

Design, Access and Heritage Statement

Flat 20, Southwood Hall, Muswell Hill Road, London

1. Introduction

This statement accompanies an application for the replacement of existing windows at Flat 20, Southwood Hall.

The proposal comprises the removal of original steel-framed windows and their replacement with new steel windows on a like-for-like basis. The works are limited to the existing openings and do not involve any structural alteration or change to the external appearance of the building.

2. Site and Context

Southwood Hall forms part of a group of 1930s mansion blocks set within landscaped gardens and located within the Highgate Conservation Area.

The building is not listed.

The estate contains a mix of original and replacement windows, with variations in materials and detailing across different flats.

The proposed works have been submitted to the freehold management company as part of the required consent to alterations process.

3. Relevant Planning Context

Planning permission was granted at Flat 17, Southwood Hall (ref. HGY/2023/2496), an adjacent flat within the same building, for the replacement of original steel windows with new double-glazed aluminium-framed units.

In that case, the Council accepted that:

- replacement on a like-for-like basis is appropriate where windows are life-expired
- the key consideration is that replacements match the existing in pattern, proportions and opening style
- minor differences arising from double glazing do not materially affect the external appearance
- such works preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area

The current proposal follows this established approach.

In addition, the proposed use of a steel window system reflects the materiality of the original windows and ensures the closest possible match to the existing building fabric in terms of profile, detailing and appearance.

4. Existing Condition

The existing windows are original steel-framed units dating from the construction of the building. As set out in the Schedule of Works, the windows are in poor condition, including corrosion, distortion and failed glazing.

Some units do not close properly, resulting in water ingress, compromised security and insurability, and poor thermal performance.

Photographs submitted with the application illustrate the condition of the windows and the extent of deterioration.

5. Proposed Development

The proposal is to replace the existing windows with new steel windows using the Clement EB20 double-glazed system, as set out in the submitted drawings.

The replacement windows will:

- replicate the existing sizes, configurations and opening arrangements
- match the existing profiles, glazing bar pattern and sightlines
- be installed within the existing openings and retained timber frames
- maintain the existing external appearance of the building

No changes are proposed to the building footprint, window openings or surrounding structure. The existing timber balcony door is retained and is not part of the works.

6. Design Approach

The design approach is one of faithful replication combined with necessary performance improvement.

The proposal retains the character, proportions and detailing of the original steel windows as closely as possible through the use of a like-for-like steel system. The use of steel reflects the materiality of the original windows and ensures the closest possible match to the existing building fabric.

The proposal retains the existing timber frames and surrounding fabric, ensuring that as much original material as possible is preserved.

At the same time, the proposal introduces modern performance through double glazing, improving thermal efficiency and overall environmental performance.

This represents the minimum level of intervention necessary to address the condition of the existing windows while preserving the architectural character of the building.

The proposed Clement EB20 steel windows are designed to replicate the appearance of original steel windows while incorporating modern performance standards.

The slimline profiles and insulated glazing units enable the replacement windows to closely match the proportions and visual characteristics of the original steel windows.

The proposed windows replicate the existing glazing bar pattern, dimensions and opening arrangements, ensuring that the established appearance and detailing of the building is maintained.

As a result, the change from single to double glazing does not result in any material alteration to the external appearance of the building.

The proposal also delivers improved thermal performance through double glazing, contributing to energy efficiency while maintaining the external appearance of the building.

The use of double glazing will also reduce external noise for road-facing windows, improving internal comfort without any change to the external appearance of the building.

7. Heritage Considerations

The site lies within the Highgate Conservation Area.

The proposal preserves the character and appearance of the building by retaining the defining characteristics of the existing windows, including their materiality, proportions and detailing.

The use of a like-for-like steel replacement ensures continuity with the original architectural intent and supports a consistent and coherent approach to window replacement across the estate.

The Clement EB20 steel window system is widely specified in conservation-sensitive contexts, including Hampstead Garden Suburb, where controls on replacement steel windows are rigorous.

The approach ensures that replacement windows match the originals in terms of material, design and detailing, thereby preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area.

As demonstrated in the Council's assessment of application HGY/2023/2496, replacement windows that closely match the originals in design and detail, and which do not materially alter the external appearance, preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The current proposal follows this approach and does not result in harm to the significance of the conservation area.

8. Access

The works relate to an existing residential flat and do not alter access arrangements. Temporary access will be required for installation, including scaffolding. Appropriate protection will be provided to internal areas and any affected common parts during the works.

9. Conclusion

The proposal comprises the like-for-like replacement of existing steel windows within an existing residential flat.

The works:

- preserve the external appearance of the building
- do not involve structural changes
- retain the architectural character of the building and conservation area
- introduce improved thermal performance through double glazing
- are consistent with a recently approved scheme within the same building

The proposal represents a necessary and proportionate intervention and is considered to preserve the character and appearance of the Highgate Conservation Area.