



WHALEBACK

DESIGN, ACCESS, HERITAGE AND PLANNING STATEMENT

The Coach House, Nether Walstead

ADDRESS

The Coach House, Nether Walstead
East Mascalls Lane, Haywards Heath RH16 2QJ

DATE

November 2025

REVISION

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Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Context and site description	4
Historical development	7
Proposals	10
Impact assessment	12
Planning statement	13

Introduction

This Design, Access, Heritage and Planning Statement accompanies proposals for works at the Coach House. It builds on an earlier submission for Pre-Application Advice, after which further historic research and on-site investigations were undertaken. The design for the Coach House and adjacent shed has since been refined in response to heritage considerations and the Conservation Officer’s comments.

The proposals include restrained modifications to the Coach House, the conversion of the adjoining timber shed, and the introduction of a lightweight link between them. The scheme aims to maintain clarity around the significance of the structures while allowing proportionate changes that support their practical, long-term use.

The assessment reflects an understanding of the buildings’ development and present condition, drawing on material from the West Sussex Records Office, the planning history, and direct inspection. This evidence has informed a design approach that seeks to limit intervention in historic fabric while providing for necessary adaptation.

The Statement outlines the design principles guiding the scale, layout and appearance of the works, and explains how the proposals respond to the architectural and historical context of the site.



Aerial view of application site.

Context and site description

The application site lies within the parish of Lindfield and falls under Mid Sussex District Council. Its wider setting is rural, with houses scattered among large areas of open, undeveloped land.

The Coach House sits within the grounds of Nether Walstead, positioned on the east side of a cluster of ancillary buildings serving the main house. Nether Walstead stands at the southern end of a long private drive from East Mascalls Lane. The Coach House is reached via a short eastern spur taken around 65m before the main house; this spur continues for about 60m through a wooded area before turning south for a further 25m to the building’s east elevation.

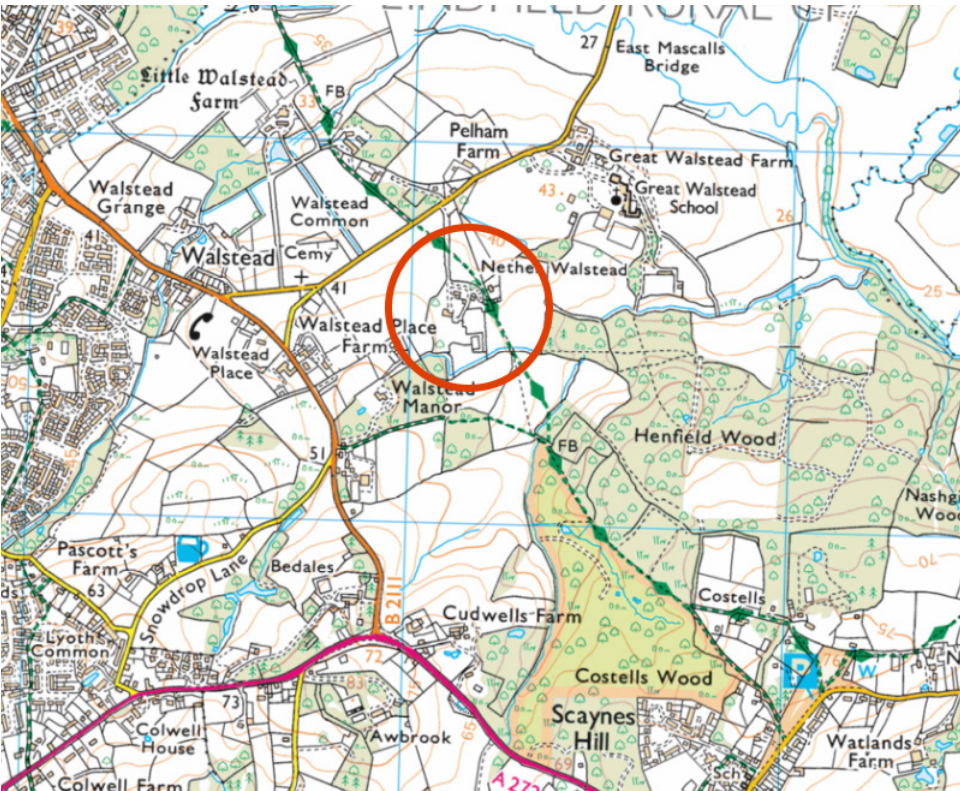
Three dwellings lie to the north-east: the Cottage, Hindover Cottage and Keepers Cottage, which were formerly part of the Nether Walstead estate and still accessed from the same private drive.

To the north of the Coach House is a lawn, enclosed by the drive to the north and east. The west (rear) elevation overlooks an enclosed garden, bounded to the north by the Shed and, west of this, by the wall of the former stable yard, which is now used for garaging and storage. A brick wall also defines the western and southern edges of the garden. Mature trees mean there is no intervisibility between the Coach House and Nether Walstead. The east elevation faces directly onto the widened section of the private drive that forms a small forecourt.

The wider grounds of Nether Walstead are characterised by mature planting, with substantial trees along boundaries. Beyond the immediate garden, the land opens out and remains largely level. The sense of seclusion created by the surrounding woodland, present to the north-east, south-west and east which is an important aspect of the site’s character.

The Cottage, Hindover Cottage and Keepers Cottage are in separate ownership. Hindover Cottage and Keepers Cottage are screened by mature trees and are not intervisible with the site. The Coach House has an oblique view eastwards towards the side of The Cottage, which sits across the drive to the north-east.

