

Ward Sidmouth Town

Reference 25/0724/LBC

Applicant Cllr Mike Goodman

Location Church Cottage Church Lane Sidmouth EX10 8LG

Proposal Retention of various works to include: lathe and plaster ceilings re-plastered; insulate ceilings; strip back partition walls to stud work and re-instate; install new partition walls; replace fireplace surround with lintel and fire in living room; re-plaster walls and ceilings; new vent in bathroom and install new cowl



RECOMMENDATION: Approval with time condition and informative.

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		Committee Date: 15.07.2025
Sidmouth Town (Sidmouth)	25/0724/LBC	Target Date: 18.07.2025
Applicant:	Mike Goodman	
Location:	Church Cottage, Church Lane, Sidmouth, EX10 8LG	
Proposal:	Retention of various works to include lathe and plaster ceilings re-plastered; insulate ceilings; strip back partition walls to stud work and re-instate; install new partition walls; replace fireplace surround with lintel and fire in living room; re-plaster walls and ceilings; new vent in bathroom and install new cowl.	

RECOMMENDATION: Approval with time condition and informative.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The application is before members of the planning committee as the applicant is a Councillor for East Devon District Council.

The application site comprises the existing, detached two-storey dwelling: Church Cottage, Sidmouth a curtilage listed building to St Giles and St Nicholas Church and Cemetery, Church Street, Sidmouth, a Grade II* listed building. The site is located to the northeast and within the immediate setting of the church.

Footpaths surround the church and run along both the south (front) and the east side of the cottage. Along the Church Lane footpath, towards the east and the north, is a row of cottages which have a view of the churchyard and cottage. Towards the south, this footpath runs past the east side of the church and leads to the nearby cafes and shops in Church Street

The site is located near / opposite the following listed buildings / heritage assets:

- St Giles and St Nicholas Church and Cemetery – Grade II* Listed Building.
- War Memorial, St Giles and St Nicholas Church – Grade II Listed Building.
- Amyatts Terrace – Grade II Listed Building.
- War Memorial Club – Grade II Listed Building.
- Woodforde's Perfumery – Grade II Listed Building.

The site is located within Sidmouth (Town Centre) Conservation Area.

The application seeks listed building consent for the retention of retrospective works, which include lathe and plaster ceilings re-plastered; insulate ceilings; strip back partition walls to stud work and re-instate; install new partition walls; replace fireplace surround with lintel and fire in living room; re-plaster walls and ceilings; new vent in bathroom and install new cowl.

The site lies within the main, Built-up Area Boundary of Sidmouth.

Given Church Cottage is a curtilage listed building, all works that impact on the character and appearance of the heritage asset require listed building consent,

The proposal is recommended for approval and is deemed in accordance with the relevant policies listed below. There are no other material considerations to indicate or suggest that the proposal is unacceptable.

CONSULTATIONS

Local Consultations

Ward Member(s) – No comments received.

Parish/Town Council

No objection

Other Representations

Thank you for your letter of 3 April 2025 regarding the above application for listed building consent.

Historic England provides advice when our engagement can add most value. In this case we are not offering advice. This should not be interpreted as comment on the merits of the application.

We suggest that you seek the views of your specialist conservation and archaeological advisers.

See conservation officers report and recommendation

PLANNING HISTORY

From records it appears that for many years the issue of whether Church Cottage was a listed building has been raised several times both with local authorities and with the Diocese with a continuing lack of clarity. It was in November 2024 that confirmation was received from both the Diocese of Exeter and East Devon District Council that the Cottage is a curtilage listed property through its historic association with St Giles and St Nicholas Church and Cemetery, and that East Devon District

Council are the controlling authority for issues relating to planning and listed building consent.

It is from that background that this application for retrospective works carried out in 2013, 2016 and 2024, listed building consent is submitted for consideration.'

POLICIES

National Planning Policy Framework

National Planning Policy Guidance

Local Plan 2013-2031

Strategy 49: The Historic Environment

Draft East Devon Local Plan (2020 – 2042) - Emerging

Policy HE01: Historic Environment

Policy HE02: Listed buildings.

Sidmouth Neighborhood Plan:

Sid Valley (Sidmouth, Sidford and Sidbury) Neighbourhood Plan

- Policy No. 7 Local Distinctiveness

Site Location and Description

The application site comprises the existing, detached two-storey dwelling: Church Cottage, Sidmouth a curtilage listed building to St Giles and St Nicholas Church and Cemetery, Church Street, Sidmouth, a Grade II* listed building. The site is located to the northeast and with the immediate setting of the St Giles and St Nicholas Church.

Footpaths surround the church and run along both the south (front) and the east side of the cottage. Along the Church Lane footpath, towards the east and the north, is a row of cottages which have a view of the churchyard and cottage. Towards the south, this footpath runs past the east side of the church and leads to the nearby cafes and shops in Church Street

The site is located near / opposite the following listed buildings / heritage assets:

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The site is located within Sidmouth (Town Centre) Conservation Area.

The application seeks retrospective listed building consent for the retention of various works to include lathe and plaster ceilings re-plastered; insulate ceilings; strip back partition walls to stud work and re-instate; install new partition walls;

replace fireplace surround with lintel and fire in living room; re-plaster walls and ceilings; new vent in bathroom and install new cowl.

