

Heritage Grants

Specification Guidelines

These generic specifications give an indication of the quality of work and level of detail that the Heritage Advisory Team will expect to see in applications for Large Grants under the Heritage Grants Scheme. Applications that contain descriptions of the works similar to this are more likely to be recommended for approval in the report that the Heritage Advisory Team will prepare for the Grants Committee, depending upon the remaining budget.

These specifications are generic and will normally require some tailoring to meet the specific circumstances of a specific property in the Heritage Character Area. It is very important that materials and methods used are dictated by the original and altered features of the individual buildings concerned. Although many homes in the Heritage Character Area were built during the short phases of construction shortly after the founding of the Garden City, there is still a rich and important variety of features amongst these buildings.

Care should also be taken to understand the current condition of the building before works commence. Any history of material decay or structural movement may impact on the approach to repairs. For example because of problems with lintels some window frames take on the structural role of supporting the wall above: special care is required when repairing or renewing such windows. If there is any doubt over such matters a professional (surveyor, architect or engineer) should be consulted.

Please note that before undertaking the work it is important that homeowners check whether planning permission, conservation area consent or listed building consent will be needed from North Hertfordshire District Council. In most cases these works will also need to comply with the Building Regulations, which are also the responsibility of North Hertfordshire District Council. The prior approval of the Heritage Foundation is also likely to be required for these works.

All grant-aided works should be carried out by experienced contractors in accordance with a specification of works to be agreed in advance by the Heritage Foundation.

Roof Tiles

Most homes in the Heritage Character Area have plain clay roof tiles on sloping roofs. If your property has a thatched roof or a slate-covered roof please contact the Heritage Advisory Team for more information.

Many roofs have been repaired or patched with a variety of tiles different from the originals over the years. Heritage grants will only be available for tiles that match the original type. If you are not sure which (if any) of the types of tiles on your roof is the original, look at surrounding buildings for clues or seek professional advice.

Tiles:

- Type: Either hand-made (earlier buildings) or machine-made (later buildings) plain clay tiles. Machine made tiles are more uniform and typically flatter than hand-made. Tiles can be new or reclaimed (and tiles salvaged from the building itself).
- Camber: Single- or double- camber to match the originals
- Fixing: Pegged (with two holes for alloy nails) or nibbed (with integral clay nibs at the top) to match the originals. Nailed as per manufacturer's instructions.
- Size: To match the originals (typically 165mm x 265mm).
- Colour: To match the originals.
- Texture: To match the originals
- Mixing tiles: If the new tiles are a good match for the salvaged tiles they can be mixed randomly. Otherwise new tiles should be utilised in a manner that best integrates with the existing building and its setting.
- Insulation: Building Regulations impose a requirement (with certain exemptions) that roofs are insulated when the roof coverings are refurbished. Insulation between or below the rafters will not require changes to the roof line. Insulation above the rafters will, to some extent, raise the roofline and change the appearance: if that is the case it should be highlighted by the Heritage Advisory Team.
- Batten Gauge: To match original
- Roof Details: All to match original, including:
- gable verges with tiled (single- or double- course, or slate or board) under-cloak;
 - wooden bargeboards (not PVC);
 - open eaves (where rafter feet are visible) or closed eaves (with soffit and fascia)
 - sprockets kicking out the bottom of the slope;
 - half-round, third round or hogback ridge tiles;
 - bonnet tiles or half-round ridge tiles on sloping hip ridges;
 - valley tiles or lead valley gutter on sloping gutters at intersections.

Windows

All but the most modern homes in the Heritage Character Area would have been constructed with windows with wooden or mild steel frames. uPVC windows are a relatively modern development. Heritage grants will only be available for windows where:

- Original wood- or metal-framed windows are to be professionally repaired or upgraded
- New wooden windows are being installed in the place of original wooden windows which are beyond repair
- New metal framed windows are being installed in the place of original metal-framed windows which are beyond repair
- PVC windows are being removed and wood-or metal-framed windows reinstated

Most windows in the Heritage Character Area would originally have had hinged casements (or sashes) rather than sliding sashes. The guidelines below have been produced with hinged casements in mind, but many of the principles apply equally well to sliding sash windows.

Please do contact the Heritage Advisory Team if you need advice on the original style windows on your property.

Repair of wooden framed windows:

Timber: Wood used for repair must be well seasoned and dry to avoid distortion. Choose the best quality available.

Species: If possible match the species to the original, and always repair hardwood with hardwood and softwood with softwood. In original windows domestic species (e.g. oak, Douglas fir) would have been used.

