

# Window Repair & Replacement in Conservation Areas



## Introduction

Conservation Areas are areas of architectural or historic interest, 'the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. Designation places a duty on the Local Planning Authority to implement conservation policies and these can be found in the Cardiff Local Plan (adopted 1996) and the emerging Local Development Plan. Designation also requires the Local Planning Authority to consider 'the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area in the assessment of planning applications'.

An alteration in the external appearance of a building is development for which planning permission may be required. Sometimes householders have 'permitted development rights' which means that planning permission is not required. However, these 'rights' have been removed in some Conservation Areas by an 'Article 4 Direction'. Householder leaflets are available which can provide advice on the controls in place. The areas are: -

- Cardiff Road
- Church Road Whitchurch
- Cathedral Road
- Gwaelod Y Garth
- Llandaff
- Oakfield Street
- Pierhead
- Roath Mill Gardens
- Roath Park
- St Fagans
- Wordsworth Avenue

## Planning Permission

If you are repairing or replacing windows in a Conservation Area it is likely that special planning policies and controls will apply and that a planning application will be sought for the work you propose. Sometimes it is difficult to assess whether replacement amounts to an alteration for which planning permission is required. What constitutes 'like for like' replacement can be interpreted in a number of ways.

To assess whether planning permission is required and, if it is, the impact of the work on the character of a building we will need clear details as follows:

- Plans at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10 showing sections through the window head and meeting rails, including details of glazing bars.
- An accompanying elevation drawing to show the window(s) to be replaced. Photos can supplement these.
- For joinery and decorative details these plans may need to be at a scale of 1:1 or 1:2.

**Planning Permission (Continued)** To assist in the preparation of plans, a typical section at a scale of 1:2 is provided for illustrative purposes only. If the windows you plan to replace are of the same type, check their dimensions and adjust the dimensions shown on the plan to show windows which will fit your house. The redrafted plans can be used to support your application.

A planning application should also be supported by:

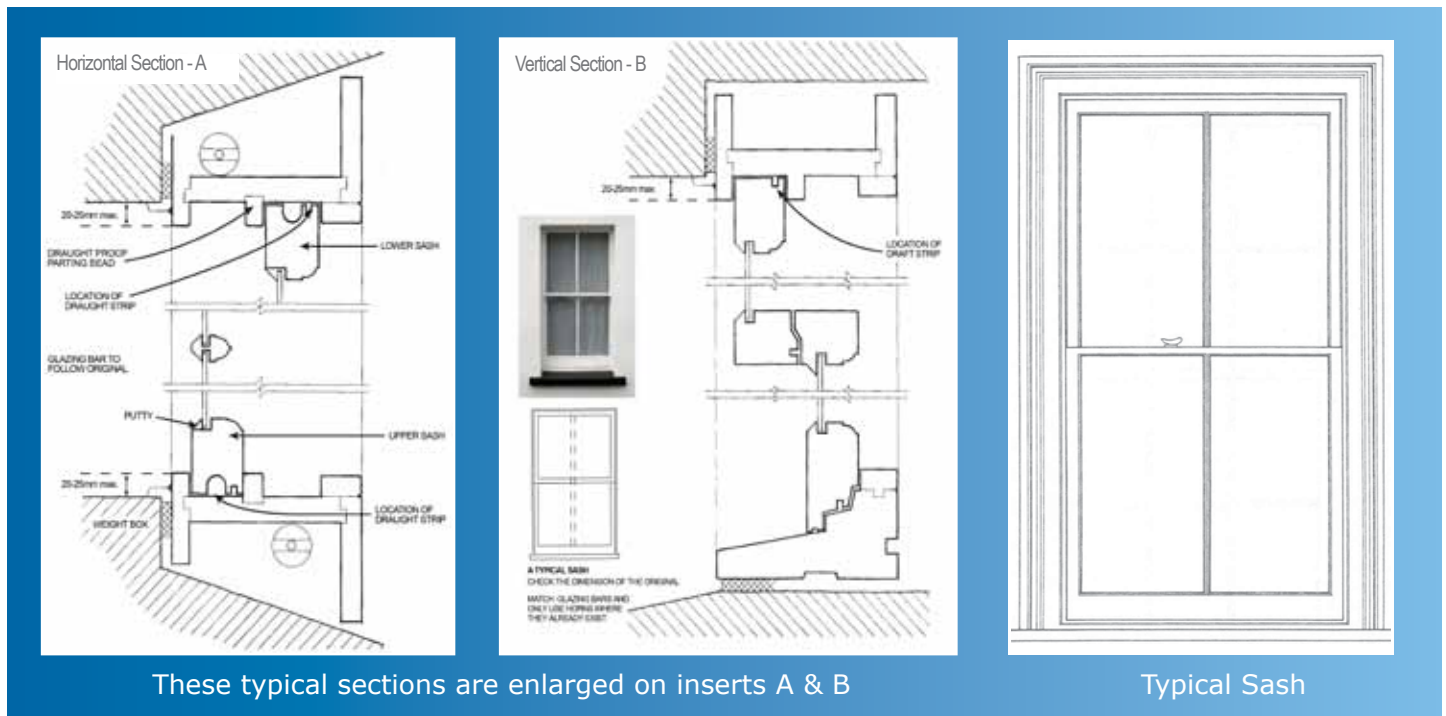
- 4 copies of an Ordnance Survey site plan to show the location of the building
- 4 copies of the planning application form, including the certificate
- A fee, if appropriate. Please contact Development Control on 20871341 for advice on current fees

