# DESIGN & ACCESS, HERITAGE AND PLANNING STATEMENT

February 2022 // 54-55 Birkenhead Street, London, WC1H 8BB



# 54-55 Birkenhead Street, Kings Cross, London

Client: The Institute of Our Lady of Mercy

Our Ref: ND/AL/IOLM

Prepared by	Checked by	Date	Signature
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### Regulated by RICS







### INTRODUCTION

This Design & Access, Heritage and Planning Statement has been prepared in support of an application, submitted by The JTS Partnership LLP on behalf of the Institute of Our Lady of Mercy, concerning No. 54-55 Birkenhead Street, London. It seeks planning permission and listed building consent to replace eight side hung timber framed windows on the third floor (top floor – front and rear) with Rehau PVC-U Heritage Sash Windows.

This Statement describes the proposed works. It identifies the important features of the building and assesses the impact(s) upon its architectural and historic importance.

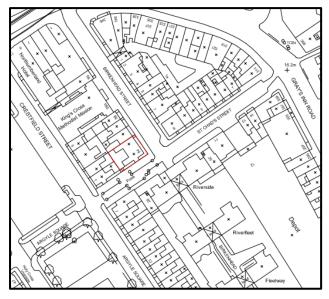


Figure 1: The site - edged in red

### THE SITE AND SURROUNDING AREA

The site is located on a corner plot facing Birkenhead Street (principal elevation) and St Chad's Street (flank elevation). It is situated within a highly sustainable location, in close walking distance to shops, services, restaurants, pubs and hotels. It is approximately two minutes' walk to Kings Cross Station, where national rail services, underground services and bus services can be taken. It is a seven minutes walk to St Pancras International.

No. 54-55 Birkenhead Street forms part of a terrace of five Grade II listed buildings. It is located within the Bloomsbury

Conservation Area and the King's Cross Neighbourhood Renewal Area. It is also situated within Flood Zone 1; an area with a low probability of flooding.

### **Planning History**

The site's planning history, as it is available on the Council's website, is set out in the table below.

Application ref.	Proposal	Decision	Decision date
2013/0484/L	Replacement of existing UPVC windows with timber glazed doors, creation of amenity space on 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor rear elevation including replacement black metal railings and new railings at basement level.	Refused	28/03/2013
2013/0462/P	Replacement of existing UPVC windows with timber glazed doors, and of existing railings around 1 <sup>st</sup> & 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor rear flat roof areas with black metal railings and willow screens to form external terrace amenity areas, and installation of new railings at basement level.	Refused	28/03/2013

2009/0804/L	Replacement of stone tiles on front entrance steps with chequered black and terracotta tiles.	Granted	03/06/2009
2007/5987/P	Relocation of CCTV camera to Chad Street entrance and retention of timber doors to Chad Street entrance.	Granted	17/01/2008
2007/5259/L	Installation of new letter box and brass sign to Birkenhead Street entrance; new telecom entrance system and relocation of CCTV camera to Chad Street entrance; and retention of timber doors to Chad Street entrance.	Granted	17/01/2008
2006/4702/P	External alterations to the existing mixed use building associated with functions of the charity including re-roofing, replacement door to Chad Street, replacement of rainwater and soil pipes, replacement windows, new balance flue, new CCTV cameras and hard landscaping.	Granted	23/08/2007
2006/4251/L	Internal and external alterations/works to the existing mixed use building associated with functions of the charity including installation of new openings, insertion of new doors, removal and erection of stud walls, re-roofing, replacement door to Chad Street, replacement of rainwater and soil pipes, replacement windows, new balance flue, new CCTV cameras and hard landscaping.	Granted	23/08/2007
2006/0039/L	Internal and external alterations/works associated with the change of use from hotel use (Class C1) to a mixed use comprising non self contained residential accommodation (Sui Generis), training/meeting rooms (Class D1), offices (Class B1) and associated functions for a charity, including new, altered and reinstated internal doorways and partitions and the restoration of cornices, new door at basement floor level to the rear elevation and lean-to smokers shelter and platform goods lift in the rear yard.	Granted	12/04/2006
2005/3924/P	Change of use from hotel use (Class C1) to a mixed use comprising non self-contained residential accommodation (Sui Generis), training/meeting rooms (Class D1), offices (Class B1) and associated functions for a charity, new external door at ground floor level to the rear elevation and lean-to-smokers	Granted subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement	12/04/2006

	shelter and platform goods lift in the rear yard.		
CTP/L14/9/A/HB 1345	Violet Hotel, 54-55 Birkenhead Street, WC1. Internal alterations to doors and doorways to comply with the Regulations in respect of means of escape in case of fire.	Listed Building Consent (Conditional)	11/06/1976

