

Your house sale could be at risk without the right paperwork!

Louise Flower - LF Architecture Ltd

Increasingly, homeowners are experiencing an unpleasant surprise when selling an altered property. Whether it's a large extension, a conservatory or merely a DIY project, if certain official approvals are not obtained before work commences it could devalue your property and even lose a sale.

Conveyancing solicitors are being increasingly insistent on seeing official written consent documentation and certification to prove the quality and authority of any recent building work.

Even before the employment of a professional designer an initial telephone call to the council's planning department for advice regarding any relevant consents that maybe required, can be extremely helpful.

A successful and smooth running planning application will take approximately 8 weeks to process - a building control application, 6 weeks. If your project requires both planning and building regulations approval it may be that you will need to finalise your scheme on paper up to three and a half months before you plan to build.

The rules dictating which consents are required are numerous and there are always exceptions! There are too many possibilities to list here but it is a good idea to get the planning officer to explain those that apply to your property as it may influence the intrinsic nature of the proposed scheme. Planning approval may not be required for smaller extensions and as such, work can be undertaken within your general permitted development rights. However, be aware that prospective purchasers have started requesting official written confirmation that planning approval was not required. With this in mind, to avoid any possible hiccups with a future sale, it is well worth submitting an application for 'Lawful Development Consent' to confirm that planning approval was not required.

Building Control Approval will be required for the majority of alterations and extensions to your property. For larger projects the Building Control department at your local council will require completed, detailed drawings to be submitted. These will also form the basis of a contract between you and your builder or tradesman. The written approval of submitted plans and

mandatory inspection of work by the local authority at specified stages will ensure a certain quality of work. You should receive a certificate of completion when the project is finished without which, you may encounter difficulties when you come to sell.

Building Regulations now encompass replacement glazing and since January of this year, domestic electric work too. If you are making alterations to the electrics in your kitchen, bathroom or garden you will need to either appoint a competent person registered with an electrical self-certification scheme - for example the IEE - or submit a Building Regulation Application. You will also need to obtain a certificate from your electrician or in the case of replacement glazing, from your FENSA registered installer on completion of the work.

In addition to the aforementioned approvals, should you want to make alterations to a leasehold property that will involve a deviation to the Lease Plan; it will be necessary to obtain the Landlords consent. Your Landlord may charge you for the privilege of altering your property, especially if you are seen to be increasing its value. You will also have to pay for the legal fees incurred in producing and submitting the 'Deed of Variation' to the Land Registry.

The majority of 'building professionals' will offer a free advice and quotation service that will enable you to establish the feasibility of your proposals and discuss the consents that are specifically required. It's also worth getting the required approvals prior to commencing any works as approvals applied for retrospectively can not only prove to be costly but ultimately, may lose you the sale of your property.



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Market Trends

David Maslen
Maslen Estate Agents

Following a slow start to the year and a huge influx of additional properties for sale, property prices decreased month on month through to the end of April. Since then the market has gradually improved, buyers confidence has returned and property prices have stabilised. In fact, May, June and July have been excellent months with the volume of transactions steadily increasing.

Buyers are most definitely out there and so is their desire to buy. However, over priced properties - even by a small amount - can sit on the market for an age and become stale. Buyers have plenty to choose from at the moment so I believe it really is imperative to price sensibly if you are serious about moving.

What's on!

Some local events scheduled during the next few months

- 19/29 Aug **Zippos Circus** - Hove
No.1 Lawn
- 20 Aug/
23 Oct Stephen Dixon:
Monsters and Metaphors -
Exhibition - Brighton Museum
- 01 Sept/
01 Mar **A Family of Fashion:**
Generations of Stylish Dress
1885-1970. A unique exhibition
drawing on the extensive
wardrobe of four generations of
Lord Snowdon's family -
Brighton Museum
- 07/11 Aug **Brighton & Hove Food & Drink
Festival 2005** - various locations
in city centre
- 10 Aug **National Speed Trials** -
timed speed trials - Madeira Drive
- 03 Sept **BASS community 'Fayre'** -
12pm-6pm - The Level

Please note: It is advisable to check dates, times and venue before travelling as each event is planned well in advance.

