



# REPLACEMENT WINDOWS

Windows are important features of any building, contributing greatly to their appearance and character, and to that of the wider streetscape. One of the best ways of protecting the character of a building is to keep its original windows, and if necessary to repair and refurbish them. This is also usually the most cost-effective option. When this is demonstrated not to be possible, it may be necessary to replace the existing windows. This guide aims to explain when planning permission or listed building consent is required and what is likely to be acceptable.

## When is planning permission or listed building consent required?

Planning permission and/or listed building consent may be required for alterations to windows or the replacement of windows, especially if the property lies within a Conservation Area or it is Listed. Use the flowchart on the back page to help you work out when the different consents are required.

## What types of alterations/replacement windows are likely to be acceptable?

What is acceptable depends largely on the type of building it is and where it is located. If you can't find the information you need in the boxes below please contact your local Planning office.

### Listed Buildings

Listed Building Consent is required for any alterations other than the repair of and exact "like-for-like" replacements. Replacements will only be acceptable where it can be demonstrated that renovation of the original windows is **not** feasible.

- ✓ Original windows should be retained and renovated (like for like – see definition).
- ✓ Where replacement of original windows are shown to be necessary they must be like-for-like in every detail (unless the windows have already been replaced with inappropriate windows, in which case replacements which better reflect the original style should be used).
- ✓ Sashes should slide vertically for opening (can hinge inwards for cleaning).
- ✓ All mullions should be retained.
- ✓ External finish should normally be white paint (unless original colour different).
- ✓ Windows should be timber (or material original to the building).
- ✗ PVCu windows are never acceptable on Listed Buildings.
- ✗ External secondary glazing.
- ✗ Double glazing (may occasionally be acceptable in category 'C' listed buildings subject to astragal detailing – see info box).
- ✗ Non-vertical opening sashes.
- ✗ 'Plant-on' or 'sandwich' astragals (see info box).

### Conservation Areas

There are no permitted development rights for the alteration of windows within Conservation Areas, therefore planning permission will be required for any change other than exact 'like for like' replacements or repair and maintenance of the original windows. See our website or contact your local planning office to find out if your house is within a Conservation Area.

- ✓ Original windows should be retained and renovated (like for like).

- ✓ Where replacement windows are necessary they should be like-for-like in terms of appearance, fenestration and proportion (unless the windows have already been replaced with inappropriate windows, in which case replacements which better reflect the original style should be used).
- ✓ Sash and case 'lookalike' windows (see diagram) may be acceptable.
- ✓ Pivot method of opening may be acceptable.
- ✓ All mullions to be retained.
- ✓ Double glazing is acceptable subject to astragal detailing (see info box).
- ✗ PVCu on the front or 'principal' elevation (or side where that elevation faces a road) as a replacement for timber windows.
- ✗ External secondary glazing.
- ✗ 'Plant-on' or 'sandwich' astragals.

*A more pragmatic approach may be taken towards the use of PVCu windows in modern buildings within the Conservation Area where it is the Planning Authority's view that timber windows are not traditional to the age or character of the building (e.g. a modern building within the Conservation Area).*

### Flats (outwith Conservation Area)

Planning permission for the alteration/replacement of windows in flats outwith Conservation Areas is only required if the size of the window or door would be altered.

There are many examples of buildings which have been split into flats, each with different colours and styles of windows. This can make the exterior of the building look disjointed and unkempt therefore you are advised to follow good practice and to replace your windows with styles and materials as close a match with the originals as possible.

### Houses (outwith Conservation Areas)

Planning permission is not required for the replacement of windows in houses which are not Listed and are not in Conservation Areas. That said, windows that are appropriate to the age and style of the house will always make an important contribution to the character of any house, whatever its location, and so it is recommended that the guidance contained in this leaflet be taken as good practice when considering the renovation or replacement of any window.

### Non-Residential Properties

Where it is proposed to replace windows within non-residential properties, planning permission will only be required if there is to be a 'material' change and they are to differ significantly in appearance from the existing windows, including;

- New or enlarged openings; or
- A significant change in design and appearance

### "Like-for-like" definition

In this context like-for-like means an exact replacement of the original windows in terms of materials, proportions, glazing pattern (fenestration), construction detailing, method of opening and decorative finish. **Replacing single glazed windows with double glazed windows is NOT a like for like replacement.**

## Care and Maintenance of Traditional Windows

The majority of traditional windows in Highland are of timber sash and case construction – usually painted white. The most common windows are from the Victorian and Edwardian periods, although there are also a number of earlier Georgian examples which feature smaller panes of glass subdivided by astragals.

