

Listed Building Consent Application

Applicant: MJ Williams
Address: 32 Shillington Road, Pirton, Herts SG5 3QL
Listing Particulars: The property is a grade II* listed property, English Heritage reference number 1103158
The site: The house is set within an ancient monument, consisting of a moated enclosure, as set out in Attachment 2.

The proposal is to introduce a log burning stove to be situated within the existing hearth of the main lounge (Room 2, as indicated within the ground floor plan of the house in Attachment 3). Photographs of the existing fireplace are disclosed in Attachment 4 and Attachment 5. This fireplace is currently (the only one) used as an open fire in the colder winter months, with logs as fuel.

It is assumed that this fireplace in its present form was introduced when the property was renovated in the 1870s and the oak panelling, which covers all four walls was installed in the property in the 1930s (according to the listing particulars) but its origin is assumed to pre-date the age of the house, which was built in 1609. In common with three other fireplaces in the main body of the house on the ground floor, the current fireplace sits in front of a much larger inglenook fireplace formed from tudor red brick, whereas the walls of the house are predominantly clunch. The chimney stack reaches a height of c.12 metres.

The dimensions of the fireplace and hearth are set out in the drawings in Attachment 6 and Attachment 7. The drawings include the two different models of log burner that are under consideration, but in both cases the requirements for log burners within an existing hearth, as set out in Part J of Building Regulations, are met. The models are an 8kW and a 12kW unit which are above the 5kW threshold where air ventilation is taken into consideration. This is discussed further below.

The applicant has been in contact with the NHDC Conservation Officer, Mr Mark Simmons, and a copy of this correspondence is included in Attachment 8. This initial enquiry assumed that a flu liner would not be installed because of the height of the chimney, but this is no longer the case and so the metal plate to prevent smoke entering the room is no longer required nor proposed.

The proposed flu liner is a 150mm diameter stainless steel liner with stainless steel couplings. This is to be fixed from the top of the chimney, with no external protrusion, directly to the log burner exhaust. Aside from the chimney fixing there are no other fixings, alterations or impairments to be made to the structure of the property, fully respecting its grade II* status.

Building Regulations Part J requires log burning stoves with an output above 5kW installed in new buildings to consider the introduction of sufficient air ventilation into the room containing the log burner. The regulations also state that "special consideration may be needed" for listed buildings and "it may be necessary to seek alternative technical solutions to those set out in this approved document in order to achieve reasonable standards of

safety without prejudicing the character of the host building or increasing the risk of long-term deterioration of the building's fabric or fittings".

The room is c.5m x 6m and the windows are single glazed in this room and throughout the house. In addition to air flow from fireplaces in each room, there are the usual drafts characteristic in old buildings from single glazed windows and original doors, and there is additional ventilation from the suspended floors in rooms 1,4 and 5, with external vents. Combined with the volume of air space in this large house and the ongoing importance of keeping rising damp in the walls in check, these features promote a level of ventilation significantly greater than is found in a modern home designed for insulation and heat efficiency for which current regulations were intended. The room is fitted with both smoke and carbon monoxide mains alarms with battery back-up.

At present, ventilation is more than sufficient to feed the open fire with a comparable level of heat output to a stove. Unfortunately most of that heat is lost up the chimney, rather than being radiated into the room.

An exemption from the requirement for an air vent will be sought from Building Control as soon as a listed building consent application reference number has been allocated to this application. This exemption is supported by Mr Simmons in our correspondence (subject to any comments he may have on the photographs provided), but it should also be noted that an air vent would have an impact on either the oak panelling or the hearth, depending on where it enters the room, and would encompass practical difficulties of an extended pipe run due to the thickness of the external wall, and the room being c.600mm below external ground level.