History on our doorstep

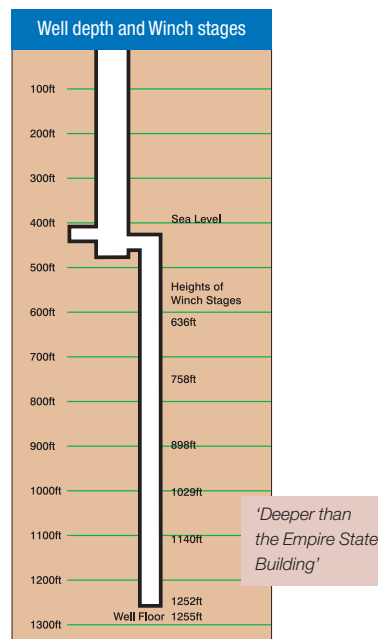
Woodingdean Well

by Roy Grant - Local historian

One of the more unusual local sites with a claim to international fame is the Woodingdean Well. It was started in 1858 by Brighton's Guardians more as a cost cutting exercise, than as an attempt to break a world record, but it did break a record and still remains as the deepest 'hand dug' well in the world.

Back in 1858, plans were in hand to build a new workhouse at the top of what is now Elm Grove and to add to it an industrial school for juveniles some 2 miles away at Warren Farm. However, the expense of having pumped water supplied from the local waterworks, then on the corner of Lewes Road (now Saunders Park) was considered prohibitive, so the Guardians decided that they would construct a single well for both properties and augment the workforce with labour from the Dyke Road Workhouse. In their opinion, making relief for the more able pauper, young or old, would reduce labour costs and indirectly add a further deterrent to anyone considering applying to the workhouse for poor relief.

The initial plan was to sink a 6 ft wide, brick lined shaft down some 400 feet to the subterranean water table. All the soil dug out would be placed in buckets and hand winched to a platform at the top of the shaft where it could be disposed of. After 2 years of digging, the shaft had reached a depth of some 438 feet, but no water had been found. Fearing that they had just missed the supply, the contractor gave instructions for a lateral chamber to be driven some 30ft northwards, but this too yielded nothing. Further lateral tunnels were driven westwards and eastwards, but none of them were successful. Failing to acknowledge defeat, the Guardians sanctioned the construction of a further 4ft wide shaft at the end of the eastern tunnel.



Work continued for several more years with men working 24 hours a day just by candle light in appalling conditions. Men had to dig, load buckets and lay bricks in the confines of a 4ft circle. Winchmen stood on tiny platforms cut into the side of the shaft,

passing spoil up and bricks down as the shaft continued forever downwards. One winchman actually plunged to his death. Above ground the Guardians began to bicker about the expense. It was now costing the local ratepayer some £90 a week and jests about it were frequent. Some said the town was constructing an alternative route to the Antipodes, whereas others described the whole thing as "a great bore"!

At the change of the evening shifts on Sunday 16th March 1862, the bricklayer noticed that the thin crust of earth he was standing on was being slowly pushed upwards like a giant piston. Scrambling up the numerous ladders to each winchman's platform, he and the others quickly vacated the shaft. It must have been a difficult task for the well had now been sunk to such an amazing depth their successful exit took some 45 minutes. Suddenly with a roar, the piston head crumbled and tools, buckets and ladders flooded up the shaft. Water had at last been found. It had taken over 4 years backbreaking work to hand dig a shaft some 1285 feet deep (850 of which were below sea level) without the aid of machines.



Woodingdean Well as it is today - outside the Nuffield Hospital.

To put this incredible achievement into perspective the Woodingdean Well's depth is greater than the height of the Empire State building. Imagine climbing that building in darkness on a twice-daily basis, using just a series of rickety ladders, let alone in a panic situation with water flooding up beneath you and your colleagues!

Did you know?

Palace Pier

- In 1889 the Brighton Marine Palace and Pier Company was formed to erect a new pleasure pier opposite the Old Steine, conditional upon the removal of the old Chain Pier which had been purchased for £15,000.
- The first phase of the new pier was completed at a cost of £137,000 in April 1901 with the opening of the landing stage and the pier-head pavilion - decorated in oriental style with four large minaret towers - contained dining, smoking, reading rooms and a concert hall.
- In 1930 a new entrance and clock tower replaced the three ironwork arches of the original entrance, an improvement which was inaugurated in June 1930.
- The pier was extended slightly in 1938 when a 'big wheel' ride was added at the pier-head. It was closed throughout the war and a gap made near the middle to prevent its possible use as a landing stage by the enemy.
- The Palace Pier reopened in the summer of 1946. Day-trips along the coast were operated until about 1960 and a repertory company performed at the theatre until 1964.
- On 19 October 1973 a seventy-ton barge, which was moored to the pier during the demolition of the derelict landing stage, broke loose during a gale and severely damaged the structure including the theatre, which was never used again.
- The following year a helter-skelter was installed but restoration of the damage was not completed until February 1976.
- The original pier-head theatre has been demolished, and the area is now occupied by a large slot-machine dome and a number of funfair rides. However, shops and the bar on the eastern side retain their original minarets.
- A number of the original square kiosks still remain along the length of the pier, mostly marked with the initials 'BMPP' for 'Brighton Marine Palace and Pier', as the pier is still officially known.

Council's

secret source

beats hose ban

The city will be able to keep the tap running at parks and fountains without draining any of the public water supply

The water used to vitalise grounds from Preston Park down through Valley Gardens, the Old Steine and the Pavilion Gardens is sourced from a separate underground source.

The underground water source, which isn't drinkable, flows beneath these parks and in to the sea around the palace pier. The council has a license from the Environment Agency to extract water from this source for irrigation purposes.

The underground source comes from the Wellesbourne that dates back many centuries and is often referred to as Brighton's lost river.

The Wellesbourne was last seen flowing in 1889 after the newly developed Patcham Waterworks began siphoning water from its sources. It is now regarded as an underground river - but in actual fact there is no river flowing through the chalk deposits. Water is carried from sources in Patcham underneath London Road via sewer before reaching the sea.



Fees versus Service

The Office of Fair Trading, whose values we usually wholeheartedly support recently produced a report into estate agency that encourages consumers to shop around for low estate agency fees.

We find this out of line with the usual aims of the OFT, who usually seek to police the very best service and value for the consumer. In this instance, they seem to have missed the point that the property sellers are most interested in ensuring that they receive a high level of personal service, exceptional competency, and complete integrity from their estate agent.

We find that Brighton sellers want to ensure that they entrust their sale to an agent who will be passionate in ensuring that they secure the highest price the market will pay, within a realistic timescale, and importantly, with minimum hassle and maximum communication during the process. They want to know that, once a buyer is found, everything is being done to pursue the transaction to a satisfactory conclusion, including related aspects of

the move, not just the sale itself.

Of course there are cheaper alternatives. That's democracy. But our clients tell us that when they have used cut-price agents in the past, they received a level of service that exacerbated the stress of moving.

The cheapest agents generally give the poorest service because they cannot afford to attract, train and retain the best staff, or promote their clients property properly. Corners may be cut and integrity can be compromised. Investment in technology is sometimes far less than suggested and the end result can be a slower sale at a lower price, despite an apparent saving in commission.

Experience shows that the best agents secure the highest prices for their clients and faster, and they communicate well during the process. They rightly charge more for this which gives better value for money overall.

If the OFT wants to support the consumer, it should be recommending that sellers shop around for service and professionalism - not fees!

BRIGHTON - NEWS IN BRIEF

Millions of journeys on the buses

Bus passenger journeys have increased by almost a million on the previous year, according to latest figures.

Bus patronage in the 12 months from April 2004 to March 2005 shows the total number of single passenger journeys as 35.2 million.

Councillor Craig Turton, deputy chair of Brighton & Hove's environment committee commented: "The increase underlines the strong partnership forged with Brighton & Hove Buses. Whilst some of the increase may have been existing passengers making more journeys, it is also fairly certain that much of the increase is down to new passengers, many of whom would previously have used a car."

Details of when and where buses are running are available on 'real-time' information boards at bus stops and on Brighton & Hove City Council's travel website: www.citytransport.org.uk

CityCarClub membership tops the 100 mark

Imagine having the flexibility of a car when you need one as well as freedom from the overheads and problems of car ownership. Brighton & Hove CityCarClub does just that!

Members only pay for the time they use a car, so they save hundreds of pounds by not running their own vehicle and by reducing the number of cars on the streets, they help relieve local congestion and parking pressure too.

Started in Hanover the club has gone from strength to strength. It now has bases in Preston Park, Prestonville and Kemptown, operates 10 cars and serves over 100 members. New cars are introduced as the membership increases to ensure everyone has access to a vehicle when they want one.

