

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 March 2026 10:48:24 UTC+00:00
To: "Steven King" <Steven.King@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/3129 Land at Borde Hill Lane

Hi Steve

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site is a parcel of fields to the east of Borde Hill Lane, just to the north of Haywards Heath and to the southeast of Borde Hill. There are a number of heritage assets within the vicinity of the site:

- Sugworth Farm, Borde Hill Lane. _

Sugworth Farmhouse is a Grade II listed 17th century or earlier timber framed building located to the east of Borde Hill Lane, to the northeast of the site. The associated farmstead includes a double courtyard of former farm buildings dating partly from the late 19th century or earlier, and partly from the early 20th century, which would be regarded as curtilage listed. The assemblage of buildings is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment as a historic farmstead of the post medieval period.

Sugworth Farmhouse is considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a rural Sussex farmhouse of its period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. It also possesses group value with the former farm buildings within the historic farmstead.

The curtilage listed former farmstead buildings, which include a barn, piggery, and range of single storey stables or cowsheds, will possess similar values as good examples of Sussex farm buildings of their type and period, as well as group value with the farmhouse.

As such, the surviving rural setting of the farmstead will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the special interests of the farmhouse and farm buildings, and manner in which these are appreciated, in particular those parts of those interests which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values. The application site forms a significant part of that setting, and will be prominent in views from the house and its immediate context, as well as from the approach to the farmstead along the farm track from Borde Hill Lane. It is also forms a significant part of the currently largely rural vistas from around the junction of Borde Hill Lane and Balcombe Road in which the farm appears towards the crest of the hill slope to the northeast, and the appeal site is open to view to the east and northeast. In addition, the open fields of the site which in part abut Borde Hill

Lane currently provide a buffer between the urban spread of Haywards Heath and the farmstead and its immediate context, including the approach to it along Borde Hill Lane.

The contribution made by the application site to the setting and special interests of the buildings within Sugworth Farm is enhanced by historical relationship of function between the site and the farmstead; the fields within the site were once part of the farmlands of Sugworth Farm, managed from and supporting the development of the farm buildings. Their surviving agricultural character contributes positively to our understanding of the narrative of the farmstead, including the historical role of the listed and curtilage listed buildings within the landscape.

- South Lodge, Borde Hill Lane.

South Lodge is a Grade II listed lodge house located at the junction of Borde Hill Lane, Hanlye Lane and Balcombe Road, to the south west of the site. The Lodge dates from c.1890, and sits next to the southern entrance into Borde Hill Park. The listing includes the attached walls and gate piers.

The Lodge possesses architectural value based on its design, construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a late 19th century lodge house forming part of an extensive country estate, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. It also has group value with Borde Hill House and the other buildings within the park, albeit that these are located some distance to the north.

The parkland setting to the northwest of South Lodge, including the adjacent entrance driveway, are likely to be considered the most important elements of its setting contributing to its special interest. However, the surviving rural setting to the east and northeast of the Lodge, on the opposite side of Borde Hill Lane, also makes a strong positive contribution to the manner in which its significance as part of a country estate is appreciated. This contribution is enhanced by the recent loss of the originally rural setting to the south to a housing development.

The proposed development site forms the rural setting to the east of the Lodge, and is a large part of the rural vista within which the building is appreciated in views looking broadly north from the adjacent road junction.

- Borde Hill Gardens, Borde Hill Lane.

Borde Hill Gardens is a II* listed garden and park located to the western side of Borde Hill Lane. The gardens, which are centred on Borde Hill House (Grade II listed), consist of a late 19th to mid 20th century plantsman's and collector's garden, laid out originally by Colonel Stephenson Clarke, set within an early 20th century park with mid 19th century origins.

The principal interest of this asset is likely to lie in the design, layout and planting of the gardens and surrounding parkland, including the collections of rare plants within them. However, the parkland setting of the house and formal gardens borrows from the surrounding landscape, and as the list description notes, *‘to the north and east, the site’s parkland and woodland merge into the adjacent undulating, wooded farmland.’* Furthermore, the house, gardens and parkland sit at the centre of a much more extensive country estate, which historically supported their maintenance and development. In this manner the surviving rural setting of the park and garden contributes positively to its significance and the manner in which this is appreciated, including both the aesthetic value of the asset, and its historical illustrative value, as part of the narrative of the development of the estate, including the house and gardens at its heart.

The proposed development site constitutes a large part of the rural vista within which the southern end of the park is appreciated in views from the junction of Borde Hill Lane and Balcombe Road. However, in my opinion it is likely to also be visible in other glimpsed views from within the western edge of the registered park, and in vistas from Borde Hill Lane which will include the parkland and/or the main visitor entrance.

