

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 July 2025 11:55:28 UTC+01:00
To: "Joanne Fisher" <Joanne.Fisher@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1129 Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney

Hi Jo

Comments on the above planning application.

Firstly, just to note again (as also noted at pre-application stage) this application requires a consultation to Historic England due to the grade of listing of St Mary Magdelene's Church.

The proposed development site is an area of agricultural land to the east of Foxhole Lane, and adjacent to the western side of Bolney village. The proposal before us, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for outline planning permission (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved), for the erection of up to 200 residential dwellings, including affordable housing; a community building encompassing land for education provision, together with associated access, ancillary parking and landscaping; the creation of a vehicular access point from the A272 Cowfold Road, and pedestrian and cycle only access to The Street; and creation of a network of roads, footways, and cycleways through the site; together with the provision of countryside open space, children's play areas, community orchard, and allotments; sustainable drainage systems and landscape buffers.

The current application is accompanied by a Heritage Statement, which I have read and considered. However I do not agree in every respect with its conclusions either in terms of the identity and nature of the affected assets, the contribution made by setting (including the application site) to their significances, or the impact that the proposal will have on those significances.

There are no heritage assets within the site itself, but it is within the setting of several:

- Bolney Conservation Area:
Bolney Conservation Area is in two parts, centred on the southern and northern ends of The Street. The site abuts the south western corner of the northern part of the Area and is in close proximity to the western boundary of its southern part.

In my opinion the significance of the Bolney Conservation Area lies essentially in its nature as the two historic focal points of a Sussex village which has developed over many centuries in close connection with the surrounding rural landscape. Although there is no adopted character appraisal for the Area, the Council's document *'Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex* contains a brief high level analysis of some of its key features.

The northern part of the Conservation Area contains a number of listed buildings, and is characterised by low density development, with trees, hedges and open spaces making an important contribution to its attractiveness. Historical map regression shows that this northern part of the village was largely undeveloped until the later 19th century, with the exception of a number of farmsteads including Dalton's Farm, and was known as Bolney Common. The Common itself was an open space until its enclosure in 1841, with only limited development of farmsteads and cottages at its periphery. Following the enclosure

of the common land, roads such as Top Street were laid out. During the 20th century the village spread north from its original core at the southern end of The Street to join up with the settlement around the former Common, to form a linear settlement with a north-south alignment, with open land and fields such as the proposed development site surviving to either side.

The southern part of the Area contains several listed buildings, including the Grade I Church of St Mary Magdalen with its Norman chancel and nave. The buildings, which are arranged in an attractive manner around Bolney Street, create a sense of enclosure and form an attractive entry to the village. There are glimpsed views between the buildings along the street, and looking from the higher points to either side of it, including the churchyard, which link this part of the village to the surrounding countryside.

The special significance and key characteristics of both parts of the Conservation Area, including rural buildings such as those at Daltons Farm which make a particularly positive contribution to the Area, and the attractive countryside views to either side, are therefore such that its surviving rural setting will make a strong positive contribution to the manner in which this special significance is appreciated.

The proposed development site is, as noted above, currently a series of agricultural fields. In respect of the northern part of the Conservation Area, the northern field of the site lies adjacent to its south western corner. It also lies adjacent to a PROW which runs westwards from Foxhole Lane and the countryside beyond this into the Conservation Area; this field and the central field which lies on the ridge of the hill to the south therefore make a strong contribution to the character of the setting of this part of the Area.

With respect to the southern part of the Area, the site forms the entirety of its close rural setting to the west. It has a particular influence on the (currently rural) character of views looking westwards between the buildings to this side of The Street, and looking over the rooftops of the houses lining The Street from the elevated ground of the churchyard. These views anchor this southern part of the village within the rural landscape from which it developed, and make a strong positive contribution to the character and appearance of this part of the Conservation Area.

