
APPLICATION NO.	P08/W0610/LB
APPLICATION TYPE	LISTED BLDG. CONSENT
REGISTERED	19.05.2008
PARISH	DORCHESTER
WARD MEMBER(S)	Mr John Cotton Mr Philip Cross
APPLICANT	Mr Philip Collings
SITE	Cranmer Cottage 90 High Street Dorchester-on-Thames
PROPOSAL	Renovation of historic outbuilding. Demolition and replacement of modern link to main house. Demolition of coal shed and construction of single storey extension (as amplified by drawings accompanying letter from McCurdy & Co dated 17 June 2008).
AMENDMENTS	
GRID REFERENCE	457732194673
OFFICER	Mr M Brewer

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This application is referred to Committee the request of local member Councillor John Cotton.
- 1.2 The application site is shown on the OS extract attached at **Appendix A.** In addition, existing floor plans and elevations are attached at **Appendix B,** proposed floor plans and elevations at **Appendix C,** the design and access statement at **Appendix D,** structural report at **Appendix E** and historic buildings report at **Appendix F.** Photographs taken at the Officers' site visits in April 2007 and July 2008 are at **Appendix G.**
- 1.3 Cranmer Cottage is a Grade II listed building, comprising a detached two-storey dwelling built at 90 degrees to the road and a separate single-storey outbuilding at the rear. The dwellinghouse dates from the early-mid eighteenth century and is an attractive double-fronted building built in good quality Flemish bond brickwork. The outbuilding is a two-bay timber frame, brick and stone building, rectangular in form with a substantial central chimney breast. It was originally a detached structure, a "detached kitchen", but is now connected to the house by a flat roofed 1950s brick link. There is a modest and insubstantial coal store attached to the garden side of the outbuilding.
- 1.4 The building is within the Dorchester conservation area at the northern approach to the town centre. The principal elevations of the house, and south-west aspect of the kitchen outbuilding can be seen clearly from the entrance onto the road.
- 1.5 The detached kitchen is a rare survival of a building type that was built in the Medieval and Tudor periods. Detached kitchens were built as rooms open to the roof with an open hearth and were used to accommodate the preparation and cooking of foods. They were separate structures to reduce the risk of fire damage to the main house and to keep the house cool in summer. Later, many were fitted with fireplaces with chimney breasts and stacks to channel the smoke out of the building more efficiently. Very few detached kitchens survive nationally, even though they were common in the Middle Ages. Your conservation officers understand that Dorchester is exceptional in having

surviving detached kitchens at four of the houses in the village. This is of national significance.

- 1.6 The kitchen outbuilding at Cranmer Cottage has smoke blackened timbers in the roof and so this suggests that the building originally had an open hearth. However, the building's timber frame is more typical of the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries and it has been fitted with a large chimney stack and fireplace. This might mean that the structure was refashioned, updated, or rebuilt in the 1600s using salvaged material. It is also likely that when the principal house was rebuilt in the eighteenth century, the elevations of the kitchen outbuilding, which are visible from the street (the south and west), were faced up in stone and brick, probably to present a more gentrified public view. Despite the difficulty in establishing an exact date of construction, this kitchen outbuilding is of a remarkable survival of a now rare structure, is still able to function in the use it was originally intended and its age and architectural interest is of national significance.
- 1.7 The outbuilding as a whole is in a reasonable condition despite its age and lack of general maintenance and repair. Some defects are highlighted in the structural report that can be patch repaired. The north elevation is in a weaker structural condition as the roof structure has pushed it outwards and it will require more extensive action.

2.0 PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The plans and elevations for the proposals are attached at **Appendix C**. The application involves three elements:
- 2.2 a) The demolition of the existing link between the house and the detached kitchen, and its replacement with a new larger porch link. The replacement link is proposed as having a pitched roof with a gabled porch over the door. It wraps 1.2m along the principal frontage of the house from the eastern end and rises to 4.4m in height. Walling materials are not specified but the roof will be finished in handmade clay roof tiles.
- 2.3 b) A new dining room extension is proposed on the eastern end of the detached kitchen measuring 3m x 4m, indicated as using timber framing, with handmade clay roof tiles.
- 2.4 c) The northern elm-framed wall of the detached kitchen is proposed to be demolished, the north elevation roof dismantled and new footings built to support an entirely new frame built in green oak, as detailed in drawings, schedule and letter from McCurdy & Co. attached at **Appendix H**. This would be finished externally with a lime plaster render.

