AWDM/1035/15

13 Widewater Court
West Beach
Shoreham By Sea
West Sussex
BN43 5LS

14th August 2015

Adur & Worthing Councils
Development Management
Economy Directorate
Portland House
44 Richmond Road
Worthing
West Sussex
BN11 1HS

ADUR & WORTHING
20 AUG 2015
PLANNING SERVICES

Attn Hannah Barker

Retention of patio doors to replace exisitng window on top floor west elevation (retrospective)
23 Widewater Court

Dear Madam,

I am writing to you as both an owner, occupier & director (Widewater Court Ltd) regarding the above planning application.

I am not adverse to the alteration per se but have a concern regarding the integrity of the installation based on the report by the surveyor Philip Goacher Associates, a copy of which is attached. This indicates that the structure of the installation is inadequate & does not comply with current Building Regulations. This leads to concerns regarding the building being at risk from weather damage & also that failure to comply with regualtions may compromise building insurance.

I would therefore request that these aspects of the application be examined & action be taken to ensure that all regulations are complied with.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

R A Dean

enc

[redacted]

Our Ref: PSG/kt/14287/001

PHILIP GOACHER ASSOCIATES
Consulting Civil and Structural Engineers
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Worthing • West Sussex • BN11 1LB
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Widewater Court
c/o Mr Craig Newman
Jordan & Cook
31 Chapel Road
Worthing
West Sussex BN11 1EG

24th July 2014

BY EMAIL [redacted]

Dear Sirs

Re: **23 WIDEWATER COURT, KINGS CRESCENT, SHOREHAM BEACH**

Further to instructions received from your Managing Agent, Craig Newman of Jordan and Cook, I confirm having visited the above property in order to inspect and report on the structural adequacy and implications of a door opening formed to Flat 23 through an external wall on to an existing terraced balcony.

The inspection and report have been carried out in accordance with the Consulting Engineer's Conditions of Appointment Agreement No.3 which is attached. I comment as follows:

1. The inspection was carried out on Monday 21st July 2014.

2. Description

2.1 Widewater Court was a purpose built block of flats thought to have been constructed around 50 years ago using materials and methods common to that era.

2.2 For the purpose of this report the new door opening formed to Flat 23 was assumed to face south.

2.3 The building appeared to have been constructed having a timber flat roof with an eaves overhang around the perimeter of the external walls. The external walls appeared to be of cavity masonry construction, and the internal walls appeared to be mixture of both solid and cavity masonry loadbearing walls and non-loadbearing lightweight blockwork partitions. The fifth floor was assumed to be of concrete construction supported by loadbearing masonry elements below. Flat 23 was situated on the top floor of the five storey building.

3. Observations

3.1 From my conversation with the current owner it was understood that he had employed a door and window installer to create an opening through the south external wall to lead from the bedroom on to the terraced balcony. It was understood that Planning Permission was not obtained, and it was also confirmed that no form of structural design or Building Regulations approval was obtained for the alteration either.

3.2 The current owner also confirmed as part of the works a single vertical restraint strap, which was previously attached to the wall towards the west side of the new opening, had been moved and re-fixed to the small residual pier left on the west side of the new opening.

3.3 On inspecting the arrangement of what appeared to be the principal loadbearing walls through the building structure, they all appeared to run in a east-west direction, and it was therefore considered highly likely that the original south wall of the bedroom where the opening had been formed was in fact supporting the roof structure.

3.4 It was also noted that an eaves overhang to the flat roof construction of around 400mm was present, and irrespective of the span direction of the main roof the eaves overhang would have been supported on to the external walls.

3.5 The head of the new door opening was flush with the ceiling and eaves overhang externally, and it was confirmed by the owners that a lintel had not been provided over the new opening. The new double glazed sliding doors were of uPVC construction and considered unlikely to provide structural support.

3.6 The west wall of the bedroom contained a large window measuring over 2.4m in length which, coupled with the new opening to the south wall, left a small 'L' shaped pier measuring approximately 500mm x 400mm in length, with the external wall being of cavity masonry construction around 290mm thick.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Although from my visual inspection I was not able to definitively confirm the span direction of the flat roof joists, the general layout of the property suggests that it was highly likely that the south external wall was providing support to the main roof structure, and was almost certainly providing support to the eaves overhang to the flat roof. The lack of structure installed above the new opening, in my opinion, makes the alterations undertaken structurally inadequate from the point of view of adequacy to support the vertical load from the roof structure.

4.2 The alteration to form a large opening, coupled with the presence of an existing opening, meaning that a relatively small section of masonry pier to the south-west corner of the bedroom was present would not provide sufficient or adequate weight to counteract the likely wind uplift on the roof structure, despite the fact that the vertical restraint strap had been moved to ensure the roof was tied down to the pier.

4.3 Having checked the dimensions of the pier at the south-west corner of the bedroom, I confirm it does not comply with the minimum dimensions set out in Building Regulations Document A, and will therefore require strengthening by provision of either a wind post or some form of frame arrangement around the doors.

4.4 In conclusion, it is my opinion that the alteration carried out to the south wall of the bedroom has potentially detrimentally affected the structure of the property and will require strengthening or remedial works in order to make good the inadequacies now present. These works should be carried out as soon as possible as the defects may invalidate the building insurance.

4.5 In addition to the fact that there are clear structural inadequacies, it should also be borne in mind that Building Regulations Approval has not been obtained for the structural alterations, nor has Planning Permission been obtained and granted, and the works undertaken are therefore in contravention of both Building Regulations and Planning statutes, both of which can be enforced by the Local Authority if required.

5. <u>Recommendations</u>

5.1 There are three options which could be considered for ensuring the adequacy of the structure, which I outline below:

1. The existing doors and windows could be entirely removed and the opening infilled to match the original form of construction, and lateral restraint straps reinstated in their original positions.

2. The existing doors could be removed and the opening partially infilled, increasing the length of the residual pier to the south-west corner of the bedroom, and perhaps installing a window with suitable lintels above in order to maintain a southern aspect view. This may also be possible to achieve by installing a single width door opening in a similar manner so that access to the balcony from the bedroom can be retained.

3. The existing arrangement could be retained to some degree, although it would be necessary to install some form of steel goalpost frame arrangement around the opening, ensuring that the

framework is adequately fixed down at floor level, and is also tied to the external walls in order to provide adequate vertical load resistance and adequate resistance to horizontal lateral loads.

5.2 It should be noted that both options 2 and 3 will require Building Regulations Approval and Planning Permission, the latter of which should be sought before proceeding further. Clearly, consent from the freehold company is also required, and would undoubtedly be subject to provision of structural calculations, etc. from a suitably qualified Structural Engineer, such as ourselves.

I trust the above is clear, and confirm I will be happy to assist further on receipt of your instructions. I enclose my invoice for your kind attention, having completed my brief.

Should you have any queries, or wish to discuss any aspect of this report, please do feel free to call me.

Yours faithfully

[redacted]

Eur.Ing PS GRINYER
C.Eng., M.I.Struct.E
on behalf of PHILIP GOACHER ASSOCIATES

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