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To: Berry, Ailsa; Planning (SMDC)
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Categories:

44 Alsop Street, Leek

The elevations are not drawn to scale, and while illustrative drawings and photographs in a manufacturers brochures has been provided, full cross-sectional drawings of the existing and proposed windows have not been provided to be able to compare the extent of the change.

The building is an attractive, late 19th century property which retains its original painted timber sash windows and other historic detailing. It is a grander building on the end of a row of terraced properties and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. It also lies within the setting of Albion Mill, a Grade II Listed Building. Dwellings in Leek are protected by the Article 4 Direction to conserve historic detailing and prevent incremental changes which will cumulatively harm the wider area. There is no evidence that the joinery is rotten and beyond repair.

Whilst the thermal upgrading of properties is supported, upgrading should be done in a sensitive way to protect the historic character of the building and the contribution it makes to the wider streetscape. It should be noted that protecting and enhancing the built environment is one of the key strands in the NPPF of achieving sustainable development.

The Council has a duty to preserve the historic character and appearance of the Conservation Area and will seek the retention of good examples of traditional windows and doors wherever possible. Traditional windows should normally be repaired and renovated with draft strips and the installation of secondary glazing if necessary. Historic England provides useful advice on historic windows <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/traditional-windows-care-repair-upgrading/>

It is possible that existing traditional windows can be upgraded to accommodate slim double glazing (if there is a sufficient rebate) but details would be needed to demonstrate how the timber sections and construction of the window would change. It is also possible to install new, double-glazed sash windows in painted timber (14mm approx. units), retaining structural glazing bars, and the glass secured with putty or mastic not timber beading.

UPVC is only considered if the existing windows are not to a traditional design already and UPVC may be an acceptable compromise if the overall design can be improved. However, UPVC is not generally encouraged in historic buildings as it fails to accurately replicate traditional joinery and we would lose good historic detailing that contributes to the character of the area. This building retains its historic sash windows and therefore the change to UPVC cannot be supported as sections tend to be wider, giving a bulkier appearance, glazing bars are applied and the overall appearance and finish is not authentic. Given the age of the building I would expect traditional, high quality window materials of appropriately lightweight and elegant appearance. This position is in line with recent appeal decisions.

The historic sash windows should be renovated with draft strips and secondary glazing (which is more thermally efficient than double glazing) or slim double glazed timber windows are the alternative. We cannot support UPVC windows in place of the historic details, especially in such a prominent location and in such an architecturally distinctive building.

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