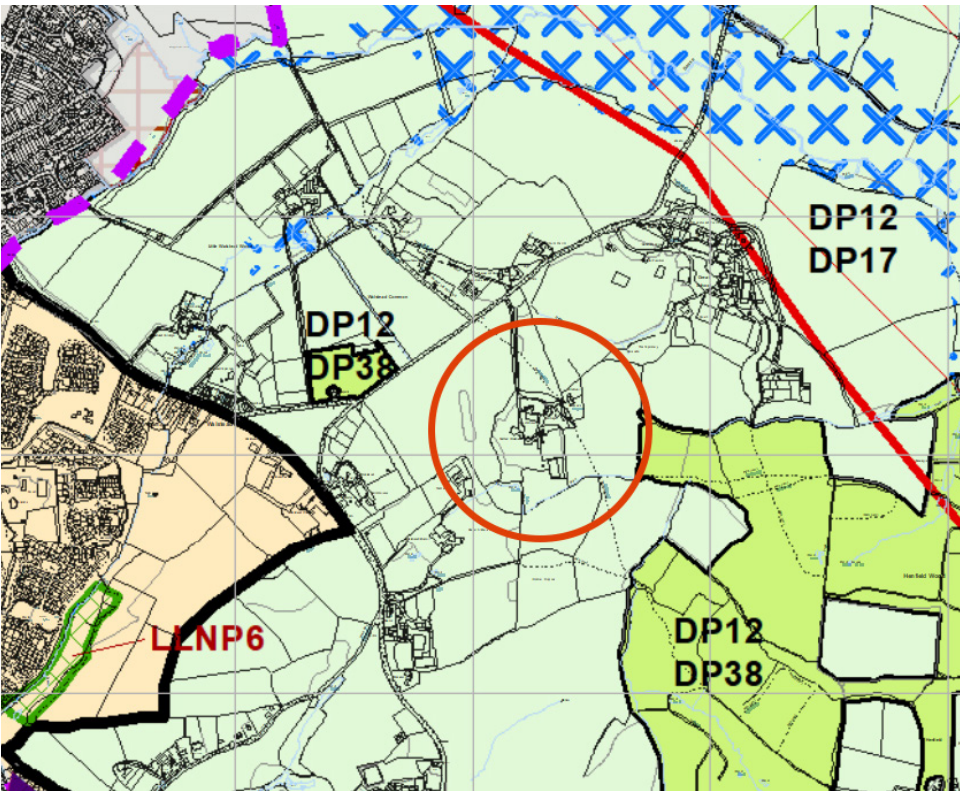
Nether Walstead is Grade II listed (NHLE 1180891). The Shed is a curtilage-listed structure. The Coach House is not considered to be curtilage listed as it appears to have been rebuilt in the latter part of the 20th century, after 1948.



Ordnance survey map of surrounding area



Map of immediate context



Mid Sussex Policy Map



Magic map of listed buildings and ancient woodlands

Context and site description



Coach House and Shed as Existing

Context and site description

COACH HOUSE & SHED

Coach House

The Coach House is a two-storey building, largely of later 20th century construction. The ground floor is brick-built, with small areas of older brickwork surviving, while the upper storey is clad in uPVC. Its plan is simple and rectangular, with chimney stacks at each end. The building has a hipped roof clad in modern plain clay tiles, with oversailing eaves and exposed rafter feet.

The east elevation has a pair of modern timber garage doors to the left, a window near the centre, and a uPVC entrance door with a small higher-level window to the right. Above, the first floor contains four uPVC windows arranged unevenly, with two set close together in the centre and two more widely spaced at the ends. On the north elevation, a projecting chimney stack sits in the centre, with one ground-floor and one first-floor window to its right. The west, or rear, elevation contains three uPVC-framed windows at first floor, and at ground floor a central pair of French doors flanked by a double casement to the right and a narrower casement to the left. A small area of older brickwork survives at the left-hand corner.

Shed

The Shed forms the northern boundary of the Coach House garden and joins the brick wall of the former stable yard at its west end and a brick wall connecting to the Coach House to its east end. The structure is currently used as a log store.

It appears to have originated as an open-fronted shed, later enclosed on its south side. The south elevation, facing the Coach House garden, consists of brick infill panels set between timber uprights. The north elevation is clad in black-stained timber weatherboarding and contains a large opening that provides the only access. The east elevation is similarly clad in black-stained weatherboarding up to the gable, while the west elevation abuts the stable-yard wall, with the cladding rising above the brickwork. The roof is covered in machine-made tiles and is in poor condition, with distortion in the underlying timbers producing an uneven, wavy profile.



East side of Coach House



North side of Coach House and Shed



West side of Coach House



South side of Shed

Historical development

The house at Nether Walstead has been the subject of research by Peter Bushell, whose work has contributed significantly to understanding the origins and ownership of the property. The name “Nether Walstead” may have Anglo-Saxon origins, possibly deriving from “Walca’s Stede,” meaning Walca’s farm or homestead. Another possibility is that the area belonged to Walter de Wolkested, who acquired it sometime during the reign of Edward II (1315-1316).

The first documented mention of Nether Walstead dates back to 1631, when the land was recorded as being owned by Leonard Brett, who passed it to his sons upon his death. The oldest part of the house likely dates from this period, if not slightly earlier. This section consists of two storeys and an attic, forming the eastern part of the house. The Brett family were likely small landowners, and the first known occupant of the house was Richard Heemes, who would have worked the land attached to the property. In 1648, Thomas Dribbin became the new tenant of Nether Walstead. Substantial alterations occurred around 1725, likely related to the initials “H.B.” at the entrance, which stand for Henry Brett. In 1786, the tithes were recorded as being paid by Richard Wyatt, but the house was leased to John Allin, a local farmer. Such leases, or copyholds, typically lasted three generations, and the house remained in the Allin family until 1857. The 1851 census indicates that several people lived in the house: Jane Allin, aged 84; four of her nieces and two nephews - William, aged 54, and his wife Harriet, aged 49; Harriet Jane, aged 29; Elizabeth, aged 23; Maria, aged 21; and Henry, aged 20. Additionally, three unmarried farm workers lived there: Samuel Binch, aged 48; George Tester, aged 30; and Levi Lipwood, aged 13. Following Jane Allin’s death, the house was rented from James King, who held it from the Earl of Chichester.

The opening of the London to Brighton railway in 1841, which included a station serving the towns of Cuckfield and Lindfield, spurred the development of the town of Haywards Heath. As with many such cases, the construction of the railway and station catalysed the area’s growth.