In conservation areas, the presumption to 'preserve or enhance' [referred to above] will serve as the basis for the Local Planning Authority's assessment of a planning application.

Applications for Listed Building Consent will be assessed in accordance with advice in Welsh Office Circular 61/96. This places a duty on the LPA to consider the character of the building as one of architectural or historic interest. It is therefore likely that a more stringent approach to repair or replacement will apply.

An indication of when planning permission or Listed Building Consent is required may be obtained by contacting the Council's Planning Officers on 20871135. Pre-application discussions may save time and delay at the application stage.

### Examples of some typical cross-section window plans



These typical sections are enlarged on inserts A & B

Typical Sash

## General Conservation Guidance on Window Replacement

The advice, which follows, provides some basic guidance on windows most commonly found in Cardiff's Conservation Areas, and information for you, your agent or joiner, to consider prior to the submission of a planning application. Some of the National Amenity Societies also publish guidance. The Victorian Society is a good source and its web site can provide information and details of publications ([www.victorian-society.org.uk](http://www.victorian-society.org.uk)).

The Council will always encourage the repair and refurbishment of original windows in Conservation Areas. However, if they are beyond repair or not of the original design then reproductions of the original style will be the best way to 'preserve or enhance' the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. In some locations, and where adopted planning policy allows, this will be required as a pre-requisite of planning permission.

## Repair and Alteration

Windows form one of the most significant construction elements of a building and their style and proportions will always affect its character and appearance. In Cardiff, this is particularly true with respect to buildings constructed over the period dating from 1870. This was a time when the city developed rapidly and streets, terraces and building groups were often built as one; displaying a common approach to architectural style and decoration. Despite the diversity of style adopted during this period of rapid development, a sash window to light rooms was commonly used. The opening mechanism could complement a successful building composition with no disruption to the face of the building, and the frame could be set into an opening, creating shadow and definition. Sash windows were used in a variety of ways: they were grouped together, used in bay windows or set into decorative stone surrounds. Windows often contained a variety of different pane sizes, or stained glass and leaded lights.



## Window Repair

Windows, which make a contribution to the historic character of a building, should always be repaired where feasible, and replacement only contemplated where windows have deteriorated beyond practical repair. It is always worth considering refurbishment in the first instance as a skilled joiner will often be able to repair and upgrade even the most seemingly rotten or inoperable windows.



Most of the benefit which accrues from fitting new windows, is that they are less draughty than older windows. Sometimes the fitting of a modern draught stripping system is less costly and will be as efficient as the insertion of new windows. They are known as weather strips or brushes and can also enhance noise insulation, ease rattling and the operation of windows. In some cases secondary glazing in a removable inner frame is another alternative.

