Historic Building Control Records Following the Insolvency of a Private Approved Inspector

Written evidence submitted by Glenda Kirby, in my personal capacity as an individual leaseholder at Wadsley Chapel Apartments, Sheffield.

1. Purpose of this submission

I am submitting this evidence as an individual leaseholder, based on my experience of trying to obtain historic Building Control records following the liquidation of a private Approved Inspector.

I am not representing the other leaseholders, the management company or its directors, and this submission should not be taken as an indication that other residents have agreed with or endorsed it.

My concern is a wider policy issue: homeowners can be left without practical access to important historic building control information when a private Approved Inspector becomes insolvent.

I ask the Committee to consider whether the Bill, or associated legislation and guidance, should provide stronger arrangements for preserving and accessing these records.

2. Background

I own a leasehold apartment in Wadsley Chapel Apartments, Sheffield, a former chapel converted into approximately ten apartments and completed in 2017.

Assent Building Compliance Limited acted as the Approved Inspector for the conversion and issued the Completion Certificate dated 10 October 2017.

Assent subsequently went into compulsory liquidation on 6 November 2025.

As part of my own investigation into concerns about the building, I have attempted to obtain the historic Building Control records relating to the conversion.

3. Difficulties obtaining the records

Sheffield City Council confirmed that Assent had issued the Completion Certificate but that the Council does not hold a copy or the underlying historic inspection records.

I obtained the architect's Building Regulations drawing package. However, this does not include the full technical and inspection record, such as inspection notes, calculations and documents prepared by other consultants.

Before Assent's liquidation, I contacted the company in October 2025 with questions about whether the roof structure and insulation had been inspected and recorded. Assent acknowledged the enquiry and said it had been forwarded to a surveyor, but I did not receive a substantive response.

On 6 July 2026, I contacted the Official Receiver requesting access to the historic project records.

The response dated 7 July 2026 explained that the historic data was not held in an easily readable format, that searching and retrieval could be costly, and that the records could not be supplied through an ordinary request. A possible court-ordered disclosure route was identified, subject to third-party funding of the retrieval costs.

I was also advised that the records were not intended to be destroyed before 5 June 2027, although their eventual accessibility and completeness could not be guaranteed.

4. Consequences for homeowners

The absence of accessible inspection and technical records makes it more difficult for an individual homeowner to establish:

- What was submitted and approved as part of the original Building Regulations process.
- What inspections were undertaken during construction.
- Whether particular elements of the building were inspected and recorded.
- What technical specifications, calculations or consultant information formed part of the approval process.
- What evidence may be available when investigating potential defects or seeking an assessment under a building warranty.

In my own case, I am investigating concerns relating to roof insulation, ventilation, damp and condensation, and fire safety. I have obtained relevant assessments and notified the building's structural warranty provider of potential defects.

I am not asking the Committee to determine the merits of that warranty matter or to make findings about the responsibilities of other leaseholders. I mention it to demonstrate why access to historic records can be important many years after a building has been completed.

5. Wider policy concern

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government responded to my enquiry on 19 October 2026 (reference TO2026/28489).

Its response acknowledged the difficulties surrounding Assent's historic records and explained that support following the company's liquidation had focused on live projects rather than historic ones.

The response also referred to the Government's Digital Building Control programme, which is exploring improvements to the consistency, maintenance, processing and publication of building control information.

I welcome that work. However, my experience suggests that the issue is not only about creating better systems for future records. There also needs to be a practical solution for historic records already held by organisations that become insolvent.

6. Recommendations for the Committee

I ask the Committee to consider the following:

1. Preservation of historic records

Arrangements should ensure that important Building Control records are preserved when an Approved Inspector or other relevant building control organisation becomes insolvent.

2. Transfer and continuity arrangements

There should be a clear mechanism for transferring historic records to an appropriate public body or designated custodian, rather than leaving homeowners dependent on the insolvency process.

3. Affordable access for homeowners

Homeowners should have a practical and proportionate route to obtain records relating to their own buildings, without facing potentially prohibitive retrieval or legal costs.

4. Safeguards where building safety concerns remain unresolved

Records relating to residential buildings where potential safety or compliance concerns have been identified should be subject to appropriate preservation safeguards.

5. Transparency about what records exist

There should be a clear process for identifying what records are held, where they are held, what can be accessed, and what information is missing or no longer available.

7. Conclusion

My experience at Wadsley Chapel Apartments has highlighted a gap in the system that may affect homeowners elsewhere.

A building may have been formally signed off, but when questions arise years later, the underlying evidence may be difficult or impossible for homeowners to obtain.

The liquidation of the organisation holding those records should not leave homeowners without a reasonable means of accessing information that may be essential to understanding the safety, compliance and construction history of their homes.

Important building control records should not become inaccessible to the people who need them simply because the organisation holding them has gone into insolvency.

Submitted by:

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