

Heritage Statement for Listed Building Consent

Bagpith's Cottage, Haywards Heath Road, Balcombe (Grade II, List Entry Number: 1025770)

Date of Listing: 11 May 1983 — *Historic England*

Overview:

A 16th-century timber-framed building, refaced in red brick with part ashlar ground floor, tiled roof, casement windows, and a Victorian-era (C19) bay with gable.

(Source: *Historic England / British Listed Buildings*)

Date: Friday 24th October 2025

1. Description of the Building and Listing Significance

Bagpith's Cottage is a nationally recognised heritage asset, listed for its special architectural and historic interest. The original 16th-century timber framing and later 19th-century bay extension contribute to its distinctive character and period charm.

The property's significance lies in its well-preserved structural timber frame, traditional plan form, and vernacular detailing, representative of the region's domestic rural architecture. Later sympathetic alterations add to the narrative of the building's long evolution.

2. Proposed Works Summary

A. Internal Works

- Installation of a timber stud wall in the ground-floor dining room (modern wooden floor, no beams), floor-to-ceiling, to create a small study space. Constructed using timber studs and plasterboard with traditional skirting to match existing finishes.
- Exploration and reinstatement of a historic fireplace or log burner in the front lounge. A former fixture appears to have been concealed by later alterations; works would involve careful investigation and potential reinstatement using non-intrusive methods.

3. Impact on Significance

- Stud Wall:** The proposed partition is entirely internal and fully reversible, avoiding attachment to or interference with the historic timber frame or original structural elements. Its addition introduces a functional subdivision in a sympathetic manner,

using traditional materials and finishes that integrate visually with the existing interior.

- **Fireplace/Log Burner:** The investigative and reinstatement works seek to restore a historic architectural feature consistent with the building's original layout and period character. The approach enhances the building's authenticity and domestic charm. Any new installation (e.g., stove or flue) will follow conservation best practice and be implemented without harm to historic fabric.

Together, these works represent minimal physical intervention and no loss of historic significance. The alterations are reversible and designed to sustain the continued residential use of the building while preserving its heritage values.

4. Justification of Need

- **Creation of Study:** The modest internal adaptation accommodates a home office to meet current family needs while maintaining all historic and architectural features. The change allows the existing spare bedroom to be used as a nursery, improving the home's functionality without structural alteration.
- **Fireplace Reinstatement:** Investigating and potentially reinstating the original hearth restores a key historical feature typical of the period, re-establishing an authentic focal point within the principal living space.

These interventions ensure that the building remains fit for modern domestic life without compromising its historic integrity.

5. Mitigation Strategy and Approach

- **Construction:** Timber stud construction will be used, avoiding penetration or disturbance of original floorboards, wall plates, or ceiling timbers. Fixings will use non-damaging methods and materials compatible with traditional finishes.
 - **Reversibility:** Both the partition and any reinstated fireplace are designed to be fully reversible and removable without trace, ensuring long-term preservation of the building's historic fabric.
 - **Conservation-Led Methodology:** Works will be undertaken by experienced contractors familiar with heritage structures, ensuring all original material is protected and recorded where necessary.
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6. Conclusion

The proposed internal works to Bagpith's Cottage — the introduction of a timber stud wall and the investigative/reinstatement works for a fireplace — are minor, sensitive, and fully reversible. They have been designed with respect for the building's special architectural and historic character, causing no harm to its significance.

The proposals represent a sustainable and proportionate approach to adapting a listed building for contemporary family use while preserving its heritage for future generations.