Heritage Statement – Birchwood, Whitburn Terrace NE36 0TF

1 Introduction

This Heritage Statement is prepared by AHBSS on behalf of the Freeholder (Lessor), in support of a planning application for the replacement of the windows to PVCu frames at Birchwood, Whitburn Terrace, East Boldon, NE36 0TF (see drawings).
The proposed heritage style frames are the same section as existing.

The Site

2.1. The site relates to Birchwood, Whitburn Terrace, East Boldon, NE36 0TF which is in the East Boldon conservation area. The property is on the very edge of the conservation area and is visible on front street.



2.2 The property is a 4 storey detached property on the corner of Front Street and Whitburn Terrace.



2.3 Date of construction is not known. There was a past planning application ST/0517/15. It requested UPVC replacements with wood effect – this was withdrawn.

The block is fairly modern and we believe the property has little to no historic or architectural merit to the East Boldon Conservation area.

The property has cavity brick wall construction (of varying thickness), suspended upper timber floors with a concrete slab ground floor. The roof is a twin pitched and hipped concrete clad main roof The property has small timber framed offshoots throughout.

Plastic gutters and rainwater pipes. Original timber window frames with improved 4-6-4 double glazing panels.

3.0 Building defects and condition

The current windows are in poor condition, the windows are beginning to rot and have issues with draught proofing. Due to the age of the windows and the lack of draught proofing throughout, the thermal performance of the existing window is significantly poor in comparison to new units.

Due to the current "cost of living" crisis, there is no money for maintaining timber windows on a cyclical basis and heat loss through the draught frames and single glazing is causing fuel poverty.

Decent Homes Standards and Negative Affect on Tenants

As described above, the timber windows are in poor condition, with some instances of wood rot causing a safety issue.

The double glazed timber windows are causing excessive draughts and heat loss, which in turn are causing mass condensation problems in the flats. Secondary glazing would not prevent this from occurring due to the restricted ventilation which secondary glazing causes.

The Decent Homes Standard is a legal standard which regulates housing provided by the social housing sector. However, it is currently being proposed that this standard will be applied to the private rented sector or PRS in the future.

Under the current version of the Decent Homes Standard a decent home is one which meets the following four criteria:

- It Meets the Current Statutory Minimum Standard for Housing
- It Is In a Reasonable State of Repair
- It Has Reasonably Modern Facilities and Services (Not applicable to this scheme)
- It Provides a Reasonable Degree of Thermal Comfort (Not applicable to this scheme)

Housing standards are assessed and hazards are categorised under what is known as the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, Properties which fail to meet this criteria are those which have one or more hazards assessed as serious or Category 1 hazards.

The criteria for the HHRS is below:

Criteria A – Fitness Standard	Pass /Failure		
1. Free from serious disrepair	Yes / No	2. Structurally stable	Yes / No
3. Free from dampness prejudicial to health	Yes / No	4. Adequate lighting	Yes / No
5. Adequate heating	Yes / No	6. Adequate ventilation	Yes / No
7. Adequate supply of wholesome water	Yes / No	8. Effective foul and waste drainage	Yes / No
9. Effective surface water drainage	Yes / No	10. Suitably located WC for occupants exclusive use	Yes / No
11. Suitably located bath or shower	Yes / No	12. Suitably located wash basin with hot and cold water	Yes / No
12. Satisfactory food preparation facilities	Yes / No	13. Satisfactory cooking facilities	Yes / No
14. Satisfactory sink with hot and cold water for food preparation and cooking	Yes/ No		

Note:-
Dwellings will fail the Decent Home Standard where one or more answers is '***No***"

The disrepair of the windows has caused a dampness and the heat loss of the single glazing has caused the property's to not have adequate heating therefore failing HHRS standards.

