

Shire Hall window repairs – spring/ summer 2026

Woodbridge Town Council (WTC) are the freehold owners of the Grade 1 listed Shire Hall – title number SK37939. WTC purchased the building from Suffolk County Council in 1988, and since that time it has been the administrative centre of the Council, as well as functioning as a public building available for rent.

A condition survey (supplied) completed by the Morton Partnership in 2021 has been used as the base level document for a public engagement in 2023 and additional reporting by Whitworth in 2024 (supplied).

WTC are currently seeking grant funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to undertake a full renovation of the building, however due to failing condition have identified that repair works to the ground floor and first floor windows are now an urgent requirement.

WTC are therefore seeking quotations for the undertaking of the repair work as provided below – the detail for which has been lifted from the Whitworth report. A site visit is recommended so that contractors can view the condition of each window, as well as understand the position of the building as central island in a town centre location.

Summary of works required:

The windows are numbered according to the scheme set out by The Morton Partnership when they reported on in 2021, ref. pages 11 and 12 of the documents '19552 All Drawings'. Provided at appendix 1 is a recent photo of the building showing the window numbers.

Window 01 – repair sashes, strip and repaint, overhaul sash cords, clean out guano.

W02 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

W03 – repair timberwork, redecorate.



W04 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

W05 – repair, repaint.

W05a – repaint in association with window W05.

W06 – reputty, redecorate.

W07 – repair timberwork, reputty, redecorate.

W08 – repair timberwork, reputty, redecorate.

W09 – reputty, redecorate.

W10 – repair timberwork, reputty, redecorate.

W11 – repair timberwork, reputty, redecorate.

W12 – timberwork, reputty, redecorate.

W13 – repair timberwork, reputty, redecorate.

W14 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

W15 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

W16 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

W17 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

W18 – repair timberwork, renew putty, redecorate.

Pages 6 to 14 of the Whitworth report provide more detail on the condition of each window.

Materials:

Timber: timber for renewals will need to be joinery grade, preferably BC pine. The survey did not include stripping of existing paint: there may be some oak cills though where visible they seem to be pine.

Glazing bars: the first-floor bars are all timber and quite fine in section. In the 19th century ground floor windows infilling the older archways they are of iron. No ground floor renewals are anticipated but any alteration of improvement will need to use similar materials.

Paint finishes: full breakdown of the existing paint finishes has occurred in restricted areas only. If it is intended to retain the existing finishes, the new paint will need to be capable of application over existing finishes as well as new timber. In such a case a system such as Dulux Weathershield would be appropriate.

As part of a re-think of maintenance generally, it would be ideal to strip back the current finishes and repaint in a linseed oil paint giving greater vapour permeability and reduced chance of weather being trapped inside paint layers, leading to decay. This would have implications for timing (weather / temperature restrictions are tighter for success with these paints). If the window units were removed to a dry heated workshop the decorating can take place in all seasons. However, stripping the existing paint finish and removal of the windows from the building will bring forward a need for extra repair as the junctions between elements lose the stiffness currently provided by many coats of paint.

It is likely that lead paint layers are concealed under the existing paintwork and appropriate health precautions will be needed.

In summary – contractors are to repair (repair and replace rotten timber window sections and cills) and repaint all windows on the Shire Hall.

Glass replacement

The condition of individual panes is provided in the Whitworth report. Where timberwork is to be renewed some loss of glass will be inevitable and should be factored into the allowances when specifying the repairs. There are no obvious signs of crown glass present but where the glass has distortion it appears to be a cylinder glass (this would be consistent with the 19th century ground floor windows). The quite heavily reamy glass is consistent with a 20th century handmade "Cordele" glass. Other panes are in clear float or a 20th century obscure glass.

Glass for renewals ought at least to be like for like, which will require new cylinder glass where the old is cracked/ broken. Float glass should match the existing in thickness, but the appearance of the exterior would be made more attractive and consistent if renewed in cylinder glass. The Cordele type glass is more reamy than necessary, to the point of being distracting. Where this does not survive removal, renewal in cylinder glass would be preferable. Where obscure glass is no longer required, this again should be renewed in cylinder glass.

This project also calls for the replacement of 51 panels of frosted glass on the ground floor with traditional float or heritage glass.

Access and safe working

The Shire Hall is located on the Market Hill and essentially serves as a roundabout along with the attached Market Square. To undertake the work, contractors will need to scaffold from the road and hence must source from Suffolk County Council a license to do so – that cost must be covered by your quotation.

Access to the front and back of the Shire Hall is available from Council property, so no permissions are required.

Scaffold should extend the full height of the building to allow for inspection of the soffit and fascias for potential future works to the property.

WTC will organise the closure of the parking bays on the Market Hill, which will be required to allow for the safe passage of traffic past the scaffolding.

The contractor will need to confirm to WTC that they will act as the Principal Contractor/ Designer in line with CDM(2015) regulations.

Site visits

Interested parties are welcome to visit the Shire Hall and view the windows, both externally and from inside the building. Visits are organised via email – townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk

Timelines

The work must be completed before June 30th, 2026 – the Council has suspended wedding bookings of the Shire Hall from January to June 30th in order to complete this work, with weddings booked from July 1st onwards. Contractors must not tender for the work if they cannot complete by June 30th.

Quotations

Quotations must be received by 5pm on Monday 16th February – The Council will appoint a contractor at its meeting on Wednesday 18th February.

Quotations must be addressed to Mr Greg Diaper, Town Clerk, Woodbridge Town Council, Shire Hall, Market Hill, Woodbridge, Suffolk. townclerk@woodbridge-suffolk.gov.uk