Extent: Do not replace timbers unnecessarily, but remember that windows endure large loadings and that short, fiddly repairs are more likely to fail.

Splice Repairs: Should be designed so that water is directed out of, rather than into, the frame and will not sit in the repair. Mechanical fixings (pins or dowels) should reinforce glued splices where possible.

Draughts: Brush or compression type draught strips can be fitted to most wooden windows. Consider future decoration – removable strips that fit into a channel are best.

Glazing: It is not normally possible to fit double glazing into existing timber casements because of a lack of thickness. Even new, extra-thin double glazing units will only be suitable for a few original windows. Also the extra pane of glass increases the weight of the sash which can be a problem.

Repair of metal-framed windows:

Preparation: Rust and accumulated layers of paint can be removed by chemical dipping or flame cleaning in a workshop. On site hand cleaning using mild detergents and paint removal can be used. If the steel was not originally galvanised abrasive blast cleaning (wet or dry) can be used. All cleaned ungalvanised metal should be primed immediately with a rust inhibitor.

Note: Some old paints contained lead. If any of the paint on your windows might be more than 30 years old take care. (see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-on-lead-paint-in-older-homes>)

Cracks: Cracks and minor defects can be repaired by a blacksmith

Decoration: Frames removed for repair can be given a durable powder coat finish. Windows left in situ can be repainted (once cleaned) with special metal paints.

Draughts: Use a silicone gel applied around the opening.

Glazing: It is not normally possible to fit double glazing into existing metal casements because of a lack of thickness.

Replacement of timber-framed windows:

To qualify for a heritage grant replacement timber-framed windows must closely match the original windows (as set out below). If the original timber-framed windows are being replaced the Heritage Foundation may request evidence that these windows were beyond repair.

Materials: Good quality, well-seasoned FSC certified timber should be used. Timber sills should be of hardwood. Foreign and/or exotic timber species can be used except where the frames are to be left undecorated or only lightly stained, in which case oak should be used for cills.

Design: The arrangement of the windows (size and number of casements, fanlights, mullions, transoms etc) must match the original. Casements and frames should be constructed with joints to match the originals (typically butt not splayed joints).

Frame: Outer frame, mullions, transoms and casement frames must match the originals in section and mouldings (except as mentioned in "glazing" below).

Glazing: Extra thin (up to 14mm in total) double glazing can often be fitted in windows with traditional dimensions without a change in appearance; in this case a small increase in the depth (but not width) of the frame sections is acceptable.

Glazing Bars: The timber glazing bars which subdivide a casement should generally have sections to match the originals. When double glazing is to be fitted this may not be possible, in which case external and internal "stick-on" bars can be used provided that they are no wider than the originals.

Lead Comes: The lead comes which subdivide a casement should generally have sections to match the originals. When double glazing is to be fitted external and internal "stick-on" comes can be used provided that they match the originals.

Furniture: Hinges should be traditional folding hinges, not modern inset pivoting hinges that are designed to allow the outside face of the window to be cleaned from

the inside. Multi-point locking mechanisms are acceptable if they can be fitted within the original frame sections.

Draughts: New timber-framed windows should all be draught-proofed using brush or compression type draught strips. Consider future decoration – removable strips that fit into a channel are best.

Trickle Vents: Visible trickle vents are not acceptable. Background ventilation should be provided by opening the windows a small amount.

Colour: The colour of all window frames and casements should match the originals, or if the original colour cannot be identified, then it shall relate to the original character of the existing house and its surroundings.

Replacement of metal-framed windows:

To qualify for a heritage grant replacement metal -framed windows must closely match the original windows (as set out below). Where original steel sections are no longer available (as is the case for many windows made before the Second World War) modern equivalents are acceptable if they closely resemble the originals. If the original windows are being replaced the Heritage Foundation Committee may request evidence that these windows were beyond repair.

Materials: Normally mild steel (alternative metal will be considered on a case by case basis).

Design: The arrangement of the windows (size and number of casements, fanlights, mullions, transoms, glazing bars etc) must match the original.

Frame: Outer frame, mullions, transoms and casement frames must closely match the originals in section (except as mentioned in “double glazing” below).

Glazing: Because of their inherent strength, steel windows with traditional dimensions can often have double-glazing fitted without a change in appearance; in this case an increase in the depth (but not width) of the frame sections is acceptable.

Glazing Bars: To match the original.

