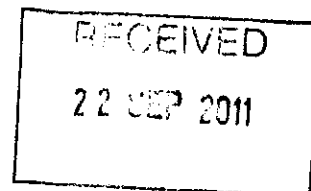


BARRY SKINNER
BUILDING PLANS AND DESIGN SERVICES
 16, Fountain Lane, Hockley, Essex, SS5 4SU.
 Telephone: 01702 – 203750 and 07932 – 741948.
 E-mail: barryskinner@btinternet.com



September 2011.

**DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT REF. No. 11/0915,
 IN SUPPORT OF A CONSERVATION AREA CONSENT APPLICATION.**

SITE LOCATION: 31B, High Street, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 7EW.

PROPOSAL:

Replace the two identical existing front oriel windows of this first-floor flat – which consist of white single-glazed Crittall steel units in white-painted hardwood sub-frames – with new white powder-coated aluminium oriel windows meeting present insulation standards.

CLIENT: Mr Edward Byford, 4 Avondale Close, Rayleigh, Essex, SS6 8NR.

AGENT: Barry Skinner, 16 Fountain Lane, Hockley, Essex, SS5 4SU.

**SEE ALSO THE ACCOMPANYING PLANS numbered 11/0915: 1(2) AND 2(2),
 and the Supplementary Drawing 11/0915: Supplement 1(1).**

The application site is a one-bedroom flat occupying approximately the front half of the first floor of a two-storey terraced building in a prominent position within the Conservation Area of Rayleigh High Street. The rear half of the first floor is occupied by another one-bedroom flat, and the ground floor consists of a photographic shop. Access to both the first-floor flats is obtained directly from the High Street via a common entrance door and staircase located at the north end of the west-facing shop frontage.

The two identical existing oriel windows in question, each some 2m wide and positioned within the 8.5m-wide frontage of the building at a distance of some 0.9m from the nearest side boundary, constitute the only first-floor windows of this property overlooking the High Street. They are the flat's only vertical windows, though they are supplemented by two roof-lights placed further back over a flat roof which is concealed by a front parapet wall. They also constitute the sole architectural feature within the red Flemish-bond brickwork facade above the prominent shop signage, and they are believed to be original fittings. They consist of white-painted Crittall steel frames (presumably galvanised) each approximately 1.25m high overall, carrying single glazing which is fixed externally with putty. All hinges to opening sections are mounted externally. In format, each window comprises a flat central element of two bays which is divided by a slender central steel mullion and is flanked by two side bays each angled back at 40°. In each case the two flanking bays and the outermost central bay feature a top-hinged opening fanlight above a fixed lower pane, while the inner central bay is wholly occupied by a full-height opening casement. This arrangement, together with the positioning of the windows equidistant from the ends of the facade, provides a pleasingly symmetrical feature at the upper level. As shown in the accompanying drawings and photographs, the separate central and side steel window-frames themselves are each mounted within a white-painted structural timber framework over a wider white-painted timber cill which is supported on two projecting timber brackets. Above the timber framework of each window, weather protection is provided by a deep white-painted timber cornice with a pronounced overhang, the flat roof of which is sheathed with leadwork. The joints in this leadwork are formed in the traditional way over two wood-rolls positioned, like the supporting

brackets, approximately at the points where the sides of the oriel bay structure meet its front face. At the rear the lead sheathing is dressed over 100mm up the building's face and chased into the brick coursing, leaving flared ends which accentuate the visual impact of the overhanging cornice.

The proposal.

It is proposed to retain all the features of the two oriels described above except for the "window" elements – i.e., the present glazing and its immediate steel and structural timber framework located between the cill and the cornice. These are to be replaced with 70mm-thick modern powder-coated aluminium frames which, incorporating a thermal break and holding 28mm-thick sealed double-glazing units, will meet the relevant current Building Regulations thermal performance requirement of 1.6 W/m²K or better for windows.

As will be apparent from the accompanying plans, the new window arrangement will replicate the existing format by retaining the present mixture of full-depth casements and fixed lower panes with opening fanlights. From the 1:50-scale and 1:10-scale drawings it can be seen that the new window-frames will be visibly wider than the existing frames with their painted putty filling, and that this difference will be most noticeable around the new fanlights (which will be deepened somewhat to partly compensate for this effect), as well as at the central mullion of each oriel. However, it has to be remembered that these windows will always be seen from some distance away and that, viewed thus, the visible overall width of the new framework at the outside "corners" of the central elements directly above the four supporting brackets will not differ noticeably from what it is at present since here the greater width of the new frames will be offset by the absence of structural timber sub-frames, which will no longer be required. Needless to say, in the new arrangement all hinges will be hidden.

The rationale for the proposed replacement of the existing windows is that it will address all their inherent functional shortcomings, namely:

- (a) That being single-glazed with thin solid steel frames, they effectively have no thermal insulation value; in addition to contributing nothing to the comfort of the flat, they are therefore a constant source of internal condensation and mould – the latter being something which has to be regularly removed.
- (b) That with metal-to-metal closures which are entirely devoid of flexible gaskets, they do not seal properly when closed down, and thus produce cold draughts.
- (c) That their single glazing – combined with poor sealing – prevents them from providing even modest sound-insulation against noise from the busy High Street.

We consider that none of these faults could be satisfactorily rectified by the use of secondary glazing which, to be thermally effective, would need to be as thick as the new proposed new external frames. Moreover, given the oriel configuration, such add-on internal glazing would require an elaborate frame of three independently-fixed sections that would each be parallel with – and shorter than – its external counterpart. Such additional internal framework would significantly reduce the daylight reaching the rooms in question, and would also make it a cumbersome task to access the inner and outer openers simultaneously. It would be unreasonable to insist on such an arrangement as the only way to provide effective thermally-insulated, condensation- and draught-proof windows that would also afford a measure of external sound-proofing, for the sake of conserving a type of early-20th-century window-frame that is now obsolete and in any case has no inherent association with the oriel window form which has medieval origins. Nor can the existing windows ever deliver the degree of protection that the current Building Regulations demand, and that present and future tenants therefore have every right to expect. Given that the applicant undertakes to retain those much more prominent and important architectural elements discussed above – the overhanging cornices, and the supporting cills and brackets – which give these oriel windows their particular interest and merit, it is therefore respectfully suggested that the proposed white powder-coated metal units should be regarded as a worthy and acceptable modern substitute for the existing Crittall window elements in this sensitive setting.

Barry Skinner,
Agent.