

The History and Structural Development

of

# 1 BEEHIVE LANE

FERRING, WORTHING

East Sussex



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for

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# THE HISTORY AND STRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT OF 1 BEEHIVE LANE, FERRING

## **Introduction**

This report investigates the history and architectural significance of 1 Beehive Lane, Ferring, East Sussex, and was commissioned to inform a planning application to redevelop the plot on which the house stands. The building is not statutorily listed, nor on a local list. However the owner commissioned this building assessment due to an interest into the history of the building.

The house occupies a large corner plot on the north side of Beehive Lane (Fig 2) and the west elevation overlooks a small triangular green at the junction with Ocean Drive and Ferringham Lane. It is surrounded by 20<sup>th</sup> century suburban development and the historic centre of the village lies about a quarter of a mile to the north.

## **History**

Prior to the 1920s West Ferring was a small agricultural village centred on the church and manor house, The Grange (Fig 1), with a population of 243 in 1901 and 256 in 1921 (Vaughan 1993, Worvell 2000). In this year the Grange Estate, the principal landholding in the village, was sold at auction (Conservation Group 1989) and the fields to the south, between the historic centre and the sea, parcelled up and sold off as housing plots. By 1931 the population had grown to 795 and by 1971 to 4292. Many of these plots were developed as holiday homes built of timber and thatch or small flat-roofed bungalows, and their construction throughout the 1920s is documented in a series of postcard views. Some of these (Vaughan 1993, pl 272) show Beehive Cottage in its original form (also Fig 1) with the roads only partially built up and building plots for sale; it was one of the first houses to be built. Another photograph (in the possession of the owner) shows the house from the east with an external stair and verandah giving access to a loft in the roof space (Fig 1).

The present owner, Mr S Jenkins, bought the house in 1962, initially for holiday and subsequently for permanent occupation. He added an extension at the east end of the house in 1975, doubling its original size, and acquired plots of land immediately to

the east so as to build a tennis court (Fig 2). A second thatched cottage standing on one of these was demolished and the materials used to make outbuildings.

**Description** (Figs 2 & 3)

The building stands at the west end of an enlarged corner plot with its longer axis facing south. As originally constructed it was a rectangular 1½ storey chalet measuring 7.3 by 6.3 m, of timber-framed construction on a thin concrete base. The exterior was weatherboarded and the roof thatched. At the east end there was an external staircase with a verandah providing access to a loft on the first floor (Fig 1). The eastward extension added in 1975 is in the same style as the original; the old weatherboarding has been replaced by UPVC cladding and double-glazed windows have been installed throughout; some of the external doors are reused.

Internally the two main rooms on the south side of the original house have been thrown together and the verandah with its external stair incorporated into the extension, to provide access to the enlarged first floor. Two ground floor rooms have their original matchboarded finish; the principal room was heated but the present fireplace surround has been brought from elsewhere.

**Appraisal**

- The building was constructed c.1921, following the sale of the Grange Estate, on what were previously open fields to the south of the historic village centre. It was part of a piecemeal development on individual plots which has covered the whole of the southern part of the parish in 20<sup>th</sup> century housing. On the majority of plots the original houses have subsequently been rebuilt or enlarged (Vaughan 1993, pl.275).
- The house was built for occupation as a holiday home and is consequently a cheaply-built, uninsulated timber structure on insubstantial foundations, which was intended to have a limited lifespan. It has been maintained for more than forty years by the present owner who has carried out repairs and alterations himself; to provide sufficient space for family occupation he extended the house in 1975. However the original fabric does not meet current building or

insulation specifications and is nearing the end of its useful life. To bring it up to standard would require total rebuilding and the inevitable loss of such original fabric as survives.

- Within its local setting the house provides a characterful focal point in an otherwise undistinguished suburban environment. This is largely due to the fact that it is thatched and not to any inherent age in the visible fabric; half of the roof dates only to 1975 and all other external finishes are also modern. The thatch has reached the point where it requires renewal.
- The house stands on a large corner plot and it is proposed to redevelop the site as several residential units. Historically more than one house stood on the site, which is an amalgamation of three separate plots bought up by the present owner; one was undeveloped and a second had a similar timber and thatch cottage which was demolished. Proposals to increase the amount of housing on the site cannot therefore be seen as overdevelopment. Adjacent plot sizes are all smaller with relatively larger houses built upon them. None of these is architecturally distinguished so that new development should not detract from their appearance and with a suitable design could enhance their setting. The present building is not without historic interest as an example of earlier 20<sup>th</sup> century seaside development but for that reason has a finite structural life.