The 1861 census records that George Roser and his wife, agricultural labourers, were living there with their daughter, likely serving as caretakers following Jane Allin’s death. After James King’s death, the house was sold to Thomas Rooke Davis, a wealthy London merchant, in 1862 for £400. Thomas Rooke moved in on 11 June 1863 with his two daughters, Ann Harriet Davis and Caroline Davis. By the 1871 census, William Gander was living there with his family; he is described as a farmer of 190 acres, which was considered an average holding at the time, likely employing several workers.

William Gander died in 1877, and the farm was sold to John Hook of Little Walstead. The 1881 census records that John Hook’s son, William, was living at Nether Walstead with his family. In 1888, Nether Walstead was purchased by Sills Clifford Gibbons, a prosperous dentist from Burgess Hill and the son of a senior clerk in the House of Commons. Following the death of his wife, Clifford Gibbons sold his previous residence, Great Walstead, and purchased Nether Walstead. Although it is not known when Clifford Gibbons sold the house, sales particulars from 1892 describe the property as a “very valuable freehold and sporting estate” to be sold at auction. The estate is described as:

“A commodious and comfortable farmhouse, built of brick and timbered, and roofed with tiles and Sussex stone, containing 2 sitting rooms, kitchen, 2 sculleries,

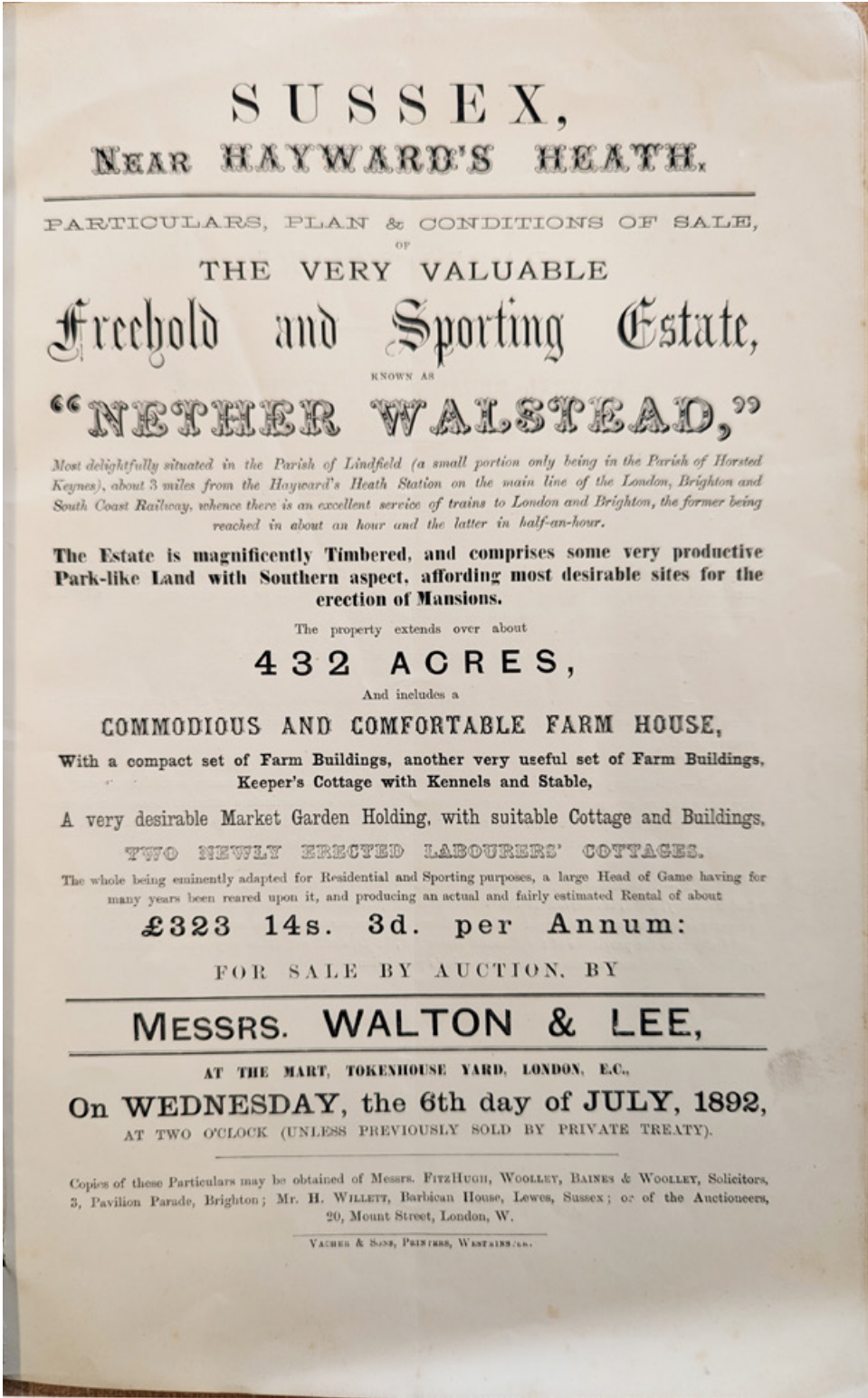
dairy, pantry, and 2 underground cellars, together with 6 bedrooms and 2 attics.”

The farm buildings are noted as compact and situated near the house, including a cart shed, stables, and cattle sheds. There are also two recently built labourers’ cottages, alongside a keeper’s cottage and kennels. Interestingly, the sales particulars list Mr. W. Hook as the occupier of the farm. Whether the house was actually sold in 1892 is unknown.

It is understood that the house was extensively remodelled and extended in the early 20th century, prior to 1904. Plans of this work have not been found but the building fabric indicates that this involved the addition of a substantial extension to the house’s west end, the addition of the porch and other works to the pre-existing dwelling.

In 1908, Nether Walstead was sold to Sydney Conrad Peters, a partner in the hop factoring firm George & Frederick Ernest Peters, based on Borough High Street, London. In 1914, the house was purchased by Captain Alfred Ernest Speer of the Northumberland Fusiliers. Following Captain Speer’s death in 1925, the house was bought by Miss Mary Hammerton. Upon her death in 1935, the house was sold by her nephews, who described her as a spinster. The house was then bought by Roy Whittington until it was subsequently sold to James Philip van den Bergh. Records indicate that the house was empty in 1963 until it was purchased by Ian and Susan Dipple in 1968.

