

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 April 2026 15:27:05 UTC+01:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: RE: DM/26/0156 and DM/26/0213 - Heathfield House, High Street, Cuckfield

Hi Katherine

Thanks for sending this on, and apologies for the delay in getting back to you, I was on leave over Easter.

The applicant has provided a historic photograph of Heathfield House prior to the insertion of the shopfront, which is interesting. I also note the points she makes regarding her interpretation of the date of the internal walls she wishes to alter or remove. However, this is not in my opinion sufficient to justify the proposal as it stands, for the following reasons:

- The external photograph dated 1875 is suggestive, but does not (obviously) show the internal layout of the building. For example, it is possible that the house door was moved across to make way for the shop front as suggested, but this does not necessarily mean that the width of the hallway behind it was altered.
- Historical map regression demonstrates that the shopfront was inserted during the late 19th or early 20th century. This aspect of the building's development and narrative is likely to be considered of interest in its own right, so whether the current position of the walls to the southern side of the hallway dates from the building's original construction, or from this phase of work, this aspect of the plan form is likely to be considered to contribute positively to the special interest of the building.
- It will be interesting to date the fabric of the two walls concerned and I would suggest that the applicant does supply the photographs mentioned. However, even if this fabric is partly modern, or has been altered, we may take the view that if it preserves an earlier aspect of the floor plan it should still be retained rather than removed. The cellular plan of the ground floor of the building is typical of its period; creation of an open plan living area is not likely to be regarded as sympathetic to its character.

In summary I will be interested to see the internal detailed photographs mentioned, however in my opinion I remain concerned that removing the walls in question and 'opening up' the ground floor of the building is likely to be harmful to the special interest of the building. I note the applicant's point regarding the expense involved, but it does also of course remain open to her to commission a targeted historic building survey if she feels strongly that this would support her argument.

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>



From: Katherine Williams <katherine.williams@midsussex.gov.uk>

Sent: 07 April 2026 11:11

To: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>

Subject: FW: DM/26/0156 and DM/26/0213 - Heathfield House, High Street, Cuckfield

Hi Emily,

I have received the below email from the applicant, can you have a look and we have a chat about this when you are back.

Thanks

Katherine Williams BSc (Hons) MSc
Senior Planning Officer
Mid Sussex District Council
01444 477214
www.midsussex.gov.uk



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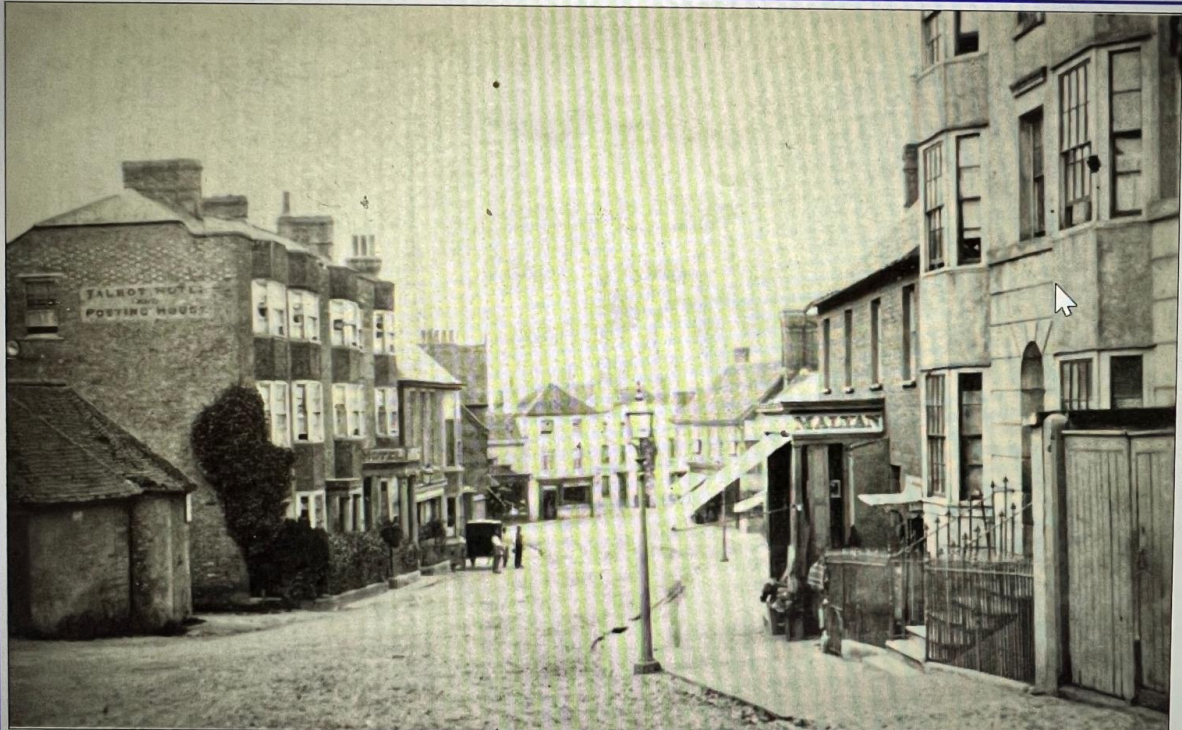
From: Rachel Bryant <rbryant@live.co.uk>

