

Enabling Works Information

regarding

Elms Farmhouse, Berners Roding

prepared for submission to

Epping Forest District Council

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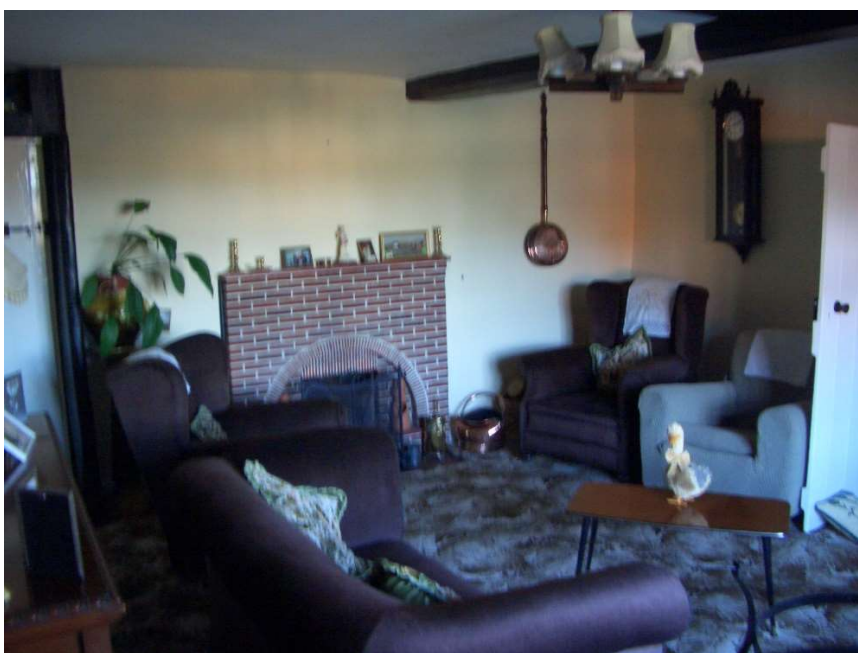
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1.0 Elms Farmhouse – Introduction

The 2 photographs that follow are from our archive from the early 2000's.

Mr John Allen Nichols and Mrs Hilda Nichols lived in the farmhouse for approximately 50 years together. Hilda was born in the house in 1917 and remained in the house all her life until later years, passing in 2013, at the age of 96 years.

John and Hilda both retired from farming in 1993, gifting the farm to their only descendant, their daughter, Catherine Amelia Beattie. They enjoyed the house and its quirky character, which we hope to retain and enhance, improving its structure without detracting from its character and its local and family heritage.



2.0 Summary and Analysis of Farmhouse / Mobile Homes Chronology

Summary

We sought approval of the listed building officer during the time repairs started at the end of June 2016, when repairs were carried out from late July onwards in a 6-month period, finishing up in January 2017.

During that time we submitted an application for our resident security lady, (whom joined us in September 2016), to live in the farm house under a subdivision of the farmhouse that would see three dwellings created within the 2400 sq.ft. farmhouse (about the floorspace of 2 x three bedroom houses and one studio apartment).

The other two dwellings would have been inhabited by the managers at the time, Weekday Manager and a couple acting as Weekend Managers, all of whom were serious managers and doing well at managing the livery yard in the latter part of 2016 and early 2017.

Unfortunately, the council would not allow subdivision of the house and therefore we were left with a farmhouse that will be only one dwelling, which didn't satisfy the needs of the three former managers, all of whom have left as a result.

This had several knock-on effects. We had to hire in a new manager, whom was to live in the house temporarily for 6 weeks whilst a second mobile home was introduced.

We then submitted revised drawings to the council for an additional mobile home, for which I have all the emails.

Unfortunately, the council in their wisdom decided the house could only be a single dwelling during the 2017 / 2018 year, which left us with two mobile homes and a house that was half repaired in the mid to late 2017.

The kitchen was then finally re-introduced into the house in December 2017, however the exterior of the new wall has not been finished since due to financial constraints.

With the finishing of the repair to the house, a small amount of rent became due and this prompted a wage rise being sought by to the weekday manager, whom was now to be employed. As a result of the money we would be paying her and she required a stable income to rent the house which was nearing its completion of the first part of the repair (the house still awaits its second part of the repair as at today).