### THE PROPOSAL

The Applicant is seeking to replace eight side hung timber framed windows on the third floor (top floor – front and rear) with Rehau PVC-U Heritage Sash Windows, in white (see Figures 2, 3 & 4). The existing windows were installed in 2007. They are already in a poor condition with evidence of rot on the top rails. It is more cost effective to replace, rather than repair. The proposed new windows are more thermally efficient, and the frames have a similar profile.

The proposed new windows are fully detailed on the application drawings which include:

- This Design & Access, Heritage and Planning Statement.
- Covering Letter, dated 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- Drawing No. 100-00 Site Location Plan.
- Drawing No. 101-00 Proposed Block Plan.
- Drawing No. 200-00 Existing Elevations and Third Floor Window Details.
- Drawing No. 201-00 Proposed Elevations & Proposed Third Floor Window Details.

The Rehau Heritage Product Brochure is also appended at Appendix 1 of this Statement, for further details of the proposed new windows.



Figure 2: Proposed front elevation

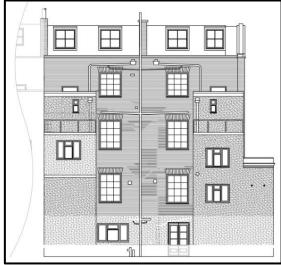


Figure 3: Proposed rear elevation

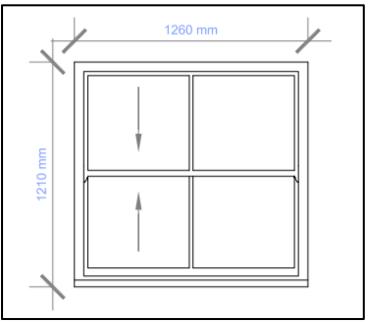


Figure 4: Proposed Rehau Heritage Sliding Sash Window Elevation

### LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Where a development may affect designated, or undesignated, heritage assets, due regard must be had for potential impacts on the historic environment.

54-55 Birkenhead Street forms part of a group of five Grade II listed buildings and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area and the King's Cross Neighbourhood Renewal Area, which are designated heritage assets.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 provides that when considering applications for planning permission:

"... special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area".

Paragraph 194 states that, when determining applications, local planning authorities should require applicants to describe the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution made by their setting. The level of detail provided should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and sufficient to understand the impact of the proposal on this significance. Paragraph 195, requires local authorities to identify, and assess, the significance of any heritage assets, which may be affected by a proposal, and to take this assessment into account when considering applications.

The steps that have been taken as part of this assessment are:-

- 1. A review of the site's planning history, as it is available on the Council's web-site.
- 2. A review of previous heritage statements as prepared by JTS (JTS has been the agent for all application submissions made since 2005).
- 3. A review of the online entries available on the online Greater London Heritage Environment Record.

### 4. A site visit.

This Statement, and the assessment set out herein, is proportionate to the importance of the assets and the potential impacts.

### **LOCAL POLICIES**

The Camden Local Plan (adopted in July 2017) is the key policy document for determining planning applications.

The Borough Council aims to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of all new development affecting sites, buildings, townscapes and landscapes of special architectural, historical or archaeological importance.

**Policy D1 Design** requires the Council to secure high quality design in development, such as:

- a. respects local context and character;
- b. preserves or enhances the historic environment and heritage assets in accordance with Policy D2 Heritage;
- c. comprises details and materials that are of high quality and complement the local character:
- d. integrates well with the surrounding streets and open spaces and contributes positively to the street frontage; and
- e. preserves strategic and local views.

**Policy D2 Heritage** requires the Council to preserve and, where appropriate, enhance Camden's rich and diverse heritage assets and their settings, including conservation areas, listed buildings, archaeological remains, scheduled ancient monuments and historic parks and gardens and locally listed heritage assets.

