

23rd January 2018

Our ref: MBD/JJH/1103



graves
jenkins
PROPERTY PEOPLE

Mr. and Mrs. C. Halls,
Decoy,
Arundel Road,
Near Poling,
BN18 9QA

Incorporating

mlsurveyors
chartered surveyors

(Crawley/Haywards Heath)

17 Brighton Road
Crawley
West Sussex, RH10 6AE

Dear Mr and Mrs Halls,

Re: Outbuildings at Decoy, Arundel Road, Near Poling, BN18 9QA

You have asked me to inspect the condition of the above buildings in relation to possible conversion to residential use, in support of your Planning Application.

The intention is for the buildings to be largely refurbished and upgraded, rather than be rebuilt, to form a single storey detached residential unit.

This report is to advise on the fundamental structural integrity of the buildings and their viability for conversion.

As one stands outside Decoy Cottage and looks at this range of outbuildings it is in four areas. There is an old barn used for garaging to the left with loose boxes to the right and then a section of loose boxes/stores linking these two sections. These are referred to 1, 2 and 3 respectively in description. Behind this is a fourth building built at a slight angle but detached.

Whilst one could look to utilise the spaces within the current pitches of the roofs, slightly higher pitched roofs, whilst not providing space for first-floor accommodation, would provide you with an aesthetically more attractive building, by utilising plain clay roof tiles which would complement the setting Decoy Cottage. However, as this may not be permitted, this report is formulated on the basis of retaining the current existing roof pitch, but please see my comments below regarding raising the pitch very slightly so as to incorporate tiled coverings.

Looking at Building 1 first, i.e. the front left area shown on the attached two photographs, I can comment as follows.

This is a building with a simple concrete floor, which could easily be upgraded to modern standards. It is enclosed by a mixed masonry wall with the structure probably being something in the order of 200 years old. One wall has a series of brick buttresses built against it to the left, but the walls are old and now appear stable and capable of retention in conversion to a dwelling house. The roof is relatively lightweight and additional trussed elements would need to be incorporated to support insulation and a heavier cladding than the existing. It may be worthwhile considering rather than just reinforcing and extending the roof, actually putting a complete new roof at a consistent pitch around all three wings of what effectively is a converted stable yard if it was converted to a house. If it is essential that the pitch remains as they are, then this would perhaps limit the type of cladding that could be used, but the basic shape could be retained.

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Haywards Heath

General: Brighton & Hove
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To all these buildings it would be prudent because of the heavier loading of the roof and so as not to over stress the retained walls to actually form the roof on steel uprights, which can be used to brace the walls and transfer the loading of the roof straight into the ground, as opposed to into the ground via the walls. The roof cladding to all these buildings is corrugated asbestos cement or possibly fibre cement in some areas, and certainly not suitable for conversion purposes. The roofs therefore would need recladding and as indicated above, plain clay tiles at a greater roof pitch would be sympathetic to the main house, although slate is more appropriate for this roof pitch. This section of building therefore can fundamentally be converted, as opposed to rebuilt.

Looking at the fourth detached section to the rear, very similar comments are applicable, in that there is something like 200-year-old possibly even older masonry walls and a roof which warrants the same comments as for the first building indicated above. This means the roof could be retained at the current pitch, but probably clad with slate, although it would need some reinforcement and more trusses with the loading taken through to the ground, probably independently rather than relying on the existing old walls, which will be retained as they are. One could raise the pitch for a clay tile roof or as above keep it the same and perhaps look to provide a slate roof covering. The concrete floor again can be upgraded quite easily to habitable standards. The walls are about 1½ brick thick and quite substantial, but historically on the corners there has been some cracking, but not recently. This is probably as a result of splaying rather than ground movement and as such some metal straps will be needed around each corner, probably fixed externally and left exposed as a feature rather than trying to hide them. You could alternatively add them internally and these would then be lost behind insulation and dry lining that would be needed to bring the walls up to habitable standards.

A small link building would be needed to connect this to the remaining buildings by building 3.

The next section i.e. Section 3 is a timber framed and clad loose box/barn area, built from a very old masonry plinth. Similar comments are applicable here to the roof as made above and the walls appear substantial enough to be retained as timber walls with insulation incorporated and can remain as having timber weatherboarding externally. The basic structure therefore, is capable of retention, but the roof as above needs upgrading preferably to a higher pitch to have a consistent roof around all three front buildings rather than completely different designs, which would look a little bit of hotchpotch. The existing roof has an unnecessary and messy method of connecting with the building 1 roof which could easily be remedied if the roof over building 3 is raised just slightly, which I would recommend.

The final section i.e. that referred to as building 2, is the right-hand wing, which is a more modern construction. Again, the concrete base can be upgraded as a floor with new insulation etc and the same structure lends itself to the same conversion technique as previously described. It could include a masonry plinth and a replaced roof cladding as the other buildings. Out of interest, I attach part of a set of Estate Agent's details, which include a section of similar stables converted into usable space, without rebuilding and within the gardens of a Grade II Listed sixteenth century house. This example property is in Hartfield, East Sussex.

I trust this report provides enough information to show that these buildings are capable of renovation and conversion, naturally with a certain amount of upgrading and improvement as expected, in particular to the roofs mainly for aesthetic reasons.

Clearly there is the matter of adding door and window openings sympathetically to the buildings, but these appear capable of being added without affecting the fundamental structure, although obviously lintels etc., need to be allowed for.



A property like this will have to have a private drainage system, which we assume can be shared with Decoy. Electricity and water are connected, and heating will be LPG or oil-fired. You may also like to look at some of the more ecologically friendly heating systems that are available now.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Yours sincerely,



M B Dutt FRICS
Graves Jenkins