

**SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL**

**APPLICATION TO BE DETERMINED UNDER POWERS DELEGATED TO  
CHIEF PLANNING OFFICER**

**PART III REPORT (INCORPORATING REPORT OF HANDLING)**

**REF :** 18/01462/FUL

**APPLICANT :** Mrs Joan McKay

**AGENT :** R Mitchell Glass Ltd

**DEVELOPMENT :** Replacement windows

**LOCATION:**  
Sunnybrae  
Midlem  
Selkirk  
Scottish Borders  
TD7 4QB

**TYPE :** FUL Application

**REASON FOR DELAY:**

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**DRAWING NUMBERS:**

Plan Ref	Plan Type	Plan Status
WINDOW SCHEDULE	Location Plan	Refused
WINDOW SECTION (x 5)	Specifications	Refused
	Specifications	Refused
	Photos	Refused

**NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS:** 0

**SUMMARY OF REPRESENTATIONS:**

No representations. The Community Council have been consulted, but has not responded.

**PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS AND POLICIES:**

Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016:

Policy PMD1: Sustainability  
Policy PMD2: Quality Standards  
Policy HD3: Residential Amenity  
Policy EP9: Conservation Areas

Replacement Windows and Doors SPG (2015)

**Recommendation by** - Stuart Herkes (Planning Officer) on 17th January 2019

This application proposes replacement windows at a house, 'Sunnybrae', which lies within the Core Area of the Conservation Area at Midlem, including all of the windows on the front elevation, the largest and most prominent of which are timber sliding sash-and-case units.

While the rear elevation is visually well-contained due to surrounding buildings, the front elevation is itself a prominent inclusion within the building line fronting and defining a section of the northern perimeter of the village green. The property in common with its nearest neighbours, has timber windows at present, of traditional design and operation. The specific windows are sliding sashes, with a four-over-four glazing pattern at ground floor level, and a two-over-two glazing pattern within dormers at first floor level.

The proposal is that all of these windows should be replaced by white-coloured, double-glazed uPVC-framed sliding sash-and-case units (specifically the proposed units identified as: W1, W2, W3, W4, W5, W6 and W7). It is additionally proposed that four fixed lights on the sides of the dormers should also be replaced in white uPVC (specifically the units identified as: W8, W9, W10 and W11), along with a proposed casement unit (W12) on the rear elevation in relation to a kitchen. Although it would have been helpful if the Applicant had included annotations on the photographs provided to identify which of the specific proposed windows described in the specification, would go in which window-openings, I am content that it is possible to discern this, due to the distinctive character and dimensions of each of the windows indicated. In the event of approval, there would be a requirement to ensure that this aspect of the proposals is appropriately regulated, but this is readily achievable within an appropriately-worded planning condition.

Given the extent of containment of the rear garden area, I have no concerns with respect to the proposed rear window replacement (W12). I note the presence of obviously modern and uPVC windows on the rear elevation. However, the rear and front elevations inhabit different contexts, particularly in that the front elevation is within the Core Area.

I am content that the Applicant would retain white-coloured sliding sash-and-case units of the same glazing pattern as the original. However, it has to be considered that there would be a loss of timber units from a section of the Conservation Area, indeed Core Area, which is characterised by the high conservation of timber-framed units. Furthermore, the recreation of the four-over-four glazing pattern would certainly require the use of applied astragals, while the introduction of heavier frames would be liable to result in a thickening of the frames relative to the existing units, which would underline that these were modern units. Another difficulty is that the specification is not particularly detailed, and therefore it is possible that the replacement units might also be characterised by obviously simplified detailing on the actual window-units, lacking the finesse of traditional craftsmanship. It is possible that the detailing and profiles of the actual frames of the units to be used, could be regulated to ensure that these were as sympathetic as possible, but even allowing for such matters to be regulated in these ways, it would still need to be considered whether or not the loss of timber and the loss of genuine multi-paned units, would be acceptable in this section of the Core Area and Conservation Area.

I would acknowledge that some of the windows on surrounding properties are not necessarily originals themselves, while there are some instances of windows, which although traditional in their operation and construction, are obviously not traditional in their specific dimensions (having an obviously horizontal emphasis in some cases). However, notwithstanding this, the proposal would introduce uPVC units to an elevation and to an area in which timber units are predominant and contribute to the high quality heritage value and visual amenity of the village green and wider Conservation Area at Midlem.

As noted, the property lies within the Core Area/Area of Prime Frontage of the Conservation Area within Midlem, and the windows on all neighbouring properties, are timber sliding sash units. The advice of the SPG on Replacement Windows and Doors, is that replacement in uPVC, may be acceptable where it retains the design, pattern, dimensions and method of opening of the units. The SPG further notes that double-glazing, similarly, may be acceptable where otherwise appropriately traditional units are maintained. Notwithstanding this though, regard must first be had to the 'General Principles' set out within Section 3.7 (page 3) of the SPG, which requires that regard is had to the existing windows and wider context before accepting uPVC in lieu of timber. In this particular case, the site and surrounding area are, if anything, particularly notable in the relatively good conservation of timber-framed traditional windows, with the current proposal being the first to introduce uPVC to the front elevations at least, of this property and its closest neighbours.

Taking account of all of the above, I consider that the proposal is objectionable, and that the character of the Conservation Area would not be appropriately conserved were the uPVC units (including with their use of applied astragals) to be used. I have advised the Applicant that I would be supportive of the principle of the existing windows being replaced by timber-framed units, but the agent has responded to advise: "On the basis that the windows specified are woodgrain effect and an astragal fixed clip system specifically designed

for conservation areas it is our clients request that the proposal is maintained as replacement uPVC windows to all elevations and should the application be refused an appeal will be made. / The design of these uPVC windows are specifically manufactured to imitate as closely as possible timber windows for applications similar to this and given the location and surroundings our client feels there would be no detrimental effect to the area or surroundings but in fact a positive one due to the simplicity in upkeep of such a product".

While it is the case that the standard and quality of uPVC window-units has improved considerably in recent years, and while conditions might ensure that the replacement units would match as closely as possible the appearance and dimensions of the existing, regard is still reasonably had within this assessment to the loss of genuine timber-framed units and to the introduction of affixed astragals. In a more mixed context, in which the quality of windows was more variable, and in which uPVC units were already present to some notable extent in the front elevations of these properties, then there would certainly have been potential to have been supportive of what is proposed here. However, given the predominance of timber, the proposed units would not deliver any enhancement to the appearance of the property or Conservation Area, and the application should be refused on this basis.

#### **REASON FOR DECISION :**

The planning application should be refused for the following reason:

The design of the replacement windows fails to comply with Policies PMD2 and EP9 of the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016, and with the advice contained within the Replacement Windows and Doors SPG (2015), in that their appearance would result in an adverse visual impact on the character of the building and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Midlem Conservation Area, including the Area of Prime Frontage.

#### **Recommendation:** Refused

- 1      The design of the replacement windows fails to comply with Policies PMD2 and EP9 of the Scottish Borders Council Local Development Plan 2016, and with the advice contained within the Replacement Windows and Doors SPG (2015), in that their appearance would result in an adverse visual impact on the character of the building and would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the Midlem Conservation Area, including the Area of Prime Frontage.

**"Photographs taken in connection with the determination of the application and any other associated documentation form part of the Report of Handling".**