The exact date when the Dipples sold the house is unknown, but planning records indicate that the property was owned by the Durkins in 2003. The house was sold again in late 2023, when it was acquired by the current owners.



Sale particulars from 1892. Source: West Sussex Record Office.

Historical development

The earliest detailed map showing Nether Walstead is the 1845 Tithe Map, which shows the house in an L-shaped form, accompanied by a group of farm buildings to the northeast and several smaller structures to the northwest.

An L-shaped range is shown in the position of the present Coach House and Shed, but its larger form does not correspond to the surviving buildings. The element occupying the position of the Coach House was longer, while the structure on the site of the Shed had a deeper plan, extending to meet the corner of the building now used as a garage and store.

The First Edition 25-inch Ordnance Survey map of 1875 presents a similar arrangement in greater detail. Its colouring conventions, red for masonry buildings and grey for non-masonry structures, indicate that both buildings on this site were likely timber-built at that time. Analysis of the map sequence, combined with surviving fabric, suggests that these early structures were later replaced.

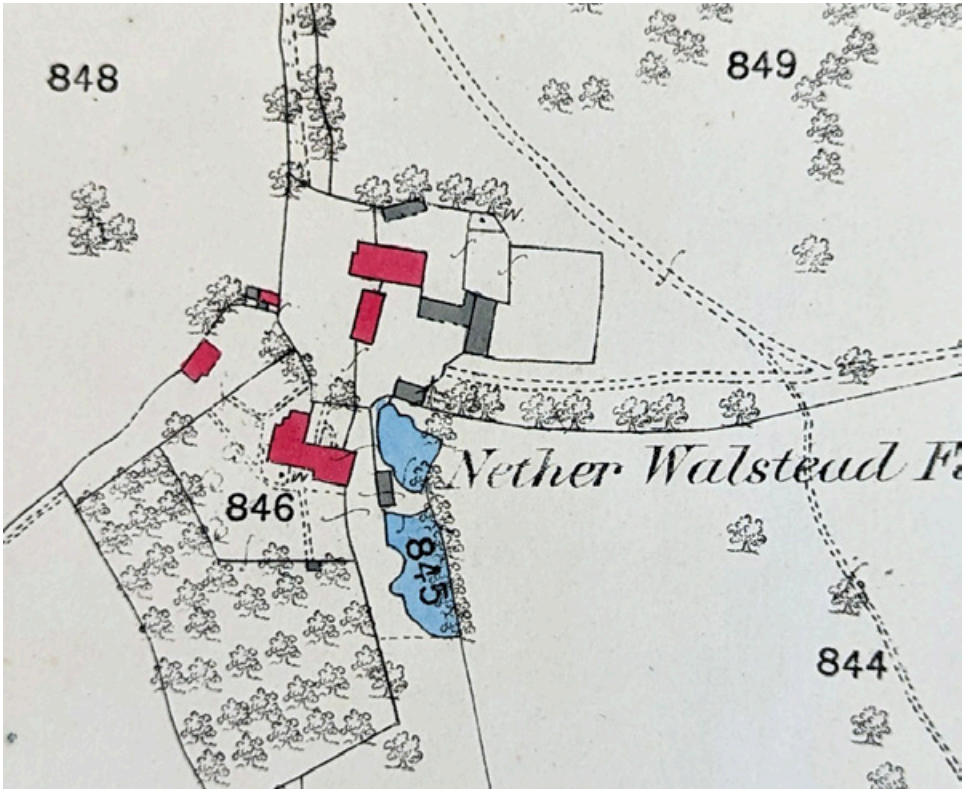
By 1895, the building corresponding to the Shed had altered to a plan form closer to that of the present structure, although it still extended further east to meet the west elevation of the Coach House equivalent. A small additional structure also appears on the north side of this. The 1895 map shows a dashed line along the Shed's south side, suggesting that this elevation was then open, and not the north side.

By 1909, both buildings had reached proportions essentially matching those seen today. The Coach House footprint corresponds closely to its current form, apart from a small projection on its north side, while the Shed had been separated from the rear elevation of the Coach House, as in the present layout.

Overall, the map evidence indicates that buildings existed on this site before 1875, but that these were largely replaced between 1875 and 1895. The structures shown in 1895 appear to be the direct predecessors of the current buildings. The Shed retains more of its historic fabric, although its formerly open south elevation has since been infilled and an opening introduced on the north side. The Coach House, by contrast, has been substantially rebuilt in the late 20th century.



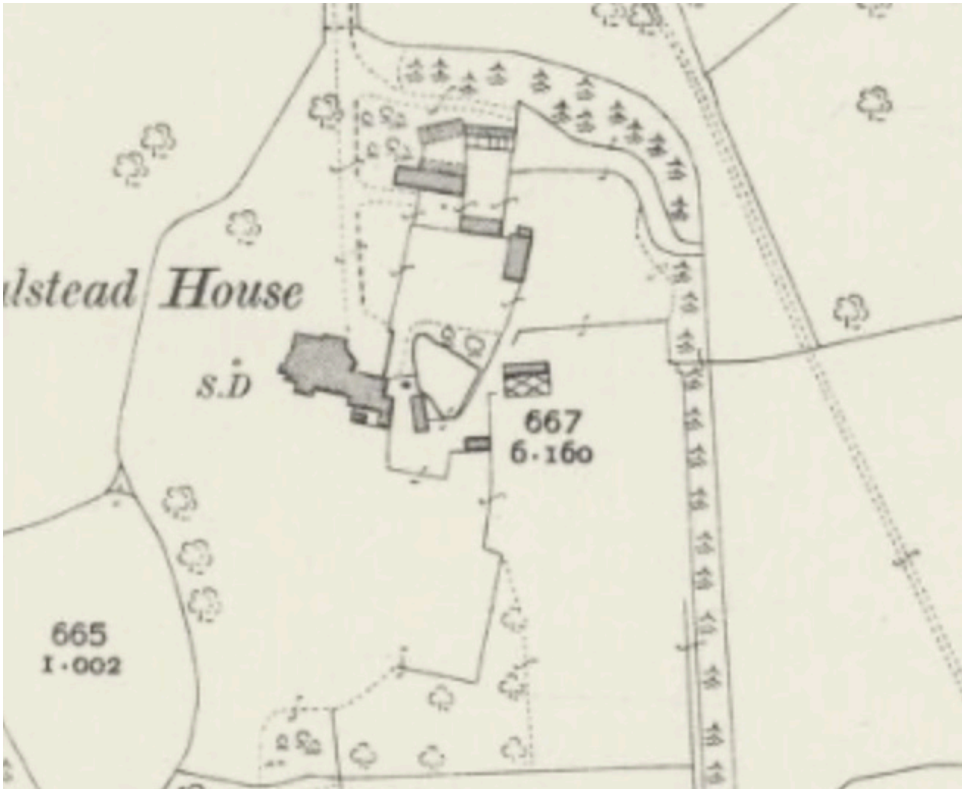
Tithe Map of 1845.



