

Heritage Statement

Address: Aster Court Nursing Home, 18-20, South Terrace, Littlehampton, BN17 5NZ

Location and Amenities

Regency Court is located to the south of Littlehampton, a seaside town in West Sussex. The care home is well placed to benefit from access to town amenities and is situated c.150 m from the sea front and a beach café. The town has a thriving town centre c.1.3 km north west of the care home with a range of high street and independent shops, cafes and restaurants. There is also, a library, museum, yacht club, golf club and supermarket.

A bus stop is situated c.65 m from the care home and there are bus services within Littlehampton providing connections to nearby towns including Rustington, Arundel, Bognor Regis and Shoreham on Sea. The train station is c.1.5 km north west of the care home and provides connections to London Victoria, Brighton, Portsmouth and Southsea and Bognor Regis. The A259 is c.2.7 km to the north west and provides a direct route along the coast, including to Bognor Regis c.12.6 km to the west and Worthing c.14.6 km to the east.

Arundel and District Hospital is situated c.11.5 km to the north. The Park Surgery is situated c.600 m to the north.

Description

The building is Grade 2 Listed and it appears to have been built in the early 19th century.

Situated on the corner of South Terrace and Norfolk Road, Regency Court is a Substantial five storey dwelling with views to the front over East Beach Green and the sea.

Trading accommodation is found on ground, first, second and third floors with ancillary areas located on the lower ground floor. The property benefits from passenger lift access to all floors as well as a stair lift in the former trading area

History of the Area

Until the late 18th century Littlehampton, or Hampton, was a village, lacking the functions, services and economy of the nearest towns of Arundel and Chichester. In the 1296 lay subsidy roll for the Villata de Hamton there were 27 taxpayers, suggesting a population of perhaps around 135; in the rolls for 1327 there were 21 taxpayers and 1332 there were 17 taxpayers.³⁵ Little had changed by 1524, when the population was c.110, or by 1676, when the population was c.100. By 1724, however, the population seems to have grown a little (but only to around its late 13th-century level) to c.135.³⁶ There was a manor house by 1370, which in 1633 (when the demesne comprised 240 acres) had farm buildings adjacent that included two barns, a cart lodge and a granary. It was located west of the churchyard, just south of the present Manor House.³⁷ That there was a school is shown by the presence of three schoolmasters recorded between 1579 and 1625.³⁸ An alehouse was recorded in 1633.³⁹ There is no evidence that Littlehampton was a port of any significance in the medieval period, with nearby Arundel, only 8km upstream, providing that function.

Although the shingle spit at Littlehampton was comparatively modest in length (c.800m by 1700), by 1733 it was restricting the depth of the river to less than 2m at high water, outside spring tides. At this point, however, ships of 60 tons were still able to use the harbour at Littlehampton. Following a Harbour Act in 1733, a new channel was cut through the spit, flanking piers extended into the sea, the harbour deepened to c.4m, and a 45m-wide quay built together with an access causeway. The works were completed by 1737, and largely funded by a loan from the duke of Norfolk.

In the late 18th century Littlehampton began to develop as a seaside resort. Visitors were coming for bathing by the 1770s,⁴⁷ and were initially accommodated in the village, chiefly by the Dolphin Inn, Surrey Street (recorded from 1777). As at Eastbourne, however, the inland location of the village poorly suited the needs of bathing and new resort facilities were developed near the beach, detached from the existing village. A coffee house was built c.1775 (on the site of modern Beach Crescent), and in 1778 this provided lodgings. In that year there were four bathing machines, and there were at least nine in the late 1780s. The Beach Coffee House had become the Beach Hotel by 1788 and by the following year had an assembly room used for public breakfasts and balls. In the early 1790s a substantial villa was built by the Earl of Berkeley (later Surrey House: demolished 1946 and replaced by Osborne House) was built, and lodging houses to the west. The development of the nascent resort received a boost with the outbreak of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars (1793-1815), and a consequent need for renewed coastal defence and for accommodation of soldiers in barracks at Beach Town between 1794 and c.1818-19.

By 1825, the seaside development had grown to include Norfolk Place, South Terrace, the eastern part of Western Road, and the southern part of Norfolk Road. Resort facilities also expanded: hot and cold seawater baths were built on the seafront itself in 1802, and extended, to include a reading room, in 1824; the Green

was used for a range of activities (see section 3.2.4); a library was located in South Terrace by 1830; a promenade was set out in the early 19th century; and the New Inn was built in Norfolk Road by 1828. The village continued to provide visitor accommodation, with the Dolphin Inn extended in the 1820s and the Norfolk Hotel, also in Surrey Street, built by c.1832.⁴⁸

With the arrival of the railway, and the renewed growth of the port and resort, the village of Littlehampton developed into what was unmistakably a town from c.1860. The Terminus Hotel opened by the station in 1863 and quickly became one of the main inns of the town. A general market (on Thursdays) is first recorded in 1871, and the emerging town began to attract more specialist service industries, retailers and professionals: for example, a silversmith and opticians was established by 1847; Neville Smart founded a chemists and stationers in 1839, expanding to include books, perfume and groceries by 1847, and printing by 1855; there were photographers from 1874; Groom's wine and spirit merchants operated from 1895-1918; accountants are recorded from 1839; and there were two banks by 1852. Brewing expanded in the late 19th century, with the steam-powered Anchor Brewery built in 1872, but had ceased by c.1917

Buildings

In contrast to the few known survivals from the earlier period, Littlehampton has numerous houses that date from between c.1730 and 1840. These include several 18th-century buildings in the village.

The development of Beach Town, however, represents the most substantial group of late 18th and early 19th-century buildings. 3 and 4, and 5 and 6 Norfolk Place are each pairs of mirrored three-storied houses of late 18th-century date, built in brick.

The tall houses of sea-facing **South Terrace** are varied, with the earliest (i.e., late 18th-century) examples probably comprising Nos. 5 and 6 (a red, grey and yellow brick mirrored pair) and 7-10 (a red and grey brick terrace: No. 7 has been modified by the addition of stucco and a full-height canted bay) and 13-15 (a similar terrace). These three-storey plus basement terraced houses, saw addition and infill in the first decade or two of the 19th century, with Nos. 11 and 12 (bow-fronted, and probably with canopied balconies from the outset), 16-18 (four-storied and basement, with full-height canted bays), and 19-20 (a more substantial four-storied and basement building, with bracketed window pediments, and No. 20 having an equally elaborate side elevation to Norfolk Road, which includes a two-storied porch). Continuing west of Norfolk Road, the canted-bay windows of 21-5 South Terrace are also early 19th-century. To the rear of these resort houses (doubtless largely used as lodgings), is the New Inn, Norfolk Road (stuccoed with first-floor bow windows) and, along the eastern part of Western Road, modest workers' two-storied cottages, mostly of flint cobble with brick dressings. Few civic or public buildings were built in this period, with the Nonconformist infants' school, 23 Church Street (now the Friends' Meeting House) being a rare survival. Dating from 1835, it is built of cobbles with brick dressings, and has a main school room with large Gothic windows.

Proposal

It is proposed to remove the PVCu window on the rear (East elevation).

The window will be replaced with a timber window with a central horizontal dividing transom, identical in appearance to the other windows on the rear elevation.

The window will be of timber construction, painted white and this form of window is appropriate to the age of the building.