### Maintaining traditional windows

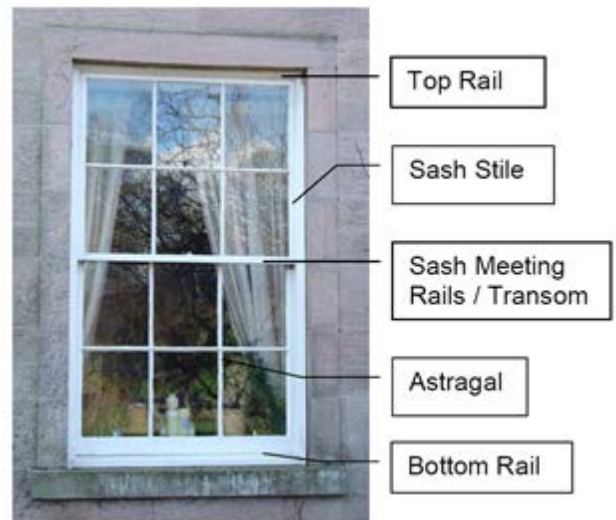
Repairing and reusing original windows rather than replacing them not only protects the historic character of the building, it is also cheaper and more sustainable than replacing the windows. It is therefore strongly recommended that repair options be fully evaluated before committing to costly replacements. Typical problems with traditional windows include heat loss from air gaps around the panes, condensation, timber decay, rot, draughts and loose joints, all of which can be overcome through renovation. This includes re-cording, repair or replacement of decayed timber parts and servicing of pulleys as well as draught proofing and secondary glazing (see below). Regular maintenance and painting will prolong the life of traditional windows for many years. The Historic Scotland booklet *'Maintaining sash and case windows'* is recommended for further information and is available from their website.

### Alternatives to Double Glazing

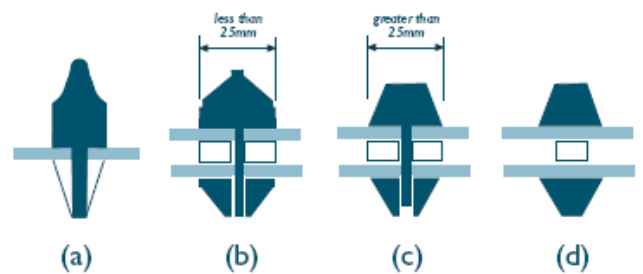
Double glazing does not in itself eliminate draughts and is not always cost effective in terms of heat conservation. The vast majority of heat lost through windows is due to air gaps around the window frames, not through the single glazed panels themselves. While double glazing can reduce heat loss, the reduction is not significant, and a payback period of 60 years is suggested. Therefore, if the original timber windows are in reasonable condition, a basic overhaul together with draught proofing or internal secondary glazing will almost always provide better value for money than double glazing.

- **Draught Stripping** is a cost-effective and unobtrusive method of improving the thermal performance of traditional windows. It has been shown to significantly reduce heating bills and energy use, and does not adversely affect the appearance of old windows. Several proprietary systems are available, each of which work differently.
- **Secondary Glazing** consists of an independent glazing unit which is fitted immediately inside the existing windows and provides a cost effective alternative to double glazing which is not visible from the outside of the building.

### Elements of a sash and case window



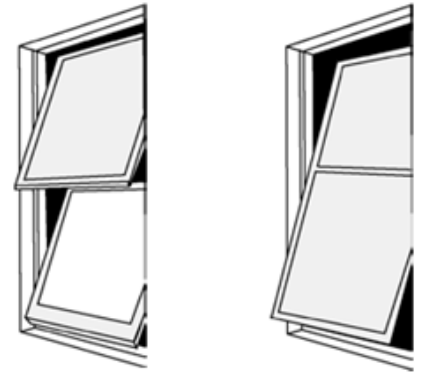
### Info box - Astragals



- ✓ (a) Typical 18<sup>th</sup> Century astragal. These are always acceptable, however they are too narrow for use with most double glazed units.
- ✓ (b) Double glazing may be acceptable if the astragals are slender (less than 25mm) and if timber beads are tapered to resemble a putty fillet. This is generally accepted in Conservation Areas and occasionally on C(s) Listed Buildings. Not acceptable on 'A' or 'B' Listed Buildings.
- ✗ (c) Crude, thick astragal with heavy and sometimes projecting beads. These are not acceptable in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings.
- ✗ (d) 'Plant-on' astragal where astragal is applied to surface of glass. Alternatively a spacer bar is 'sandwiched' between the 2 layers of glass to imitate an astragal. This is not acceptable in Conservation Areas or on Listed Buildings.

