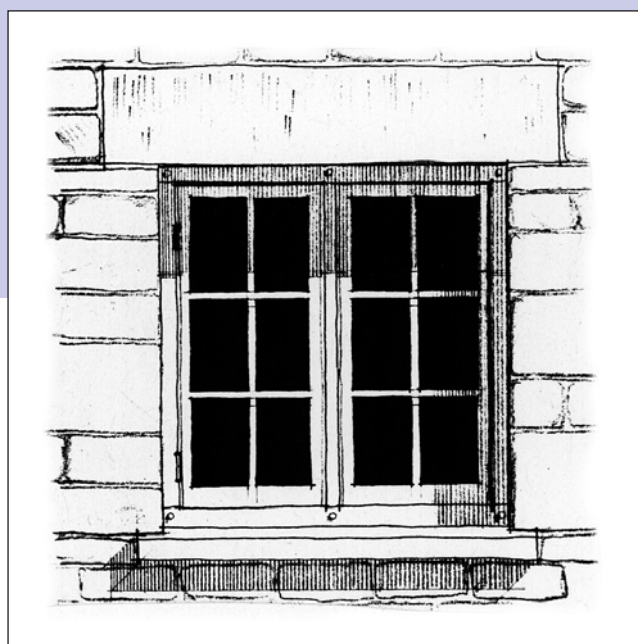


# TRADITIONAL CASEMENT WINDOWS

## Design Guide



*Windows, often referred to as 'the eyes of the building', contribute significantly to its character and require great care and understanding if any changes are proposed. The casement window is a common type where the opening part of the window is hinged, usually on a vertical edge. This is a guide to the history, conservation and design of traditional timber casement windows for Cotswold buildings.*



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Tewkesbury Borough Council

HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES FLOURISH IN A QUALITY ENVIRONMENT

## History

Successor to the stone mullioned window, the traditional timber casement became the most common window type by the second half of the eighteenth century. Subdivided by glazing bars, joining together the small panes of glass, the earlier designs had the opening part of the window, the 'casement' made of iron with lead latticing to the glass. By around 1840, the beginning of the Victorian period, the frames and opening casements were made entirely of timber.

Windows of 6-panes per casement were the most common pattern, but designs were occasionally elaborated by the use of Gothic arches or smaller panes, especially during the mid-nineteenth century. From then, though, glass technology improved and the number of panes per casement was reduced to two with one horizontal glazing bar. Traditional windows usually were no wider than about 450mm (18") per casement.

## Construction

The timber frame of casement windows was developed from the heavy oak frames of medieval openings. Jambs, cill and head were jointed with a pegged mortice and tenon. A slimmer softwood version of this construction forms the basis of the traditional casement window.

In a typical window, a glazing rebate is formed allowing the glass to be fixed from the outside face and be held in place with sprigs and putty. A little sophistication was introduced by means of moulding the inner edge of the frame where it adjoins the glass, the glazing bars being moulded to match, and the fixed frame was often also moulded.

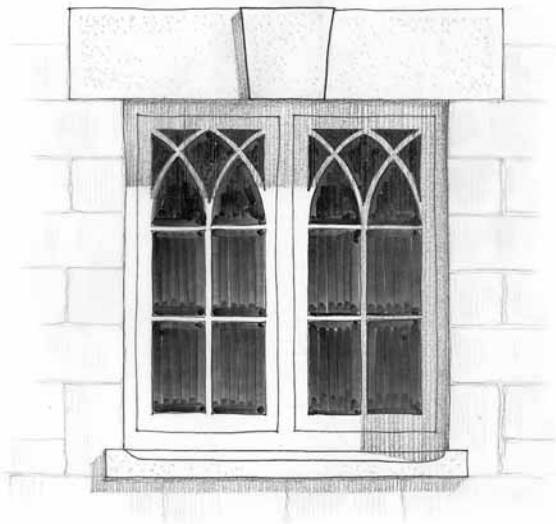
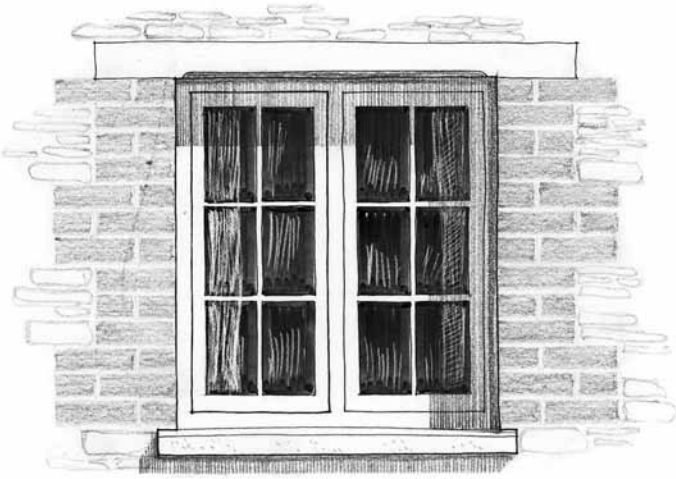
In traditional construction, mouldings meet at mitred corners: they were never routed after assembly, rounding the inner edges, as is common today.

