

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 05 September 2025 10:46:01 UTC+01:00
To: "Andrew Horrell" <Andrew.Horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: St John's Lodge, 151 High Street, Lindfield DM/25/2068 and 2069

Hi Andrew

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications.

Firstly, I would note that the submitted plans appear to have some errors in terms of incomplete or missing elements of the drawings- I am not sure if this is an error in how they have been saved, or this was how they were received, but it should be corrected. For example, the details of what appear to be rooflights to the proposed rear extension are missing from the roof plan, as are parts of the detailing to the proposed elevational drawings.

Also, the submitted DAS suggests that the internal insulation to the outbuilding is not part of the application, but it is included on the drawings and is covered by the heritage statement- can this be clarified, and further information provided as set out below?

St John's Lodge is a Grade II listed detached house located in a backland position to the west of Lindfield High Street, within the Conservation Area. The building, which is the Gothic style, dates from the mid 19th century, and is the former schoolmaster's house associated with the former National School which opened in 1856 just to the south. This building, which was later in use as private and Sunday school and then a Mission Hall, survives as a residential conversion, but is not listed, although it has group value with the Lodge, and would be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. The name of the property reflects the former name of the parish church, which is now known as All Saints, but until the late 19th/early 20th century was called St John the Baptist's Church. A contemporaneous outbuilding survives within the garden to the north-east of the house. A more detailed history of the building's origins is provided in the Historic Building Assessment submitted as part of the current submission.

The site is also within the setting of a pair of much older Grade II listed buildings, Little Blacklands and Firs Cottage which are located to the road frontage to the west of the Lodge.

The Lodge has been previously substantially extended to the north-west, with the original L shaped 19th century plan infilled in the later 20th century by a two-storey extension under twin gabled roofs. A modern garage building sits to the south-west of the house, at the end of the access driveway running between the house and former school.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for internal and external works comprising:

- 1. Blocking of a ground- floor doorway between the snug and drawing room;
- 2. Blocking of a ground- floor doorway between the study and the existing kitchen (proposed utility room);
- 3. Creation of a WC in the lean- to, including blocking of an archway to the existing kitchen (proposed utility room);
- 4. Addition of two bay windows and a chimney to the east elevation of the house to create a larger drawing room;
- 5. A single- storey rear extension to create a new dining room and kitchen, with associated alterations to modern part of house;
- 6. First-floor alterations comprising the relocation of a doorway to the bathroom, and repositioning of a partition between the en-suite and dressing room;
- 6. Increasing the size of two first- floor windows on the north elevation;
- 7. Replacement of existing rainwater goods with powder- coated black cast aluminium;
- 8. Reinstatement of a gable finial to the front elevation;
- 9. Works to the outbuilding to the east of the house (Bedroom 5 Annex) to provide insulation , remove the existing sauna and install a shower;
- 10. Removal of the existing garage, sheds and close- boarded fence and construction of a new garage to the north- east of the house; and
- 11. Creation of new patio areas and installation of estate fencing

To consider these works in turn:

1. This doorway is a modern opening created between the original house and the 1980s extension; as such its infilling will reinstate an element of the original floor plan and is not considered contentious.
2. This is an original door in an original opening- its loss would therefore be harmful to the special interest of the listed building. However, the proposal appears to be for the retention and fixing shut of the door- assuming this is the case, and the door is to be retained exposed to both sides, this aspect of the proposal may be considered acceptable, subject to detail.
3. Again, this archway is an original opening. However, if as suggested by the proposed plan the infilling retains a set back to both sides so that the form of the archway continues to be readily appreciable, this work may also be considered acceptable, subject to detail.
4. The pair of two bay windows and the new chimney which they flank to the east elevation of the house in effect constitute a side extension to this part of the property. Although this is part of the 1980s addition to the house, and therefore historic fabric is not affected, the juxtaposition of the bay windows and the chimney is odd and visually jarring, and the squat and utilitarian form of the chimney itself has an inappropriately industrial appearance. This aspect of the proposal requires simplification, with the removal of either the bay windows or the chimney, and if the chimney is retained, a reconsidered form. It is not clear whether the chimney is intended to be functional, but if so, it would be helpful if the applicant could confirm that it is Building Regulations compliant, as it does not overtop the adjacent ridge height?

