

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 07 July 2025 13:20:34 UTC+01:00
To: "Susan Dubberley" <Susan.Dubberley@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Castle Inn DM/25/0736 and 0737

Hi Sue

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you, which has been caused by pressure of other work.

The application site, the Castle Inn, is a Grade II listed building, dating originally from the 18th century, with attached early 19th century parallel ranges, and later additions. The 18th century core of the building faces onto Hickstead Lane, whereas the larger 19th century ranges are set perpendicular to this fronting onto London Road. To the rear (west) is an attached 18th century stables building which appears to be part of an originally significantly larger group of attached and unattached buildings which formed a courtyard to the rear of the building. A further 18th century outbuilding positioned in the angle of the original and 19th century ranges has also become attached to these ranges by 19th and 20th century extensions. Historical map regression suggests that the group of buildings was during the 19th century the farmstead of Hickstead Farm, and only became a hotel during the late 19th or early 20th century. It was renamed the Castle Hotel, taking the name from the previously existing Castle Inn, which was located just to the south of the adjacent road junction (now known as The Old Post Office).

Based on the information in front of us I would consider that the listed building possesses architectural value based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value particularly relating to the evolution of its use over time from farm to hotel and public house, and aesthetic value, based in part on the use of vernacular materials within the older parts of the building. As a c.1900 public house it will also have some communal value as a longstanding focus of the local community.

The current proposal, which is partly retrospective, is for extensive external and internal works to the building and its grounds. In some respects the works affect non original plan form, features or fabric and are not considered contentious - I will comment here only on those which raise concerns and/or require further information.

To consider these works in turn:

External works:

Replacement windows

Replacement windows are proposed in a number of positions throughout the building. Further information will be required in this respect, in the form of a window survey which gives the age and condition of the windows affected. The loss of original or early windows will be considered contentious unless justified by their condition. We will also need to see detailed drawings (large scale elevations and sections, annotated to show materials and finishes, including glazing bar detail and depth of reveal, as appropriate) for the replacement windows. These could be requested by condition but given the advanced stage of works on site might be better provided now as part of the current applications.

Similar details will be required for new or replacement doors.

To the rear (north) roofslope of the 18th century wing, it is proposed to remove an existing flat roofed dormer and replace it with an extension of the adjacent catslide. This is not considered contentious subject to detail, and should enhance the appearance of this part of the building.

It is proposed to 'sandblast' the east elevation and repoint with lime mortar. The removal of the existing paintwork would require robust justification in the form of evidence that this part of the building was not originally painted. If this can be provided (and it is not supported by the historical images provided in the DAS), the removal of the paint may be acceptable in principle (subject also to confirmation of the expected condition of the underlying brickwork) but sandblasting is highly unlikely to be considered an appropriate method, due to the damage that this is likely to cause to the underlying bricks. A gentler, less abrasive method should be specified, which we would then expect to be tested with a test patch in an unobtrusive position (which would be required by condition) before work commenced. However, as above, the starting point would be to establish that the removal of the paint is acceptable in principle.

Details of the proposed mortar mix for re-pointing works should be provided (or could be requested by condition).

Details of the proposed new signage should be provided.

The proposed new outbuildings to the west of the existing are not considered contentious, although further detail of roofing and facing materials and of external doors and windows would be sought by condition on any approval granted.

Solar panels are proposed to the flat roof of the 20th century extension to the rear (north facing) elevation. These should be shown on appropriate sectional drawings- it appears likely that they may be hidden from view from ground level by surrounding roof structures, but sectional drawings would be required to confirm this.

Internal works:

Basement level: The submitted Schedule of Condition (SoC) includes floor strengthening works which have apparently been undertaken to the area of the cellar ceiling/ground floor floor structure beneath the Bar and Public Bar. However, although some hand written structural calculations have been provided, and a brief statement from the structural engineer, this does not provide an adequate, clearly stated description of the extent or nature of the works which have taken place (including plans as relevant), a full justification for their necessity (based on an appropriately detailed structural engineer's report), or an indication of the associated impact on the historic fabric of this part of the building. This information should be provided.

Ground floor:

- Underfloor heating is proposed to several areas. However, we have no full description of this work or indication of the extent of any associated impact on the historic fabric of the floor structure/floor coverings, if these survive. This information should be provided, including a methodology and typical sectional drawings.

