Peter Shaw

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[redacted]

The Planning Officer
Arun District Council

20/08/2013

Your ref. LU/204/13/L

Dear Sir/Madam

Application to demolish outbuilding to the New Inn, Norfolk Road, Littlehampton

I write to strongly object to the above application. This is a cynical approach by the freeholders to avoid their responsibility regarding repair and maintenance of an historical asset in their ownership.

The building provides much needed protection to less able residents of the town and is attached to a listed building of some character and history.

Historically:

The New Inn is one of the oldest hostelries in Littlehampton and has served the public for many centuries. In the past, it is widely reported, that the building, the subject of this application, was a licensed brothel connected to the Inn in the coaching days prior to railway transportation.
A piece of local history that would be lost should the application succeed.

The buildings walls consist mainly of flint, with comparatively little brick, few structures of this nature are left in the town and those that do need to be preserved for the architectural heritage of the area.

In the recent past the building has been used for band practice and meetings, when it was in better condition. It provided a private environment for activities that had the potential to be noisy or require sensible debate, without disturbing neighbours but providing a neutral and convivial space, principally due to the integrity of the walls.

Stability:

Part of the applicants justification is that the building is unsafe and not usable.

The main reason for the current state of affairs is that the building has deliberately never been properly maintained. The current corrugated roof has been in place for many years, without gutters or sensible drainage arrangements. Consequently the top of the flint walling is beginning to decay and loose flints have been known to fall into the pub garden. The freeholders response was to erect a sheeted scaffold to catch the flints. This has been in-situ for a number of years, at a rental cost presumably, and no attempt has been made to solve the fundamental problem that the building should have a proper roof and drainage.

An examination of the walls reveals that they are vertical, predominantly sound, and fit for purpose.

Admittedly the first floor internally is unsafe but only because of an inadequate roof and lack of maintenance.
The first floor structure, being inadequate, has not disturbed the external walls, thus again demonstrating their soundness.
One quoin is not in good condition but is capable of non destructive repair using modern preservation techniques.
The majority of defects noted in the survey are due to inadequate and inappropriate repairs.

An example of the lack of care is the vegetative growth on some areas of the walls. Ivy and the like will root in lime mortar and cause the loosening of the flint work. Attention and care, or one small can of weed killer, would have solved this problem in hours not days.

In the past I personally know of two proposals to bring the building back into use, both refused by the freeholders, another example of a lack of care.

Amenity:

Should the application be approved the physical separation of the pubs garden from Regency Court would be lost. The frail residents of Regency Court are protected from the noise of a pub garden by a substantial structure with excellent sound attenuation properties. Its removal would be to their detriment and detrimental to the general amenity of the area.

This is exampled in relation to another public house in the town that has to shut its garden at a certain time of night because of noise affecting local residents. With a loss of amenity for the patrons and undoubtedly income for the establishment. There are employment, viability and sustainability issues that the authority needs to consider in this connection.

Conclusion:

This proposal should be resisted with the utmost robustness and I urge the council to reject the application for reasons of loss of heritage, amenity, local provision and future employment.

The service of a repair notice may be more appropriate given the above noted deliberate lack of care.

Yours faithfully,

P. Shaw.