

SASH WINDOWS

Original sash windows of the 18th and 19th century can be found in many historic buildings in the Winchester area, providing interest and character to the elevations and demonstrating how past generation had the skills to produce extremely fine examples of carpentry. These windows should therefore be seen as part of the area's architectural heritage and the Council is keen to encourage owners to repair them, retaining their original detailing and materials, rather than replace them using inappropriate modern replicas. Many of these sash windows will in any case be situated within a listed building and Listed Building Consent from Winchester City Council will normally be required to alter or replace them.

The Historic Development of the Sash Window

Before the 16th century, only the most prestigious houses had glazed windows as glass was difficult to produce and therefore very expensive. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the use of crown glass became more widespread and the small panes of 'quarries' were set into lead and framed in wrought iron, often fixed into mullioned-and-transomed timber frames in the bigger houses or casements in the more vernacular. Sash windows first came into use in the late 17th century when the heavy glass was contained by thick oak frames and glazing bars. From the 18th century onwards, cylinder glass was

Produced which was thinner and available in larger pieces, and this allowed the production of the elegant, more lightweight sashes of the Georgian period. Often part of a formal, classically inspired elevation, sash windows provided a completely different appearance to the more mundane leaded casements of the previous centuries and quickly became highly fashionable. After about 1850 the introduction of plate glass allowed sash windows to be much larger with only one or maybe two panes of glass to each sash, so 'horns' had to be added to strengthen the junction of the meeting rail with the frame.

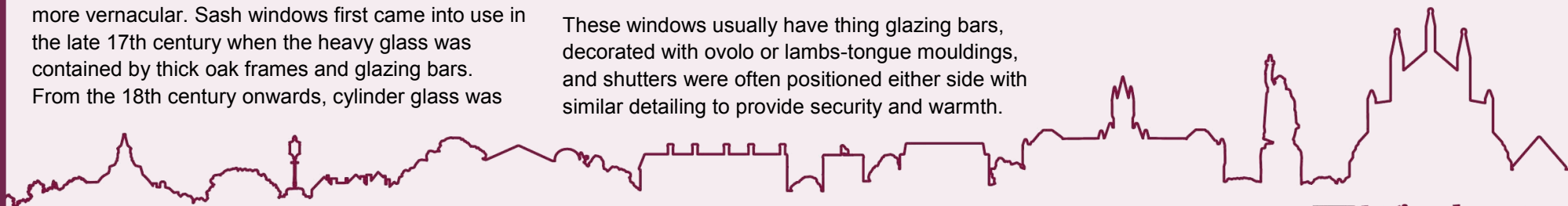
The Importance of Historic Detail

Original sash windows consist of two glazed sashes, which slide vertically in a timber frame, supported by cords that are balanced with metal weights. 'Yorkshire' sashes, which can be seen in cottages and the more vernacular buildings within the Winchester area, slide horizontally and without weights. Vertically-sliding sashes of the 18th and 19th centuries invariably were sub-divided into six, eight or sometimes more, panes of glass which were always slightly taller than they were wide, reflecting the proportion of the whole window.

These windows usually have thin glazing bars, decorated with ovolo or lambs-tongue mouldings, and shutters were often positioned either side with similar detailing to provide security and warmth.

These windows were usually built from softwood and were painted.

Modern 'sash' windows fail to replicate the detailing of the historic originals, although from a cursory glance they may appear similar. Many operate on spiral balances, rather than traditional cords and weights, and these can be unreliable and difficult to repair. Some look like sash windows when closed but the individual sashes are top or side-hung which is only too evident on a hot day when the windows are open. Most fail totally to replicate the delicacy of the detailing of the original with clumsy glazing bars, usually far too thick and without mouldings, and substantial meeting rails designed to take the additional weight of Double-glazing. The use of stained hardwoods, aluminium or uPVC also produces windows which are totally inappropriate in historic buildings.



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Repairing Historic Sash Windows

Most historic sash windows can be repaired *in situ* at a much lower cost than wholesale replacement and there are specialist firms within the Winchester area who can, for example, piece in rotten timber sections, fit new weights, pulleys and sash cords, and produce exact copies of historic mouldings. Some companies can also upgrade your old windows by inserting modern draught-proofing systems which will provide many of the advantages (including increased warmth and noise reduction) offered by modern double glazing, without changing the appearance of the window or affecting its special character. Secondary internal glazing could also be considered provided this does not interfere with original features like shutters and care must be taken to line-through the glazing bars and frames of the new windows with the original. Early sash windows may contain good examples of crown or cylinder glass of great historic interest, and care must be taken to protect this glass when carrying out repairs.

Will I need permission from the Council?

Usually, like-for-like repairs to a listed building do not require Listed Building Consent but you may be asked to submit details of your proposed repairs to your sash windows so that the Historic Environment Team can be sure of what you intend to do. For more extensive work, including the total replacement of any window on a listed building, Listed Building

Consent will almost certainly be required and detailed drawings to a scale of 1:5 or 1:10 may be asked for to ensure that the detailing of the new windows is precisely right. The joinery company supplying the window can sometimes provide these drawings.

For all unlisted historic buildings, particularly in conservation areas, the Council encourages owners to repair their windows using matching materials and reinstating the original detailing's. Further, more stringent controls may apply in some conservation areas and owners are therefore strongly advised to contact the Historic Environment Team before commencing work.

