## The Need for Old Buildings to Breathe

It is important that historic buildings "breathe". A fully air-tight building could store up such problems as condensation and dry rot. Double-glazing does not eliminate condensation it simply moves it elsewhere, such as into the roof-space.

It is best therefore to look at the whole building. Its structure, materials and methods of construction as well as its patterns of air and moisture movement should be understood. Introducing double-glazing could upset the balance.

## Means of Escape, Ventilation, and Safety

When changing your windows, you should also consider some or all of the following: the need to comply with Part B (means of Escape), Part F (ventilation to room) Part J (air supply to heat producing appliances) and Part N (safety glazing).

Your District Council's Building Control staff will be able to advise further.

## A Sustainable Approach

The most sustainable approach is to repair existing traditional windows, this is also often the cheapest solution. uPVC windows, because of their non-traditional appearance, are not appropriate for use in listed or historic buildings. In addition, their method of manufacture is not a sustainable one. They cannot be repaired, and their disposal can be a pollution hazard.

If windows have reached the end of their useful life, like-for-like replacements should be installed. Timber from a responsibly managed source is the most environmentally friendly option. A specialist joiner would be able to advise.

## Further Information

Contact your District Council's Building Control Section for advice on any aspect of the Building Regulations.

Copies of the Part L Regulations are kept in larger libraries. Alternatively, they can be consulted on the government website at:

www.safety.dtlr.gov.uk/bregs/brads.htm

English Heritage have produced a useful guidance note called "Building Regulations and Historic Buildings". This includes information on doors, walls, floors and roofs as well as windows. To obtain a copy contact:

English Heritage
Customer Services Department
PO Box 569
Swindon SN2 2YP
Tel: 0870 333 1181
www.english-heritage.org.uk

Information on listed buildings and conservation areas, copies of lists of joiners who can repair historic windows, and suppliers and manufacturers of secondary glazing are available from:

Built Environment Service
Peak District National Park Authority
Aldern House
Baslow Road
Bakewell
Derbyshire
DE45 1AE

Tel: 01629 816200
aldern@peakdistrict-npa.gov.uk

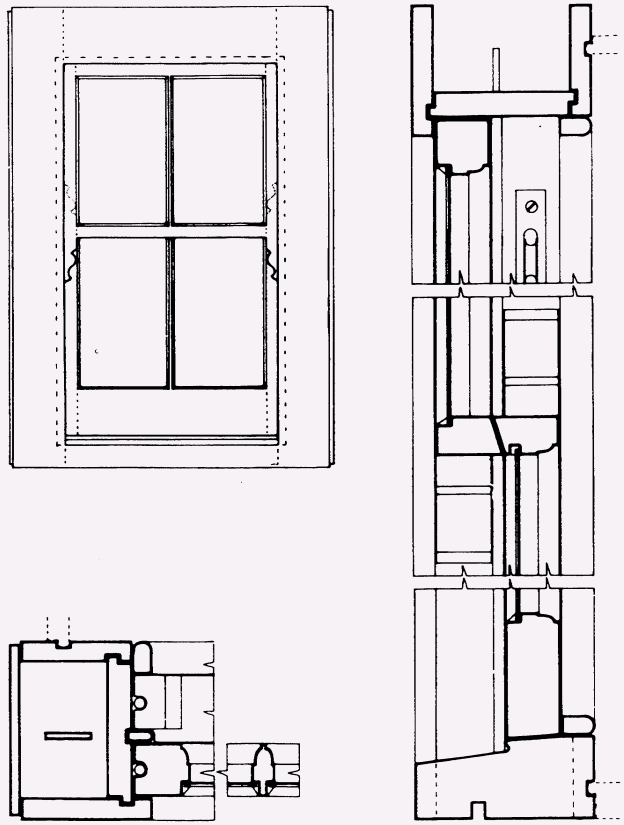
Cover illustration showing details of a typical late nineteenth century window reproduced with the permission of English Heritage .

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

Conserving your Historic Building

# Building Regulations and Windows

## How Part L affects Historic Buildings



The aims of Building Conservation and Energy Conservation sometimes conflict. Part L of the Building Regulations recognises the need for compromise. This leaflet considers how to improve the thermal efficiency of traditional windows without compromising their appearance.

PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY

## Replacing Windows

Replacing any window in your property now requires Building Regulations approval from your District Council, even if a like-for-like replacement is being made. Listed building owners should note that this is in addition to any requirement for listed building consent.

## The Building Regulations

Work involving alterations to the structure or use of a property is subject to Building Regulations. From 1 April 2002, control was extended to include the renewal of windows within existing buildings. This came about as a result of the new Part L Building Regulations. The context for Part L is the government's commitment to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. The specific requirement introduced by Part L is that reasonable provision shall be made for the conservation of fuel and power by limiting the heat loss through the fabric of the building.

The regulations provide guidance on how this might be done. The guidance is not mandatory, but the requirement to save energy is.

Please note that the Building Regulations are the District Council's responsibility and are dealt with by Building Inspectors. They should be contacted if you have any queries about part L and how it affects you. Don't forget to tell them if your property is listed, in a conservation area or is an historic building in the National Park.

## When Do The Building Regulations Apply?

Where a window is being replaced, or the use of the building being changed, the new regulations will apply and an application must be made to your District Council. A charge will be made for this application. All buildings, new and existing are covered. NB The Regulations also apply to roof-lights, roof windows and doors with over 50% glazing.

Where a window is being repaired, ie where broken panes, rotten sills or glazing bars are being renewed, Part L does not apply. For listed and historic buildings, repairing is the best solution.

## Traditional Windows and the Regulations

- Traditional single glazed windows cannot achieve the energy requirements recommended in the Regulations.
- It is impossible to reach the desired standards in listed buildings without compromising their character and appearance.
- The Regulations acknowledge this in relation to the following categories of building:

  Listed Buildings.
  Historic Buildings in Conservation Areas.
  Historic Buildings in National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Regulations recognise the need for sensitivity and flexibility in these cases and recommend early consultation with the National Park's Building Conservation Team and your local Council's Building Control Office.

## Practical Solutions:

There are ways to improve the thermal efficiency of historic windows without spoiling their character:

- By refurbishing them to add draught-proofing. This is often the best solution. Draught-proofing a single-glazed window has roughly the same effect as fitting an additional sheet of glass.
- By making use of any internal shutters. Particularly if the shutters themselves are draught-proofed.
- By using thermally lined curtains, or reflective and/or insulated internal blinds.
- By installing secondary glazing.

## The Advantages of Secondary Glazing

- It retains the traditional windows in situ thereby having the least effect on the building's appearance.
- It is easily removable and may not require listed building consent.
- As timber and aluminium are often the framing materials used, it is a sustainable approach as both materials can be recycled.
- Secondary glazing can significantly improve thermal efficiency, and if it can be opened, it will allow the building to breathe.
- It is more effective at reducing noise than double-glazing. This is due to the air gap created being larger than that achieved in a double glazed unit.

NB, in some buildings secondary glazing will not be an appropriate solution, for example where internal shutters are present.

## Compensatory Measures

Because it is not possible for historic windows to achieve the thermal requirements of Part L, it is useful to look at compensatory measures to increase the energy efficiency in other parts of the building. This may include increasing the efficiency of roof or floor insulation, or increasing the efficiency of central heating boilers.

## Listed Building Legislation

Listed buildings are protected by law and it is necessary to obtain listed building consent from the National Park Authority to change the design, method of opening or material of the window. In some cases, unlisted buildings also need permission before their windows can be altered. Business premises, hotels and flats fall into this category. This is in addition to applying for Building Regulations approval.