## Glass

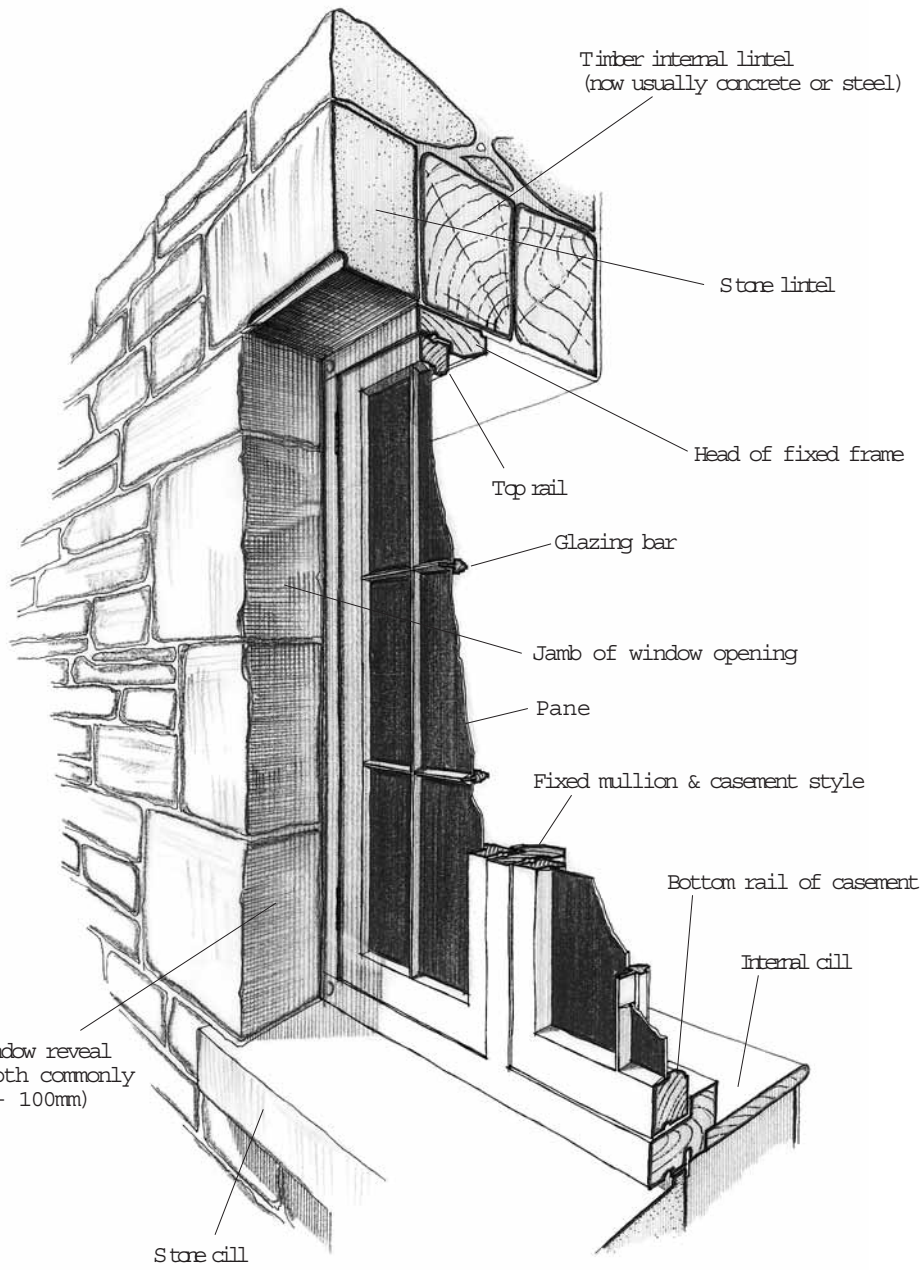
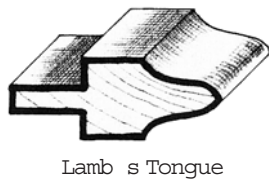
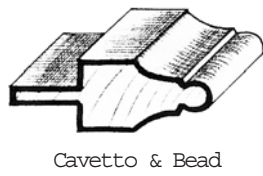
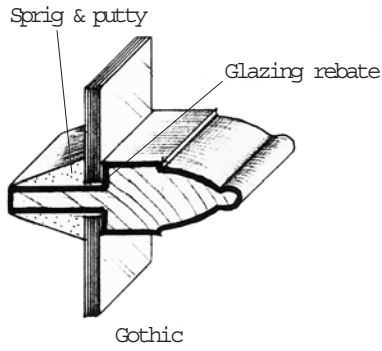
Until Crown Glass and Cylinder Sheet became available, the small panes of Broad Sheet had to be fixed together in leaded lights, and later by the use of glazing bars. The newer glass-making processes produced much larger sheets although many imperfections occurred, and these can often be seen in the poorer quality glass used in cottage casements. Modern Polished Plate glass has no imperfections, and has none of the special character of the older material.