Therefore, we sought to change the usage of the house as market rent would be in excess of £2200 after renovation and therefore out of reach of most people in terms of rent.

Analysis of the submission of the planning application

At the time of submission of the planning application (about OCT 2016) and for the subdivision of the house, we had a concurrent application for one mobile home, in respect of livery yard security.

Application was revised and a mobile home added because one of our 2 managers required to live on site to prevent horses getting cast in the middle of the night and to tend to any emergencies. We then purchased the 2nd mobile. Unfortunately, an impasse happened with pay rises being sought, out-performing the turnover and income of the yard and the managers consequently left after being told there was no more money.

In 2018 a new set of managers were introduced to the site, whilst the previous manager refused to leave the farmhouse.

The new managers, then assumed living quarters in the 2nd mobile home, for 6 months until July 2018.

This mobile now sits on the concrete top yard (as it is now redundant).

Meanwhile....

The farm planning and listed building consent was granted in Feb 2017, however the removal of the kitchen in 2016 to enable repair works had left the building without a kitchen, which was replaced in January 2018. The previous manager of Elms Farm Stables then refused to move out of the premises in January 2018, moving on from the house in January 2019 after a court order and bailiffs.

Recap

As mentioned, the house is due to be renovated, with an expected rent after completion, in excess of £2200 market rent. As explained the house is soon to support a mortgage of about £1600 per month, which is attributed to the renovation of the house in its second phase of repair work from the beetle infestation.

I.E: the managers could not afford the house after renovation.

Hence the Stables Proprietors decided to purchase their own mobile homes.

Planning

James Rogers then advised us to withdraw planning for the 2 mobile homes in mid-2018, which we very reluctantly withdrew, which was then followed on via Sharon Hart's involvement as enforcement. We have all the emails to prove this sequence of events.

Conclusion

We feel that the need for on-site supervision of horses at all times outweighs the current tighter planning restrictions, which, I have seen planning laws allowing up to three mobile homes on site for the purposes of temporary accommodation for up to

three years with planning permission granted, whilst the viability of the business is being tested and other consents are being sought.

The location of the mobiles is currently under negotiation and please be advised we are all working together (the “superior landlady” and management company and Epping Forest District Council), initially via Howard Parkinson, Planning solicitor.

It seems we have now reached a negotiated agreement following on from the initial refusal notice on the siting of these mobile homes in the front paddock.

Negotiations have been fruitful and subject to committee approval the mobile homes will be sighted to the rear of the farm.

3.0 Architectural Report

Introduction

This section of the report on the grade 2 listed farmhouse, including its construction, its current internal and external condition, and its current and future structural integrity.

All of the following summary is backed-up via external consultants reports, a letter of anticipated structural works from a structural engineer, an expert witness / building surveyor's letter, a solicitors appraisal of the legal situation from our client's solicitor whom is dealing with the probate for Mrs Nichols estate, namely Elms Farmhouse, together with lastly, a finance broker's letter confirming funding being sought.

Summary of Works

Essentially the farmhouse is a 400-year-old timber structure in need of repair.

The external finish is rendered and internally it is plastered over the studs, making the work to the timber structure unquantifiable at an early stage.

The future building work is unforeseen in terms of the extent and severity of any remedial works, as a result of the previous beetle infestation, which was sprayed as an entire house operation in 2016 / 2017.

The works to the timber frame will be a guess until the walls are opened up from the external skin, which is actually an old war reparation to the entire house after a bomb dropped over the road in WW2 and the original rendering was severely damaged.

Conclusion

So, to conclude, due to the previous beetle infestation, the farmhouse is now due for a major renovation.

Whilst renovating the timber frame, it makes sense to insulate as much as practical using breathable insulants (Sheep's wool within the timber frame and warmshell outer layer).

The drawing slides illustrating the planned renovation in this document, are located within the Appendices, which show neatly the extent of works in drawings and zones.



ABOVE and BELOW: The kitchen re-fit in January 2018, as included in the works approved by Epping Forest Council Listed Building officer at the time.



Appendices