The criteria for the State of Repair is below:

Criteria B – State of Repair	Pass / Failure								
	House			Flat Below 6 Storeys			Flats, 6 Storeys or More		
	Age >		Poor Condition	Age >		Poor Condition	Age >		Poor Condition
Key Components									
Wall structure	80	Yes / No	Yes / No	80	Yes / No	Yes / No	80	Yes / No	Yes / No
Lintols	60	Yes / No	Yes / No	60	Yes / No	Yes / No	60	Yes / No	Yes / No
Brickwork (spalling)	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Wall finish	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	60	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Roof structure	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	50	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Roof finish	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	50	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Chimney N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	50	Yes / No	Yes / No	N/A	N/A	N/A
Windows	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	40	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
External doors	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	40	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Gas central heating boiler	15	Yes / No	Yes / No	15	Yes / No	Yes / No	15	Yes / No	Yes / No
~~Heating other~~	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Electrical systems	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Other Components									
Kitchen	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No	30	Yes / No	Yes / No
Bathrooms	40	Yes / No	Yes / No	40	Yes / No	Yes / No	40	Yes / No	Yes / No
Central heating distribution system	40	Yes / No	Yes / No	40	Yes / No	Yes / No	40	Yes / No	Yes / No

Note:-
Dwellings will fail the Decent Home Standard where one or more of the ***key building components*** are old ***and,*** are in poor condition; or two or more of the ***other building components*** are old ***and***, are in poor condition

The age and condition of the windows has caused a failure of the State of Repair Criteria.

4.0 The Proposal

Replace existing wood framed double glazed windows with brown coloured woodgrain UPVC windows in all 13 apartments within one block. Windows to be in the same style of fenestration.

Replacement of existing cladding with fibre cement cladding (Grey Slate Cedarmil).

Replace timber fascia with PVCu (Colour TBC).

5.0 Impact on the asset.

No further historic fabric or architectural features would be lost as part of the proposal. The proposal including woodgrain windows which shouldn't alter the appearance of the block however should allow a better living standard to the block with significantly reduced maintenance.

Surrounding Area

The areas immediately surrounding does not have similar construction to Birchwood. The majority of properties have Moulded stone surrounds to windows. Painted wooden moulded mullions, cills and heads to bays and moulded timber door surrounds.

There is evidence of PVCu windows at 1-3 Somerset terrace which is located directly opposite of the side elevation of Birchwood. 1-3 Somerset terrace is also in the conservation area.



Looking further down the street (located in the conservation area) there is evidence of PVCu windows on Gordan Drive.



6. Planning Policy

Reason 1) A. Section 72 of the PLBCAA.

72General duty as respects conservation areas in exercise of planning functions.

(1)In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any functions under or by virtue of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area.

The proposal acknowledges that the site is inside of the conservation area boundary. However, we believe the disrepair of windows and difficulty in maintenance due to the height of many of windows, service charges and lack of funds is having a detrimental effect of the character or appearance of that area.

There is also instances of PVCu windows in the conservation area which we believe has "enhanced the character" of the building.

Reason 1) B. Paragraph 202 of the NPPF.

202. *Where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.*

If a proposed development is considered to result in less than substantial harm, then it triggers the 'test' contained within Paragraph 202 and the applicant must demonstrate that the public benefits of the proposal outweigh the level of harm to the significance of the asset resulting from the scheme. If no obvious public benefits are present, then securing its optimum viable use – such as in the case of a derelict building – can also be used to argue in favour of the scheme.

A change in window material would not be regarded as "substantial harm". Therefore we must assess whether this change has public benefit. The public benefit test is usually only applicable to major developments and we cannot see any obvious public benefits. The only benefit would be to the residents of which are experiencing major heat loss, condensation and draught caused by the derelict windows, causing many of the flats to fail decent homes standard (discussed in Section D) and spoiling the enjoyment of the flats. A failure of decent homes standards is a directly contradiction of optimum viable use as discussed above.

We believe that the positive affect that the new PVCu heritage windows would have on the residents currently experiencing major dampness. Far outweighs any negative impact of a change of window material.

In our opinion, the proposal does not affect any “negative factors”:

6.4.2 ***Negative factors***

Negative areas are those which detract from the overall character and appearance of the place. The principal negative factors are:

- the loss of original architectural details such as chimney stacks and chimney pots.
- The loss of original shopfronts.
- Their replacement by poorly designed and proportioned shopfronts that have little or no reference to historic appearance and material content. This removes quality and distinctiveness.
- The introduction of external security shutters and their housings.
- The presence of traffic and the clutter and variety of street furniture that has been installed as a consequence of its volume and speed.
- Poorly designed and maintained landscape features that divide rather than unify spaces.
- Maintenance of footpaths