**Policy CC1 Climate change mitigation** requires all development to minimise the effects of climate change. It encourages proposals to meet the highest feasible environmental standards that are financially viable during construction and occupation. It states that the Council will:

- a) promote zero carbon development and require all development to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through following the steps in the energy hierarchy;
- b) require all major development to demonstrate how London Plan targets for carbon dioxide emissions have been met:
- c) ensure that the location of development and nix of land uses minimise the need to travel by car and help to support decentralised energy networks;
- d) support and encourage sensitive energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings:
- e) require all proposals that involve substantial demolition to demonstrate that it is not possible to retain and improve the existing building; and

f) expect all developments to optimise resource efficiency.

Additionally, the Camden Planning Guidance (CPG) Design (adopted in January 2021) requires development to seek to achieve certain principles. In this case, in terms of sustainable, the following applies:

- Development should promote sustainability and efficient resource consumption.
- Development should make efficient use of the site.
- Development should make use of good quality durable materials.

Paragraph 3.61 refers to historic buildings. It reads:

The Council recognises that the historic environment can play a role in reducing the impact on climate change. For example, reusing existing buildings can avoid the material and energy cost of new development. There are many ways to improve the efficiency and environmental impact of historic buildings, for example improving insulation, draught-proofing and integrating new energy-saving and renewable-energy technologies. We will seek to balance achieving higher environmental standards with protecting Camden's unique built environment in accordance with Local Plan Policies CC1 Climate change adaptation and CC2 Adapting to climate change through promoting higher environmental standards and D2 Heritage.

### **DESIGN & ACCESS**

Use: No change of use is proposed.

**Amount:** No extensions are proposed.

**Layout:** No changes are proposed to the layout of the building.

**Scale:** No additional floorspace is proposed.

**Appearance:** It is proposed to replace the existing timber framed windows with Rehau Heritage Sash Windows.

**Landscaping:** No changes are proposed to any landscape features.

Access: No changes are proposed to the access.

### **HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

54-55 Birkenhead Street forms part of a group of five Grade II listed buildings and is located within the Bloomsbury Conservation Area.

The List entry describes the special interest of the terrace in the following terms: -

"TQ3082NW BIRKENHEAD STREET 798-1/90/94 (West side) 14/05/74 Nos. 54-58 (Consecutive) and attached railings

GV II

Terrace of 5 houses, Nos 54-56 now hotels. C1834-49. Built by W Forrester Bray, restored late C20. Yellow stock brick with later patching. Nos 54 & 55, red brick parapets. No. 56 painted. Stucco ground floors to Nos 54-56. Plain stucco 1<sup>st</sup> floor sill bands. Slated mansard roofs with dormers. Round-arched ground floor openings. No. 54, single storey, stucco portico extension on return; round-arched doorway with fluted Doric three-quarter columns carrying cornice-head; fanlight and panelled door. Nos 55-57, architraved doorways with pilaster-jambs carrying cornice-heads with fanlights (No. 57 patterned); panelled doors (No.56 C20). No. 58, doorway with fluted Doric quarter columns carrying cornice; patterned fanlight and panelled door. Gauged-brick flat arches to recessed sashes; 1<sup>st</sup> floor in shallow arched recesses. Cast-iron balconies to 1<sup>st</sup> floor windows. Parapets. INTERIORS: not inspected. SUBSIDIARY FEATURES: attached cast-iron railings with bud and other finials to areas. (Survey of London: Vol. XXIV, King's Cross Neighbourhood, Parish of St Pancras IV: London: - 1952: 109).

Listing NGR: TQ3035582894"

The Bloomsbury Conservation Area Appraisal (paragraph 3.8) describes the special interest of the area:

"Bloomsbury is noted for its formally planned arrangement of streets and the contrasting leafy squares. The urban morphology comprises a grid pattern of streets generally aligned running north-west to south-east and south-west to north-east, with subtle variations in the orientation of the grid pattern. The quintessential character of the Conservation Area derives from the grid of streets enclosed by mainly three and four-storey development which has a distinctly urban character of broad streets interspersed by formal squares which provide landscape dominated focal points.

