

REPORT FROM: PLANNING, BUILDING CONTROL AND LICENSING SERVICES MANAGER

TO: COLNE AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

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**ALBERT ROAD CONSERVATION AREA – UPVC WINDOWS,
DOORS AND SHOPFRONTS**

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Committee of the outcome of a survey of commercial properties within the Albert Road Conservation Area to establish the extent of use of UPVC shopfronts, doors and windows, and to consider whether enforcement action should be taken where these are unauthorised.

RECOMMENDATION

To note the findings of the survey of commercial premises and the extent of use of UPVC in the Albert Road Conservation Area, and to consider enforcement action in respect of those premises where unauthorised UPVC windows, doors and shopfronts exist.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

In order that the heritage significance, character and appearance of the Conservation Area is not harmed by the use of inappropriate modern materials.

ISSUE

Background

- 1 A report was presented to Committee on 9th February 2017 which set out issues around the use of UPVC shopfronts and windows in the Albert Road Conservation Area (CA), and their adverse impact on character and heritage significance. It was resolved that the Council's adopted design guidance on the use of appropriate materials for windows, doors and shopfronts in the CA should be consistently applied, and also that enforcement action be considered where unauthorised UPVC windows, doors and shopfronts had been installed. A survey of commercial premises in the CA has subsequently been undertaken in order to confirm which premises have UPVC windows, doors and shopfronts, and planning records checked to establish as far as possible whether this UPVC is unauthorised.

Findings of the survey

- 2 There are around 180 commercial premises within the CA. The vast majority of these are shop-fronted properties, though there are also significant numbers of professional offices, dental surgeries, etc. on Albert Road which do not have shopfronts as such, but retain bay windows or similar. Front elevations (and side elevations where particularly prominent) were photographed and checked for UPVC shopfronts, doors and windows. Although upper floor windows were also recorded, the emphasis at this stage was on establishing the extent of UPVC at ground floor level, as it is predominantly at street level where there is currently the most impact on the character and appearance of the CA.
- 3 The survey has confirmed that around 160 (89%) of 180 commercial premises in the CA either retain their original joinery or more recent timber replacements at street level. Only 20 properties (11%) were found to have some element of UPVC in shopfronts, windows and doors at street level. These premises are listed below with relevant information on each. The findings reinforce the fact that over the last few years the trend has been for shopfronts to be reinstated or repaired in timber, in line with the Council's Conservation Area Design Guidance. Where UPVC shopfronts now exist they do tend to stand out as the exception rather than the rule. However at upper floor levels the picture is somewhat different. Fifty-three premises (29%) were found to have UPVC windows at first/second floor or dormer level.

Commercial properties which have UPVC at ground floor level

- 4 **119 Albert Road, Fantasy Tat 2**
White UPVC door, timber shopfront and 2 first floor UPVC windows. Photographic evidence shows a blue timber door in place in July 2016; no planning consents exist. The door is unauthorised as it has been in place for less than 4 years.
- 5 **94 Albert Road, Crown Hotel**
White UPVC windows at ground and first floors, have been in place less than 4 years. An application for retrospective permission was recently refused, and a current application seeks permission for new UPVC windows to the side elevation. Discussions have been held with the owner.
- 6 **80 Albert Road, Hair Associates**
White UPVC door to upper flat within dark painted timber shopfront. Consent granted in 1998 to create a timber door as part of a conservation grant aided scheme. No subsequent consents or evidence of when the door was installed.
- 7 **78 Albert Road, Ivy Palace restaurant**
Mid brown UPVC door, windows and upper floor windows. Consent was granted for change of use to restaurant in 2003; the premises appeared to have white UPVC windows at that time.
- 8 **99 Albert Road, MHD hairdressers**
Dark grey UPVC shopfront, brown UPVC windows to first and second floors. No planning consents exist. Photographic evidence from July 2016 shows what appears to be a light grey aluminium shopfront with a deeper fascia. The shopfront is therefore unauthorised, however the alterations have arguably improved the appearance of the building.
- 9 **76 Albert Road, Wicked Bikes**
White UPVC door to upper flat within black timber shopfront, and white UPVC windows at first and second floor. No relevant planning consents or evidence of when the door was installed.

