

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 January 2026 15:57:28 UTC+00:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <Stefan.Galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/25/2567 Oaklands North, High Street, Cuckfield

Hi Stefan

Further comments on the above application following the receipt of a structural report and revised drawings. My apologies that I was not able to get these to you sooner, due to leave over the Christmas period, and pressure of other work.

In my initial comments on the proposal, I requested a revised and expanded Heritage Statement to consider the age of the single storey element it is proposed to demolish, and its contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. No revised Statement has been received, although the applicant has commented that they have been unable to find any further information on its historic use, and consider that the age of the property is adequately addressed in the Structural Report which has now been submitted. This does not unfortunately represent the fully detailed statement that we requested- the Structural Report states only that Oaklands appears to date from the 18th century and that the side wing is anecdotally reported to be a former schoolhouse, which were already aware of.

Based on this very limited information, on a brief historical map regression exercise (which shows the side wing to have been place since at least the mid-19th century), and on our site inspection, it is my view that the existing building at Oaklands North is of historical and architectural interest in at least the local context, and contributes positively to the northern part of the Conservation Area. The side wing, which is prominent in public views of the site, is a constituent and apparently original part of the building. Its unusual form in relationship to the main house suggests some specific non-domestic historic use, whether this was as a schoolhouse or for some other purpose such as a shop or office- it is possible that further, more detailed research might allow this use to be better understood. Its loss is therefore considered to result in harm to the character and appearance of both the building and the wider Conservation Area.

The applicant has submitted a Structural Report, which identifies significant structural issues with the side wing relating to movement, cracking, and damp ingress. The conclusion of the report is that while the retention of the wing would be possible, it would be *'a highly complex undertaking with significant long-term risk.'* In this context, it is acknowledged that the demolition and rebuilding of the wing, while resulting in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, may be justified in principle.

Without the fully detailed Heritage Statement previously requested, the level of harm arising from the loss of the side wing is difficult to accurately assess, however in my opinion given its age and character, and positive contribution to the character and

appearance of the Conservation Area, if demolition is necessary then a like-for-like replacement should ideally be sought, re-using the existing materials where possible. Failing that, any replacement structure should make the same or a greater positive contribution to the significance of the asset.

The current proposal is for a two storey side extension sitting over the same footprint as the existing side wing. In my opinion, putting to one side the loss of the existing wing, this proposal raises concerns in terms of an adverse relationship of scale between the addition and the original house, based on the height, width and front building line of the extension. The Council's adopted Design Guide requires at Design Principle DG49 'General Principles for Extensions', that *'Extensions should also normally be designed to be well-integrated with the existing scale, form and massing allowing the original building to remain the dominant element of the property whether it has one or several additions.'* DG50 (Front and Side Extensions) states that these *'will be resisted where they have an adverse impact on the street scene or the appearance of a dwelling... Side extensions should normally be subservient to the original dwelling.'* The current proposal is not considered to meet these requirements.

Furthermore, the drawings recently received showing the extension in the context of both Oaklands North and Howdean demonstrate that contrary to the applicant's assertion, the proposal does not reinstate the original symmetry of the pair of cottages, as the extension now proposed is both wider and set further forward than that to the neighbouring property. Instead, the extension in combination with the existing addition to Howdean bookends the original cottage pair, further subsuming the original form of the building and eroding its legibility.

The extension therefore does not mitigate the harm caused by the removal of the side wing, and instead results in further harm to the character and appearance of the building.

In summary therefore, it is my opinion that the proposal results in harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal is considered to result in less than substantial harm – based on the limited information available as to the age and level of interest of the side wing, I would place this at around the mid-level of that scale. The proposal is also as noted above contrary to the requirements of the Design Guide.

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.

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



From: Emily Wade
Sent: 04 November 2025 15:13
To: Stefan Galyas <Stefan.Galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2567 Oaklands North, High Street, Cuckfield

Hi Stefan

Following on from our site meeting this morning, just to confirm that the following will be required in relation to the above application:

- A revised and expanded Heritage Statement which contains further details on the age and level of interest of the existing single storey side range which it is proposed to demolish and replace, which is suggested to have been the former Cuckfield school house; and
- A fully detailed structural report prepared by a conservation accredited structural surveyor.

As we discussed, the existing structure appears to be of some age and interest within the local context. As such, we firstly need to establish whether in fact this is the case, and secondly, if so, to consider the extent and nature of the structural justification for its removal.

Following receipt of the above, and depending on the conclusions drawn, we may also request further details of the proposed replacement extension including plans and elevations to show the proposal in context of both of the pair of cottages (i.e. including Howdean).

Thanks,

Emily

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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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