A hierarchy of different scales of streets is evident across the area with clear differences between the wider major arterial routes which define and cross the Conservation Area, the grid of primary, relatively spacious, intersecting streets, narrower secondary streets, rear mews and narrow connecting lanes. The grain of streets is generally smaller scale in the older, southern part of the Conservation Area where there are a large number of narrower streets and alleyways which are intimate spaces with a particular charm and sense of history. The spatial character of Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn also differs, being based on a series of interconnected courtyards and open spaces of varying sizes and scales. The mews are a common theme across the area and provided rear service access to the larger buildings fronting the principal spaces of the Conservation Area."

The site lies within Sub Area 13: Cartwright Gardens/Argyle Square (see Figure 5), which is describes as follows:

The interest of this sub area derives from the formal early 19th century street pattern and layout of open spaces, and the relatively intact surviving terraces of houses. Developed mainly by James Burton, it was one of the later areas of Bloomsbury to be completed, and in its early 19th century parts retains a remarkably uniform streetscape. The mature trees to be found in the large formal gardens soften the urban area and provide a foil for the built environment in the summer months.

The sub area also includes a tranche of slightly later development stretching from Mabledon Place in the west to the junction of Cromer Street and Loxham Street in the west. This is a relatively consistent area of development including a large number of mansion block flats from the turn of the 20th century, which were developed to replace rundown, earlier streets of terraces of small houses. The various architectural styles of these mansion blocks can be seen across

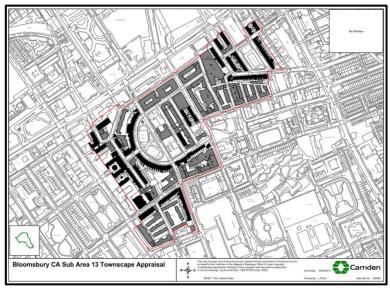


Figure 5: Conservation Area Appraisal Map – Sub Area 13

the area: in the west the blocks are mainly of red brick, whereas in the east they tend to be faced in a yellow stock or a buff brick. There are a number of large footprint early 20th century buildings in the vicinity of Mabledon Place and Bidborough Street. Later 20th century buildings include a row of three large student residences on the east side of Cartwright Gardens There are a few surviving buildings from the earlier phase of development, including some fragments of domestic terraces and a number of public houses. A second area of slightly later development lies to the south of Tavistock Place where two social housing estates on the east and west sides of Herbrand Street were developed at the turn of the 20th century.

The original residential character of the earlier 19th century area in large part disappeared during the 20th century, due to the migration of residents to outer London suburbs. The area became dominated by a mix of hotel and bed—and-breakfast uses, student accommodation and offices. However, with the coming of the 21st century, a scattering of properties are beginning to be converted back to single family dwellings. Notwithstanding use issues, there remains a striking uniformity and sense of repetition in the townscape, with townhouses of consistent form, plot width, and architectural treatment including detailing and materials (for instance the use of London Stock brick, stucco decoration, timber joinery and slated roofs).

The earlier 19th century properties tend to be three or four storeys in height, adhering to classical proportions, with taller, grander buildings facing the open spaces. Other common features include timber sash windows with slender glazing bars, which are taller on the first-floor windows at piano nobile level, and decrease in height with each storey above; arched doors and ground-floor windows with delicate fanlights and arched motifs, intricate iron balconies, cast-iron front boundary railings, and roofs concealed behind parapets. The mansion blocks and commercial buildings range from four to eight storeys. Later 20th century development includes some residential towers of up to fifteen storeys.

The mature trees within the open spaces (Cartwright Gardens and Argyle Square) make a welcome landscape contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The public realm contains elements of historic interest including statues within the gardens, York stone paving along Cartwright Gardens and Burton Street, and coal holes, gate posts and bollards.

### Argyle Square

The area around Argyle Square was one of the last land parcels to be developed in the 1830s and 1840s having been previously the site of the failed Panharmonium Pleasure Gardens, an over-ambitious and short-lived project from 1830-32. The surrounding streets, however, are likely to have been built earlier, Crestfield Street and Birkenhead Street were laid out from 1825; Argyle Street from 1826 and St Chad's Street from 1827.