- 10 97 Albert Road, Anaz Indian takeaway**
Mid brown UPVC shopfront and white UPVC windows at first floor and dormer. Consent granted in 1990 for the formation of a grant aided timber shopfront. No further consents or evidence of when the UPVC shopfront was installed.
- 11 95 Albert Road, 12 Bar**
White UPVC door and side-panel with white UPVC shop windows; brown UPVC windows at first floor and white UPVC dormer. Consent was granted in 2008 for change of use and a timber shopfront, including a timber door. No evidence of when the UPVC was installed.
- 12 89 Albert Road, W Aspin & Co Accountants**
White UPVC bay window at ground floor and 2 white UPVC windows at first floor. No relevant planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC was installed.
- 13 68 Albert Road, Marland Electrical Engineering**
White UPVC bay windows at both ground and first floors, with additional UPVC window at first floor level. No planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC was installed.
- 14 73 Albert Road, Blackburn & Blackburn accountants**
White UPVC bay window at ground floor and 2 x white UPVC windows at first floor. No planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC was installed.
- 15 51-53 Albert Road, former Applegate School (currently vacant and for sale)**
Two white UPVC bay windows at ground floor level and 4 x white UPVC windows at first floor level. No relevant planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC was installed.
- 16 22 Albert Road, Albert House Residential Home**
Mid brown UPVC windows and door to the original main building. These have been present since at least 2010 and are therefore immune from enforcement action. Consent was granted in 2010 for a 2 storey side extension, with timber windows being stipulated for the front elevation of the extension in line with conservation area policy. These windows are in white timber but those in the original building remain as brown UPVC.
- 17 35-43 Albert Road, XLCR Vehicle Management**
Two white UPVC windows have been installed to the far left hand side of the ground floor elevation. The remainder of the windows are original metal casements which were replaced/refurbished to a good standard as part of a change of use scheme in 2013. No subsequent consents or evidence of when the UPVC was installed, but it is thought to be within the last 4 years.
- 18 12 Church Street, Blood Sweat and Tattoos**
Black UPVC shopfront window frames within plain timber-clad pilasters, dark brown UPVC boarding to stallriser, and black UPVC door. White UPVC windows above. The UPVC shopfront was installed in 2014 to replace a relatively modern timber front, and no planning application was submitted for the alteration. Committee considered the issue in January 2016 and decided not to pursue the matter further.
- 19 4 Church Street, Istanbul takeaway**
White UPVC window frames within a metal shop frontage; timber door and windows above. No relevant planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC frames were installed.
- 20 2 Market Street, Funky Gifts**
White UPVC windows to front and side elevations at ground and first floors. No relevant planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC windows were installed.

- 21 10 Market Place, Crown & Greenline Cabs**
Mid brown UPVC shopfront, white UPVC door to upper floor (possibly flats), white UPVC windows to first floor. Consent granted in 2001 for a timber shopfront. No subsequent consent for alterations or evidence of when the UPVC shopfront was installed.
- 22 10 Windy Bank, Just Around the Corner café**
White UPVC shopfront window frames and door; timber windows above. The building appears to be unused at present. No relevant planning consents or evidence of when the UPVC was installed.
- 23 8 Windy Bank, Jovial Hatters**
White UPVC bay window at ground floor and some brown UPVC windows to upper floors. The building appears to be unused at present. Photographic evidence shows a brown timber bay window in July 2015. No planning consents exist, and the UPVC windows are unauthorised as they have been in place for less than 4 years.

Conclusions

- 24** The Council's policy guidance is clear in that UPVC will not normally be appropriate for CA's. The majority of permissions in the CA involving new windows or shopfronts over the last few years have consistently followed the guidance. Although there has been a general improvement to the appearance of the CA overall over the last few years, which has undoubtedly enhanced the attractiveness and vibrancy of the shopping centre, there is still the risk that remaining original timber shopfront and window joinery could be indiscriminately lost and replaced, which would lead to a gradual erosion of the character and distinctiveness of the CA. It is important that the detailed guidance in the Conservation Area Design and Development SPD is consistently applied, and enforcement action taken in appropriate cases.
- 25** It is proposed that letters are sent out initially to the premises listed above which have UPVC at ground floor level, to set out the Council's policy and to request information as to when the UPVC was installed. Enforcement action could be taken in appropriate cases. This could be followed up with similar action in respect of those additional properties which have UPVC at upper levels. Additional measures could include sending a standard letter out to all businesses in the CA setting out the Council's policy.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The loss of timber windows to UPVC would alter the policy of the Council and would lead to the deterioration of not only this but all conservation areas across the Borough

Financial: None

Legal: None

Risk Management: None

Health and Safety: None

Sustainability: None

Community Safety: None

Equality and Diversity: None