

REPAIR OF WINDOWS AT RAINSCOMBE HOUSE, OARE, WILTSHIRE

Heritage Statement



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Heritage Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rainscombe House, is a Grade II listed building located within parkland to the north-east of the village of Oare, Wiltshire. The owner of the property is seeking to undertake repairs to a number of windows in the property as set out in the schedule presented as Appendix I.

1.2 Forum Heritage Services has been commissioned to make an assessment of the heritage significance of the house with particular focus on the windows, and the potential impact of the proposals upon that significance and to prepare a Heritage Statement in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Bob Edwards BSc (Hons) PG Dip. IHBC MCIfA, Director of Forum Heritage Services, visited the property in October 2025 and subsequently prepared this report.

1.3 This report will present:

- A brief background history to the site
- A general description of the windows of the house and descriptions of the windows proposed to be repaired.
- Policy and guidance background
- An assessment of the significance of the windows as an element of the listed building following Historic England's *Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019)
- An assessment of the potential impact of the proposals upon the significance of the listed building
- Conclusions

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Rainscombe House dates from around 1810, built by Thomas Baldwin of Bath probably on or close to the site of an earlier house for the Rogers family who occupied the house into the early 20th century. During WWII the house was used for blind veterans. After the war the house was owned by Sir Geoffrey Fry, of Fry's Chocolate.

2.2 Rainscombe House was added to the *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* at Grade II in 1952. The building is described in the *List* as:

House. c1810, by T. Baldwin of Bath. Roman cement on brick, with slate roof. Two storeys, attic and cellars, 5 x 3 bays. Garden front has portico with paired Ionic columns and wide glazed entrance. Central bay has flanking niches and is raised with a cornice. Facade also has slightly raised ends also with niches. Basement rusticated below ground floor windows. Twelve-paned sashes, but 8-paned to centre of first floor which has fascia and cornice. Moulded eaves and double hipped roofs with flat roofed dormers. Side elevation has central entrance with flanking pilasters from C20 portico; now removed. Interior has large hall leading to stair at rear, and flanking reception rooms.

3.0 DESCRIPTION

- 3.1 Rainscombe House faces south-west across its parkland, this elevation being adequately described by the list entry (Figure 1). The house has a double -pile plan but the rear part of the main block of the house is slightly diminished through having its side elevations stepped back from the end sections of the front range. The front and rear elements of this main block of the house have tall, hipped slate roofs, the front roof running the length of the building, but the roofs to the rear are broken into two parts to allow for the lantern over the main staircase, the roofs being gabled towards the lantern (Figure 2). Windows to the front elevation are six-over-six sashes (the list description referring to the central first floor window as being an eight pane sash is incorrect).
- 3.2 Along the rear of the main block of the house is a lower two-storey range with a shallow pitched slate roof (Figure 2). This elevation has a variety of window forms including sash windows of different forms and casement windows.



Figure 1 The front elevation of Rainscombe House



Figure 2 The rear elevation of Rainscombe House.

- 3.3 An examination of the windows has established that there are relatively few historic, and probably original windows surviving within the building. The probable original sashes that survive, mostly at first floor level, have glazing bars with hollow and astragal mouldings, a form that was in common use in the early 19th century. In some cases one sash of the window has been replaced with a modern sash of the same details.
- 3.4 Many later windows have horns to the sashes, indicating that they are post-c.1850 replacements with glazing bars with ogee or ovolo profiles. There are also several modern windows that do not have traditional detailing.

4.0 POLICY & GUIDANCE BACKGROUND

4.1 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the statutory approach to the management of historic buildings and areas and requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses, and its setting, under Section 66 – a matter the Courts have held should be afforded considerable importance and weight.

4.2 The statutory approach is reflected in Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment which has 'weight' following submission to the Secretary of State in late October 2024.

4.3 Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) states that:

In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.

4.4 Paragraph 212 advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation whilst para. 208 states that local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise. They should take this assessment into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal.

4.5 Historic England's *Good Practice Advice in Planning Note 2* (March 2015) states that understanding the nature of significance is important for understanding the need for and best means of conservation. Understanding the extent of that significance leads to a better understanding of how adaptable a heritage asset may be and provides the essential guide

as to how policies should be applied. The following descriptive appraisal will evaluate the building against Historic England's criteria for heritage values set out in *Statements of Heritage Significance Assessing Significance in Heritage Assets* (Historic England Advice Note 12, 2019):

Archaeological interest

There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.

Architectural and artistic interest

These are interests in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can rise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and the creation of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skills, like sculpture.

Historic interest

An interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

- 4.6 The selection of buildings for addition to the statutory *List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest* is informed by a set of criteria set out in the revised *Principles of Selection for Listing Buildings*, (DCMS, 2018). These criteria have also been considered in this assessment.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designations

- 5.1 Rainscombe House is a Grade II listed building and so is regarded as a building of significance in a national context.

Assessment of Significance

- 5.2 The proposed works relate only to the windows and so this assessment of significance, whilst recognising that Rainscombe House is a good example of a small country house of early 19th century date, will focus on the importance of the windows.

Archaeological interest

- 5.3 The windows represent a variety of dates with some probably being original early 19th century sashes, some Victorian or later replacements and some being modern. These windows have no notable archaeological interest.

Architectural interest

- 5.4 The probably original sash windows are an important part of the architectural interest of the listed building. Later windows, where they are traditionally detailed and of the correct form, also contribute to the overall architectural interest of the building, although they have lesser significance than the original windows. Modern windows that are correct in their general form but not in the detailing of the mouldings to the glazing bars are considered to be neutral in terms of their significance and contribution to the architectural interest of the listed building.