First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1875.



Second edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897.



Third edition Ordnance Survey map of 1909.

Historical development

DEVELOPMENT PHASES

The accompanying map has been annotated to indicate the likely phases of development. Although the footprint of the Coach House aligns with that shown on late 19th-century mapping, the building fabric appears to be largely the result of late 20th century reconstruction.

The fabric of the Shed is likely to date principally from the period between 1875 and 1895, albeit with later alterations. These include its shortening, the infilling of the formerly open south elevation, and the creation of a new opening on the north side.

Statement of Significance

The Coach House and Shed stand within the grounds of Nether Walstead, a Grade II listed building whose significance derives principally from its architectural character, historic development, and landscape setting. As ancillary structures, the Coach House and Shed contribute to the understanding of the estate’s evolution from a working farmstead to an enlarged 19th-century country house with associated service buildings.

The Shed is the more historically significant of the two buildings. Map evidence suggests it originated between 1875 and 1895, when the site still operated as part of a farm. Its form, likely an open-fronted cart shed subsequently enclosed, reflects the functional requirements of an agricultural holding of that period. Although later altered, with the south elevation infilled and a new opening introduced to the north, the structure retains elements of its 19th-century fabric, layout, and utilitarian character. It therefore makes a modest but clear contribution to the evidential and historic interest of the estate, illustrating the working life of the site before and during its transition to a country house.

By contrast, the Coach House has very limited heritage interest. While its footprint corresponds to that shown on late 19th-century maps, the building itself has been substantially rebuilt in the late 20th century. Modern materials, detailing and construction predominate, and only small pockets of earlier brickwork survive. As a result, the Coach House has negligible evidential or architectural value; its contribution to the significance of Nether Walstead is limited to its role as part of the wider pattern of ancillary buildings within the grounds.

Taken together, the two structures make a modest contribution to the significance of the heritage asset. Their value lies principally in their historic relationship with the main house and in the way they illustrate the incremental development of the estate’s service buildings. Their individual architectural or artistic interest is limited, and neither plays a notable role in views to or from the principal listed building. Their significance is therefore best understood as contextual and historic rather than architectural.



Current OS map annotated with assumed building phases

Proposals

SITE PLAN

The site plan illustrates the established arrangement of buildings within the application site. This configuration remains unchanged, except for the introduction of a small link between the Coach House and the Shed at the rear. The link is positioned where a continuation of the Shed previously existed, as shown on the 1895 map.

A new metal rear gate is proposed to the south-east of the Coach House, providing separation between its forecourt and the continuation of the drive to the south.



Proposals



Coach House and Shed as Existing

Proposals & impact

PROPOSALS

The uPVC cladding to the upper floor of the Coach House, together with the modern windows, doors, rainwater goods, light fittings and other incidental fixtures, will be removed. Internal partition walls will also be removed so the plan can be reconfigured, and several external openings will be adjusted to create a more coherent and orderly arrangement.

The timber cladding of the Shed is considered to be of relatively recent date and will be removed to enable repair of the underlying timber frame. The machine-made clay tiles to the roof will also be taken down to allow for renovation of the existing roof structure. Parts of the south wall of the Shed will be reopened by removing later brick infill between the existing timber posts and inserting a window and French doors to connect the space with the Coach House garden.

The Coach House will be reorganised to provide a living room, bathroom and bedroom at ground floor, with three bedrooms and a bathroom above. A modest link will be formed between the Coach House and the Shed to create internal connectivity. This will have a glazed north elevation and an oversailing canopy forming a sheltered porch. The interior of the Shed will remain open, with a kitchen at the west end and a dining area to the east.

The simple, utilitarian character of the Coach House will be reinforced through the introduction of painted timber weatherboarding to the upper storey. New windows will be simple timber casements. The main entrance will be located within the new glazed link, sheltered by its projecting canopy. Timber cladding will be reinstated to the north, west and east sides of the Shed and painted to match the Coach House. The clay tile roof will be restored.

A sliding metal gate is proposed on the south side of the Coach House forecourt. This gate is required to separate the shared drive, used by neighbouring properties to the north, from the private grounds of Nether Walstead to the south. Its width and construction is dictated by the need to maintain access for service vehicles to the existing electricity substation. For this reason, the gate is proposed to be of lightweight painted metal. A narrower pedestrian gate of matching design is also proposed to the south of the Coach House to control access to its garden

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The proposed works to the Coach House and Shed have been developed with careful regard to the significance of the ancillary buildings and their relationship with the Grade II listed Nether Walstead. The assessment below considers the impact on the architectural, historic, and evidential interest of each structure, as well as their contribution to the wider character and legibility of the estate.

Coach House

Although the footprint of the Coach House broadly accords with that shown on late 19th-century mapping, its existing fabric is largely late 20th century and makes a limited contribution to heritage significance. The removal of modern uPVC cladding, windows, doors, rainwater goods and other applied fixtures, together with the rationalisation of internal partitions, will result in no loss of historic material. Their replacement with painted weatherboarding, simple timber casement windows and more coherent elevational treatment will positively reinforce the building’s traditional service character.

Minor refinements to the openings will allow for a more orderly arrangement of the elevations. These alterations respect the historic form and will not undermine the building’s legibility.