- Walnut and Well Cottage, The Street:

A Grade II listed timber framed building, formerly two cottages, and dating from the 17th century or earlier. It is located to the western side of The Street within the southern part of the Conservation Area. The timber frame of the house has been underbuilt in brick, and the roof is split level, reflecting the original subdivision into two cottages, which are roofed variously in Horsham stone and tile.

Based on the limited information in front of us, Walnut and Well Cottage is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex village building of its period, altered over time in response to changing social and economic circumstances, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed against the backdrop of the rural landscape from which they were drawn. As such, the surviving rural setting to the west of The Street, which forms this rural backdrop, will make a strong positive contribution to the special interest of the building and the manner in

which this is appreciated, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values. The site constitutes this entirety of this part of the building's setting.

- St Mary Magdalene's Church, Cowfold Rd:

St Mary Magdalene's is a Grade I listed stone church dating originally to c.1100, with a tower constructed in 1536-8 which houses an unusual peal of 8 bells. The church, which set in an elevated position to the east of The Street, was extended again in the 18th and 19th centuries. Based on the limited information in front of us, the building is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as an exceptional example of an early rural Sussex church, artistic or aesthetic value based on its internal decorative features and on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the rural landscape from which they were drawn, and communal value as an ancient centre of Bolney life. It also has associative value with various prominent local people including John Bolney who was responsible for the construction of the tower, and the Huth family of Wykehurst Place.

The rural setting to the east and west of the church, which to the west consists predominantly of the proposed development site, visible over the intervening houses on The Street, makes a strong positive contribution to its historical illustrative value as an early Sussex country parish church, and to its aesthetic value.

- The Old Post Office, The Street:

This house is the former Bolney village post office. Although the front range of the building dates from the late 19th/early 20th century, the rear range appears to be significantly older- external and internal inspection would suggest it is a timber framed building of the 17th century or earlier, later underbuilt in brick. Historical photographs submitted by a neighbour during the course of a separate planning application show the building was also the post office during this phase of its life - presumably during the late 19th century - prior to the construction of the front range. A change of use application was granted in 2009, but it would appear that before this the building was the village post office for a century or more. A late 19th/early 20th century shopfront survives as an integral part of the building's façade.

It should be noted that the assessment made in the submitted Heritage Statement is factually incorrect regarding the dating of the building. Whilst I appreciate that the author of the statement may not have had access to the building itself or to the historical photographs mentioned, the above points regarding the surviving timber framed range to the rear of the late 19th/early 20th century frontage which were included in the pre-application response should have been noted.

Given the apparently early date of construction of this rear range of the building, which has quite significant areas of framing surviving internally, as well as the architectural character and communal value of the front range, I would consider that the building would be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) with potential for inclusion in a local list of buildings of architectural and historical interest within the local context.

The rural setting to the west of The Street (which consists of the development site) is visible in glimpsed views between the buildings to the opposite side of The Street and contributes to the context within which the former post office building is appreciated, in placing it within a rural, village context.

- Daltons Farm, The Street, and associated historic farm buildings:

Daltons Farm is a Grade II listed 18th century or earlier red brick former farmhouse, part of a historic farmstead dating from the 19th century which is recorded as such in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment. There are number of other buildings which appear to survive from the farmstead, including The Byre to the south (now a residential conversion) and a piggery within the gardens of the farmhouse. These buildings are likely to be regarded as either curtilage listed or NDHAs, depending on their circumstances.

I would consider it likely that Dalton's Farmhouse will possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, as well as historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse of its type and period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. The curtilage listed buildings and/or NDHAs surviving within the former farmstead may possess similar values as examples of former agricultural buildings of their own type and period- this is something which should be explored by a Heritage Impact Assessment as part of any formal application.