ANALYSIS

Significance

The cottage is built in stone, rendered with plaster and painted white, with a slate roof and a brick-built extension on the eastern end. The front (southerly) aspect has characteristic Regency gothic revival style windows and door, the pointed shape perhaps imitating the gothic windows of the church (the church itself has since been rebuilt in Victorian gothic style).

It is believed that the cottage was originally built in the 17th Century, just outside the churchyard, to house the sexton of the church. An inscription on a stone within the cottage gives a date of 1631, suggesting that it was originally built during the reign of King Charles 1. However, 19th Century records indicate that it was rebuilt in 1802. During the 19th Century, the churchyard was extended several times and the cottage was incorporated into the consecrated area. In 1863 the thatched roof was replaced with slate.

The cottage was altered and extended during the 1950s to provide a bathroom and kitchen. No plans or pictures can be found for the new extension and therefore, the particulars of features, such as windows and doors, cannot be verified.

Intermittent records show maintenance work on the cottage was concentrated in periods when a new sexton, or latterly a new verger, was being appointed. The cottage is well hidden behind the church and its northerly and westerly aspects are mostly screened by shrubs and trees. Apart from nearby residents, it is therefore, only seen by those who use the footpaths around the north and east sides of the church.

Whilst for many years the cottage was used as accommodation for the Sexton or Verger of the church in more recent years the cottage has been let commercially as a home.

In setting, the building now known as Church Cottage sits in a corner of the churchyard of Sidmouth Parish Church, St Giles and St Nicholas, which is listed grade II*, within the Sidmouth Conservation Area. Footpaths surround the church and run along both the south (front) and the east side of the cottage. Along the Church Lane footpath, towards the east and the north, is a row of cottages which have a view of the churchyard and cottage. Towards the south, this footpath runs past the east side of the church and leads to the nearby cafes and shops in Church Street.

Proposed works

The main heritage issues to be considered through this application is the effect the development works have had on the significance of Church Cottage, as a Curtilage Listed heritage asset located in Sidmouth (Town Centre) Conservation Area.

Impact of proposed works

This application is for the retention of works undertaken in 2013, 2016 and 2024 at Church Cottage. For ease of reference the works undertaken have been addressed in chronological order, in accordance with those set out on the annotated floor plans provided.

The key works undertaken in 2013, that would have impacted on the setting and significance of Church Cottage, included replacement windows with hardwood frames and window repair, works that are acceptable to the conservation of the heritage asset.

However further works undertaken in 2013, included the insertion of uPVC windows and door to the rear elevation of the single storey extension, an approach which is contrary to the conservation of the heritage asset. These works however are justified through a letter sent to the Church Warden of St Giles & St Nicholas dated 20.09.1999 from East Devon District Council, confirming the building was not subject to listed building legislation.

In this respect these windows are accepted through this application, as being inserted in good faith with an understanding, as agreed by the owner, that when the windows are replaced, this is to be in traditional timber casements to match the existing windows within the wider property.

Turning to the works undertaken in 2024, that included repair to the ceilings, strengthening of internal walls and repairs to internal plaster work, due to the failing chemical damp proof course inserted in 2016. Additional works included the removal of the modern fireplace and back boiler in the living room and its replacement with a new electric heater, blocking up a window and the fitting of a c-cap to the existing chimney cowl, works that are acceptable to the conservation of the heritage asset.

In summary the works undertaken in 2013, 2016 and 2024, were primarily repair works to the fabric of the building, including the insertion of a chemical damp proof course which has been addressed through the 2024 application and removal of a modern fireplace. In context of the setting and significance of the heritage asset these works are considered acceptable to the conservation of the heritage asset as a curtilage listed building.

Conclusion

The Council has a statutory requirement under Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in considering whether to grant consent for any works to have special regard to the desirability of preserving and or enhancing the historic and architectural interest of Church Cottage, as a Curtilage Listed heritage asset.

Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF] explains that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets. Paragraph 219 advises new development within the setting of heritage assets, should look for opportunities to enhance or better reveal their significance. In addition, Paragraph 215 states that any less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

The development works undertaken at Church Cottage have continued to preserve the setting and significance of this curtilage listed building whilst ensuring its long-term repair and maintenance.

RECOMMENDATION

APPROVE subject to the following conditions:

1. The works hereby approved shall be in accordance with the approved plans listed at the end of this decision notice.

(Reason - For the avoidance of doubt.)

NOTE FOR APPLICANT

Informative:

In accordance with the aims of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning In accordance with the requirements of Article 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 in determining this application, East Devon District Council has worked positively with the applicant in the following ways to ensure that all relevant listed building concerns have been appropriately resolved:

The hereby approved uPVC windows, shall at their time of renewal, be removed and replaced with traditionally constructed timber casement windows, details of which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Plans relating to this application:

Location Plan	26.03.25
Floor Plans	02.04.25

List of Background Papers

Application file, Design and Access Statement, consultations and policy documents referred to in the report.

Statement on Human Rights and Equality Issues

Human Rights Act:

The development has been assessed against the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998, and in particular Article 1 of the First Protocol and Article 8 of the Act itself. This Act gives further effect to the rights included in the European Convention on Human Rights. In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the applicant's reasonable development rights and expectations which have been balanced and weighed against the wider community interests, as expressed through third party interests / the Development Plan and Central Government Guidance.

Equality Act:

In arriving at this recommendation, due regard has been given to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010, particularly the Public Sector Equality Duty and Section 149. The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people when carrying out their activities. Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race/ethnicity, religion or belief (or lack of), sex and sexual orientation.