The architectural and historic interest of this area is reflected in the fact that the majority of the buildings are listed. The conversion in the 20th century of a number of properties to hotel use, has given rise to a plethora of signage, painted brickwork, additional downpipes and unsympathetic replacement of sash windows and front doors that detract from the homogeneity of the terraces.

Four-storey townhouses around the square have a restrained classical appearance with consistent parapet lines, decorative stucco banding, large first-floor windows with stucco surrounds, arched ground-floor doors and a parapet concealing the roof. The east and west sides are almost intact, but the south-east corner was destroyed in World War II. Postwar housing blocks were built on this site, which lie outside the Conservation Area, but are highly visible in views from the square. These nine-storey blocks dating from 1949-51 were designed by Hening and Chitty and are of note as early postwar social housing solutions with blocks placed at right-angles to the street to allow for landscaped communal gardens. Along the streets the buildings are slightly older, and tend to have plainer detailing but are of a smaller scale, consisting of three storeys with a mansard roof, party wall upstands and predominant chimney stacks and pots. Most properties have consistent iron railings and delicate balconies. Although unlisted and altered, Nos 45-47 Argyle Square date from the early 19th century and use consistent materials and themes. There are relatively few 20th century interventions. On the north side of St Chad's Street, Derbyshire House has a balanced facade in a pale brick with a stone ground floor and with metal windows in stone surrounds with horizontal mullions and other Art Deco influenced details. Although it is of five storeys, it blends well with the predominant 19th century character of the streetscape.

### **IMPACT ON HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE**

### Impact on the listed building

The existing windows are not historic and were put in around 2007. As such, they are not of significance in themselves. As shown in Figures 6 to 14, the windows are in poor condition and, despite only being 15 years old, they need to be extensively repaired or replaced. It is more cost effective to replace the windows rather than repair them.

The replacement windows frames and casements have similar profiles to 'traditional sashes' such that, at third floor level, it will be virtually impossible to distinguish them from timber installations (see attached Rehau brochure).

Replacing the windows with Rehau PVC-U Heritage Sash Windows, will also cut down on maintenance cost, facilitate easy cleaning and provides increased sound and thermal insulation. In the latter respect, the windows have an A rating and comply with Part L Building Regulation requirements.



Figures 6, 7, 8 & 9: Photographs showing the poor condition of the top floor windows that will require replacement



Figures 10, 11, 12 & 13: Photographs showing the poor condition of the top floor windows that will require replacement



Figure 14: Another top floor window that will require replacement due to its poor condition

The proposal is in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC1, which requires all development to minimise the effects of climate change and encourage all developments to meet the highest feasible environmental standards that are financially viable during construction.

Similarly, the proposal is in accordance with Local Plan Policy CC2, which requires all development to adopt appropriate climate change adaptation measures.

The existing windows are modern and their removal will have no adverse impact upon the heritage significance of the listed terrace.

The use of vertical sliding sash windows, as opposed to side hung windows, will have a minor positive impact on heritage significance.

The use of PVC-U replacements, as opposed to timber, will have a less than substantial impact but at the very lowest end of that scale. The minimal harm caused to heritage significance is justified by the increased noise and thermal performance of the proposed units and compliance with Local Plan Policies CC1 and CC2.

### Impact on the conservation area

The dormers in buildings in the neighbourhood are a mix of sash and side hung windows. From ground level, it will be difficult to detect that the windows are constructed of PVC-U, as opposed to timber, or double glazed, whilst changes to sashes will have not harm, and may slightly improve, the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

### **HERITAGE BALANCE**

The change from single glazed, timber, side hung, units, to double glazed, PVC-U, sashes will cause less than substantial harm to the heritage significance of the listed building. The harm caused is at very lowest end of the scale and is outweighed by ease of maintenance; long term savings in repair costs; and the much better sound and thermal insulation properties of the new windows. No harm will be caused to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

# **APPENDIX 1 –**

# **REHAU Heritage Product Brochure**





REHAU HERITAGE PERIOD STYLE



www.rehauhome.com

Building Solutions Automotive Industry



PERIOD STYLE



REHAU is the premium worldwide brand supplying polymer-based windows, doors and conservatories to professional fabricators and installers. Our products are unrivalled in quality, technological innovation and exceptional design.

The REHAU Heritage Vertical Sliding Window system is designed to incorporate all the desirable traditional features of a timber sash window, yet with all the additional benefits and conveniences of modern PVC-U.

