

Design and Access Statement

Property: Bagpiths Cottage, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe (Grade II Listed)

Applicant: Scott Childs

Application Type: Listed Building Consent

Date: Friday 24th October 2025

1. Introduction

This Design and Access Statement supports an application for internal works to Bagpith's Cottage, a Grade II listed building. It outlines the design approach, rationale, and access considerations in accordance with the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The proposals comprise modest, reversible internal alterations designed to improve functionality for modern family life while preserving and enhancing the building's historic character.

2. Site Context

Bagpith's Cottage is a 16th-century timber-framed dwelling with later brick refacing, situated within the village of Balcombe. The building is recognised for its architectural and historic interest, featuring a combination of sash and casement windows, a Victorian gable bay, and traditional interior features.

Internally, the cottage retains exposed beams, traditional joinery, and a compact floor plan typical of the period. The works are confined to the ground floor and are entirely within the building's existing footprint.

3. Proposed Works Overview

Internal Works:

- Installation of a timber stud wall within the ground-floor dining room to create a small study.
- Investigative and reinstatement works for a fireplace/log burner within the front lounge, where evidence suggests a historic hearth previously existed.

4. Design Principles and Rationale

a. Stud Wall

- Design: A timber stud partition finished with plasterboard and traditional skirting, installed floor-to-ceiling to define a new study space.
- Rationale: The alteration provides a modest home office area, allowing the existing spare bedroom to serve as a nursery. The layout change is minor and entirely internal, maintaining the building's spatial integrity.
- Heritage Impact: The partition is lightweight and fully reversible, requiring no loss or damage to historic fabric. It will be finished in materials consistent with the existing interior, blending unobtrusively into the room's character.

b. Fireplace / Log Burner

- Design: Opening up of a historic fireplace recess in the front lounge, subject to investigation. Installation of a log burner (if suitable and approved) within the existing chimney breast, with appropriate flue lining and venting in accordance with conservation guidance.
- Rationale: The reinstatement aims to restore an original architectural feature likely lost through previous alterations, enhancing both the aesthetic and historic authenticity of the space.
- Heritage Impact: The works will reveal original structure rather than introduce incongruous features. Any new components will be installed sensitively to minimise visual intrusion.

5. Impact on Character and Appearance

- The proposed internal alterations are limited, sensitive, and reversible, ensuring the building's heritage value is maintained.
- The partition wall introduces no permanent or visually intrusive change and allows for flexible use of space.
- The fireplace reinstatement enhances the building's authenticity by re-establishing a feature consistent with its historic period.

- No external alterations are proposed; the building's appearance and setting remain entirely unaffected.
-

6. Access Considerations

- During Works: Contractors will use existing access points. Protective measures will ensure no damage to historic finishes or features.
 - Post-Completion: Internal circulation remains largely unchanged, with the new study easily accessible from the main living area. There will be no adverse impact on accessibility or movement within the dwelling.
-

7. Sustainability and Materials

- Use of FSC-certified timber for the stud wall and sustainable plasterboard products.
 - The reinstated fireplace and log burner may provide improved energy efficiency through renewable wood fuel heating, if feasible.
 - Works are small in scale, generating minimal waste and disturbance.
-

8. Conclusion

The proposed internal works are carefully designed, proportionate, and reversible. They respond to the functional needs of the occupants while respecting and enhancing the special architectural and historic character of Bagpith's Cottage.

The approach aligns with conservation best practice and the principles of the NPPF, ensuring that the building's heritage value is protected for future generations.