3.0 CONSULTATIONS & REPRESENTATIONS

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| 3.1 | Dorchester Parish Council | Approval |
| | Countryside Officer | No objection |
| | Conservation Officer | Objection, many aspects of the proposal are unacceptable in terms of design, scale and loss of historic fabric |

Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society (on behalf of the Council for British Archaeology)	First response is at <u>Appendix I</u> Second response is at <u>Appendix J</u>
English Heritage (South East)	The response is at <u>Appendix K</u>
Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	The response is at <u>Appendix L</u>
Ancient Monuments Society	The response is at <u>Appendix M</u>

No **Neighbour Representations** were received

4.0 **RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY**

- 4.1 P06/W1078 and P06/W1077/LB - Demolition of car port & garden shed, elevational alterations to north elevation and new boiler room, erection of wall, internal alterations and alterations to land levels(as amended and clarified by drawings and schedule of works accompanying letter from agent dated 1 December 2006).
- Planning and Listed Building Consent on 29 January 2007
- 4.2 P07/W0190/LB and P07/W0189 – demolition of annex and link, and erection of new replacement annex.
Withdrawn prior to determination, 4th May 2007.

5.0 **POLICY & GUIDANCE**

- 5.1 G6 Promoting good design
CON1 Demolition of a listed building
CON2 Extensions to listed buildings
CON3 Alterations to listed buildings
CON5 Setting of listed buildings
CON7 Development within a conservation area
H13 Extensions to dwellings

South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008

PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment

6.0 **PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 It is felt that the issues are most clearly discussed by considering the implications of each element of the proposal:
- a) the replacement porch link
 - b) the dining room extension
 - c) the demolition and reconstruction of the north elevation of the detached kitchen
- 6.2 The Replacement Porch Link
The existing link structure is notably subservient to both the principal house, and its unobtrusive design retains the relationship with the historically detached kitchen. Although it is not a particularly attractive addition to the property it does not compete with the two buildings which is important.
- 6.3 The increase in scale and footprint is detrimental to the established relationship between the house and the outbuilding as the two separate structures would be less distinct visually. Advice in PPG15 is that modern extensions should not dominate the existing building in scale, material or situation. Policies CON2 and CON3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan, and advice in Sections 6.2 and 6.3 of the South Oxfordshire

Design Guide are also against alterations and extensions that would be inappropriate and unsympathetic to the character of a listed building in design, scale and materials.

- 6.4 Your officers consider that the proposed alteration is contrary to policy. The applicant expressed interest in revising the design of the porch link and officers offered design parameters in an attempt to overcome the above objections. Subsequently, the applicant requested that the application be determined as submitted.
- 6.5 The proposed link increases the existing link footprint from 3.5m² to 8m², includes a gabled porch element, and is 2m higher, now coming within 0.25m of the eaves of the house. The proposed porch link is considerably more dominant than the existing link and the design is not sympathetic to the special interest of the listed building. This is because it overlaps the symmetrical front elevation of the house and visually creates a new primary entrance to the property, adversely affecting its appearance. The style of the proposal reflects neither the 'polite' architecturally-designed appearance of the main house nor the vernacular appearance of the historically detached kitchen.
- 6.6 The Dining Room Extension
The dining room extension is to be built onto the former detached kitchen and an opening created in the timber frame to form an access from the kitchen to the dining room.
- 6.7 Your officers actively support the reintroduction of the kitchen use to a building originally designed for this purpose but object to the addition of the dining room extension to the structure. An extension would compromise the historical form and character of the original building, which was constructed as a detached building for a specific function. It is felt that the main house has ample space to accommodate the dining function. (Composite building plans and elevations are attached at **Appendix N**. Please note that these have been assembled by officers in order to assist members. The drawings do not form part of the application).
- 6.8 The addition of a structure to the east wall of the former detached kitchen would also result in the obscuring of most of the timber frame in this elevation, which is a complete and intact truss.
- 6.9 Your officers are further concerned that the details of the works required for the new opening through the original timber framed wall (of largely sound construction) have not been submitted but are unlikely to be acceptable because of impact on historic fabric, particularly as the other wall of elm framing is proposed for demolition (see paragraph 6.6 below). Loss of original historic fabric, would be directly contrary to advice in PPG15, and Policies CON2 and CON3 of the Local Plan.
- 6.10 The demolition and reconstruction of the North elevation of the detached kitchen
The north wall timber frame was constructed in elm in the seventeenth or eighteenth century and is in a weak structural condition. The letter and accompanying details of the 17th June submitted by McCurdy & Co (**Appendix H**) state that the intention is to replace the entire north wall with an oak framed wall of similar design. The works also involve dismantling the roof on the north side of the outbuilding and the construction of new footings. The McCurdy & Co. report, whilst recommending complete replacement for practical and economic reasons, acknowledges that some of the timbers could be repaired or refaced.
- 6.11 PPG15 Annex C advises that 'repairs to timber frames... should be kept to the essential minimum'. This principle is also supported by Policies CON2 and CON3 which states that 'the building's special architectural and historic character [should not be] diminished by the proposal.'

