

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT

Application 12/05152/HOU - Tower Court, 70 Wharfe View Road, Ilkley LS29 8DU

Replacement of single glazed windows by double glazed windows

Design process and considerations

My wife and I bought this house in the summer of 2012. In addition to meeting our housing requirements (e.g. 2 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, study, central location) and budget it offered historic character and features which very much appealed to us.

After moving into this house in October 2012 we soon discovered in this autumn period that the downsides of living in an historic/old house were worse than we had expected. There was severe condensation, mainly on the single glazed windows with water dripping onto the window sills and floor. This was not reported in the building survey we had carried out prior to buying this house.

We then had 2 separate, independent, surveys carried out by damp/condensation experts (to get a wide range of solutions). Both recommended several possible actions to improve the ventilation and to improve the thermal insulation.

Based on these recommendations we now improved the ventilation, e.g. by having a positive ventilation system installed. We also improved the insulation internally, by putting reflecting foil behind the radiators, rock wool in the loft and thermal wall paper in the top bedroom against the sloping roof walls.

However there is still some condensation in the evenings and mornings on the single glazed windows which are situated on the first floor in the living room, kitchen and stairways. It is also noticeably colder near these windows, even 1-2 meters away. This is in particular a problem in the living room where these windows form a large part of the longer wall in this room which is only 3.5 m deep. It has not yet been possible to assess the energy cost of heating this house comfortably as we have not lived here for a full year but judging by the noticeable heat loss through these large single glazed windows we expect this to be substantially more than for a normal/modern house.

To address this problem of condensation on and heat loss through the single glazed windows throughout the house the 2 surveyors had independently recommended installing double or secondary glazing. We did not want secondary glazing as this destroys the historic appearance and character of the house on the inside so we started to look whether there were acceptable double glazing solutions which retain this historic character and appearance both from the inside and from the outside.

Searching the Internet and visiting the Home Improvement exhibition in Harrogate last November established contacts with the only 2 specialist companies we could find that had experience with double glazing of heritage windows in stone, one in the Cotswolds and one in Yorkshire. We decided to pursue further development with the Touchstone Glazing Solution in Brighouse, Yorkshire. As they had already done such work in Bradford on the Manningham Library we assumed their track record in Bradford could help in assuring the Bradford Council that what we and they wanted to do

would be compliant with the intentions and requirements of the Council to preserve the historic character of their listed building.

After supplying Touchstone with photos and information and a subsequent visit to our house by their experts they gave us a bespoke solution on how this could be done and a quote (attached to the application).

This solution leaves the stonework of the building untouched. Each window - consisting now of 3-4 window panes, separated by partitioning/separation bars - will be replaced by one large window pane. The horizontal separation bars between the existing small glass panes in each window will therefore not be needed anymore but will be replaced with bars of the same size and colour on the outside and inside of the double glazed window, thus leaving the shape, subdivision and appearance of the windows as a whole as it was. The single glazed openers in some of the windows will also be replaced by double glazed openers in the same location, again with the same size and colour, thus also not changing the shape, subdivision and appearance of the windows as a whole.

We have since been able to consult some of the 9 other neighbours in this building but not all as we do not know them very well yet after only having moved in in October and have not been able to meet up with many of them in the colder autumn/winter period since then. The neighbours we have been able to consult about our intentions have not expressed any objections or reservations; they have actually been quite supportive.

We also visited the offices of Bradford Council for a pre-application meeting and discussed our intentions with a planning officer, Ms Emma Cosgrif. The impression we got was that our plans were not immediately unacceptable and would require further detailed consideration. We were encouraged to put in an application for planning permission and consent for alteration of (part of) a listed building. We submitted this application at the end of December and are now awaiting the outcome of this.

The potential contractor Touchstone Glazing Solutions has expressed their willingness to us to meet with the planning officers of Bradford Council to discuss their proposed solution and – if not acceptable – any modification of this solution.

Access considerations

As the intended alteration only affects (some of) the windows there is no impact on the accessibility of the house. It does not even alter the escape access out of the windows as the existing openers will be replicated in the same size.

There are no problems with the access to the house to carry out the alterations. Most work can be done from the inside. If access is needed to the windows from the outside this can be done with a ladder as all affected windows are on first floor level. Most of the relevant windows are situated over our own garden areas. Access for (delivery) vehicles is also no problem as our house is surrounded by tarmacked off-road public areas with several parking spaces. It is even possible to park right in front of our small gardens below, only 2-3 metres from the relevant windows, without blocking access and passage by other cars.