5. Although the form of the proposed rear extension has been revised since pre-application, it remains over-scaled and overbearing in its relationship with the host building, in particular when viewed cumulatively with the existing 1980s 2 storey extension to the house. As was noted at pre-application stage, any substantial new extension to the listed building is unlikely to be favourably viewed given the scale of the existing modern additions to it, for this reason.
Furthermore, the angled footprint of the extension as shown, and the manner in which it attaches to the western end of the existing original lean-to element to the rear elevation, blur the distinction between the modern and the original elements of the rear of the house, and in any but the closest views will obscure a large portion of the rear ground floor, including the original elements, from view.
Although in my opinion the contemporary aesthetic of the addition is not itself contentious, the relatively solid elevational treatment also adds to its apparent bulk. As was suggested at pre-application stage, the maximum which may be achievable at the rear of the building would be a significantly less deep single storey addition sitting solely across the existing rear infill extension, replacing and slightly extending the footprint of the existing lean-to element in this position. The adjacent original lean-to should be retained unaltered.
6. Internally at first floor the proposed works are largely confined to the 1980s extension to the house and are not considered contentious.
7. The two windows in question to the northern elevation at first floor are existing window openings to the central and western gable of the infill extension, and are therefore not of historic interest. The proposed alterations would mean that the windows would better reflect the proportions and detailing of the original window at this level to the service range to the east. This introduces more balance to the elevation and is not considered contentious subject to detail.
8. The replacement of uPVC rainwater goods with aluminium is welcomed.
9. The reinstatement of the gable finial to the front elevation of the house is also welcomed, subject to detail.
10. The outbuilding in question is contemporaneous with the house, and would be regarded as curtilage listed. The removal of the modern sauna and installation of a shower is not considered contentious. The installation of insulation to the walls of the structure internally will obscure the existing apparently historic finish (painted masonry), which will result in some loss of character. Before commenting fully on this aspect of the proposal, I would like to see detailed typical sectional and elevational drawings to show the method of installation of the insulation, including how it would be detailed around existing door and window openings. The window heads have exposed timbers, which would ideally remain exposed to view. I would also like clarification from the applicant as to whether any works are also proposed to the roof and floor structures of the building, as insulation to the walls alone is not likely to be effective?
11. The existing garage and sheds etc. are modern and are not of any special interest- the garage in particular is quite visually prominent and detracts from the setting of the listed building and of the adjacent former school house (NDHA). Their removal is therefore not considered contentious. The proposed replacement garage building and bike store is on a larger footprint, and will result

in some loss of garden space, in particular due to the associated access and hardstanding, and when viewed cumulatively with the proposed rear extension. However, it is arguably more sensitively located than the existing garage, being to the rear of the Lodge and of the buildings fronting onto the High Street including Blacklands and Firs Cottage, and adjacent to an existing access driveway running across the back of these properties. Although larger than the existing garage to the front of the house and the shed to the rear, it does remain lower than the adjacent original outbuilding and is therefore subservient in this respect. Had the application been otherwise acceptable, I would have suggested some reconsideration of the balance of hard and soft landscaping forming part of the proposal (e.g. a potential reduction in the extent of the patio areas adjacent to the house) to reduce the overall impact on the verdant nature of the garden. However, on balance the proposed garage is not in itself considered contentious in principle.

12. See above with respect to the balance of hard and soft landscaping within the scheme. The proposed new estate fencing is not considered contentious.

In summary, although aspects of the proposed works are considered beneficial or are not considered contentious, the proposed side and rear extensions are unacceptable and detract from the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the Lindfield Conservation Area. Other aspects of the proposal require further information for a fully informed assessment, notably the works to the outbuilding, or might require more minor amendments as part of any revised scheme (e.g. the landscaping). In my opinion, the beneficial aspects of the scheme (such as the reinstatement of the front gable finial) do not outweigh the harm arising from other aspects, notably the side and rear extensions.

As it stands, the proposal would be considered contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal will result in less than substantial harm to the special interest of St John's Lodge, at around the mid point of that scale, such that paragraph 215 will apply. I would also place the harm to the Conservation Area within the less than substantial range, at the low-mid point. The side extensions to the house may be considered to result in low level of harm through impact on setting to the former school house, which I would regard as a non-designated heritage asset of a mid level of interest within the local context.

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.

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