

APPLICATION FOR LISTED BUILDING CONSENT

The Malthouse, The Green, Biddestone, Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 7DG

DESIGN, ACCESS AND HERITAGE STATEMENT

1. INTRODUCTION & PROPOSAL SUMMARY

This Statement is submitted in support of an application for Listed Building Consent (LBC) to replace three modern, single-glazed, timber windows and one modern external door set on the rear, south-facing, elevation of The Malthouse, Biddestone, Wiltshire SN147DG.

The proposed works comprise:

1. **W1 – Landing Window:** Replacement of a single-glazed timber window (approx. 960 × 900 mm).
2. **W2 – Bedroom Window:** Replacement of a single-glazed timber window (approx. 1450 × 900 mm).
3. **W3 – Kitchen Window:** Replacement of a single-glazed timber window (approx. 945 × 1012 mm).
4. **D4 – Snug Door Set:** Replacement of a single-glazed timber door set (approx. 1450 × 1970 mm), comprising a central door with two fixed glazed sidelights.

The replacement units will consist of bespoke, hand-crafted, painted FSC Sapele hardwood frames fitted with high-efficiency double glazing, manufactured and installed by Oakwrights Bath Ltd.

No alterations of any kind are proposed to the principal north-facing elevation overlooking Biddestone Green, ensuring that the primary public frontage of the listed asset remains completely untouched.

2. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE HERITAGE ASSET

The Malthouse is a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number: 1198906, first listed on 20 December 1960) situated within the Biddestone Conservation Area. The building dates principally from the 18th century and was utilized as a functional malthouse during the 19th century before returning to residential use.

Its statutory significance and "special architectural and historic interest" are defined by three core historic, architectural, and spatial features:

- **Feature A: Architectural Form & Rubble-Stone Fabric:** The Malthouse is constructed of C18 local rubble stone, presenting a traditional terraced form under a slate roof, and features a prominent ashlar east end chimney stack. It stands as a fine example of traditional Wiltshire domestic vernacular architecture.
 - **Feature B: Group Value & Conservation Area Setting:** The building holds significant "group value" (designated GV II) as an integral part of a high-quality architectural ensemble of historic buildings that enclose and define Biddestone Green. It makes a strong, positive contribution to the historic character, visual cohesion, and appearance of the Biddestone Conservation Area.
 - **Feature C: Historic Openings & Principal Façade:** The principal north-facing façade is the main public face of the building and is characterized by a 2-storey, 2-window range of traditional stone mullion windows. This includes bead-moulded 3-light windows on the first floor and ground floor left, an inserted unmoulded 2-light window on the first floor right, and a central main entrance doorway with a plain stone lintel.
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3. APPRAISAL OF AFFECTED FABRIC (1980s ADDITIONS)

The windows and door set proposed for replacement (W1, W2, W3, and D4) are located exclusively on the less prominent, secondary rear (south) elevation. This elevation is not visible from Biddestone Green, public highways, or the wider conservation area.

A physical inspection and timber joinery appraisal of these sashes reveals that they are **unhistoric, modern insertions, likely dating from the 1980s**. Joinery analysis confirms that:

- The windows contain **no historic glass** (such as hand-spun crown or mouth-blown cylinder glass); they are fitted with modern machine-drawn single panes.
- There is **no early ironmongery** or traditional window furniture present.
- The frame sections are thick and machine-cut, featuring modern profile mouldings that do not align with traditional 18th-century joinery or moulding techniques.
- The units have suffered severe decay from ongoing timber rot and water pooling.

Because these sashes are poorly detailed, modern replacements, they do not constitute historic fabric and do not contribute materially to the special interest of the listed building or the character of the Biddestone Conservation Area.

4. CONTEXTUAL PLANNING POLICY ALIGNMENT

The proposed replacement of these non-contributing, deteriorating modern windows with high-quality, thermally efficient timber units is fully supported by national and local planning policies:

- **NPPF Chapter 20 (Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment):**
 - **Policy HE6(1)** mandates that when considering the effect of a proposal on a designated heritage asset, substantial weight should be given to its conservation.
 - **Policy HE6(4)** establishes that where a development proposal leads to minor harm, this must be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme. Crucially, the policy explicitly states that: *“Important public benefits can include securing the long-term reuse of a vacant or underused listed building, and enabling energy efficiency and low carbon heating measures to be employed.”* The transition to double glazing represents a substantial public benefit in terms of energy efficiency and resource conservation.
 - **Policy HE9(2)** recognises that not all elements of a Conservation Area contribute to its significance. The removal of these poor-quality 1980s timber units removes an unsympathetic, non-contributing element from the building.
 - **NPPF Chapter 5 (Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change):**
 - **Policy CC2(2)** explicitly dictates that: *“Substantial weight should be given to the benefits of improving the energy efficiency of existing buildings... where this would be achieved through proposals for development.”* Improving the thermal barrier on the rear elevation directly supports this national policy directive.
 - **Historic England Guidance (Listed Building Consent Advice Note 16):**
 - Historic England guidance supports the replacement of modern, non-historic windows with high-quality, bespoke timber units that replicate traditional joinery. Replacing modern 1980s casements with hand-crafted timber windows that respect traditional sightlines, proportions, and materials is defined as a heritage enhancement.
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5. HERITAGE IMPACT & MITIGATION MEASURES

The proposed works have been carefully designed to achieve a high-quality visual enhancement while completely protecting the historic fabric of the listed asset:

- **Detailed Replacement Design:** The new sashes (W1, W2, W3) and snug door set (D4) will be custom-built to match traditional design lines. Constructed from premium FSC Sapele hardwood, they will feature traditional flush-closing casements, traditional brass butt hinges, stays, and fasteners. No surface-mounted trickle vents will be used, preserving clean traditional sightlines. The frames will be finished in a factory-applied, three-coat microporous white paint, unifying the rear elevation.
- **Physical Protection of Fabric:** No original masonry openings, stone surrounds, or historic reveals will be altered, enlarged, or reduced. The new frames will be fitted entirely within the existing openings. Surrounding historic stonework and lime plaster will be carefully protected during installation. Any local making good will be executed using matching, breathable lime-based mortars.
- **Visual Cohesion:** Two other windows on the rear elevation were already replaced by the previous owners with double-glazed timber units during renovations in 2014. Replacing the remaining three modern single-glazed sashes and the snug door set will restore visual harmony and symmetry to the rear elevation, correcting the current mismatched appearance.