

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 May 2025 12:09:31 UTC+01:00
To: "Susan Dubberley" <Susan.Dubberley@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/0868 Withiel, 14 Hassocks Rd, HPP

Hi Sue

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site is an unlisted detached house located within the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area. The house, which is a substantial and attractive building dating from the early 20th century, is located in an elevated position to the south west of Hassocks Road, behind a deep front garden which is bounded to the front by a brick wall and hedge rising above a verdant roadside bank. To the rear, the property is adjacent to and visible from Tott Lane, with open fields to the south. The property has been extended to the rear, and has a modern garage with off street parking accessed from Tott Lane.

The house and its gardens have group value with the other buildings of a similar age associated with Halton to the north west, and contribute to the verdant and semi-rural character of this part of the Conservation Area, which sits in a transitional position on the southern edge of the village. The roadside bank to the Hassocks Road frontage also contributes to the semi-rural character of this key approach into the Area from the east, marking the entrance into the centre of the village.

The current proposal, which partly follows on from pre-application advice, is for a variety of works including:

- Creation of a new vehicle access from Hassocks Road, with partial removal of the roadside bank, hedged and wall, and construction of an off street parking area within the front garden space, with associated regrading, hard and soft landscaping;
- A single storey rear extension with alterations to the fenestration to the adjacent elevation at ground and first floor and addition of a rear porch;
- Replacement of existing timber sash windows to the side of the building with uPVC units;
- Installation of 2 ASHPs to the side of the house; and
- Enlargement of the existing off street parking to the rear with partial removal of the existing adjacent wall and hedge.
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To consider these works in turn:

- As was advised at pre-application stage, the creation of a new vehicle access from Hassocks Road is considered unacceptable in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The new crossover and driveway would result in the loss of a significant part of the existing, attractive grassed bank and front boundary wall with hedging. From our conversation on site, I understand that the impact would also be likely to extend into the frontage of the neighbouring property in terms of reduction in size of the existing hedge planting to allow for effective sight lines. These works will have an adverse impact on the current character of this part of Hassocks Road, at the entrance to the Conservation Area, and will detract from its existing verdant, semi-rural character.

Within the front garden to the property, the associated driveway and parking as shown would remove a very significant portion of the garden space, and would have a seriously detrimental impact on its currently verdant character. As noted above, garden spaces make a positive contribution to the character of this part of the Conservation Area.

Opening up the frontage onto the road would render the extensive new hard surfaced parking area relatively prominent in views from Hassocks Road, which in addition to harming the semi-rural character of the street scene would also detract from the setting in which the attractive house at Withiel is appreciated.

District Plan Policy DP35 'Conservation Areas' is relevant, and states that:
'Development in a conservation area will be required to conserve or enhance its special character, appearance and the range of activities which contribute to it. This will be achieved by ensuring that: ...

• Open spaces, gardens, landscaping and boundary features that contribute to the special character of the area are protected.'

In my opinion, this aspect of the current proposal is contrary to the requirements of this policy for the reasons set out above.

- The proposed single storey rear addition is shown as a single storey, flat roofed infill between the existing rear swimming pool wing at the southern end of the elevation and a further smaller outshot to the north. The original house has already been quite substantially extended by the swimming pool annexe, such that in other circumstances any further additions to the building might be regarded as contentious. However the relatively light weight elevational treatment of the proposed extension and its position tucked between the two existing rear outshots in my opinion result in an acceptable relationship with the host building. This aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious, subject to detail.

Although the principle of the associated alterations to the fenestration at ground and first floor is not considered contentious, the proposed use of uPVC to the replacement windows would be harmful to the character and appearance of this attractive period building and its contribution to the Conservation Area. I would instead recommend double glazed timber sashes of an appropriate design.

- Similar considerations would apply with respect to the proposed replacement of timber windows with uPVC to the side of the building. The applicant may find the relevant guidance from Historic England of interest in this respect. This details the benefits and disbenefits of replacement timber and uPVC windows respectively on traditional buildings:

[Traditional Windows - Their Care, Repair and Upgrading](#)

The applicant could also consider retaining and repairing the existing timber sashes, if this is practical, and installing slim-line double glazing within the existing frames. This may be a more cost-effective (as well as a more sustainable) alternative to their replacement. There is further, more technical guidance on these issues, and on other aspects of improving energy efficiency with respect to traditional buildings which the applicant may also find useful, and could search for.

- The proposed alterations at the rear of the property comprise the partial relocation of an existing retaining wall to enlarge the existing off street parking area- this entails loss of a

section of hedging sitting above the wall. This rear boundary opens onto Tott Lane, which is an attractive road with a semi-rural character having development to its northern side and to the south open fields with extensive views towards the South Downs. In this context, although the extension to the existing parking area is modest, and the relocation of the retaining wall is not considered in itself contentious, the associated partial loss of the hedging sitting above this will result in a degree of harm to the street scene, particularly in the context of the existing off street parking, which detracts from the semi-rural character of the Lane, and is softened only by this planting. I would therefore suggest that this aspect of the proposal is amended to show the retention of some space for planting above the retaining wall, even if the extent of this is reduced.

In summary, although some aspects of the current proposal are not considered contentious in principle, others are considered to be harmful to the character and appearance of the Hurstpierpoint Conservation Area, and should be either withdrawn from the scheme (in the case of the proposed vehicle entrance and off street parking adjacent to Hassocks Road, or amended. As it stands, I would consider the proposal to be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal would result in less than substantial harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, at around the mid range of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.

Thanks,

Emily

- The proposed ASHPs are shown on plan to the south-eastern side of the house. These are placed at ground level, and will be well screened from wider views. They are therefore not of concern in terms of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

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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