## Fittings

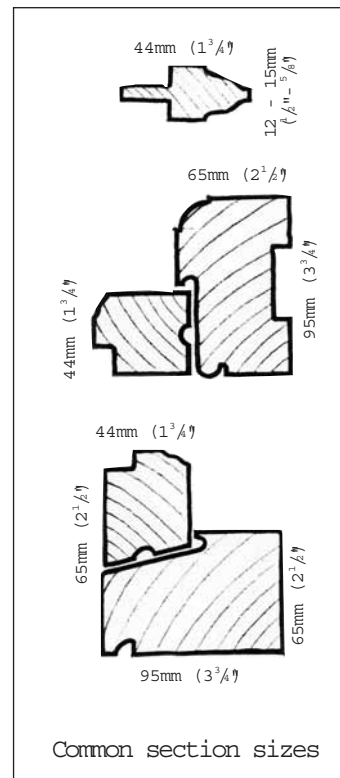
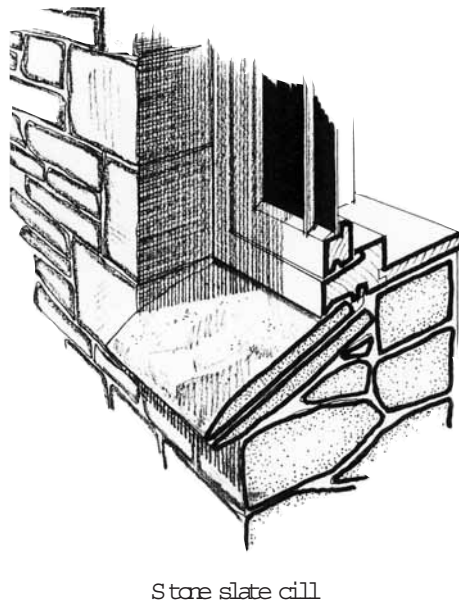
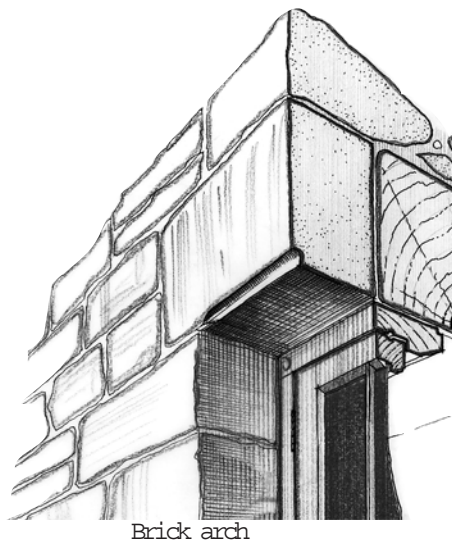
The ironmongery attached to casements consists of the hinges, the casement latch, and the stay bar. As with the latches found on earlier iron casements, these fittings were often made by the local village blacksmith and can be very distinctive. By the late nineteenth century, cheaper factory-produced fittings were available.