Lead Comes: The lead comes which subdivide a casement should generally have sections to match the originals. When double glazing is to be fitted external and internal “stick-on” comes can be used provided that they match the originals.

Draughts: New metal -framed windows should all be draught-proofed by the manufacturer

Trickle Vents: Visible trickle vents are not acceptable. Background ventilation should be provided by opening the windows a small amount.

Colour: The colour of all window frames and casements should match the originals, or if the original colour cannot be identified, then it shall relate to the original character of the existing house and its surroundings.

Doors

Almost all homes in the Heritage Character Area originally had wooden front doors. Heritage grants will only be available for doors where:

- An original wooden door is to be professionally repaired or upgraded
- A wooden door is being installed in the place of an original wooden door which is beyond repair
- A PVC or composite door is being removed and a wooden door reinstated

Low cost, wooden doors are available off-the-shelf but these rarely faithfully match the design of an original Letchworth front door. In order to qualify for a Heritage Grant a replacement door must be a close replica of the original in material and design, which means that in most cases it will need to be custom made.

Please do contact the Heritage Advisory Team if you need advice on the original style doors on your property.

Repair of wooden doors:

- Timber:** Wood used for repair must be well seasoned and dry to avoid distortion. Choose the best quality available, and always repair hardwood with hardwood and softwood with softwood. In original doors domestic species (e.g. oak, Douglas fir) would have been used.
- Extent:** Do not replace timbers unnecessarily, but remember that doors need to be secure and that short, fiddly repairs are more likely to be vulnerable.
- Brackets:** Metal brackets let in to the outside edge of a door are a good way to reinforce a weak joint.
- Splice Repairs:** Should be designed so that water is directed out of, rather than into, the door. Mechanical fixings (pins or dowels) should reinforce glued splices where possible.
- Draughts:** Brush or compression type draught strips can be fitted to most wooden doors. Consider future decoration – removable strips that fit into a channel are best. For the base of the door automatically retracting brush seals are available which help prevent draughts through what can be a large gap.
- Glazing:** Many front doors have one or more glazed panels, often with stained or obscured glazing. Original glazing should always be retained if possible – the energy savings from upgrading a small door panel to double glazing is unlikely to be significant. If glazing is cracked or missing single glazing should replace original single glazing. Note that building regulations place requirements for toughened glazing in certain circumstances for safety and security reasons.
- Other features:** The repair of the door frame, canopy, hood etc. can be included in the cost of door repairs if the same repair principles are followed.
- Colour:** The colour of the door and frame should match the originals, or if the original colour cannot be identified, then it shall relate to the original character of the existing house and its surroundings.

Replacement of wooden doors:

To qualify for a heritage grant a replacement wooden door must closely match the original. If the original door is being replaced the Grants Committee may require evidence that this door was beyond repair.

- Materials:** Good quality, well-seasoned FSC certified timber should be used. Timber thresholds should be of hardwood. Foreign and/or exotic timber species can be used except where the door is to be left undecorated or only lightly stained, in which case oak should be used.
- Design:** The design of the door, (size and number of panels, dimensions of ledges and braces etc.) including any glazing, must match the original.
- Glazing:** If possible retain any glass from the original door and reuse it. If the glass is lost or broken extra thin (up to 14mm in total) double glazing is an option if it can be fitted in a replacement door without a change in dimensions. If the original doors had stained glass panels these should be reproduced. This should be in keeping with the style and character of the original house design. Modern, contemporary designs or motifs are not suitable. Note that building regulations place requirements for toughened glazing in certain circumstances for safety and security reasons.
- Glazing Bars:** The timber glazing bars which subdivide glazed panels should generally have sections to match the originals. When double glazing is to be fitted this may not be possible, in which case external and internal “stick-on” bars can be used provided that they are no wider than the originals.
- Lead Comes:** The lead comes which subdivide a glazed panel should generally have sections to match the originals. When double glazing is to be fitted external and internal “stick-on” comes can be used provided that they match the originals.
- Furniture:** Multi-point locking mechanisms are acceptable if they can be fitted within the original sections.
- Draughts:** New wooden doors should all be draught-proofed using brush or compression type draught strips. Consider future decoration – removable strips that fit into a channel are best. For the base of the door automatically retracting brush seals are available which help prevent draughts through what can be a large gap.
- Colour:** The colour of the door and frame should match the originals, or if the original colour cannot be identified, then it shall relate to the original character of the existing house and its surroundings.
- Other features:** The reinstatement of the original door frame, canopy, hood etc. can be included in the cost of door replacement if the designs reproduce original details.