- 6.12 It is the view of Officers that the proposed demolition of the wall and roof involves greater intervention than may be necessary, which results in the loss of significant and irreplaceable historic fabric. A less invasive repair solution should be explored, with new work being added to complement and retain the original wherever possible.
- 6.13 Your officers have experience of situations elsewhere in the District that involve works to timber frame structures. Two recent consents demonstrate that alternative solutions were achieved in similar circumstances that resulted in the complete retention of the historic timber frame. 28 St Marys Street Wallingford (P05/W0997/RLB) involved the installation of a steel frame to take the loading off the original timber frame, whereas at 46 Butts Road, Horspath (P08/W0508/LB) an internal brick wall was built adjacent to the frame to support the structure. An alternative solution has not been explored in this case as the applicant has requested the application be determined as it stands.
- 6.14 Your Officers do not raise an objection to the principle of using oak instead of elm for the frame repairs.

7.0 NOTIFICATIONS AND CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 7.1 Two rounds of consultations have been undertaken in line with the notifications procedure set out in Circular 01/01. In the first instance, the application was referred to the six national amenity societies for comment because of the proposed works to the north wall.
- 7.2 Responses were received from the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society and the Ancient Monuments Society (please see **Appendices I** and **M**). The Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society urge the retention *in situ* of as much existing historic fabric as is possible, such as by the construction of a new load-bearing external skin to support the frame and protect it from the elements. It also raised concerns about the junction between the existing east elevation and the proposed dining room extension and suggested the roofline of the building be raised or lowered so that more of the frame remains visible internally or externally. No amended plans were received from the applicant in response to this suggestion and the dining room extension has been assessed by officers in accordance with the submitted proposals. The Ancient Monuments Society do not object as the proposal does not involve the complete demolition of the building.
- 7.3 The second round of consultations was undertaken on receipt of the supplementary information from McCurdy & Co (**Appendix H**). This was forwarded to the amenity societies and, as the extent of demolition proposed was greater than previously detailed, also required that English Heritage be consulted in accordance with the definitions specified in the Circular. This time responses were received from the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, English Heritage and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (**Appendices J, K** and **L** respectively).
- 7.4 The advice received is contradictory. English Heritage raise no objection to the demolition and reconstruction of the north wall provided the historic frame is recorded before being dismantled. The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings urge conservative repair to retain the historic fabric although it acknowledges that the replacement of the frame may be unavoidable. The Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society object to the proposals as the complete demolition of the north elevation is contrary to the fundamental principle of conservation practice which states that as much historic fabric as possible should be conserved in any repair work. Furthermore, the Society considers the replacement of elm timbers with oak framing as the use of an alien material.

7.5 In attempting to reconcile these different opinions, officers take the view that a less destructive method of repair should be explored, prior to consent being considered for the complete demolition of the north wall frame.

8.0 **CONCLUSION**

8.1 The proposals would be harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. This is contrary to local policy, and national planning and conservation guidance.

9.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

9.1 **That listed building consent is refused for the following reasons:**

- 9.2 **1. That, having regard to its massing, height and design which overlaps the principal double-fronted elevation of the dwelling, the proposed porch link would become a dominant feature and destroy the historic relationship between the main house and the former detached outbuilding. As such, the proposal would be harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building contrary to Policies CON2 and CON3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, and advice in PPG15 and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008.**
- 9.3 **2. That the proposed dining room extension is not in keeping with the historic form and character of the former detached outbuilding and that it would obscure more of the historic timber frame of the outbuilding and result in the loss of historic fabric by inserting a new opening through the end wall. As such, the proposal would be harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of a listed building, and result in a loss of historic fabric, contrary to Policies CON2 and CON3 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011, and advice in PPG15 and the South Oxfordshire Design Guide 2008.**
- 9.4 **3. That, having regard to the method and extent of the rebuilding of the north wall which involves the complete demolition of that elevation and the removal of the existing roof materials, would involve the unacceptable loss of historic fabric. As such, the proposal would be harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, contrary to Policies CON1, CON3 and CON7 of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan 2011 and advice in PPG15.**

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