



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 April 2025

by **L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3105/Y/24/3355671

Fir Cottage, Fir Lane, Steeple Aston, Bicester, Oxfordshire, OX25 4SF

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against the refusal of details of works required by a condition of a listed building consent.
- The appeal is made by Mr Mark Utting against the decision of Cherwell District Council.
- The application Ref 24/01740/DISC sought approval to discharge condition 3 (construction details) of 24/00512/LB pursuant to condition No 3 of listed building consent Ref 24/00512/LB granted on 19 April 2024 for a proposal described as “Internal alterations to existing side extension to provide utility room to include relocation of WC. Insulation to roof and walls. New door to rear exterior in place of existing window”.
- The application was refused by notice dated 11 October 2024.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed in relation to the details submitted pursuant to condition No 3 of listed building consent Ref 24/00512/LB granted on 19 April 2024 in accordance with the application reference Ref 24/01740/DISC dated 13 November 2019 and the plan submitted with it is approved. This is Drawing No 24-031 730-100 dated 28/06/2024 Planning Conditions – External Door Details – Solidoor Stable Door.

Application for costs

2. An application for an award of costs was made by Mr Mark Utting against Cherwell District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Background and Main Issue

3. This appeal follows the refusal by the Council to approve details required by condition No 3 attached to listed building consent reference Ref 24/00512/LB (the listed building consent). The listed building consent relates to alterations to a grade II listed building known as Fir Cottage, Fir Lane (Fir Cottage) which is also within the Steeple Aston Conservation Area (CA).
4. The main issue is therefore whether the details submitted address the requirements of condition No 3 of the listed building consent having regard to whether they would preserve the grade II listed Fir Cottage and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and their effect on the CA.

Reasons

5. Fir Cottage is a two storey C19 dwelling with later extensions. It is built from limestone, with a stonesfield-slate roof. It has brick end stacks and traditional casement windows to the front elevation under flat arches. However, the windows

in its rear elevation are mainly modern UPVC of different styles. Thus, insofar as is relevant to this appeal, the special interest and significance of Fir Cottage is associated with its architectural interest derived from its traditional architectural detailing.

6. The CA is a rural village which has evolved around substantial manors and open spaces. It has a rich variety of traditional buildings, mainly constructed from local materials including local limestone. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal the significance of the CA derives from the architectural detailing of the traditional buildings within it.
7. The Council granted listed building consent for alterations to Fir Cottage subject to a condition which required details of an external door shown on the approved drawings to be submitted and agreed before it is installed. The dispute between the parties relates to the details of the door submitted pursuant to the discharge of that condition (the door details).
8. I acknowledge the approved plans show a more traditional solid timber stable door which is very different to the door details submitted. I accept that a solid timber stable door would more closely relate to the traditional character of the appeal building than the composite part glazed stable door proposed in the door details. However, the appeal building has been subject to significant modern alterations. These are particularly noticeable in the listed building's rear elevation where the door would be installed. The proposed composite door would replace a modern UPVC window, some modern masonry and a modern timber lintel. The proposed door would be viewed alongside other modern UPVC windows in the rear elevation.
9. Thus, in my view the approval of the door details and the installation of the proposed modern composite door would have a neutral effect on the listed building when appreciated in the context of the wider rear elevation. The significance of the listed building and its special architectural interest would therefore be preserved if the door details were approved and there would be no loss of or damage to historic fabric associated with the listed building.
10. Consequently, as there would be no harm to a traditional building within the CA, there would be no harm to the significance of the CA as a whole and its character and appearance would be preserved.
11. The scheme would therefore accord with the aims of Policy ESD15 of the Cherwell Local Plan 2011-2031 Part 1 (2015) and saved Policy C18 of the Cherwell Local Plan (1996) which seek to ensure good design and the preservation of heritage assets. For the same reasons there would also be no conflict with the heritage protection aims of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given and considering all other matters raised, the appeal should be allowed and the details submitted should be approved.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR