

## PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

## PHILIPPA RUDD



Planning permission can be a tricky area – especially if you are trying to change the use of a building. Our expert explains.



**My wife and I are hoping to retire to Norfolk. We have seen a semi-derelict shop on the edge of a coastal village. We understand that we would need to obtain planning permission for the renovation works and I imagine that we would also need permission to use the shop as our home. The agents say this would be a formality. Is that so?**  
You will need planning permission for the change of use from a shop to a home, as well as permission for the renovation works. You should also check to see if the property is listed – if it is you will also need listed building consent.

**Is permission likely to be granted? We would not want to waste much time making long drawn out applications.**

The council will wish to preserve the appearance or character of the area. They will also take into account the impact of the development on people living near the property. I suggest that you talk to a planning officer about your plans. He or she will try to advise you on how to proceed, but his advice will be given without prejudice to the outcome of the planning application.

**What if we just go ahead and improve the property and then move in? Surely the council would just turn a blind eye?**

Residents are encouraged by the council to report any breaches of planning laws. If a complaint were made, it would be investigated. Likewise, a planning officer would be likely to notice your works and the council would then approach you to ask for an explanation.

**What could the council do?**

It could take enforcement action and order you to stop the unauthorised use as a house and you could be required to reinstate the property to its original state. Your solicitor will not let you go ahead with the purchase without making sure that you will be able to proceed with your proposals. You should not exchange contracts until you have satisfactory planning permission for the works and change of use.

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■ **If you have a question or dilemma over the legalities of buying or selling a property which you would like to appear in this supplement, please contact Philippa by e-mailing [caroline.culot@archant.co.uk](mailto:caroline.culot@archant.co.uk)**

■ **These questions and answers are not intended as a complete statement of the law. Specific legal advice should always be taken.**

# Home with clear appeal



By CAROLINE CULOT

**W**hen the owners of this Grand Designs-style home approached their local architects, their brief was to create a modern house with lots of glass to bring the outdoors in, which was practical, but unique – and look at the striking result!

When you arrive down a long drive, the property is a real surprise, with its stunning floor to ceiling window on one side and tall, narrow windows on the other. It really is a “glass house” – when you go up to the front door you can see through into the downstairs floor – so there’s no hiding from unwanted guests! Of course, this exposure is possible because of the property’s situation, tucked away on a secluded plot down the end of a drive which has electric gates so you can be completely private – the postman or window cleaner can be kept well away if need be!

Avocet House, Common Lane, Sheringham, is for sale for a guide price of £525,000 with Keys.

The owners always knew what they



wanted and worked with local architects Stead Mutton to realise their dream. You enter into a huge, open-plan downstairs floor, with kitchen/living/dining levels defined by steps. As you go in, there is a lobby leading into an impressive contemporary kitchen with glossy white units, black granite work surfaces with gadgets, such as an extractor hood which rises out of the

worktop at the touch of the button. The ceilings are vaulted and in the centre of this floor is a large dining hall area which extends out into the rear garden. This really brings the outdoors in and there is also a feature woodburner in a central chimney breast. The downstairs has underfloor heating throughout.

The large sitting room goes from the front to the back of the house and

has an eye-catching, full-height window with doors at the front. Monochrome is the theme throughout, although the kitchen has been painted red and the upstairs bathroom shades of aquamarine. Downstairs, there is also a utility, contemporary shower room and a fourth bedroom, which could be used as a study. Upstairs, you are treated to different angles and window shapes on the landing. Off this is a huge master bedroom with an en suite shower room, large second bedroom with a lovely window looking out towards Sheringham and the sea, a family bathroom and a novel third landing. You go along a thin landing to the bedroom at the end which overlooks the front – it would make an ideal children’s room.

Outside there is a large detached garage, shed, drive and lawns at the front and rear, a manageable, but good-sized garden with a fir tree, silver birch, patio and lots of lighting. It is also worth noting that this house has disabled access.

■ **Avocet House is for sale for a guide price of £525,000 with Keys on 01263 822373.**