The surviving rural setting to the west and south west of the former farmstead, which is likely to be part of the former farmlands of the holding, makes a strong positive contribution to the special interests of the designated and non-designated assets within it, and in particular those parts of those interests which are drawn from historical illustrative or aesthetic values. The proposed development site forms part of that setting, lying a short distance to the south west, separated by a further intervening field. The rear of Dalton's Farm is visible in views from the above mentioned PROW running along the northern edge of the site, from which the northern field of the site is also very prominent. Contrary to the comments within the submitted Heritage Statement there is likely to be visibility of the site (and development on it) from the rear of the listed building and/or its immediate garden setting. The site also affects the context within which the farmstead is appreciated in views from the PROW.

Tanglewood, Lodge Lane

Tanglewood is a 17th century timber framed house located to the southern side of Lodge Lane, which sits on a ridge to the north of the site. Based on the limited information in front of us, I would expect that the building will be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex building, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials. As such the surviving rural setting to the north, west and south of the house will make a strong positive contribution to the special interest of the building, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

The proposed development site is a short distance to the south of Tanglewood, separated from it by an intervening field and tree belts. However, given the topography which falls towards the PROW running across the north of the site, and then rises again

north to south towards the site's central field, it is possible that there will be some intervisibility between the proposed development and the listed building, in particular in views from its upper floors, and/or from its immediate garden setting. The submitted Heritage Statement concludes that this is not the case, however no assessment appears to have been made from the building itself or its gardens. The weight that can be attached to this conclusion is therefore somewhat limited.

- Durstons, Lodge Lane

A 17th century or earlier timber framed house also located to the southern side of Lodge Lane, in a similar relationship to the site to Tanglewood, above. It is likely to possess similar values to Tanglewood, and as such the rural setting will make a similar contribution to its significance. Again, the submitted Heritage Statement concludes that there is no intervisibility between the site and this listed building or its immediate setting, however again no assessment appears to have been made from the building itself or its gardens. The weight that can be attached to this conclusion is therefore again limited.

- Bolney Lodge and Bolney Cottage, Foxhole Lane

This pair of Grade II listed buildings are located a short distance to the north of the site along Foxhole Lane. Bolney Lodge is a part 18th, part early 19th century substantial country villa, located in extensive landscaped grounds. Bolney Cottage is a more modest 18th century red brick cottage located to the opposite side of Foxhole Lane.

I would expect Bolney Lodge to be considered to possess architectural value based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of an 18th century country villa, altered and extended in response to the changing needs and aspirations of successive owners, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials to both the house and associated curtilage listed structures including the sandstone boundary wall onto Foxhole Lane. It also has group value with Bolney Cottage. As such, as well as the extensive landscaped grounds around the house, the surviving wider rural setting will make a strong positive contribution to the special interest of the building and the manner in which this is appreciated.

The proposed development site is located directly adjacent to the southern edge of the grounds to Bolney Lodge, separated from them only by the above mentioned PROW running between Foxhole Lane and The Street. Although this part of the Lodge grounds is wooded, the woods have an open structure which means that (contrary to the statement within the submitted Heritage Statement) the southern elevation of the house, including the large sash windows at ground and first floors, are clearly visible from the PROW, indicating (given that the site is also open to view from this part of the path) that there will be intervisibility between the site and Bolney Lodge itself, as well as its grounds. The site in its current state must therefore be considered to make a positive contribution to the setting and special interest of Bolney Lodge, which is enhanced by the contribution which it makes to the rural character of the approach to Bolney Lodge from the south along Foxhole Lane.

Bolney Cottage will possess architectural interest based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a modest 18th century rural Sussex Cottage, aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed against the backdrop of the rural landscape from which they were drawn. It also

has group value with Bolney Lodge. The surviving rural setting around the Cottage makes a positive contribution to its significance, including in particular its historical illustrative and aesthetic values.

There is unlikely to be intervisibility between the site and Bolney Cottage due to the intervening topography and planting, however it does, as with Bolney Lodge, contribute positively to the rural character of the approach to the listed building along Foxhole Lane.