The introduction of a modest, lightweight glazed link between the Coach House and the Shed occupies the line of the former continuation of the structure shown on the 1895 mapping. This respects the historic disposition of buildings on the site, while ensuring that the Coach House and Shed remain clearly read as two distinct ancillary elements within the estate.

Shed

The Shed retains a greater proportion of historic fabric, principally within its timber frame and roof structure, which date from its late 19th-century use as part of the former farmstead. Proposals to repair the frame, reinstate timber cladding and restore the clay-tiled roof will conserve and enhance its evidential value and reinforce its character as a simple utilitarian rural building.

The careful opening-up of parts of the south wall, focused between the existing structural posts, and the removal of sections of later brick infill will improve connectivity with the Coach House garden while restoring some of the informality and openness characteristic of its historic use. These works are modest, respectful of the surviving fabric, and reversible should future needs change.

Internally, the building will remain open, allowing its underlying structure to be appreciated, and the kitchen and dining uses proposed are compatible with its scale and character.

Gates

The proposed sliding gate and smaller pedestrian gate are required for access management but have been designed to preserve the visual hierarchy and rural character of the estate. Their positioning maintains the spatial relationship between the Coach House, Shed and the continuation of the drive while providing appropriate separation between shared and private areas.

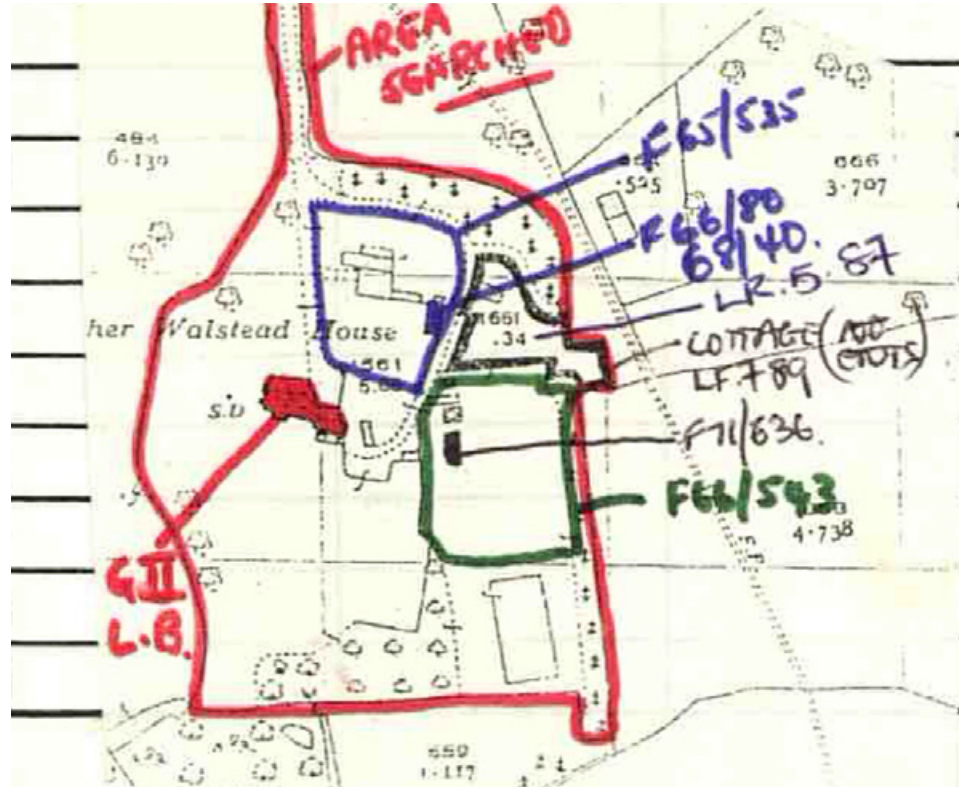
The gates adopt a simple, well-proportioned metal design that relates to the style and quality of those serving the main house, while clearly sitting below them in the hierarchy through their restrained detailing. They read as modern insertions yet draw on the forms and proportions of traditional farmstead and estate gates, making them sympathetic to their context.

Overall Impact

Overall, the proposals will result in a minor beneficial impact on the significance of the heritage assets.

The Coach House will be improved through the removal of intrusive modern materials and their replacement with appropriate traditional finishes, helping to re-establish its rural service character. The Shed will be repaired, tidied and sensitively opened up, enhancing both its condition and its legibility as a former farm building. The works will not affect the fabric or significance of Nether Walstead itself. The functional and spatial relationships between the house, its ancillary buildings and the broader estate will be preserved, with the proposals reinforcing rather than diminishing their historic character.

Planning statement



Planning Search Map

JO	NAME	ADDRESS	PARISH	PLAN ON REA
NEITHER WALKSTADT HSE (COTT.) OUTBUILDINGS etc		EAST MASCALLS LANE.	LR	Map 244.
PLG NO.	DECISION	B.REG.NO.	DECISION	DETAILS
F 65.535	R. 2/1/68			CONV. OUTBUILDINGS TO TWO LIVING UNITS
F 66.80	R. 2/13/66			CONV. STABLE BLOCK TO SERVICE COTTAGE
F 66.543	R. 2/1/66			CIA BUNGALOW.
F 68.40	9c 26/7/68			CONV. STABLE BLOCK TO SERVICE COTTAGE
F 71.636	9c 2/11/71			TWO LOOSE BOXES + TACK ROOM IN FIELD.
LR 5-87	cc 1.4.87	CLR 20.87	A 2-7-87	Internal alterations & erection two storey extension (the cottage)
LR 5-87	Ap 24.6.87			Amended plans received 10/6/87
LR 61.87/8	cc 11.11.87	6/12/88/87	A 15/10/87	Alterations & improvements to kitchen area & rear courtyard (the)
LR 7.89	cc 15.3.89			proposed extension to provide additional accommodation (the cottage)
LR 45-89	cc 4.9.89	CLR 32.89	A 13.11.89 C 27.10.89	proposed two storey extension to a sun-room & extension to garage & extension to all under pitch & eaves
T.P.O.	CONS. AREA	LISTED BLDG.	N.G. REFERENCE	E.D.
		G II HUE 1956/8	TO 36159 24592	ZONING H1 3/4 DEV. RESTAURANT WHITE

Planning Search Details

PLANNING HISTORY

The planning search map and details identify an application F66/80 for the Coach House, which relates to the Conversion of the Stable Block to a Service Cottage, decided 31/03/66.

