



LONDON OFFICE

Ms Caroline Grist
Mid Sussex District Council
Oaklands
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Haywards Heath
West Sussex
RH16 1SS

Direct Dial: 0207 973 3627

Our ref: P01605480; L01605482

10th August 2026

Dear Ms Grist

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**WYKEHURST HOUSE, WYKEHURST PARK, COLWOOD LANE, BOLNEY,
HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX RH17 5QQ
Application Nos DM/25/3228; DM/25/3229**

Thank you for your letters of 24th July 2026 regarding further amendments to the original applications for planning permission and listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Background

Historic England provided advice on 26th May 2026 regarding amendments to the proposals to remodel the altered house's central lightwell and introduce a new staircase to reinstate the historic secondary circulation route.

The amended scheme retained the relocated secondary staircase while reducing the scale and visual prominence of the proposed new openings at second-floor level. We acknowledged that these changes reduced harm and better respected the building's hierarchy and architectural character.

However, concerns remained regarding the creation of a large open-plan lounge from a series of historic cellular rooms at second floor level. This would require additional interventions, including the exposure of a vaulted ceiling, the insertion of a circular window, and the introduction of matching fireplace surrounds to create a symmetrical composition. We considered these alterations to be historically unsubstantiated and likely to undermine understanding of the building's original layout, function and



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hierarchy. Consequently, we concluded that the proposals would continue to result in a degree of 'less than substantial harm', in NPPF terms, to the significance of the listed building.

Historic England Position on the Amended Proposals

The latest amendments comprise:

- Relocating the staircase slightly westwards to improve natural light levels and reveal the original opening shown on Section A-A.
- Reinstating the ceiling in the second-floor lounge.
- Introducing matching fireplace within the open-plan space while retaining the existing fireplace openings and their original proportions.

We consider that the reinstatement of the ceiling reduces harm by restoring more modest room proportions and allowing a clearer appreciation of the historic arrangement of this part of the building.

However, we remain concerned about the proposed matching fireplace surrounds. The fireplaces differ in scale and proportion and were not historically intended to be experienced within a single room. Introducing identical surrounds would create a misleading impression of their historic relationship and suggest a degree of uniformity that did not previously exist.

Retaining a visual distinction between the fireplaces would better reflect the former subdivision of the rooms and enhance understanding of the building's historic plan form.

In view of the reduced height of this space following the reconstruction of the ceiling, consideration could be given to reinstating sections of partition between the former rooms, with very wide, doorless openings between them. This approach could help achieve a more balanced spatial composition while retaining the legibility of the historic layout.

Recommendation

Historic England recommends that your Council should approve these applications, which, broadly, would conserve the significance of Wykehurst House. This recommendation is subject to the fireplace design being revised to respond to the differing proportions and character of the existing openings. Such an approach would avoid creating a misleading sense of uniformity and would reinforce understanding the building's historic plan form.

If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.



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Yours sincerely

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