

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 29 April 2026 15:38:28 UTC+01:00
To: "Caroline Grist" <Caroline.Grist@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/0694 and 0695 Wykehurst Park- swimming pool and pavilion

Hi Caroline

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications.

Wykehurst House is a II* listed building located in a rural position outside Bolney. It is a substantial and extravagantly detailed country house in the Victorian revivalist style, which has been strongly influenced by the French chateaux of the Loire valley. The house was constructed in 1871-1874 to designs by E M Barry. It has been subject to extensive alterations and reconstruction following periods of use as a hotel during the early 20th century, requisitioning and then abandonment during and after WWII, and conversion to flats during the 1970s.

Although the surrounding formal gardens and wider parkland are not registered in their own right, they include separately listed (Grade II) walls to the northern forecourt of the house, and to the west and south further sections of walling (some of which is retaining), stone 'bastions' and steps, which would be regarded as curtilage listed. There is also a surviving stone fountain within the lower terrace which appears on historic mapping from the late 19th/early 20th century and would be regarded as curtilage listed. The formal gardens around the house, which are quite compact, and the wider parkland, add to the illusion of the building as a fantastical French chateau, and make a strong positive contribution to its special interest and the manner in which this is appreciated.

The current proposal relates to the terraced garden area to the west of the house, and is for works associated with the introduction of a swimming pool and pool house, including also hard and soft landscaping.

Also under consideration at present are parallel applications for listed building consent and planning permission for further works within the vicinity including repair of the stone walling to the garden terraces, with replacement of missing sections, construction of an oil tank enclosure and access to the south of the western driveway approach to the house, construction of several ASHPs and a boiler enclosure to the north of the driveway, and a new secondary gate to the driveway itself. The cumulative impact of these works on the setting of the building will be a relevant consideration.

We have received comments from Historic England on the current proposal which I have considered and would largely agree with:

- HE consider that a pool in the position shown is not contentious in principle, provided that it is treated simply, as a garden feature which could sit within the reinstated formal landscaping of the area. I would agree with this in principle, but

would suggest that the hard landscaped surround to the pool should be reduced, to retain as much as possible of the verdant character of this space, and to ensure that it does appear more as a formal water feature within a designed garden landscape than as a domestic pool.

- They have however objected to the pool house in its current form and location, considering that it would constitute a visually intrusive element, particularly when viewed from the western approach to the house. I would also agree with these comments. The pool house is a fairly substantial structure, and is currently shown located within the historically open space of the garden terrace. HE have suggested that the structure could potentially be redesigned and resited to the north of its current position, so that it becomes an integral part of the northern wall enclosing the terrace, in a similar manner to the existing original bastions forming part of the walls to the south. This seems to me a sensible approach which could work well, given the existing partial nature of the wall (i.e. that it is not an intact feature so that extensive loss of historic fabric would be involved), and one which could also have the added potential benefit of providing additional screening to the oil tank which it is proposed to site to the north of this, subject to the above mentioned separate applications.
- An objection is also raised to the form and style of the soft landscaping, which is intentionally Italianate. Historic England feel that this is not an appropriate response to the history of the site, or to the architecture of the house, including designed or significant views from it, and that the tree planting which forms part of the scheme would block key views from the house. This is the view of their landscape experts, and I see no reason to disagree with it, or with the suggestion that this aspect of the proposal is re-envisioned to better reflect the original character of the French-inspired parterres to the garden terraces, including removal of substantial trees from the scheme.

In addition, I would note the following:

- The fountain set centrally within the westernmost semi-circular element of the terracing is not shown on the proposed plans. This appears to have been a designed element of the gardens from an early date, and it should be retained and if necessary repaired (although I appreciate that it may not be possible to return it working order).

I have no objection to the other aspects of the scheme, including reinstatement or creation of steps, and the new gateway to the western side of the house forecourt opening onto the terrace, subject to detail.

In summary, although the principle of the pool, pool house and associated landscaping of the formal garden terrace to the west of the house can be supported, revisions are required to both the built and soft landscaped elements of the scheme to meet our own concerns and those of Historic England, and to ensure that the setting and special interest of Wykehurst House and its associated listed and curtilage listed garden features are preserved.

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>

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