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Sent: 23 July 2025 15:31:33 UTC+01:00
To: "Hamish Evans" <Hamish.Evans@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1218 Land adjacent to 19 Estcots Drive EG

Hi Hamish

Comments on the above planning application.

The proposed development site is a residential garden adjacent to 19 Estcots Drive, a detached house dating from the later part of the 20th century. Although now the garden to no. 19, it was previously part of the gardens to Estcots Farmhouse, which lies directly to the north, and retains features dating from that period including an ornamental pond and walling. Estcots Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building dating originally from the 16th century or earlier, which became associated in the mid-late 18th century with the mansion constructed in that period a short distance to the north (East Court, listed Grade II). The farmhouse became the dower house to the estate, and later the home farm. The parkland created around East Court mansion, which was created from part of the farmlands to Estcots Farmhouse, survives and forms the setting to the north of the former farmstead.

There are a number of buildings surviving from the former farmstead, including Estcots Barn (separately Grade II listed) which is located directly to the east of the former farmhouse, a range of outbuildings to the south of the barn (which may be regarded as curtilage listed), and Estcots Cottage, to the north. Although unlikely to be considered curtilage listed, the Cottage will be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA). The Estcots (a.k.a. Estcotes, Eastcots or Eastcourt) farmstead is included in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment as a historic farmstead of the Medieval Period.

All of the above mentioned heritage assets lie within the Estcots Conservation Area, although 19 Estcots Drive and the proposed development site are outside the boundary.

Estcots Farmhouse is considered to possess evidential interest based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative interest as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse of its period, later becoming a country residence or home farmhouse associated with East Court mansion, and aesthetic value based on part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. The barn and outbuildings are likely to possess similar values as examples of former farm buildings of their type and period. The Cottage likewise will possess similar values as a building of historical and architectural interest within the local context. All these building will also have group value with each other as constituent parts of a historic farmstead.

As such, the surviving rural character of the setting of the former farmstead will make a positive contribution to the special interests of the heritage assets within it, and how their significance as constituent parts of a former working farm are understood, including in particular their

historical illustrative and aesthetic values. The 'rural' aspects of the setting of these buildings include the verdant nature of their immediate context, and of the approach along the tree lined driveway from the west. The parkland to the north of the farmstead also contributes positively to the significances of these assets -its open and verdant nature is reminiscent of the farmland from which it was created, but the parkland character in itself contributes to the narrative of the development of Estcots Farm from the 18th century on, when the farmstead became associated with East Court mansion and its occupants.

The proposed development site, as noted above, forms part of the former gardens to the farmhouse. A historical map regression exercise included within the submitted Heritage Statement shows that the application site was previously part of a large enclosure to the south of the building. By the late 19th century, this is depicted as a walled garden, possibly a kitchen garden, with outbuildings, paths and planting. The scale of this garden is such that it is tempting to speculate that its cultivation may have been associated not only with provision of produce for the farmhouse but with the East Court mansion. The application site occupies approximately the north west quarter of this garden, the remainder having been built over with housing or lying under Estcots Drive.

Estcots Farmhouse appears to have remained part of the East Court estate until the 1920s, when it was sold into separate ownership, as a rural property within easy reach of the expanding town of East Grinstead. Historical map regression suggests that some of the surviving garden features within the application site date from this period, including the pond. The site therefore also reflects this later phases in the farmstead's narrative.

Although it is noted that intervisibility between the site and the former farmstead, included the listed farmhouse, is limited by a change in level and by intervening planting, the site does form the foreground in views towards the farmstead from Estcots Drive. These views may be glimpsed, but they represent the best views of the grouping from outside its immediate setting, thus contributing to a wider perception of the existence and location of the farmstead, and would potentially become significantly clearer if the dense laurel planting along the southern boundary of the current garden to the farmhouse was reduced or removed. It should be noted also that intervisibility is not the only aspect of setting. In my opinion both as a verdant foreground to views from the south, and as the only surviving element of the former walled garden space associated with the farmhouse, the site does make a positive contribution to the settings of the heritage assets within the farmstead, in particular contributing to their historical illustrative values (including the evolving nature of the relationship between the farmstead and the East Court Mansion, and its later history as a separate rural residence), and their aesthetic values.

Although the Council does not have a detailed character appraisal for the Estcots Conservation Area, the Council's document '*Conservation Areas in Mid Sussex*' provides a brief high level analysis of the key features of the Area. These include:

- *'Its open rural quality on the edge of the town;... and*

- *The attractive grouping of Estcots Farmhouse, Estcots Barn (both listed) and Estcots Cottage.'*

The proposed development site, which as above was formerly part of the gardens to the farmhouse, retains an open and verdant character. There are as noted above views across the site towards the former farmstead from the south which are the only indication from this position within the much more modern development of Estcots Drive of the presence of the Conservation Area; otherwise the degree of intervisibility is limited due to a change in levels between the two, and intervening screening. Intervisibility, however, as also noted is only one aspect of setting, and the site does certainly make some contribution to the surviving verdancy of the setting of the farmstead and Conservation Area, and as above also formed part of the historical gardens of the farmhouse.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses on the site, with off street parking and other associated hard and soft landscaping.

Although the scale of the proposed development has been somewhat reduced since pre-application stage, in terms of footprint at least, the proposed pair of houses will have a fundamental impact on the verdant and relatively open character of the site, through the introduction of substantial built form, associated boundary treatments and hard landscaping, and will remove and reverse the positive contribution which it currently makes to the settings of the adjacent heritage assets. The surviving 1920s garden features will also be lost, and views of the farmstead from Estcots Drive will be blocked. This will result in less than substantial harm to the designated assets mentioned above, which I would place at the lower range of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 of the NPPF will apply. The proposal will also be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 and DP35. Given the position of Estcots Cottage to the northern side of the farmhouse and barn, which consequently separate it from the application site, I would not identify harm to this non-designated heritage asset.

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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