

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 September 2026 10:53:36 UTC+01:00
To: "Hamish Evans" <Hamish.Evans@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/1840 Birch Grove Farm

Hi Hamish

Comments on the above planning application.

Birch Grove Farm is a small historic farmstead located in a rural position to the northeast of Horsted Keynes. It is part of the hamlet of Birchgrove, and is included within the Birchgrove Conservation Area. The farmstead is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmsteads and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the post-medieval period. A Grade II listed building (The Old House) is located a short distance to the northeast. A public right of way (PROW) runs southeast-northwest from the hamlet past the edge of the farmstead and on into the surrounding countryside.

The farmstead consists of the former farmhouse, and a courtyard of former farm buildings to the north of this. The farmhouse appears from a brief historical map regression exercise to date from the 19th century or earlier, but has been substantially extended to the northwest. The surviving farm buildings appear also to largely date from the 19th century or earlier, and include a timber framed weatherboarded barn with perpendicularly attached stables forming the northeastern corner of the yard, a pigsty next to the stables, a further timber framed weatherboarded building to the southern side of the yard, adjacent to the farmhouse, and to the western side a two storey stone built building with an attached single storey timber framed weatherboarded building. The stone building, which has an unusual asymmetric pitched roof, has a date stone to its north facing gable end which reads 1853, with a door below this at first floor. Anecdotally this building was used as an apple store, and OS maps dating from around the mid 20th century do show an extensive orchard in the fields to the west and southwest of the farmstead. However earlier maps do not show orchard planting and it therefore seems likely that the building may have originated as a granary.

Although none of the buildings within the farmstead are statutorily listed, I would regard the farmhouse and the courtyard of historic farm buildings as being of historical and architectural interest in the local context, and would therefore regard them as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs), which also make a strong positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Birchgrove Conservation Area.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for the conversion of the stone building and the attached single storey timber framed building to create a separate dwelling, with associated alterations and a single storey extension to the western side. Associated landscaping works would create a parking area and domestic curtilage around the conversion.

The principle of the conversion is not considered contentious. The form and design of the addition to the western side have been amended on Officer advice as part of the pre-application process, and are now considered acceptable, being subservient in scale to the existing buildings and sympathetic in form having a linear footprint and gabled roof. Associated alterations to the existing structure, including re-use of existing window and door openings to the stone building, and new or altered openings to the timber clad building, have also been amended to better preserve the agricultural character of the site.

Proposed new solar PV panels are confined to the southern end of the western roof slope, where their visibility and impact on the appearance of the farmstead will be minimised. On balance, and subject to detail, this aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious. The applicant should be encouraged to consider colour-matched panels to further reduce their visual impact.

The associated landscaping was also previously of concern, but has been amended to retain the form of the existing yard to the eastern side of the buildings. The existing piggery is to be re-used as a bin store, and domesticating features such as a patio and planting area are confined to the south-western side of the building. Subject to detail, this approach should again retain the agricultural character of the site.

In summary therefore, subject to detail to be reserved by condition, the proposal is considered to preserve the significance of the NDHAs at Birchgrove Farm, and the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

This meets the requirements of the relevant paragraphs within chapter 20 of the NPPF, as well as District Plan Policy DP35.

I would recommend the following conditions:

- Details of roofing and facing materials
- Detailed drawings, at an appropriate large scale, including sections, and annotated to show materials and finishes, of the following:
 - - typical examples of windows and external doors. Your drawings should include depth of reveal.
 - - external shutters.
 - - typical eaves detail to the extension.
- Details of the proposed solar array to include a manufacturer's specification for the panels and drawings at an appropriate large scale including sections to show the panels in the context of the surrounding roof slope.
- Rainwater goods and other external pipework to be of painted metal.
- Rooflights to be flush fitting, metal framed, conservation style rooflights.
- Detailed hard and soft landscaping plans, to include elevations of new or altered fencing, gates and other boundary treatments, and of hard surfacing materials.
- (If appropriate, subject to confirmation by applicant if any works are proposed) Details of works to the piggery to include works of repair, restoration or

adaptation for use for bin storage. Your submission should include as appropriate plans and details of methods and materials.

Thanks,

Emily

Please note that this advice is given at Officer level only and is without prejudice to the formal decision of the District Council.

Submit your planning application online.

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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