This tells us that, prior to 1966, the building was a stable block and allows us to conclude that the building fabric dates to this period. Only the small sections of older brickwork on front and rear elevations relate to the previous stable.

PRE-APPLICATION ADVICE

A previous scheme was submitted for pre-application advice and feedback received in December 2024.

The main planning considerations raised in relation to the main house were:

- Protection of Countryside
- Design and Character
- Impact on Listed Buildings
- Parking provision
- Impact on neighbouring amenities
- Trees Impact

A number of points were made in relation to the main house and outbuildings. Those that are relevant to the current application are set out below.

Protection of Countryside

Given the nature of the proposal in relation to existing established dwellings, the works proposed were deemed in character with the rural area.

Design and Character

It was noted that:

- The proposals for the courtyard buildings were generally considered to be acceptable, demonstrating compliance with DP15 of the Mid Sussex District Plan (DPC4 of District Plan Review) as adapted for residential usage.
- The principle of new entrance gates was accepted.

Impact on Listed Buildings

It was noted that:

- Works to the garage/ store were supported in principle, noting that care should be taken to preserve its existing character and historic fabric.
- The provision of gates was supported, subject to detail.

Parking Provision

The proposal was deemed to provide sufficient parking, complying with DP21.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

Given the relationship with neighbouring properties, the proposals were not deemed harmful to the neighbouring amenities in line with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Impact on Trees

The works for the main house were within 15m of trees, and therefore a tree report would have to be provided with any submission.

Response to Pre-Application Advice

The scheme for the Coach House and Shed has been developed to respond to the pre-application advice. Care has been taken to conserve and enhance the existing character of the buildings.

PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to determine planning applications in accordance with the development plan, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 sets out the legal requirements for the control of development and alterations which affect buildings, including those which are listed or in conservation areas. Buildings which are listed, or which lie within a conservation area are protected by law. Grade I are buildings of exceptional interest. Grade II* are particularly significant buildings of more than special interest. Grade II are buildings of special interest, which warrant every effort being made to preserve them.

Under Section 66 of the Act, when considering granting planning permission for developments affecting a listed building or its surroundings, local planning authorities or the Secretary of State must prioritise preserving the building, its setting, or any notable architectural or historical features it possesses.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework places a presumption in favour of sustainable development at its core, requiring proposals to balance economic, social and environmental objectives. For applications such as the Coach House and Shed at Nether Walstead, key guidance is found in Chapters 2, 12, 15 and especially Chapter 16, which concerns the historic environment.

Chapter 16 requires applicants to describe the significance of any affected heritage assets, including their setting, at a level proportionate to their importance. Local planning authorities must use this evidence to understand the degree of impact and seek to avoid or minimise conflict between a proposal and an asset's conservation. Great weight must be given to conserving designated heritage assets, regardless of the scale of harm. Any harm or loss must be clearly and convincingly justified.

Substantial harm to Grade II listed buildings is expected to be exceptional; proposals for assets of the highest significance must demonstrate even stronger

Planning statement

justification. Where harm is less than substantial, it must be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the asset’s optimum viable use. For non-designated heritage assets, decision-makers must make a balanced judgement informed by the asset’s significance and the scale of impact.

Overall, the NPPF supports development that sustains significance, enhances setting, and contributes positively to local character.

Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031)
The Development Plan consists of the Mid Sussex District Plan (2014–2031), Lindfield and Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan, Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD, and the NPPF.

The District Plan 2021 – 2039 was submitted for Examination on 8th July 2024 and is currently undergoing the Inspector’s review, with hearing sessions already underway. As it is not yet adopted, the emerging plan carries limited weight in decision-making. The adopted District Plan (2014–2031) therefore remains the primary basis for determining planning applications at this stage.

The key policies relevant to the determination of this application are:

- Policy DP12: Protection and Enhancement of Countryside (DPC1 of the Mid Sussex District Plan review)
- Policy DP26: Character and Design (DPB1 of the Mid Sussex District Plan review)
- Policy DP34: Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets (Policy DPB2 of the District Plan Review)
- Policy DP21: Transport (DPT4 of the District Plan Review)
- Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows (DPN4 of the District Plan Review)

Mid Sussex Design Guide SPD 2020
The Mid Sussex Design Guide is relevant, particularly with regards to its advice on Household Extensions.

Policy DP34, relating to Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets, is the key policy in the assessment of the proposals. The purpose of Policy DP34 is to ensure the protection and preservation of listed buildings and other heritage assets in Mid Sussex, reflecting the district’s unique character, historical significance, and visual qualities.

Key Objectives:
1. Protection of Listed Buildings: Development proposals must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the significance of listed buildings and their settings. This includes respecting the historic form, scale, setting, and fabric of the buildings. Any alterations or extensions should retain the building’s significance and ensure it remains in viable use.

2. Use of Traditional Materials:The policy emphasises the use of traditional

building materials and construction techniques, prohibiting modern materials like uPVC windows and doors that could detract from the building’s historic character.

3. Preservation of Building Settings: Special attention is given to protecting the setting of listed buildings, ensuring that new developments do not negatively impact their historical context. This includes careful siting of modern installations like satellite dishes and solar panels.

4. Conservation of Non-Listed Heritage Assets: The policy also covers buildings of architectural or historic merit that are not listed but contribute significantly to the local scene. The council prefers retaining these buildings over demolition and redevelopment, aiming to conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Overall, the policy seeks to balance the need for development with the importance of preserving Mid Sussex’s rich heritage, ensuring that historical assets continue to contribute to the district’s character and quality of life.

LINDFIELD & LINDFIELD RURAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2014–2031
The overall objective of the Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development in a way that preserves the unique historical and rural character of the area. It seeks to balance the need for new development with the imperative to protect and enhance the historical environment, ensuring that any changes contribute positively to the area’s heritage and are in harmony with the existing built and natural environment. The plan seeks to influence planning applications related to listed buildings through several approaches:

1. Preservation of Historic Character
The Plan emphasises the importance of maintaining the historic character of Lindfield and Lindfield rural area. It encourages development that is sympathetic to the historic environment and avoids harm to the distinctive character of the area. This includes ensuring that new buildings or alterations to existing buildings respect the scale, materials, and design features typical of the area.

