

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 03 July 2025 17:02:48 UTC+01:00
To: "Rachel Richardson" <Rachel.Richardson@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1245 Lane House, Denman's Lane, Lindfield

Hi Rachel

Comments on the above planning application.

Lane House is a unlisted detached property set in extensive gardens to the southern side of Denman's Lane. The house dates from the early 20th century, and is an attractive property with vernacular, loosely 'Arts and Crafts' derived features typical of that period such as a half hipped roof with a catslide to the rear, exposed timber rafter feet and prominent brick chimneys, a projecting bay windows with half-timbering and small pane casements, and a timber bracketed porch. The house and gardens are within the setting of the Lindfield Conservation Area, the boundary of which is diagonally opposite the north east corner of the site at its closest point, although it also runs a short distance to the south east taking in 27-29 Denman's Lane.

Although there is no adopted character appraisal for the Lindfield Conservation Area, the Council's document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' contains a brief high level analysis of its key features. This highlights the strong individual village identity of the Area. Expanding on this, in my opinion, the core significance of the Conservation Area lies in its nature as Sussex village which has grown up over many centuries in close connection with the surrounding, historically rural, landscape. As such, surviving elements of the setting of the Area which contribute to an continuing understanding of this historical relationship with the surrounding countryside, and of the originally rural context of the village, are very important to an appreciation of its significance, particularly when the direct relationship with the surrounding rural landscape has been eroded in some areas by development of a suburban character.

The stretch of Denman's Lane to the north west of Compton Road retains a semi-rural character, due to its narrow width, absence of through traffic, abundant fringing hedgerows and tree planting, and the extensive gardens of the properties to the south of the Lane, in particular Lane House. Some of the buildings along the Lane, including Lane House, are also complementary in their age and/or style to the traditional village buildings within the Conservation Area.

For these reasons, I would consider that Lane House and its gardens make a positive contribution to the setting and significance of the Lindfield Conservation Area.

The current proposal is for significant extension, remodelling and alteration of Lane House, including a part two, part 1½ storey side extension to the western end of the house, projecting forwards towards the lane, further single storey extensions to the front (north) and rear (south), a half-hip to gable extension to the eastern end of the building, new dormers to the rear and enlarged dormers to the front, demolition of the existing chimney stacks, replacement windows, removal of hung tile and rendering of brickwork. The proposal also includes extensive hard landscaping, including widening of the access, an enlarged front garden parking/turning area, and a replacement rear patio.

In my opinion, this proposal raises a number of significant concerns in terms of the impact on the character and appearance of the house and its gardens, and the positive contribution which they make to the setting of the Conservation Area:

- The proposed extensions to the house are very significantly overscaled, to the extent that the existing building would be completely subsumed by these additions, and its original form would no longer be discernible. This is contrary to the requirements of the Council's adopted Design Guide, including Design Principle DG49 '*General Principles for Extensions*', which requires that: '*Extensions should... 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.*'
- The proposed remodelling of the house includes loss of the original roof forms (both the existing half hip and catslide roofs would be removed), loss of features such as projecting bay windows, porches, and all of the existing chimneys, replacement of all existing windows and doors, rendering of original brickwork, loss of hung tile, and loss of elements of the mock timbering. This work is so extensive that the existing, original, period character of the building would be entirely lost. The proposed new design treatment is of a poor quality and does not, in my opinion, come close to compensating for this loss of character.
- The enlargement of the footprint of the building arising from the proposed extensions is so great as to also detract from the open and verdant character of the gardens around it. The proposed enlargement of the associated hardstanding areas will further detract from this character.
- The proposal also includes (from the description of development) enlargement of the access from Denman's Lane. This is not particularly clearly shown on the submitted plans, but any loss of the hedging to the road frontage to the property would be considered to further detract from the positive contribution which the site currently makes to the setting of the Conservation Area.

For these reasons in my opinion the proposal will detract from the character and appearance of Lane House and its gardens, the semi-rural character of Denman's Lane, and the positive contribution which these make, through setting, to the significance of the Lindfield Conservation Area.

This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35. In terms of the NPPF, I would place the harm caused at the low-mid end of the less than substantial spectrum, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply.

I would suggest that the applicant consider withdrawing the current scheme and seeking pre-application advice in respect of an alternative, more sympathetic proposal.

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>

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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