## Window Replacement

One of the main reasons for window replacement is a desire to conserve energy and Part L of the Building Regulations has been drafted to achieve this aim in new building work. However the Regulations recognise that a balance is needed between reducing energy use emissions and conserving the local heritage and some flexibility exists with historic buildings.



By definition these are: -

- Listed Buildings
- Buildings in Conservation Areas

- Buildings which are of local or historic interest and which are referred to in the deposited Unitary Development Plan.

Where the replacement of an original window is the only feasible option, it is always preferable to match the original. The following details are important in preparing plans:

## Section Dimensions

The size of timber sections in the new windows should match those of the original. This is particularly important for the bottom rail of the lower sash which should generally be deeper than the meeting rail on elevation when the window is closed. The visible part of the sash stile, top rail and meeting rail should be of a similar width and depth.

## Operation

Sashes close vertically and can be operated by sash weights or spiral spring balances. Spring balances are unlikely to be acceptable if they replace box sashes on a listed building. It is sometimes possible to fit hinges which can also allow a sash to open inwards for cleaning.

## Glazing

Glazing should preferably be retained in position with putty, but where double glazed units are planned, beads may be required. If a double glazed unit creates a substantial alteration in window size and dimension from the original, it is unlikely to be acceptable. It is usually impossible to install double glazed units in existing frames or to replicate existing frames with new sealed units without making drastic changes to the shape or proportions of glazing bars. Slimline double glazed units (3-10mm cavity) are now available that have much lower profile perimeter seals within the cavities. This in turn allows for more slender sash frame dimensions. The use of highly insulating gases means that the energy savings offered by such units is comparable to standard double glazing (16-20mm cavity). Where the original windows have glazing bars, the new ones should match the original, particularly in multiple pane sashes.

## Sashes with horns

Sash windows may have horns. These are additions to the lower part of the sash which enhance a window's rigidity. Georgian and early Victorian windows rarely have horns but later Victorian and Edwardian sash with horns are common in Cardiff and often have decorative qualities that can be replicated in timber.

## Materials

Windows will normally be formed in softwood for painting, although hardwood windows are also available. It is recommended that timber be double vacuum pressure impregnated with a preservative to enhance the window's life. Timber sources should be checked to ensure that they are ecologically sound.

Although alternative materials may be acceptable where scale and form can follow the original, it is very unlikely that the thickness of frames and glazing bar can be accurately reproduced in alternative materials such as UPVC. As the thickness of such elements of a window are critical to its appearance when viewed from the street, timber is preferred and the most realistic option. It can easily compete with UPVC in terms of longevity, if well cared for.

uPVC windows also generally differ in appearance from traditional timber sliding sash windows in the following ways:

- uPVC windows generally include visible black rubber glazing gaskets, these have a significantly different appearance to painted putty or timber beading;

- applied horn/joggle details do not adequately replicate the integrity of decorative carved timber detailing;
- grooves are often visible in the linings to accommodate spiral balances;
- uPVC windows generally have mitred joints which have a markedly different appearance to painted mortice and tenon joints;
- the finish of uPVC windows has a synthetic appearance that does not adequately replicate a gloss painted finish on wood, even when a foil grain finish is specified; and
- glazing bars are usually stuck on rather than functional and as such have a different appearance.

For these reasons, the proposed replacement of original or traditional timber sliding sash windows with uPVC versions will generally not be supported.

### Window Manufacturers

The Conservation Team in Strategic Planning can supply details of joiners who have undertaken traditional window or door replacement in Cardiff.



Any further advice on conservation areas and listed buildings may be obtained from the Conservation Team  
Strategic Planning  
City Development  
Cardiff Council  
County Hall  
Cardiff CF10 4UW