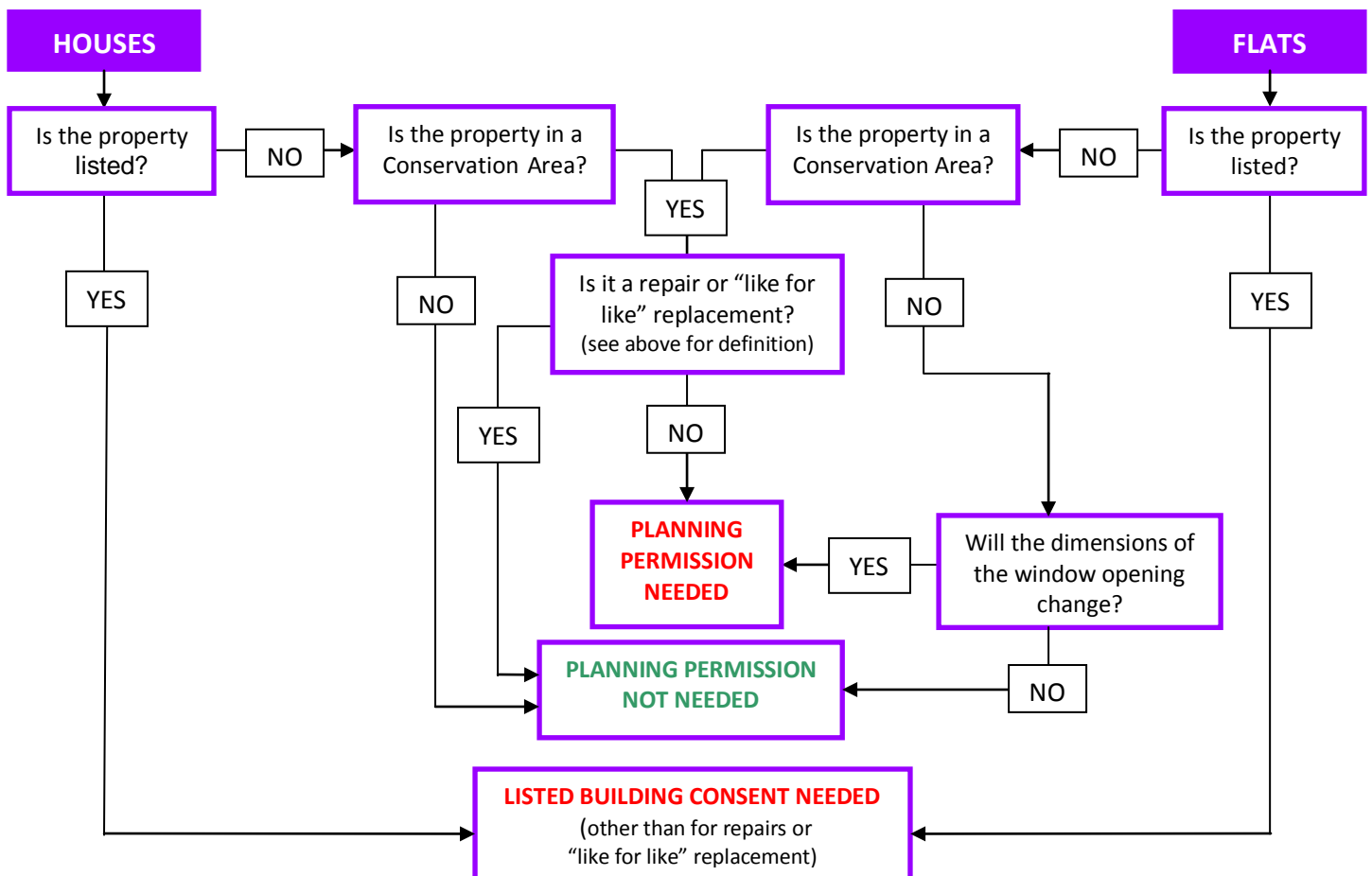
### Info box - 'Lookalike' sash and case windows

A number of glazing firms now produce 'lookalike' timber sash and case windows which pivot for cleaning but retain the look of a traditional window when closed. Many of these are of a high quality and when replacement is unavoidable can provide a viable alternative to traditional sash and case windows. They are generally permitted within the Conservation Area, although not on Listed Buildings. They should have upper and lower sashes of the same size as those in the window they are to replace and the upper sash must be stepped out in front of the lower sash in profile, with the meeting rails fully overlapping. Windows consisting of a single pane of glass with a middle transom are not acceptable as 'lookalikes'. The following guidelines should be followed:



- ✓ No more than 25mm of the outer window frame to be visible at top and sides
- ✓ Meeting rails must fully overlap
- ✓ Bottom rail of the lower sash to be at least 75mm high
- ✓ Glass must be recessed from the front face of the sash by at least 10mm

### When is planning permission required?



### Further information

For more information on how to apply for planning permission or to find out if your house is Listed or is in a Conservation Area please see our website [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk) or contact your local Planning office:

Badenoch & Strathspey (01540) 661 700  
Lochaber (01397) 707 015

Caithness (01955) 607 751  
Ross & Cromarty (01349) 868 600  
Skye & Lochalsh (01349) 868 600

Inverness & Nairn (01463) 255 200  
Sutherland & Easter Ross (01408) 635 352