

**From:** Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 06 January 2025 15:15:26 UTC+00:00  
**To:** "Andy Watt" <Andy.Watt@midsussex.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** DM/24/2214 Lingworth, 17 Oathall Road, HH

Hi Andy

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

Lingworth is a substantial unlisted house located within The Heath Conservation Area within Haywards Heath. The building, which dates from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century, retains a number of period features including sash and stained glass windows, but has been altered and extended particularly to the rear. There is a surviving original coach house building to the back, which is visible from The Heath itself. Both buildings make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. As is noted in the adopted character appraisal, one of the key features of the Area is *'large Victorian and Edwardian villas set in extensive gardens in Oathall Road and Heath Road'* - Lingworth would be a good example of such a property. This appraisal goes on to consider Lingworth in more detail, stating that:

*'No.17 Oathall Road (Lingworth) is a grand Late Victorian / Edwardian (1897-1912) two-storey villa with attics. The original building has a symmetrical plan but the central porch has been replaced with an extension that detracts from the appearance of the building. At the rear of the house is an enclosed swimming pool (1983) and a hard tennis court. The tennis court lighting poles erected in 1982 are intrusive. On the western boundary of the garden is a modest Edwardian coach house that has some original internal features.'*

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for the change of use of the building from a single family house to C2 use (care home), with alterations and extensions including additions to the side and rear of the main building and a roof extension above the existing garage to the coach house.

Firstly I note that there are inconsistencies in the plans with respect to the coach house, in that the proportions of the proposed dormer windows to the roof extension above the garage are not consistent between the front and side elevations.

The proposed two storey side and rear extension is substantial, and wraps around the rear corner of the building extending across the entire rear elevation of the building - despite concerns raised at pre-application stage, the scale of the addition appears if anything to have been increased. This raises a number of issues in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the building and its contribution to the Conservation Area:

- The relationship of scale between the house and proposed extension, in particular when viewed cumulatively with the existing rear additions to the building, which already sit across the full width of the building at ground floor and extend back for some distance into the garden.
- The form of the extension in wrapping around the corner of the building exacerbates the impact on the extent to which the original footprint of the building would continue to be appreciable.

- In respect of both of these above points the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide will be relevant, in particular Principle DG49 'General Principles for Extensions', which states 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.*' Figure 9E is also relevant and illustrates the point that extensions that wrap around an existing dwelling can undermine the integrity of the original architecture.
- The extension has an adverse impact on surviving features of interest to the building, in particular an existing large decorative stained glass window to the rear stairwell, which would become internalised.

The proposed works to the pool house, which is a modern addition to the property, include alterations to the fenestration, installation of solar PV panels and an ASHP, and internal works. These works are not considered contentious subject to detail.

The proposed works also include alterations to the existing house including removal of guard rails at main roof level, removal and replacement of the existing two storey porch addition at the centre of the front elevation, alterations to the roof forms of the adjacent original bay windows, and replacement fenestration. At pre-application stage it was suggested that in conjunction with amendments to the scale and form of the proposed side and rear extensions (which do not form part of the current proposal), the overall impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area could be ameliorated by the inclusion of certain beneficial works to the existing house to remove unsympathetic modern additions. These additions included the railings at roof level and the front porch. Although the proposed removal of the railings is therefore welcomed, the current proposal removes the existing two storey front porch only to replace it with an addition of similar scale, albeit a different form and open at ground floor. It does not reinstate the original appearance of the building's façade, and does not even appear to reinstate the original front entrance at ground floor beneath the overhanging first floor. This latter aspect of the proposal does not therefore in my opinion secure the benefit to the Conservation Area which was envisaged at pre-application stage. The associated alterations to the roof form of the adjacent bay windows, which are suggested to reflect the original appearance of the elevation, are not justified by any accompanying evidence to support this assertion. Therefore again no benefit to the Conservation Area is demonstrated.

The coach house is an original or early feature of the property, and makes a positive contribution to the setting of the house and the character and appearance of the wider Conservation Area. The proposed first floor addition will add to the bulk of the extensions to the building, but is relatively modest in scale, and will sit above an existing modern garage. In principle, this aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious, however the above point regarding inconsistencies in the drawings as submitted should be noted.

The associated landscaping scheme includes the proposed removal of the flood lit tennis court- this represents a large area of hard surfacing which detracts from the generally verdant character of the gardens. The flood lights are tall structures visible from the adjacent Heath, which again detract from the setting of this surviving area of semi-natural landscape at the heart of the Conservation Area. The removal of this feature, returning most of the affected space to garden, would be a positive aspect of the proposal in heritage terms, although it is noted that some of the area would be lowered and resurfaced to create a parking area.

The proposed landscaping plans include a new garden pavilion to the south western corner of the rear garden. This is shown as a contemporary structure, with a utilitarian appearance and

flat roofed form which does not relate particularly well to the quality or character of the surrounding historical development, and would therefore benefit from amendment.

In summary, the proposal raises concerns in terms in particular of the scale and form of the proposed side and rear extension, the associated loss or concealment of original features, and aspects of the other works to the house and gardens. Although there are some heritage benefits arising from the relandscaping of the rear garden and removal of guard rails to the main roof, these are not considered sufficient to outweigh the harm caused by other aspects of the proposal.

The application is therefore considered contrary to District Plan Policy DP35 (Conservation Areas) as well as the Council's adopted Design Guide, and the Heath Conservation Area Appraisal, which includes management proposals. In terms of the NPPF I would place the harm caused at less than substantial at around the mid range of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.

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.

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