2. Protection of Listed Buildings
The Plan includes specific policies aimed at protecting listed buildings and their settings. Any development proposals that affect listed buildings must demonstrate that they preserve or enhance the building’s historical significance. This includes careful consideration of alterations or extensions, which must respect the historic fabric, scale, and setting of the listed structure.

3. Design and Materials
The Plan advocates for the use of traditional building materials and methods in any development or alteration work, particularly in proximity to historic assets. This ensures that new developments or changes are in keeping with the historic and architectural context of the area.

4. Sensitive Development in Rural Areas

For the rural parts of Lindfield, the Plan seeks to ensure that development is sensitive to the historic and natural landscape. It aims to prevent suburbanisation or inappropriate development that could detract from the rural character and historical landscape.

PLANNING ASSESSMENT

As noted in the pre-application response, the main planning considerations are:

- Protection of Countryside
- Design and Character
- Impact on Listed Buildings
- Parking provision
- Impact on neighbouring amenities
- Trees Impact
- Biodiversity
- New Homes in the Countryside

Protection of The Countryside
Policy DP12 in the District Plan. This states: “The countryside will be protected in recognition of its intrinsic character and beauty. Development will be permitted in the countryside, defined as the area outside of built-up area boundaries on the Policies Map, provided it maintains or where possible enhances the quality of the rural and landscape character of the District, and:

— it is necessary for the purposes of agriculture; or

— it is supported by a specific policy reference either elsewhere in the Plan, a Development Plan Document or relevant Neighbourhood Plan.

This is similar to policy DPC1 of the Mid Sussex District Plan review under examination.

Given the nature of the proposal in relation to existing established dwellings, the works proposed are deemed in character with the rural area.

Design & Character
Policy DP26 requires high-quality, well-designed development that reflects local character, protects landscape features, respects amenity, creates clear and attractive public and private realms, integrates parking, supports walking, and responds to sustainability. The Mid Sussex Design Guide (DG49–DG51) further expects extensions to use simple forms that are subordinate to the host building, avoid closing important gaps, maintain street character, and allow rear extensions, where not publicly visible, to adopt contemporary design where appropriate and consistent with the dwelling’s scale, boundaries, and setting.

Planning statement

The proposals have been amended to address issues raised by the officers at pre-application stage and are considered to be in full accordance with this policy.

Impact on Listed Buildings

As required by Policy DP34, the proposals have been guided throughout by a thorough understanding of the significance of the relevant heritage assets and their settings, set out in a detailed Heritage Statement. This evidence base has directly informed the design development and ensures a proportionate and robust response to the buildings’ architectural and historic interest.

Alterations and extensions are modest and the minor extension to the shed is informed by its previous extent. The removal of intrusive 20th-century additions across all elevations delivers clear heritage benefits. New work is designed to be visually subordinate and sympathetic character ensuring that the legibility of the structures is preserved.

Where interventions are proposed they are limited in extent, and based on a sound understanding of the building’s evolution. Features of low significance are removed, while higher-value elements are retained and revealed.

Traditional building materials and construction techniques are used throughout, with new joinery specified in timber and external finishes chosen to sit comfortably alongside the retained fabric. This approach reflects policy requirements for authenticity and material continuity.

Special regard has been given to the setting of the curtilage listed Shed. The design of the gates is similarly restrained.

Overall, the scheme conserves and enhances the curtilage listed building and its setting, delivers tangible heritage benefits, improves architectural coherence, and secures the long-term viable use of the property in a manner fully compliant with the requirements of Policy DP34.

Parking Provision

At pre-application stage, the proposal was deemed to provide sufficient parking, complying with DP21 and this is considered to remain the case.

Impact on Neighbouring Amenities

The pre-application proposals were not previously deemed harmful to the neighbouring amenities in line with DP26 of the Mid Sussex District Plan.

Impact on Trees

No trees will be impacted by the proposals.

Biodiversity

The proposals are informed by a comprehensive ecological assessment, covering habitats, protected species and designated sites. The assessment confirms that the development will not result in harm to statutory or non-statutory designated sites,

nor to nearby ancient woodland, with all works located beyond the recognised buffer zone. Existing biodiversity has been carefully considered, with sensitivity through construction-phase mitigation.

Other species, such as nesting birds, reptiles, hedgehog and potentially mobile species such as badger, will be safeguarded through precautionary working methods, sensitive vegetation clearance and pre-commencement checks where required.

In accordance with policy, the development delivers meaningful on-site biodiversity enhancements. These include new bat and bird boxes, hedgehog houses, brash piles within adjacent woodland, and habitat improvements such as pollinator-friendly planting and wildflower grassland.

Overall, the proposals avoid harm, incorporate robust mitigation, and deliver measurable biodiversity enhancements, ensuring compliance with the policy requirement to protect, enhance and provide a net gain for biodiversity.

Conclusion

The proposals for the Coach House and Shed at Nether Walstead have been carefully developed in direct response to pre-application advice, the statutory duties of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and the relevant policy framework set out in the NPPF, the Mid Sussex District Plan, and the Lindfield & Lindfield Rural Neighbourhood Plan. The scheme is informed by a proportionate and robust understanding of the site’s planning history and the significance of the curtilage-listed structure.

The works preserve and enhance the character of the existing buildings through the removal of intrusive elements, the reinstatement of sympathetic materials, and the use of high-quality, traditional detailing. The modest scale of the proposals ensures that the historic form and legibility of the structures are retained, while securing their long-term viable use. The development maintains and reinforces the rural character of the countryside, aligns with established design guidance, and avoids harm to neighbouring amenity.

No trees will be affected, and the proposals are supported by comprehensive ecological assessment, delivering meaningful on-site biodiversity enhancements.

Taken as a whole, the application represents a sensitive, well-considered and policy-compliant scheme that conserves the heritage significance of the Coach House and Shed while providing clear functional and environmental benefits.

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