Historic interest

- 5.5 In terms of illustrative historic interest, the windows have limited illustrative historic interest beyond the use of casements to service areas (although there is not a consistent use of such windows to service areas only).

6.0 PROPOSALS & ASSESSMENT OF IMPACT

6.1 A schedule for the works to the windows has been prepared (Appendix I). The majority of the works being proposed represent minor like-for-like repairs that do not actually require listed building consent. With regard to these windows, where there is decay in the timber, new timber will be spliced into the existing frames with any mouldings replicating the existing.

6.2 The windows that require additional work that may require listed building consent include:

WG12



WG12 is a late 19th century six-over-six sash with horns and ogee profile glazing bars.

The bottom sash requires replacement due to decay, most evident externally, and a new sash of the same detailing will not harm the significance of the listed building.

WF05



WF05 is a modern window and frame with ogee profile and a wide fillet to the glazing bars. No horns.

There are several areas of decay is what is a modern, low quality softwood window, and repair is not economically justified.

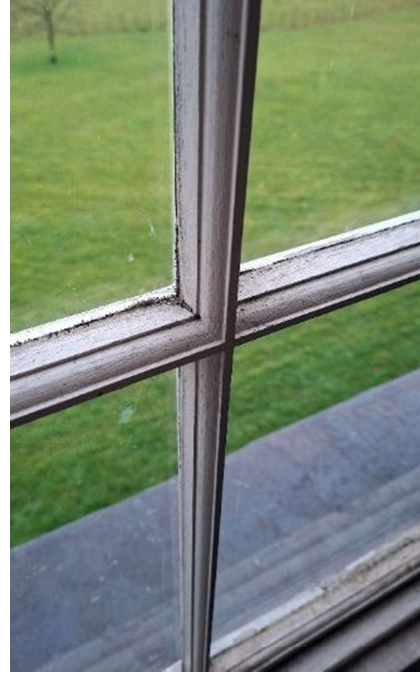
This window is not of significance in terms of its historic fabric, and its replacement with a new window of similar detailing will not harm the significance of the listed building.



WF06



Upper sash



Lower sash

WF06 has a late 19th century upper sash with an ogee moulding to the glazing bars and no horns. The lower sash is a modern replacement having a Grecian ovolo moulding to the glazing bars.

It is proposed to replace the lower sash which has some decay with a new sash to match the detail of the upper sash. The modern fabric of the lower sash is not significant. There is understood to be some decay to the cill below the lead covering which will be repaired with new timber scarfed in as required.

WF12



WF12 is a six-over-six sash with Grecian ovolo mouldings to the glazing bars and no horns. The window is of 19th century date.

This bottom rail to the upper sash has become detached but generally, this window is in reasonable condition. A new rail will be added requiring scarfing of new timber to the stiles and glazing bars to create new joints to the rail.

The proposed repairs will retain this window with minimal impact on historic fabric.



7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 Rainscombe House is a fine early 19th century country house which retains some good interiors. Few original windows with hollow and astragal mouldings to the glazing bars survive, with the remainder of the windows being mainly of late 19th century date or modern replacements.
- 7.2 The majority of the works to the windows are refurbishment, retaining the windows whilst undertaking minor repairs, addition of draft proofing strips and redecoration. These works do not require listed building consent.
- 7.3 A small number of windows are in a condition whereby a greater level of repair or replacement is proposed, as described in this report. The modern window of WF05 and the modern lower sash of WF06 are to be replaced with new hardwood frames. The fabric of these modern window elements is not of significance, and they are in a condition that does not warrant repair economically or on heritage grounds. Their replacement with new joinery of appropriate detailing will not harm the aesthetic qualities of the listed building.
- 7.4 Accordingly, I can find no conflict in the proposed development with the statutory duty in Section 66 of the Act, National Policy in the NPPF or Policy CP58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, adopted January 2015 (CS) and Policy 99 of the Draft Local Plan Review: Ensuring the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and conclude that the application should be allowed.

APPENDIX I
Schedule of Repair

Project- Rainscombe Main House

Door & Window Schedule

Item	Description
	External Windows & Doors
	Windows & doors. (As Acorn reference numbers below) Works schedule.
	<i>Ground Floor</i>
1	WG12. Replacement hardwood bottom sash due to significant rot to the frame
	<i>First Floor</i>
2	WF01 Decoration only
3	WF02 Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration
4	WF03 Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration
5	WF04 Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration
6	WF05 Implement a new hardwood sash window. Heritage sash window including weight & cord. Sash 48mm thick with solid glazing bars & ovolo mould internally, putty glazing externally. Frame hardwood sapele. Opener engineered sapele. Glass 4mm toughened glass.
7	WF06 Replacement hardwood bottom sash due to significant rot to the frame. Carry out scarf repair to the cill and decoration

8	WF07 <i>Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration</i>
9	WF08 <i>Draft strip implemented on existing window. Decoration only</i>
10	WF09 <i>Draft strip implemented on existing window Decoration only</i>
11	WF10 <i>Draft strip implemented on existing window Decoration only</i>
12	WF11 <i>Draft strip implemented on existing window Decoration only</i>
13	WF12 <i>Install new bottom rail to top sash by scarfing like for like material. Carry out decoration</i>
14	WF13 <i>Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration</i>
15	WF14 <i>Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration</i>
16	WF15 <i>Decoration only</i>
17	WF16 <i>Unable to survey due to access. Decoration only</i>
18	WF17 <i>Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration</i>

19	WF18 <i>Decoration only</i>
20	WF19 <i>Minor repairs including draft stripping and decoration</i>
21	WF20 <i>Unable to survey due to access. Decoration only</i>