The current proposal is an outline application for up to 125 dwellings, together with landscaping, open space and associated development works, with access from Balcombe Road.

There is a relevant appeal decision in the consideration of this application, which relates to a proposed 30m high steel lattice telecommunications mast which was to be located in an enclosure adjacent to the railway line to the southeast of the Sugworth farmstead, a short distance to the east of the current application site. Whilst this was for development of a different extent and nature to that now proposed, some of the Inspector’s comments in dismissing the appeal in relation to the contribution of the fields to the east of Borde Hill Lane to the settings and special interests of the above-mentioned heritage assets will be relevant.

- With respect to Sugworth Farm, the Inspector noted that: *‘The building lies within a predominantly agricultural landscape. The historic relationship of the farmhouse with the surrounding agricultural land remains evident and is clearly appreciable. Based on the evidence before me and my site visit, I find that the special interest of the listed building insofar as is relevant to this appeal derives from its historic and architectural interest as an illustration of a historic farmhouse, which dates back to at least the 17th century. The building’s timber frame, use of traditional materials and the rural landscape in which it sits contribute towards its special interest.’*
- In relation to South Lodge, the Inspector found that: *‘While the immediate setting to South Lodge has been compromised somewhat by the introduction of a modern roundabout and new housing development, the lodge building is still appreciated within its attractive, rural landscape.’*

From the evidence before me and my site visit, I find that the special interest and significance of South Lodge mainly stems from its architectural and historic interests, as an illustration of domestic architecture from the late 19th century. The building's architectural form, historic fabric and the surviving rural landscape in which it sits make important contributions in these regards.'

- With respect to South Lodge and Borde Hill gardens, the Inspector noted that: 'At present, the rural and picturesque qualities of the appeal site and the surrounding rural landscape make a positive contribution to the setting of both of these designated heritage assets.'

In conclusion the Inspector found that the appeal proposal would result in less than substantial harm, of varying degrees to all of these assets.

The current proposal is for a residential development of up to 125 houses on the site, including access from the junction with Balcombe Road and Borde Hill Lane which would involve extension of the existing roundabout, internal roads, and landscaping. The proposal will have a fundamental impact on the currently agricultural character of the site, which will become suburbanised. This impact will extend to the Balcombe Road/Borde Hill Lane frontage, which will lose its surviving rural character and instead appear as a continuation of the existing suburban development of Haywards Heath. This will remove and reverse the positive contribution which the site currently makes, through setting, to the special interests of the above-named heritage assets and the manner in which these are appreciated:

- Sugworth Farmhouse and historic farmstead

There will be a significant adverse impact on the currently largely rural character of views looking southwards from the buildings and from the approach to them along the farm track from Borde Hill Lane. In addition, the development will be prominent in views towards the farm looking across the valley from the junction of Borde Hill Lane and Balcombe Road- the existing rural context within which the historic farmstead is appreciated in these public views will be largely lost. Furthermore, the adverse impact on the rural character of Borde Hill Lane will detract from the wider approach to the farmstead, and reduce the sense of separation between the farm and the suburban spread of Haywards Heath.

This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 which requires development to protect listed buildings and their settings. In terms of the NPPF without a fully developed scheme it is difficult to assess the level of harm arising, however I would place consider this likely to fall within the less than substantial spectrum, at around the mid-level of that range.

- South Lodge

The development, in particular the enlarged roundabout to the southeast of the listed building, will adversely affect the surviving rural character of views looking broadly east from the listed building and its immediate setting. The proposal also detracts from the context within which the Lodge is appreciated in views and vistas looking broadly northwards from Balcombe Road and the road junction- this impact is cumulative with the existing recent housing development to the

south. This will detract from the special interest of the listed building and the manner in which this is appreciated, contrary to DP34.

In terms of the NPPF the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the listed building which I would consider likely to fall around the mid-range of that scale.

- Borde Hill Gardens

The proposal will have a significant adverse impact on the rural character of the wider setting of the RPG, including vistas including the southern parkland from around the junction of Borde Hill and Balcombe Road (including the enlargement of this junction) and the approach to it along Borde Hill Lane from the south. The sense of separation of the parkland from Haywards Heath will also be reduced, and there may also be some limited impact on glimpsed views looking eastward from within the RPG. Again the adverse impact will be cumulative with the existing housing development to the south of Hanlye Lane.

This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP36 (Historic Parks and Gardens). In terms of the NPPF, I would place the harm as around the low-mid level of less than substantial.

In carrying out the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF, the Council should be mindful of the requirement of paragraph 212 of the Framework to give great weight to the conservation of all designated heritage assets (and the even greater weight which must be attached to the conservation of II* listed Borde Hill Gardens), and that under paragraph 213 any harm to the significance of an asset should require clear and convincing justification.

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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