Bookers Farm and Bookers Barn, Foxhole Lane

A grade II listed 17th century farmhouse and separately listed 15th century barn, forming part of the Bookers Farm historic farmstead, which is located a short distance to the west of Foxhole Lane opposite to the north western corner of the site. The former farmstead, which is recognised in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment as a historic farmstead of the Medieval period, includes a number of other ancillary buildings which are likely to be regarded as curtilage listed. The PROW which runs along the northern edge of the site continues westwards from the Lane through the farmstead.

The farmhouse is likely to be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a former Sussex farmhouse of the 17th century, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials. The barn is likely to possess similar values as a good example of a 15th century barn. The buildings also have group value with each other, and with the other surviving buildings within the historic farmstead.

As such, the surviving rural setting which is to all sides of the farmstead (although impacted to an extent by Bookers Vineyard to the north and east), will make a strong positive contribution to the significance of the listed and curtilage listed buildings and the manner in which this is appreciated. The proposed development site forms part of the wider rural setting of the farmstead, with intervisibility from the listed buildings or their immediate settings. The site also affects the character of the approach to the historic farmstead from Foxhole Lane along the entrance drive, which is also a PROW.

- Providence Chapel, Cowfold Road, Crosspost

This mid 19th century building, now in residential use, is a former Calvinist chapel with associated burial ground. It is located within the hamlet of Crosspost, which sits at the junction of Foxhole Lane, Chapel Lane and Cowfold Road, opposite the south western corner of the site. The building is not listed but is of some architectural merit and is also of local historic interest. Non-Conformism had a particularly strong following in this part of Sussex and is an important part of the social history of the area. I would therefore regard the building as a non-designated heritage asset with potential for inclusion on a Local List.

Within the local context, the building will possess architectural value, historical illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex non-conformist chapel, and communal value as a former place of worship for sections of the local population. The rural setting which surrounds Crosspost will make a positive contribution to the significance of the NDHA in terms of the appreciation of its former role serving the rural community. The proposed

development site constitutes a significant part of that rural setting, including the outlook to the front of the building.

- Bolney Place, Cowfold Road

Historical map regression and the limited information available on the internet suggests that Bolney Place, a substantial country house which appears to be now in commercial use, has potential to be considered as an NDHA due to its age and architectural quality. From images in the internet the building appears to be a large and attractive sandstone faced house with hipped slate roofs, and appears typical of the early-mid 19th century in style, to the façade at least. Map regression also suggests that a number of ancillary buildings may survive to the west of the house.

The information contained within the submitted Heritage Statement would support the conclusion that it should be regarded as an NDHA.

If it is confirmed as a historic country house of interest within the local context it is likely that the surviving wider rural setting of the building and its estate, which consists primarily to the north and west of the proposed development site, will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the significance of the house and the manner in which this is appreciated. The contribution made by the site in this respect is strengthened by the historical functional relationship between it and Bolney Place (which was historically in the same ownership and occupation).

Impact of the proposed development:

The proposed development is for 200 new houses, including associated vehicle access from Cowfold Road, and internal road and pedestrian path network, parking areas, hard and soft landscaping, and a new community building. The new built form is shown predominantly located within the northern and southern fields of the site, with the central field transformed into a public open space. The access road for vehicles between the northern and southern residential areas is also shown running through this central field, towards its eastern side. The position of this road has been adjusted somewhat following pre-application discussions, to move it further west into the site.

The proposed development will inevitably have a suburbanising impact on the currently open, agricultural character of the site. The introduction of substantial built form to the northern and southern fields will have the most marked impact, but the transformation of the central field to parkland incorporating the vehicle access road providing the only car access to the northern section of the new housing will also have a significant effect on the rural nature of this part of the site. This will inevitably have an impact on the contribution which the site currently makes to the settings of the above mentioned heritage assets and the manner in which their various significances are appreciated.

