

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 02 March 2026 16:18:11 UTC+00:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Heathfield House, High Street, Cuckfield DM/26/0213

Hi Katherine

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications.

Heathfield House is a Grade II listed building located in a prominent position at the heart of the Cuckfield Conservation Area. The building, which includes a historic shop frontage at ground floor, dates from the mid 19th century.

Planning permission and listed building consent were recently granted for the change of use of part of the ground floor shop unit to residential, with associated internal alterations, and external alterations including repainting and demolition of an existing modern extension at the rear of the building.

The current proposal is for internal alterations, alterations to the rear external door and the installation of pv panels on the internal roofslopes above the second floor. To consider these works in turn:

- To the rear external door, it is proposed to replace an existing softwood panelled door with French doors. Although this will entail some potential loss of historic fabric from the rear elevation, the door itself is not original, and the impact on the appearance of the building will be slight. On balance, this aspect of the proposal is considered acceptable subject to detail.
- Internally, works are proposed at ground and first floor levels. At ground floor, the substantial removal of the existing subdividing walls/partitions and a chimney stack within the residential part of the property is proposed.

Although the submitted planning statement suggests that the walls affected are entirely non original, we have no evidence to support this, such as a targeted historic building survey undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced historic building archaeologist. An 'existing' plan has been provided, overlaid with a conjectural 'original' layout, but again there is no reasoning or justification, based on a study of the fabric or of historic building plans, which backs this up. In my opinion, this plan is misleading and should be withdrawn.

Based on the very limited information in front of us, I can accept it is likely that the partition running front to rear within the rear room, which bisects the chimney, is likely to be an insertion, and it is unlikely that an objection to the removal of this element would be justified. However, the remainder of the plan form appears consistent with the building's type and age, and without evidence to the contrary, I have no reason to believe it is not original. The chimney, which runs up through the floors above, appears historic and would dictate the position of the partition wall between the front and rear rooms, for example, and paired front and rear rooms to either side of a central hallway leading to the staircase would be a

typical arrangement for houses of this period. In my opinion, based on the information before us the existing room plan and fabric to this part of the ground floor is likely to be considered of interest, and its wholesale removal in favour of a single open plan space, which is completely unsympathetic to the typically cellular nature of the plan form of buildings of this type and age, alongside the loss of the historic chimney and fireplace, is likely to be considered unacceptable without a very compelling justification.

At first floor, removal of a built-in kitchen from the rear south west room to create a study is proposed. This work is not considered contentious.

- The building's original roof above the second floor is of a double pitch, its parallel ridges running side to side across the building, flanking a central valley. The proposed PV panels are to be sited on the east and west facing internal roofslopes above the valley. Although the installation may be partly visible in glimpsed views looking south along the northern part of the High Street, the impact on the appearance of the listed building and the street scene is likely to be minimal. In the context particularly of para. 167 of the NPPF, this is considered acceptable in principle. I would however like to see detailed drawings, including sections to show upstand, of the panels to confirm that these will be flush or near flush to the roofslope. This information will ideally be provided as part of the application rather than by condition.

In summary, further information is required for fully informed comment on some aspects of the proposal. Other aspects are likely to be considered unacceptable without a compelling justification in the form of a detailed historic building survey which supports the proposals.

As it stands, in my opinion the proposed internal works would be regarded as harmful to the special interest of the listed building, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF, the harm caused is likely to fall within the less than substantial spectrum, 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.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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