roof. This window again has metal frames although is not as ornate as those on the north or west elevations, comprising a single top-hung casement over two non-opening panes.

Wall	East
Window	1
	
Window ID	1A
Configuration	Top-hung casement
Furniture	?Original stay
Defects	
Window ID	1B
Configuration	1x2
Furniture	
Defects	

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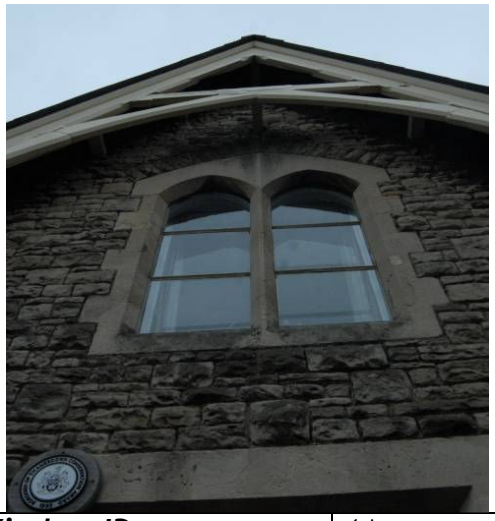
4.3 Side (West) Elevation

The eastern elevation of the building faces Cricklade Street and the windows in the wall are therefore more elaborate than those found in the eastern wall as they are intended to be seen by those using the road. The first floor window follows the shape of those found on the northern wall.

There is no lower window on this wall. The space is occupied by a dedication plaque indicating the construction of the building in 1877.

Wall	Side
Window ID	1
 	
Window ID	1A
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	
Defects	Corroding frame
Window ID	1B
Configuration	1x3, upper pane shaped to fit lancet arch
Furniture	
Defects	Corroding frame

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Rear Passageway

Wall	Rear
Window ID	1
	
Configuration	1x2, non-opening
Furniture	None
Defects	

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Wall	Side
Window ID	2
	
Configuration	1x2 modern side-hung casement
Furniture	
Defects	

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Wall	Side
Window ID	3
	
Configuration	Single pane with top-hung casement over, modern
Furniture	
Defects	

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5. Is Listed Building Consent Necessary?

Paragraph 3.2 of PPG 15 states:

> *Consent is not normally required for repairs, but, where repairs involve alterations which would affect the character of the listed building, consent is required. Whether repairs actually constitute alterations which require consent is a matter of fact and degree which must be determined in each case.*

What is being proposed is by definition a repair to the windows and their replacement on a like with like basis which is consistent with PPG 15 paragraph C40 in any event.

All the key elements of the windows which create the special character, that is

- the stone mullions
- the sills
- the stone surrounds

are being retained.

The proposal is to replace the following elements:

- The means of fixing the glass to the stone
- The glass itself
- The mechanism for opening the windows
- The window furniture where it is not original

Clearly there can be no objection to the replacement of modern stays and handles which detract from the overall character.

The glass itself is thin and brittle, with some panes cracked and this is an opportunity to introduce safer and more thermally efficient glass. Clearly there cannot be an objection to replacing broken panes and clearly listed building consent is not needed.

Thus there will be no affect to the special character of the building and therefore it is suggested that LBC consent is not necessary.

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6. The Condition of The Windows

The condition of the windows is described in the schedule above. It is noted that some windows can only be opened by applying some considerable force or being levered open with a screwdriver. All the windows are badly fitting, warped and leak, there is extensive mould growing in the area of the windows. This is agreed by all.

7. Practicalities and How the Windows Can Be Repaired.

A specialist firm, The Cotswold Casement Company, have been engaged in the repair of these windows for some years and indeed carried out repairs in 2003 to windows in flats 28 & 30. The schedule of work included:

- deglazing windows
- fitting new stays
- tightening handles
- application of rust inhibitor
- re-glazing windows

These repairs have not been totally successful and the view of this company is that renewal is now the only option. On site repairs like this can be successful but at best only solve problems for a short period of time.

The opinion of the building surveyor, who belongs to a practice- Bare Leaning and Bare - which specialises in the conservation of historical buildings, cathedrals and churches, when they prepared the quinquennial report is:

> "All windows poor fit, old metal casements rusty, draughty and difficult to open and close."

Their view was replacement was the best option.

The repair of the windows would mean the removal of all glazing elements and a temporary replacement fitted.

Steel windows corrode when moisture collects and stays on unprotected metal and paint is not an effective protective coating. Until the 1950s metal windows were not protected and after that date they were galvanised.

To be repairable there must be enough sound metal present to be able to support the weight of the window in any event; that is more or less the original size.

In places it is clear that insufficient sound metal will be present. This is usual (see Clement.P., ***Metal Windows***, Building Conservation Directory 1997. Thus new steel has to be welded into the old frame. The amount of sound metal can only be fully determined after paint and rust has been removed. The removal of rust can only be done by dipping the metal in acid or using airborne abrasives which in turn weakens the metal.

To solve the problem of corrosion over a long period of time, 20 years, the steel has to be treated and in effect hot galvanised at a temperature of 450 degrees C. Often the windows do not survive this process.

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In addition it is accepted that the windows are warped and straightening and grinding of the metal would also be necessary. Indeed the warping, gaps and resulting collection of moisture have led to the extensive corrosion. Thus it is considered unlikely that much of the original metal will survive the process of conservation.

It is noted that conservation is different to restoration. In reality the methods currently available are restoration not conservation and will result in much replacement of the original metal. It is suggested that the degree of corrosion is in fact such that it is not practical to conserve the metal in the windows.

8. Discussion

The basis of modern conservation is that the best policy for the protection of historic buildings is for building to be in use and preferably for its original function. In the case of these buildings there is a protected function as accommodation for the elderly due to its endowment as a charity. As living accommodation there are certain basic requirements windows which are weather proof, not draughty and can be easily opened are a basic requirement.

The fact that attempts have been made to repair the windows which have not been successful point to the fact that it is not practical to repair the windows.

Of importance is the statement of the conservation officer in the pre-listed building consent consultations which states:

> ***I note the problems of warping and corrosion and given the repair of some of the windows approximately five years previously I would not necessarily object to their replacement depending on the details submitted.***

It is thus suggested that the proposals:

- May not need listed building consent
- Are now urgent for reasons of health and safety
- Fulfil the criteria of PPG 15 in terms of design
- Will retain and reuse the original window furniture where present and
- That this report provides the detailed information required.

English Heritage in their document Sustaining the Historic Environment grades assets into Critical for the most important, through to the most minor which are tradeable for some social good. It is suggested that the retention of minor amounts of Victorian metal in these window casements is clearly tradable in the context of the continuing use of the building as adequate accommodation for the poor and elderly in any event.

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