

## The Village Design Statement Explained

### Part 6: Replacement Windows

#### #2 General Replacements

This, the sixth of a monthly series of articles, is aimed at explaining how residents can apply the Village Design Statement (VDS) principles when considering material changes to their properties. If you are thinking about altering your property it is always best to consult with a constructional professional such as a Chartered Architect or Chartered Surveyor as they will know their way around the complex regulations surrounding construction projects whether permitted development rights or the full planning process is used. Even if such a professional is employed, the appropriate instructions will need to be issued and therefore an understanding of the VDS is important. Remember, it is not just the size of the property that affects the value but also the design, plan detail and appearance together with its 'kerb appeal'.



Steel Framed Thin Section

A major component of this 'kerb appeal' and therefore value centres on the fenestration, the style and the appearance of the windows within the building facade. There are many pressures urging the replacement of old timber windows on the grounds of maintenance and thermal insulation whereas in most cases, minor repairs, upgrading and secondary glazing would allow them to remain fit for purpose often at a lesser cost. Windows are a vulnerable design element, easily replaced but having a profound effect on the host building and area characteristics and therefore considerable care should be taken when dealing with them.



Timber Framed Thin Section

Most houses in the Village originally had timber windows with a few exceptions where aluminium or iconic Crittall metal windows were used. The replacement window industry currently relies heavily on PVC-u or plastic for almost all of its business and therein lays potentially one of the biggest threats to building and area character. Despite considerable design input, the extruded sections of plastic that are produced to make up PVC-u windows cannot replicate the sections and proportions of original timber, steel or aluminium thereby reducing the effective window size and offering a heavier appearance. This becomes an issue when the host building is neither Listed or falls within a Conservation Area (see article 5) as replacement windows generally fall within the character of permitted development therefore the use of alternative materials.



Large Section PVC-u

It is important when considering whether to replace windows that thought is given to the significance of them and the contribution they make to the overall appearance of the building. Having a configuration, style and material that is relevant to the host building will add to the value whilst in contrast many standard replacements are of little aesthetic value, often unsympathetic to the visual qualities of the building and surroundings and will detract from the value.

*The VDS document can be found on the Parish website or purchased from the Clerk. Residents' enquiries arising from the VDS should in the first instance be directed to the Clerk.*

*Website: [www.essexinfo.net/woodhamwalter-pc](http://www.essexinfo.net/woodhamwalter-pc)*