# Typical glazing bar mouldings



# Variations in the head and cill treatments







## Paint Colour

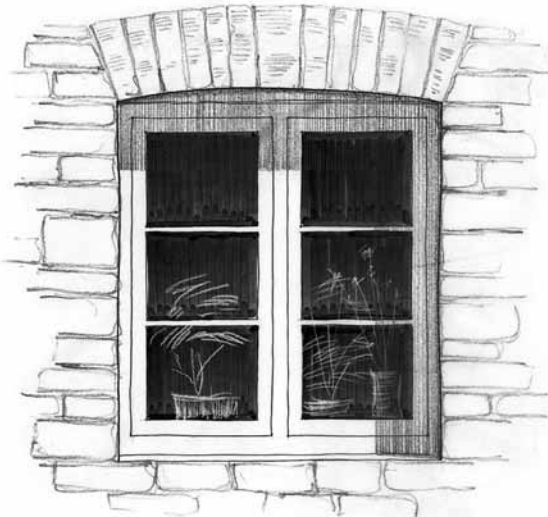
Although the very earliest casements were made of oak, and therefore left unpainted, nineteenth-century softwood casements were always painted. White was the most common, but many other colours were also used such as buff, green, blue and crimson. Staining is not a traditional finish for windows and is best avoided, especially on listed buildings.

## Conservation

Although this guidance leaflet is primarily intended to provide advice on how to design new casement windows to match the appropriate local style, old windows should always be retained and repaired wherever possible, especially when the building is 'listed'. Often the only fault will be a rotten cill, and any good joiner will be able to replace this. Old glass and ironmongery should also be retained, unless beyond repair.

Modern casement designs should always be avoided. Usually these have opening casement frames that overlap the fixed frame externally. Where the fixed light is directly glazed to this outer frame it creates an unbalanced effect.

When selecting windows for sensitive locations, such as on listed buildings or in conservation areas, the joinery details described in this leaflet should be followed.



## Listed Buildings

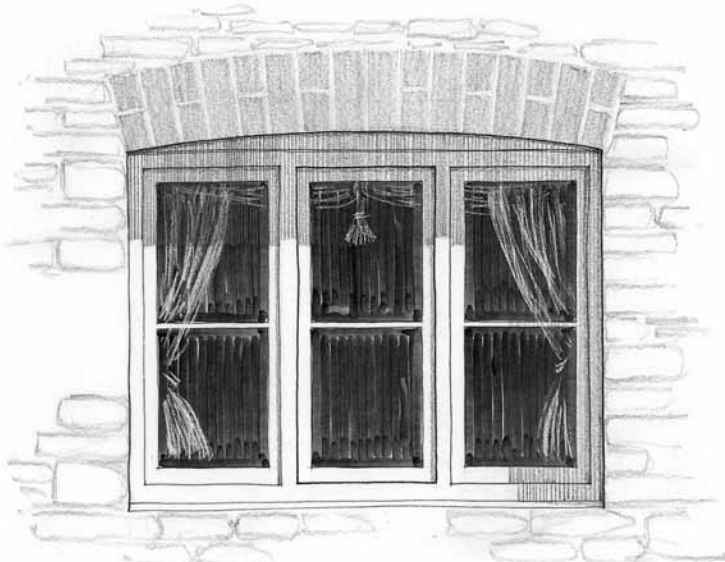
Most changes to windows on listed buildings, other than very minor repairs, will require listed building consent. It is recommended that a member of the Council's Conservation and Design Section is contacted for advice prior to any work on listed buildings, and before an application is made.

Where prior permission is required, it is a criminal offence to carry out unauthorized works to a listed building.

### Further reading:

SPAB Publication **The Repair of Wood Windows**, available from SPAB, 37 Spital Square, London E1 6DY. Telephone: 0171-377 1644.

**Historic Windows Guide** available from Tewkesbury Borough Council on the contact below



For further advice and information contact:  
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**Tel 01684 295010**  
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