

Arun District Council
Planning Department and Listed Building Consent
1 Maltravers Road
Littlehampton
BN17 5LF

15th April 2020

Dear Sirs

The Old Mill House, Station Road, Angmering, West Sussex BN16 4HY

Please find attached our planning application for the above property. I sincerely appreciate with Covid-19 we are experiencing very surreal times for the Nation and World, but felt we still needed to apply for planning for our home. I am sending you this letter with our application to help describe and explain our reasoning for making our application.

We moved to the area after relocation from Buckinghamshire (Aylesbury) at the end of February 2020, just as Covid-19 was being realised, thankfully for us without the current impact. The first two weeks was very dull and cold which was fine as we were settling in and unpacking; it was at this point we realised several 'problems' with The Old Mill House, some of which we were aware of but the majority were somewhat of a surprise. Given the age of the property we did not have a structural survey, as we did not necessarily want to be 'put off' with the purchase, we hoped to bring life back to the Cottage and enhance her natural beauty to both house and gardens.

We were very fortunate in that prior to lockdown we had the relevant trades in to help us understand what was going on with property and what we would need to achieve in order to maintain and make safe the utilities that service the house.

I will start with the garden. There are no TPO in place so we had no idea why trees have been left rotting and several had died because of overplanting and ivy that has been left to grip and strangle many of the older trees. There were also 3 outbuildings 2 of which had 'live' power running to them, not complying with regulations as the cables were loose. All 3 buildings were beyond repair and dangerous upon inspection, and had started to collapse onto the pathways and trees. We have since had these removed as they were structurally unstable upon closer inspection, (when viewing the property we could not gain access to these buildings as they were full of items) and would like to replace them with outbuildings as outlined in our application to house a small home office, a workshop and garden building with shower room and small kitchen to allow family members to visit us. (The upstairs bedrooms in the Cottage share a bathroom that has a macerator servicing the toilet as a soil vent pipe was not fitted because of the listing of the building; as macerators have a tendency to break-down because of what is flushed away, for us living in the property we can make sacrifices but asking guests to do the same may be somewhat awkward, hence having a small guest space as a place to visit us, not on a permanent basis I must stress).

We have removed the trees, using a professional company, that have caused nuisance to the thatch roof and thinned out the planting to ensure the older trees now thrive. The steps leading to the garden from the Cottage need repair as do the dwarf gardening retaining walls. These need to be taken down and rebuilt in keeping with the structure of the Cottage, our documentation shows the angle of the wall leaning to the steps.

We have had a builder out who has advised the dwarf wall needs urgent attention and will collapse as can be seen from the photos it leans very much over the steps. The steps also cause concern due to their height and need have other 'tiers' added to make the steps more manageable and the garden easier to access.

Moving to the Cottage itself, the attached letters and emails will hopefully give an insight into what we are facing within the property. We were advised upon purchase of the property by the vendors that there wasn't a problem with either the boiler or the electrics. Within the first 2 weeks we realised we had a huge problem as the boiler is unable to start up properly and emits a strong gas odour. Initially the boiler ignition was taking between 8-10 times to light the boiler we have been living here for 7 weeks, it is now taking up to 15 meaning the boiler is really struggling. We also noticed that hot water takes on average 8-10 minutes to warm up in the kitchen sink and longer to the bathroom, where the flow rate is very very slow. You will note from the plumber's letter when he did previous work to the property, he advised the owners that the plumbing needing an overhaul. We cannot adjust the heating in the property at all, the valves on the radiators do not work and therefore on permanently at full temperature. To turn the heating off, we lose hot water! The system needs attention as a priority.

The plumber has advised that the boiler needs to be replaced along with the heating and pipework in its entirety to make the Cottage more efficient and safer! We would like to remove the old and rusting radiators to more authentic ones in keeping with the period of the cottage and upgrade the pipework also, whilst this work is carried out. The recommendation was to rehouse a new more efficient boiler in the conservatory against a solid wall, we have attached documents to show the proposal. The Conservatory leaks has rot on the lower structural members, the windows and doors do not shut or lock properly. The glass has 'blown' on the windows, and the hardwood frame is very old and has several areas that are rotted through. If we replaced the conservatory in a similar vein, we could relocate the boiler to comply with regulations and make the conservatory a more useable asset to the Cottage, providing light and power to it and by providing a new roof, it will be a useable room for all year use.

This leads onto the electrics servicing the cottage. There is no main light in either bedroom 2 or bedroom 3, with bedroom 3 having no heating or lighting and only one electrical socket which does not work. The extended cabling to the garden is also unsafe and does not adhere with compliance guidelines and needs to be updated, making it dangerous to feedback to the cottage and like the boiler is a potential fire hazard.

We bought the property aware of some work required but have uncovered many problems that need to addressed simultaneously in our opinion. The Cottage is beautiful and we are aware we are as we call it, "custodians of history"; we would like to make the property safe and uncover the beams contained within the cottage that have been boxed in and painted over.

The windows upon moving in do not open, apart from 2 have been painted shut with very old secondary glazing that is failing. The secondary glazing also needs attention, as most of them do not open and glued into place.

We are asking for permission for the out-buildings to go ahead, we know that should/if we need to leave the property whilst repair works are being undertaken, we have at least somewhere temporarily to go for a few days. Whilst this application is for the outbuildings at this stage, we wanted to give provide you with as much information as possible for you to ascertain our position within this beautiful home. We will be submitting a second application regarding the plumbing/heating and conservatory.

We do not regret our move to West Sussex and the village of Angmering whatsoever, and very much hope that the planning and listed building departments can understand the need and want to return this Cottage to a glory that is fitting to its age and character, whilst being compliant and safe without hazards to serve us, and the community and keep the Cottage's historic status for many more years to come.

Kind regards

Yours faithfully

Suzanne and Simon Howland
The Old Mill House, Station Road, Angmering, West Sussex BN16 4HY