The REHAU Heritage Vertical Sliding Windows are the most distinctive and authentic-looking PVC-U sash windows available on the UK market.

SIMPLY SUPERIOR





## REHAU Heritage sliding windows offer a number of features and benefits including:

### Noise reduction

The double-glazed sealed units considerably reduce outdoor noise levels, allowing you to relax in the peace and quiet of your home.

### Energy efficiency

The REHAU Heritage system can achieve an A rating, the highest possible Window Energy Rating (WER), therefore reducing heat loss and keeping out draughts.

REHAU windows and doors will comply with Part L Building Regulations providing the correct glazing unit is used. For windows this requirement is an overall U-Value of 1.6 W/m<sup>2</sup>K and for doors 1.8 W/m<sup>2</sup>K.

### Safety and security

The superb period look is backed up by a very modern approach to security. Our three-chamber sash profiles allow for even stronger reinforcements.

### Low maintenance

Our systems contain a unique compound with a smooth gloss finish – guaranteeing they retain their pristine appearance. It also means they will never warp, not or need regular painting.

Superbly engineered and of exceptional quality, REHAU Heritage windows will add real style to your home, guaranteeing maximum efficiency and performance for your investment.

### AUTHENTIC INNOVATION









REHAU Heritage windows are designed with all the traditional detailing found in period sash windows, including a deep bottom rail, slim sashes and an optional Georgian bar.

Successfully approved and installed in conservation areas across the UK and the Republic of Ireland, REHAU Heritage Vertical Sliding Windows are suitable for any style of home.

### Choose your style

Classic-style hardware and fittings and optional decorative horns replicate the traditional timber aesthetics to complete the stunning finish.

The slim sash is designed specifically to replicate the more elegant signifines of traditional wooden windows.

#### Choose your finish

Our REHAU Heritage window system is available as standard in Classic White, Soft Cream, Rich Rosewood or Warm Golden Oak. There is also a choice of 19 special laminate options available, including the increasingly popular White Ash.

Further colour options from our unique REHAU Acryl II colouring system offer you a choice of 150 different colours.

Ask your installer about our REHAU Heritage range. To see more examples of REHAU window and door installations, visit www.rehauhome.com and order a copy of the REHAU window, door and conservatory brochure.





III Renott toll finishes

SIMPLE CONSTRUCTION



Fabricators and installers consistently recommend REHAU window and door systems to customers. They know they are delivering a quality product that will give full satisfaction. Our systems are specifically designed to help the installation process run as smoothly as possible.

The simple construction and fitting specifications behind the REHAU Heritage Vertical Sliding Window system are described below.

The system has two sashes built into the framewhich slide in opposing directions and will remain in any position.

A sub-frame, which makes up three sides of the window, is the most popular configuration and is welded at the top two corners whilst mechanically joined at the bottom with a sill and screws. The sill is sealed off at each end with an end cap to prevent water ingress into the walls of the property. The sub-frame can also be an all-welded construction with a clip-in sill. This detail is used in installations where stone sills are present.

The three-chambered sash profiles are designed with two front chambers to achieve good heat insulation and allow isolated drainage. The third chamber allows the fitting of specifically designed reinforcement sections.

FITTING QUALITY





### The REHAU Heritage system has been designed to accommodate all possible hardware requirements.

Steel-reinforced sliding latches allow the sashes to be tilted inwards to enable the window to be cleaned from the inside of the property, yet the facility is concealed for aesthetic and safety reasons.

The latches can be locked off to prevent unauthorised tilting of the sash.

Standard balances of 14mm or 19mm diameter may be used, and it is also possible to fix all hardware into a specially designed steel or aluminium section for increased security performance. Summary of options available with the REHAU Heritage system:

- Stepped frame with either mechanically jointed sill or fully welded options
- Supplementary profiles and seals, including Georgian bars
- A comprehensive range of additional profiles via the REHAU Tritec 60mm casement system allow for easy and versatile installation options
- Patented heritage-style horn replicates traditional timber aesthetics
- A contemporary window style is available with the use of glazing bead profiles via the REHAU Tritec 60mm casement system

More information for fabricators and installers can be found in the REHAU Heritage System Description (719.600EN/657).