Simon Bannister, Manager of Brighton & Hove CityCarClub, believes the rise in membership is a good indication of local enthusiasm. He says "We're currently welcoming five new members each week and, with a further six cars being launched in Hove, Seven Dials and North Laine over the summer, I don't see the car club's popularity abating."

City's first wind turbine gets the go-ahead

Brighton & Hove's planning sub-committee has given the go-ahead for a 15-metre high electricity generating wind turbine to be built on the Westergate House development in Moulsecoomb.

The development will consist of 10 industrial units - one unit divided into ten for smaller concerns. The turbine will provide power for the communal areas, such as corridors and toilets, of the divided unit.



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Design and detailed plans for:

• New build • Barn conversions • Extensions
• Loft conversions • Internal alterations, etc.

Saltdean's Grand Ocean Hotel to be restored



Planning permission has been granted for the art deco Grand Ocean Hotel in Saltdean to be restored and turned into flats and commercial/community space.

The grade 2 listed hotel, built in the 1930s and designed by Saltdean Lido architect R.H. Jones, closed in January this year and is now empty and virtually unused. Brighton & Hove City Council granted permission for the hotel to be converted into apartments on the upper floors and commercial or community space on the ground floor. In total there will be 279 flats, 102 of which will be affordable housing and a new car park of 210 spaces.

This permission is subject to a legal agreement with the applicant JG Brighton to make 102 of the apartments affordable housing, to contribute £343,500 towards community use; to put £108,000 towards sustainable transport, including a car club and bus stop improvements and improvements to the environment and to safety of pedestrians on Longridge Avenue; to give £107,308 towards local schools and to contribute £37,500 towards public art on the site.

The existing blocks which currently stand in the grounds, to the south west of the main hotel, and originally housed hotel rooms and also a swimming pool are to be demolished and four new residential blocks will be built instead. A block of flats of up to five storeys is to be built on the existing car park off Nutley Avenue to accommodate affordable housing units.

The exterior of the hotel will be restored and the ornamental gardens will be replanted and landscaped and watered using recycled 'grey water'.

The applicant has agreed to provide 1,100 sq m of community/leisure space on the site to replace the facilities in the hotel which the general public were able to use. The applicant has been in discussion with potential users such as a library, doctors surgery and a nursery.

Chair of the planning committee Councillor Leslie Hamilton said: "The Grand Ocean Hotel is a fine example of art deco architecture and it will be wonderful to see this site restored. The new blocks will replace buildings which were adding nothing to the area and will provide good quality modern housing for Saltdean."

Hanover Day Parade events

Monday 1st August

Hanover Day Parade Workshop: 2.30-4.30pm
Hanover Community Centre, 33 Southover Street.
Parents and children - Make your own Hanover Hats and Headdresses!

Early booking essential on 01273 694873

Tuesday 2nd August

Hanover Day Parade Workshop: 10am-12 noon
Hanover Community Centre, 33 Southover Street.
Parents and children. Make your own Hanover Hats and Headdresses!

Early booking essential on 01273 694873

Limited access, please ask for details

Saturday 6th August

Hanover Day Parade Clinic: 2-5pm
Hanover Community Centre, 33 Southover Street.
Missed the workshops? Broken your hat?
Drop in for Parade First Aid!

See posters around Hanover for more detail.

Sunday 14th August

Hanover Day: 12 noon-5pm
Community Street Festival around Southover Street.
Entertainment, Stalls, Food, Drink, Activities, Parade.
All welcome.

Friday 30th September & Saturday 1st October

Hanover Beer Festival
Hanover Community Centre, 33 Southover Street.



Well done Ben!

Ben Hawley started with us over 3 years ago as a Trainee Negotiator. He has worked extremely hard during that time, so I am pleased to announce that after several previous advancements, he has now been promoted to Senior Negotiator. Ben also completed his NVQ level 3 last year and will be sitting the National Association of Estate Agents Technical Exam later this month.

Congratulations!

Maslen Estate Agents are pleased to be associated with Woodingdean under 9's Football team who have been crowned champions in the division. Our sponsorship of the team this year has been a pleasure and we attended the award ceremony in early July, at Woodingdean School, to present the 'Maslen Award' for the most improved player.



Woodingdean Bowls Club

We are very pleased to be linked with the Woodingdean Bowls Club and delighted to be able to provide ongoing sponsorship. We recently visited the club to present a cheque and were given a very warm welcome by everyone there. Pictured here with some of the club members is Nick Wall, our Woodingdean branch manager.

