

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 30 January 2026 14:54:52 UTC+00:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2774 Havelock Farm

Hi Katherine

Comments on the above variation of condition application.

The proposed development site, now known as Havelock Farm, is an area of land to the west and south west of Wakehurst Farmhouse, the former home farmhouse of Wakehurst Place, which is located a short distance to the south east. The land is partly open and partly occupied by a range of buildings including the former farm courtyard to the home farm, as well as modern barn buildings. Immediately to the south is the boundary of Wakehurst Place gardens. A public right of way (PROW) runs east-west a short distance to the north. Due to position of the site on a hilltop above the valley of Ardingly Brook, which curves around Wakehurst to the west and north, there are far reaching view to and from the surrounding countryside.

The current proposal, which follows on from the granting of planning permission and discharge of conditions, is for alterations to an approved scheme for partial redevelopment of the site (retaining the farm buildings which are of heritage interest) to provide a new conservation and research nursery.

There are a number of heritage assets both within the site and in close proximity to it:

- Wakehurst Place – the Grade I listed 16th century mansion house at the heart of the estate and located a short distance to the south east of Havelock Farm.
- Wakehurst Stables- Grade II* listed 18th century stable block to the north east of the house.
- Wakehurst Place Park and Gardens – Grade II* registered early-mid 19th century plantsman's and collector's garden- the site is directly adjacent to the northern boundary of the registered garden.
- Wakehurst Farmhouse – the former home farmhouse to Wakehurst Place, which is regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. Historical map regression suggests that the building dates from the mid-late 19th century or earlier. The farmhouse is just to the east of the site.
- The farm courtyard directly to the west of the farmhouse- again these buildings appear to date originally from the mid-late 19th century or earlier and although altered will be regarded as NDHAs and as having group value with the farmhouse. These buildings are located within the site, and the existing approval is for their retention, with a condition requiring repair work as appropriate.

The scheme for which approval was recently granted was considered to result in a slight positive impact on the registered park and garden, based on the reduced scale of the

development immediately adjacent to the most part of the boundary with the most open views of the site, and the removal of an unattractive and unsympathetic blockwork wall along the boundary at this point, but a low level of less than substantial harm in respect of both Wakehurst Place and Stables, which results from the adverse impact of the development on Havelock Farm as the home farm of the Wakehurst estate, and its consequent group value with the listed buildings at the estate's heart. In respect of the NDHAs constituting the former home farmstead itself a mid level of harm to assets of a mid level of significance in the local context was identified, through impact on their setting..

The current proposal for amendments to the approved scheme follows on from pre-application advice, and includes:

- Reduction in size of three of the four main new buildings on the site and omission of the upper storey to an ancillary building;
- Omission of the surface water storage reservoir in favour of above ground rainwater storage tanks to the southern part of the site;
- Swapping of the positions of the polytunnels and shade structure;
- Repositioning of cold frames;
- Addition of a designated storage area for waste and recycling with screening planting;
- Addition of gates and fencing;
- Increase in size of the external plant compound with retention of the blockwork wall to the south and new timber slatted screening; and
- Associated alterations to hard and soft landscaping.

For the most part, these amendments are not considered to materially affect the impact of the proposal on the adjacent heritage assets, albeit that the reduction in scale of the principle buildings may result in a commensurate slight reduction to the level of harm caused, through impact on setting, to the significance of Havelock Farm and hence also to the designated assets at the centre of the estate with which the Farm has group value. There is no change proposed to the direct impact on the retained buildings within the former Havelock Farm farmstead.

At pre-application stage, concerns were raised regarding the location of the waste and recycling enclosure in relation to the adjacent PROW, and the expansion of the plant enclosure and its proximity to the registered park and garden.

- With respect to the waste and recycling enclosure screening by native hedgerow planting has been introduced to the northern and eastern sides of the enclosure. In addition, where the surface water reservoir has been omitted to the north east of the enclosure woodland planting is now shown, which will also act to screen the feature in public views from the PROW to the north. On balance, this aspect of the proposal is therefore now considered acceptable.
- In relation to the plant enclosure, I remain concerned about the scale and proximity of the enclosure to the boundary of the registered garden, including both the ASHP enclosure and the water tanks, which are 3m+ high. The submitted DAS comments in respect of the revised and expanded plant area that alongside slatted timber fencing around the area (and the native species hedging

to its western side shown on the Landscape Masterplan), *'the existing wall and trees to the south are to be retained and will block views of the development.'* However, the existing wall is a crude blockwork construction which detracts from the setting of the registered garden. Its removal, which formed part of the approved scheme, was considered a benefit to the setting of the garden to be weighed against the harm arising from the scale of the new development, including the plant enclosure. The retention of the wall alongside the greater scale and proximity of the plant enclosure results in a reversal of the slight beneficial effect on the setting of the RPG noted in respect of the approved application, instead resulting in a degree of less than substantial harm. I would recommend that the current proposal should be amended to show the wall removed, and an alternative, contextually appropriate boundary treatment including new planting shown in its place to effectively and attractively screen the enlarged enclosure.

In summary, I would consider that the proposal in general has similar impacts on the affected heritage assets as the approved scheme, with the exception of the impact on the RPG :

- The level of less than substantial harm to the listed buildings remains low, and arguably at a slightly lower level than the approved scheme due to the reduction in scale of the built form overall;
- Similarly, the impact on the NDHAs at Havelock farm would be likely to be a slightly reduced mid-level of harm;
- With respect to the designated park and garden, however, I am concerned that the revision to the plant enclosure coupled with the retention of the blockwork wall will reverse slight benefit to the asset previously identified, and instead result in a degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of this asset. This aspect of the proposal requires reconsideration, as noted 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.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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