- To the G05 Corridor a matt sealant is proposed to an exposed brickwork wall, where the plasterwork has been stripped back. No comment is made on the date of the fabric which has been removed- if this plasterwork was original, it should be reinstated. Exposed brick is in any case not likely to be the original finish to this part of the building and will require justification. We would also require further information regarding the sealant, which I would have concerns over in terms of its breathability and resulting potential impact on the condition of the underlying bricks. The ceilings to this room have also been taken down. Can the applicant please confirm whether these were entirely of modern fabric?
- The SoC notes at G.06 (WC) that a new window is to be installed, however this is not shown on the submitted ground floor plan?
- To the kitchen within the 18th century stable block (G.08) roof strengthening works have taken place. As for the ground floor floor structure, further information should be provided concerning the nature of this work, its extent, and the justification for it. The applicant should also confirm the nature of the ceiling fabric which has been removed.
- G.09 (Store) is also within the stable block. Again information on the nature of the ceiling fabric removed should be provided.
- G.13 Hall to stair- further information on the date of the pre-existing stair fabric which has been removed should be provided. Is this the original stair position?

First floor:

- See above with respect to under floor heating.
- The provision of ensuite bathrooms is proposed throughout the first floor. This will in most if not all cases adversely impact the historic proportions of the rooms concerned, resulting in harm to the special interest of the building, particularly as this work extends throughout the first floor of the building. This aspect of the proposal must therefore be regarded as contentious.
- To bedrooms 1.03 and 1.05 the proposed plan suggests that the doorways connecting with the proposed adjacent ensuites formed by subdivision of room 1.04 are new. However openings are shown in these positions on the existing plan. Can the applicant please clarify?
- Can the applicant please provide photographs of the skirting and architrave which have been removed throughout?
- Can the applicant please provide details of the mortar mix used for repair works and of the new plaster to the walls?
- 1.01 (Hall) as with other structural works noted above, further information, including appropriate drawings, will be required as to the nature and extent of the works, and a justification for them in the form of a structural engineer's report. This also applies to the first floor floor structure which the existing plan notes requires reinforcing.

- Can the applicant please confirm the intention with respect to the chimney breast to room 1.04 where the plaster has been hacked off? Presumably it is proposed to reinstate an appropriate lime-based plaster?
- The 1920s fire surround to room 1.07 Bedroom 5 may not be original but it is of some age and character. The building as a whole does not appear to retain many features of interest, and therefore the retention of this surround may be desirable. It would be helpful if its position could be marked on the plans, particularly as the numbering of the bedrooms changes between the existing and proposed drawings.
- 1.08 Hallway- please see below with respect to the proposal to retain and seal the exposed brickwork. Further details of the extent and nature of the brickwork repairs should be provided.
- With respect to the replacement of rafters, again this requires justification by an appropriately detailed structural condition report, and the extent and nature of the work should be clarified with appropriate drawings and a methodology.
- Can the applicant please provide further details of the ceiling fabric etc. which has been removed to expose the rafters -what is the plan to reinstate the ceiling?
- Room 1.09 (Bedroom 6) – structural works to the roof above are noted, as well as a replacement ceiling. As above, structural works require full details including appropriate plans, and a detailed structural report to justify the work.
- What is involved in chamfering the joists? How does this affect the historic floor structure and/or floor covering?
- Bedroom 7- removal of chimneys is often not favourably viewed, due to adverse impact on historic fabric and on the plan form and narrative of the building. This work does not appear to be noted on plan and there is no indication of the location of the chimney? No justification is provided for this work, which must be regarded as potentially contentious.
- Likewise the removal of plasterwork and ceilings is contentious- what is the proposal to reinstate these? What is meant by a new ceiling above the existing ceiling? We would expect the original finishes to be reinstated, alongside the original proportions of the room, unless there is a robust justification for any other outcome.

The submitted DAS also mentions an ASHP to be installed internally, but this does not appear to be shown on plan?

Proposed landscaping:

The proposed landscaping plan is generally acceptable, however there are a couple of points requiring reconsideration or further information:

- The key to the left of the plan includes a proposed 1.1 m brick wall (B1). I think this is shown on the drawing along the eastern boundary but it is not annotated. It is also not consistent in terms of the height of the wall with the most recently received proposed elevation which shows the wall at 0.5m high. It would be useful if this could be clarified.
- The proposed refuse store is shown in a rather isolated and exposed position to the northern side of the car park, which is likely to render it unduly visually prominent. This

side of the parking area would benefit from further planting of e.g. native hedgerow species and I would suggest that some reconsideration of the treatment of this area should include provision of appropriate planted screening around the store.

In summary, there are significant aspects of the existing and the further proposed works to the Castle Inn which require further information and/or revision. There are areas which are of concern in terms of impact on the special interest of the listed building, including in particular the extensive strengthening/structural works, the alterations to the plan form at first floor, and the sandblasting of the eastern façade. The extensive stripping out works which have taken place without consent, and the potential loss of historic fabric involved with these, are highly regrettable, and the appropriate reinstatement of the fabric and spaces affected should form part of the current applications- in many cases, insufficient information has been provided in this respect.

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>

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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