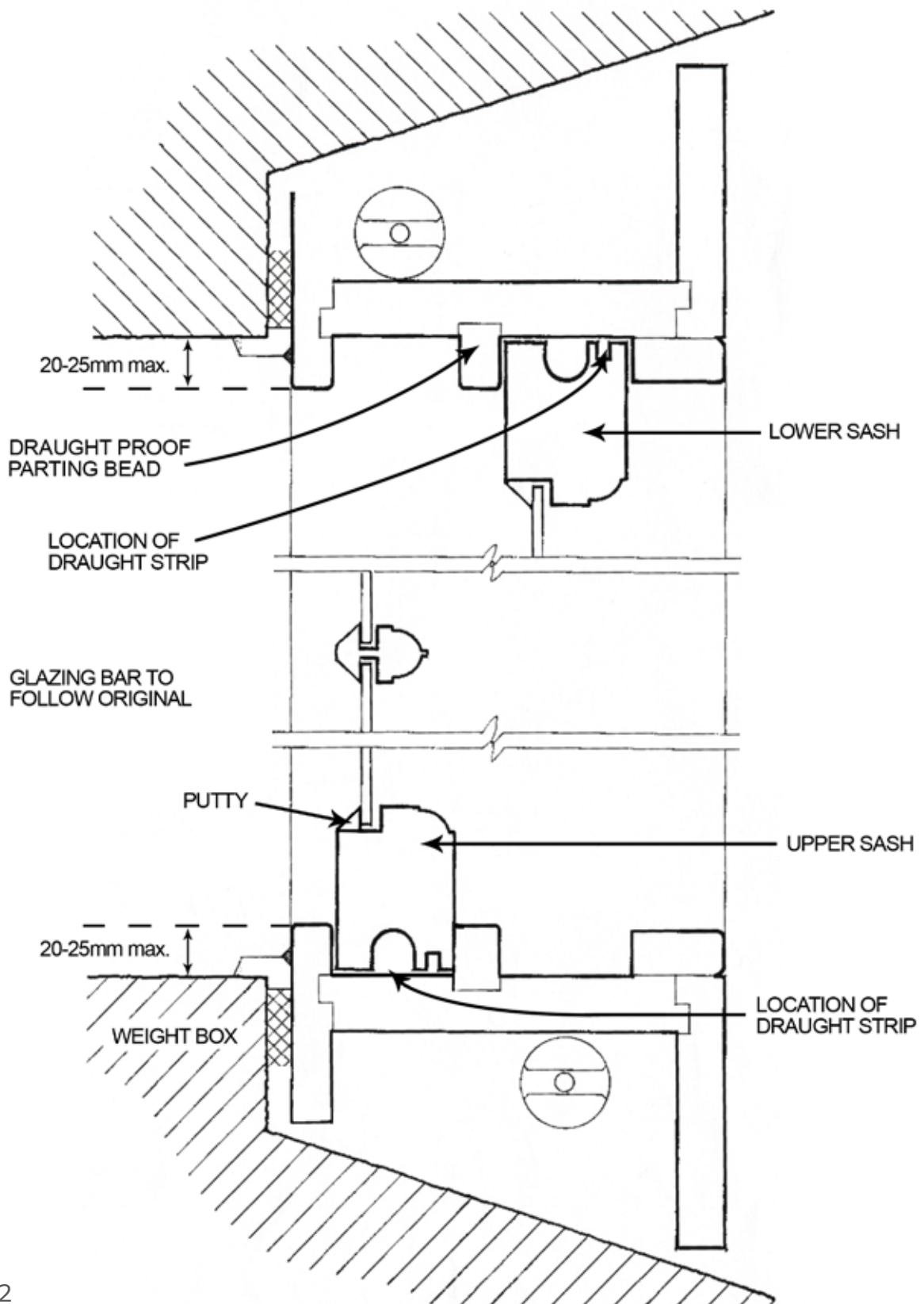
**Tel:** 029 2087 3485/3480  
**Email:** [conservation@cardiff.gov.uk](mailto:conservation@cardiff.gov.uk)  
**www:** [www.cardiff.gov.uk/conservation](http://www.cardiff.gov.uk/conservation)

for illustrative purposes only

## A Typical Horizontal Section of a Sash Window

A

NB: Always check these demonstration plans alongside the dimensions of the window for which you propose work.