## **References**

Ferring Conservation Group, 1989 *Setting up a new society*

Vaughan, J, 1993 *Goring and Ferring, past and present*

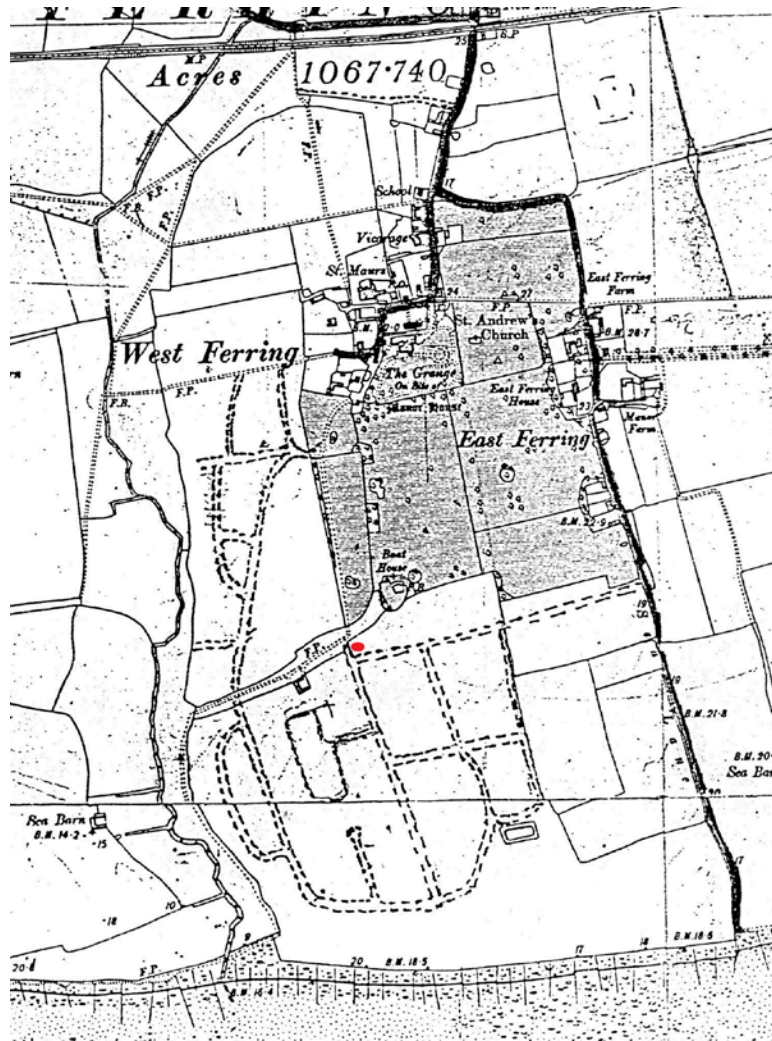
Worvell, K, 2000 *Ferring Millennium History*

## **List of figures**

**Fig 1** Historic map and photographs

**Fig 2** Plot plans and phased sketch plan of house

**Fig 3** Photographs of house



**Fig 1**

1913 Ordnance Survey map, 6":1mile, with new roads sketched on; position of house shown in red

The original house from the south-east showing the verandah



The original house from the north, 1920s, looking down Ocean Drive. Both photos in the possession of the owner. There is a similar photo in Vaughan 1993 (pl. 272) contrasted with a modern view.





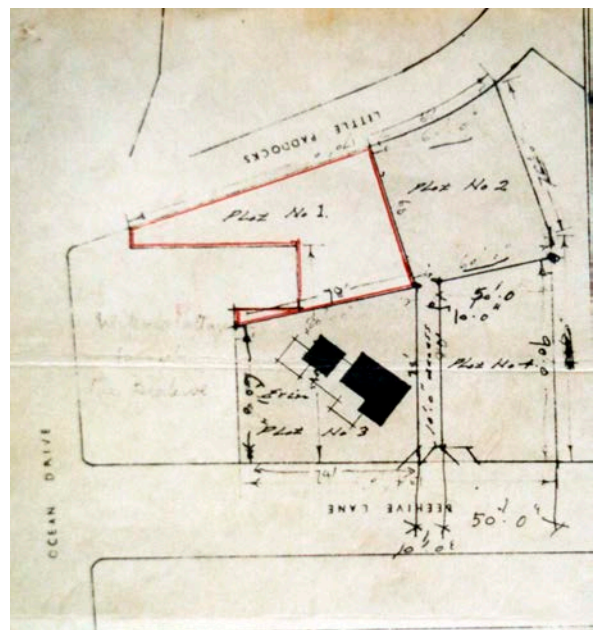
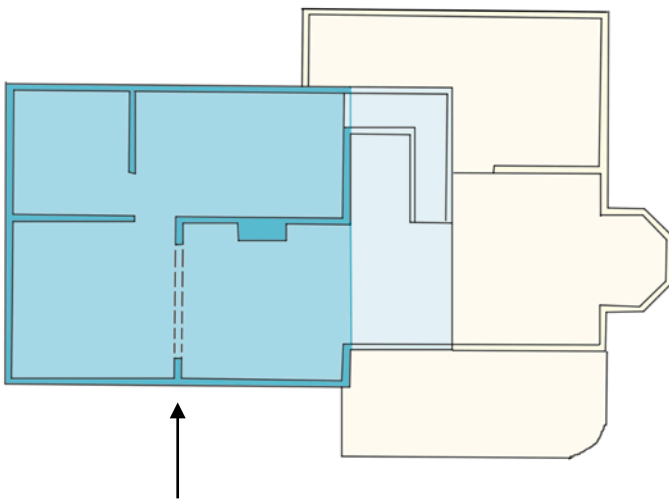
**Fig 2**

The house in its modern setting; plot outlined in red

Sketch plan: original house - blue  
verandah & stair - pale blue  
1975 extension - yellow

View from the south

Plan showing addition plots incorporated into the garden and demolished second house





**Fig 3**

(clockwise)

View from the west

View from the east (1975 extension)

View from the north-east

Sitting room (original house) looking west

Joists to former verandah, now internal

