

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 24 November 2025 14:29:35 UTC+00:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <Caroline.Grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2478 Land Adj. to Great Haywards

Hi Caroline

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site is a small field, now somewhat overgrown, located to the southeast of Great Haywards historic farmstead, within the town of Haywards Heath. The historic farmstead, which is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment as dating from the Medieval period, includes the former farmhouse, which is a late 15th or early 16th century Grade II listed building, and Great Haywards Barn, which is also Grade II listed and dates from the 18th century.

Great Haywards house would be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse of its date, which (from the submitted heritage statement) was associated with some prominent local families, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials. It also has group value with former barn. The Barn would be considered to possess similar values as a good example of an agricultural building of its type and period.

As such, the surviving element of the originally rural setting of the farmstead, which consists of the application site and a further small field which is adjacent to the site and to the south of the farmhouse, will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the special interests of the listed buildings, in particular those parts of those interests which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values. During our site visit I noted the relatively high hedge between the site and the farmhouse, however planting of this nature is relatively ephemeral, and therefore the weight that can be attached to it in terms of the contribution made by the site to the setting of the house and farmstead, which is in close proximity, is correspondingly limited.

In this respect, I also note the comments made by the Planning Inspector in terms of the contribution made by the fields to the south of the farmstead to the special interests of the listed buildings in the context of a previously proposed new house to be located within the field to the west of the current application site. (The earlier 2011 appeal mentioned refers to a previous proposed for a single dwelling on the same site of a different footprint and design):

'The appeal site forms part of an open field with the appearance of rough pasture, although somewhat neglected. It lies adjacent to Great Haywards, a substantial Grade II listed former farmhouse. This building and The Barn (also listed Grade II) slightly further afield, the three ponds nearby and the adjoining

open land including the appeal site, all combine to evoke a strong sense of a surviving rural enclave amidst the surrounding suburban development. However, the two substantial detached houses which have been erected on land to the south west of Great Haywards, represent a modern intrusion into this setting.

A mature boundary hedge separates the appeal site and the rest of the field, from the garden of Great Haywards. In the 2011 appeal, the Inspector noted at paragraph 10 of the decision that this hedge "...obscures what is otherwise an interlocking setting to the listed buildings based upon the three ponds and the land thereabouts...the two detached houses have a dominant, exclusive suburban appearance in that scene, due to their siting, scale and mirrored style. Even so...the appeal site in no way has become isolated from Great Haywards, irrespective of the intervening substantial boundary hedge, and is in close proximity."

I am mindful that the extent of the setting of a listed building is not fixed and can change over time, as the surroundings evolve. However, when I visited the appeal site, my experience of its relationship and that of the rest of the field with Great Haywards, was very similar to that described by the previous Inspector. In particular, no substantial physical changes appear to have occurred to either the appeal site, the rest of the field or the wider setting of the listed building, since the previous appeal decision.

The 2011 Inspector went on to conclude at paragraph 11 that the appeal site "...contributes to showing the listed buildings off in their historic context, which albeit now is restricted to a rural enclave. The two detached houses have reduced the extent of that rural setting in the past and the proposed development would make matters worse through a further encroachment of like development, which would be intrusive and unwelcome."

I acknowledge that the proposed development exhibits differences, notably in terms of its siting and design, to the previous appeal scheme. In particular, the proposed dwelling has been moved to the south, further away from Great Haywards...

However, in my view it is the manner in which the appeal site and the rest of the field is experienced in its totality, which marks its contribution to the setting of Great Haywards in both a quantitative and qualitative sense. The proposed development would still be similar in scale and design to the adjacent dwellings, it would have a similar overall footprint and it would represent an encroachment of substantial built form into the openness of the appeal site. It would also result in the subdivision and domestication of a substantial part of the field to form the curtilage, with its resulting boundary enclosures, ornamental planting, hardsurfaces and other domestic features. Although the proposed dwelling would be sited further away, both it and the substantial detached garage would be viewed in conjunction with Great Haywards. All of this would serve to significantly

erode the current rural setting of the listed building. Taking account of all of the above, I find that the siting and design of the proposed development does not overcome the 2011 Inspector's findings of harm in this respect.'

The current proposal differs from both of these previous schemes, in particular in respect of the location of the proposed new house, which is relocated to the southeast corner of the easternmost of the two fields. However, as is noted by the appeal decision above, it is the totality of the remaining fields to the south of the farmstead which contributes positively to the setting and significance of the listed buildings within it. This contribution is not diminished by the intervening hedge.

The current application, similar to the schemes dismissed at appeal, would introduce a new dwelling into this surviving fragment of the historically rural setting of the listed buildings, contained within a domestic curtilage, with a detached garage, and new hard and soft landscaping. This will have a fundamental impact on the character of the site, which would become domesticated, harming the positive contribution which it currently makes, through setting, to the special interests of the listed buildings and the manner in which these are appreciated.

For this reason, the current proposal is in my opinion unacceptable in principle in built heritage terms. It results in harm, through impact on setting, to the special interests of both Great Haywards and Great Haywards Barn, contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF, I would place the harm caused as less than substantial in both cases, at around the mid-point of that scale (perhaps slightly lower with respect to the barn than the house, due to their differing positions relative to the site), such that the balancing exercises set out in paragraph 215 will apply. In carrying out that balancing exercise, the Council must be aware of the great weight that must be given under paragraph 212 to the conservation of these assets, that under paragraph 213 any harm to designated heritage assets requires clear and convincing justification.

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.
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