Sent: 20 March 2026 15:20

To: Katherine Williams <katherine.williams@midsussex.gov.uk>

Subject: DM/26/0156 and DM/26/0213 - Heathfield House, High Street, Cuckfield

The Talbot Hotel and Cuckfield High Street in the 19th Century



[ABOVE] A view of **Cuckfield High Street**, showing the **Talbot Hotel** and **Posting House** on the left (c1875). It is possible that this view was taken by **Albert Dumsday**, son of **Ambrose Dumsday**, the proprietor of the **Talbot Hotel**.

Dear Katherine,

I hope you are well.

Thank you for your recent comments regarding the two non-original internal walls. I have considered these carefully and wanted to respond in more detail, as well as reiterate my commitment to achieving the best possible outcome for the building from a conservation perspective.

I had hoped that, by agreeing to retain the fireplace wall that the application might be viewed more favourably. However, I would like to take this opportunity to clarify why the two walls in question are demonstrably later insertions and do not contribute to the building's historic significance.

The rear stud wall, which runs along the back portion of the house to the rear door, is of notably lightweight construction, incorporating a sliding door and abutting the chimney breast in a way that partially obscures it. It has even been constructed over the timber draft cover to the chimney, suggesting it was added as a secondary, functional alteration rather than as part of the original layout. (I can provide images if required to show this) Its presence results in a very small, poorly lit internal room with no direct access to natural light, which is at odds with the proportions and qualities typically associated with the building's original plan form. On this basis, it is difficult to see how this partition contributes positively to the heritage value of the property.

Similarly, the wall to the left upon entering through the repositioned front door appears to be a later addition. Historic evidence (as shown in the attached image) indicates that the original entrance was centrally aligned with the upper windows. The relocation of the door to its current off-centre position likely occurred when the shopfront was introduced, necessitating internal reconfiguration. This wall therefore seems to have been inserted to accommodate those later changes, reducing the scale of what would originally have been a principal reception room. By removing this wall I am simply opening the room up to its original form.

Its construction further supports this conclusion: it produces a noticeably hollow sound when tapped compared to the surrounding original fabric, and the junction with the chimney breast is visibly expressed. In addition, the presence of a steel beam forming the adjacent opening to the later addition staircase indicates structural alteration consistent with the insertion of a new wall and hallway arrangement.

In light of the above, I would respectfully suggest that the removal of these elements would not result in the loss of historic fabric, but instead provide an opportunity to better reveal and restore the building's original spatial character. My intention throughout has been to enhance the property using appropriate materials and detailing, addressing past unsympathetic alterations and securing its long-term conservation.

I am naturally mindful of costs with such a lot of renovation work to do and would prefer to avoid commissioning what I believe may be an unnecessary additional report. However, I remain fully committed to working collaboratively to reach an outcome that satisfies conservation objectives.

I would very much welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you further at a convenient time.

Many thanks and have a lovely weekend

Rachel Bryant