Whilst it is difficult in the absence of a fully developed scheme to determine with exactness the level of harm arising from this, I would expect that for all the designated assets listed above this harm would fall within the less than substantial range, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply. On the basis of the limited information in front of us, I would place the level of less than substantial harm to the designated assets in these broad ranges:

- Bolney Conservation Area: Less than substantial, mid-high (although slightly lower than might have been case from the scheme seen at pre-application, due to the repositioning of the access road noted above, and additional planted screening)
- Walnut and Well Cottage: Less than substantial, low-mid (although again slightly lower than noted at pre-app., for the same reasons)
- St Magdalene's Church: Less than substantial, low-mid
- Dalton's Farm: Less than substantial, mid
- Tanglewood and Durstons: Less than substantial, low
- Bolney Lodge: Less than substantial, low-mid (in this respect the positioning of the proposed pumping station and electricity substation is regrettable, as these are shown directly to the south of the listed building. However, we have no detail at present of the scale or appearance of these structures, so their visual impact is hard to estimate).
- Bolney Cottage: Less than substantial, low
- Bookers Farm and Bookers Barn: Less than substantial, low-mid

In respect of the NDHAs listed, I would assess the likely level of harm in these broad ranges, as per the requirements of paragraph 216 of the NPPF:

- Old Post Office: A low level of harm to an asset of a high level of interest in the local context
- Providence Chapel: A mid level of harm to an asset of a mid level of interest in the local context
- Bolney Place: A mid level of harm to an asset of a mid level of interest in the local context

Mitigation:

As was discussed at pre-application stage, and is further elaborated on in the formal application before us, the applicant intends to incorporate certain mitigation strategies into the design of the scheme, the most significant of which is the placement of the parkland area within the central field of the site, which will (in comparison to housing development) reduce the level of harm caused to the adjacent southern part of the Conservation Area and the listed buildings within it.

The placement of the vehicle access road adjacent to the eastern boundary of the site will result in the passage of numerous vehicles daily in close proximity to the Conservation Area and to the rear of the buildings to the western side of The Street. Following on from pre-application discussions, the road has been set slightly away from the boundary to the site, and further planted screening introduced between the two. This will reduce the level of less than substantial harm arising to the relevant assets, as noted above.

The detailed design of the parkland should be carefully considered in any detailed application which may follow, in order to preserve as much as possible of its existing rural character. A formal, suburban treatment will not be appropriate in this context and should be avoided.

The mitigation strategies employed elsewhere around the site consist of retention of open spaces and/or existing or enhanced planting at key locations where assets are in proximity to the site boundary. Since pre-application stage, further planted screening appears to have been introduced in some locations, although this does not appear in most instances to be a significant increase from the proposal seen at pre-application. Whilst this may have some positive impact in reducing the visual prominence of built development in external views, it is unlikely to remove

the harm caused, in particular bearing in mind that however effective planted screening may be, the wider rural setting and outlook of these assets will be lost or diminished. As noted above, the mitigatory measures included with this outline application may therefore result in a reduction in the level of less than substantial harm caused, but are unlikely to remove that harm.

Notwithstanding the above, the use of screening by appropriate native species planting and/or adjustments to the site layout, in order to reduce the visual prominence of the development, in particular the built form, within the settings of the designated and non-designated assets listed above should form an important part of the development of any detailed proposal which may follow if this outline scheme is approved.

For these reasons, the proposal remains in my opinion contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the less than substantial harm identified to the designated heritage assets would stand under the requirements of paragraph 215 to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, bearing in mind the great weight which must be given to the conservation of these assets. With respect to the NDHAs, under paragraph 216 the level of harm identified should be subject to a balanced judgement, bearing in mind also their significance within the local context, both of which are set out above.

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.
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Emily Wade Ma MSc
Conservation Officer
Planning Services
Tel: +44 (0)1444 477385
emily.wade@midsussex.gov.uk <http://www.midsussex.gov.uk>



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