



Council: Fidler's secret castle must be destroyed

英議會：秘密違章城堡必須拆除

A British farmer who built a castle and then kept it hidden behind straw bales for four years while he lived there was told to demolish it because he had not received planning permission.

Robert Fidler, 60, spent two years building his dream home — complete with cannon, ramparts and stained glass — in Redhill, Surrey, south of London before moving in with his wife and eight-year-old son.

But he had not been given the green light for construction by local officials and has been left **grasping at straws** as he considers a legal appeal.

Fidler thought he could **exploit** a legal loophole allowing some residents to avoid planning controls if their property was constructed more than four years ago and he kept the property secret from 2002, when it was finished, to 2006.

Judge Thayne Forbes at the High Court in London ruled this did not apply in his case, though, after several years of legal **wrangling**.

"Mr Fidler made it quite clear that the construction of

his house was undertaken in a **clandestine** fashion, using a shield of straw bales around it and tarpaulins or plastic sheeting over the top in order to hide its presence during construction," the judge said.

Fidler's lawyer Pritpal Singh Swarn said his client was considering an appeal.

"Mr Fidler is obviously disappointed and will almost certainly want to appeal bearing in mind what he stands to lose, which is the house that he has built," Swarn said.

(AFP WITH STAFF WRITER)

一個英國農夫蓋了一座城堡，將其隱藏在稻草堆中住了四年，但他當初沒有獲得建築許可，所以政府要求他拆掉這座城堡。

六十歲的羅勃·費德勒花了兩年時間，在倫敦南部薩里德希爾建造他夢寐以求的家——有舊式大砲、城牆和彩色玻璃的城堡，然後帶著妻子及八歲大的兒子搬入。

但他並未取得當地政府的建築許可，於是只得作最後的掙扎，甚至考慮循法律途徑上訴。

當地市政條例規定，部份居民私自搭建的建築，屋齡若超過四年，就沒有建築許可的問題。他心想他可以鑽這個法律漏洞，因此二〇〇二年城堡完工後，他就一直隱藏到二〇〇六年。

經過數年纏訟，倫敦高等法院法官賽恩·富比斯仍裁定此規定不適用於他的案例。

法官說：「費德勒先生顯然是蓄意隱瞞這棟房產，除了利用稻草堆掩蓋，還在上面蓋上帆布或塑膠薄板，這些作法都是為了要在施工期間掩人耳目。」

費德勒的律師普利特坡·辛格·史旺表示，他的當事人考慮提起上訴。

史旺說：「費德勒先生對這個結果感到很失望，為了不讓蓋的城堡遭到拆除，即使沒有勝算他會繼續提出上訴。」

(法新社／翻譯：袁星塵)

Robert Fidler stands outside his home at Salfords, England, on Feb. 3, 2010.

PHOTO: AP

二月三日，羅勃·費德勒站在他英格蘭索爾福茲的家外。

照片：法新社

TODAY'S WORDS 今日單字

1. **exploit** /ɪksˈplɔɪt/ v.

利用 (li4 yong4) , 開拓 (kai1 tuo4)

例： We are hoping to exploit new opportunities in South America.
(我們想開拓南美洲的新機會。)

2. **wrangle** /ˈræŋɡl/ v.

(長時間的) 爭辯 (chang2 shi2 jian1 de5 zheng1 bian4)

例： The builders have been wrangling for months over their fees.
(建築工人因為工資的問題吵了好幾個月。)

3. **clandestine** /klænˈdɛstɪn/ adj.

暗中從事的 (an4 zhong1 cong2 shi4 de5)

例： The clandestine meetings took place in a disused cigarette factory.
(秘密會議在某廢棄菸廠舉行。)

LANGUAGE POINT 重要片語

grasping at straws 不放棄任何機會

If you are **grasping at straws** you are so desperate to succeed at something that you are prepared to try methods that are unlikely to work.

Example: "Will thinks he still has a chance with Selina, but I think he's **grasping at straws**."

如果說你「**grasp at straws**」，就表示你不計一切想達成某事，所以連不可行的方法都願意嘗試。

例如：「威爾認為他跟瑟琳娜之間還有機會，但我覺得他只是在垂死掙扎」。