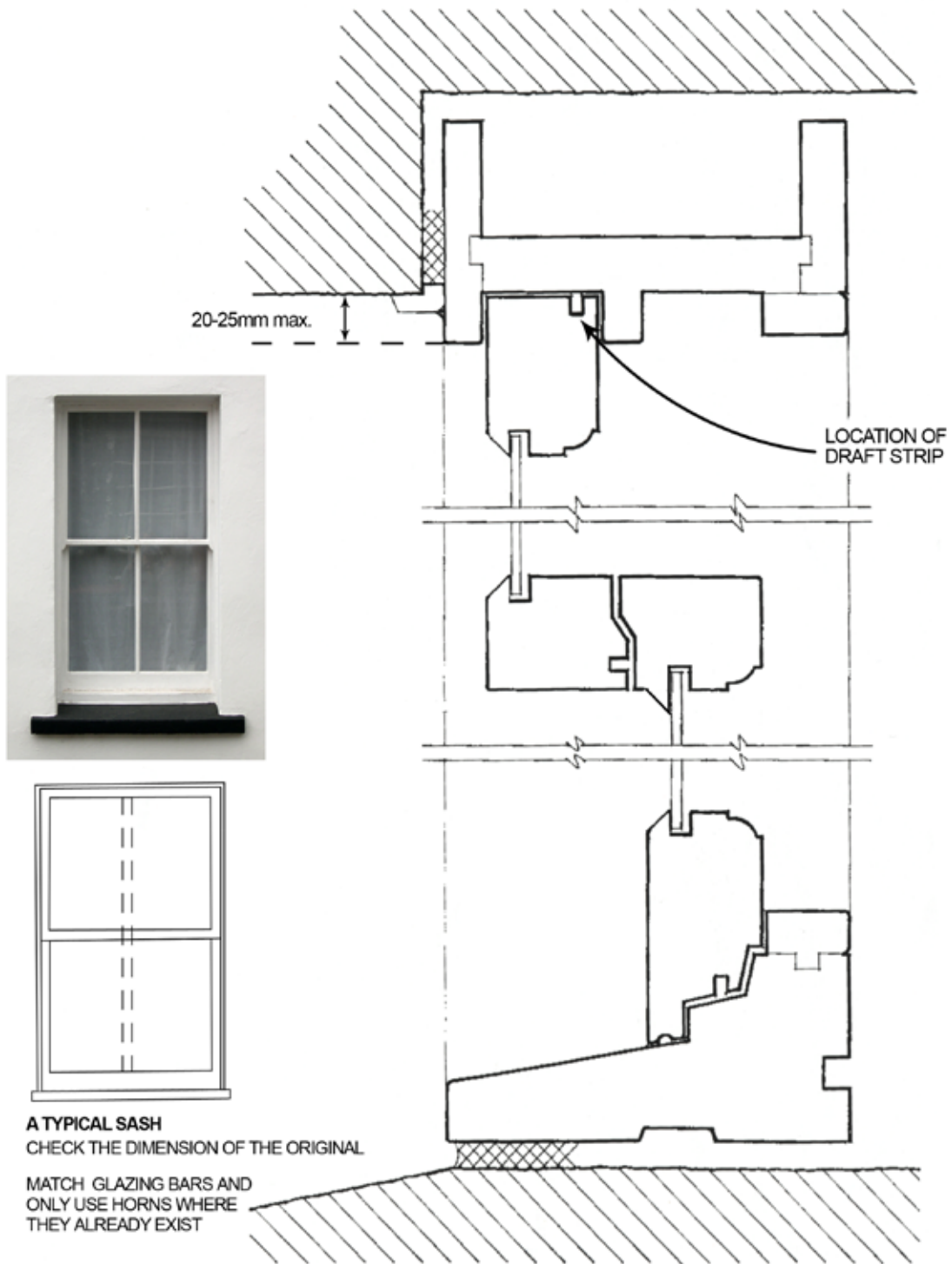
Scale 1:2

for illustrative purposes only

## A Typical Vertical Section of a Sash Window

B

NB: Always check these demonstration plans alongside the dimensions of the window for which you propose work.



**A TYPICAL SASH**  
CHECK THE DIMENSION OF THE ORIGINAL

MATCH GLAZING BARS AND  
ONLY USE HORNS WHERE  
THEY ALREADY EXIST

Scale 1:2