

Susan Dubberley

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 October 2026 12:02
To: Susan Dubberley
Cc: Eric Owens
Subject: DM/26/1979

Attn Susan Dubberley

Re: Marlow House, 107 High Street, Lindfield, Haywards Heath, RH16 2HR – Application DM/26/1979

Further to Historic England's consultation response dated 5th October 2026, I would like to provide some clarification after discussions with our Heritage specialist SHDR regarding the lime plaster on the west wall of the basement and explain why we respectfully disagree with Historic England's recommendation for refusal.

I fully recognise that Marlow House is a Grade II listed building of considerable historic significance and that the conservation of its historic fabric is important.

However, there is an important factual point which I believe should be taken into account when assessing the application.

The lime plaster currently covering the west basement wall is not historic lime plaster.

It was applied several years ago, following advice from SHDR, as a compatible and breathable treatment for the traditional masonry.

The application therefore does not seek to retain an historic plaster finish which itself forms part of the building's historic significance. Rather, it seeks to retain a modern lime-based treatment which was deliberately applied because it was considered appropriate for the traditional construction and its moisture-management requirements.

This distinction is important when considering Historic England's concern that the plaster conceals historic masonry.

I fully accept that the masonry beneath the plaster is historic and that exposing historic masonry can sometimes provide useful evidence of construction and alteration. However, the historic masonry itself has not been removed, damaged or otherwise lost as a result of the proposal.

The issue is therefore one of **visibility of the underlying historic masonry rather than loss of historic fabric.**

The earlier historic masonry on the east wall has already been left exposed, providing a clear opportunity to see and understand the historic construction of the basement. The west wall forms part of the later development of the cellar and is not of the same significance as the earliest fabric.

In this context, I respectfully consider that retaining the modern lime plaster on the west wall does not prevent the historic development of the building from being understood.

The plaster was also applied following specialist advice because it is a breathable material compatible with traditional solid-wall construction. Historic England itself acknowledges in its consultation response that lime plaster is generally recognised as an appropriate breathable material for historic solid-wall construction and that it allows moisture to evaporate through its surface.

The fact that other damp-management measures, such as the French drain and mechanical ventilation, are also in place does not make the lime plaster inappropriate. These measures perform different functions and can work together as part of an overall approach to managing the traditional masonry and basement environment.

Importantly, Historic England has not identified any physical deterioration of the west wall which has been caused by the lime plaster.

There is no identified evidence of:

- masonry decay attributable to the plaster;
- trapped moisture caused by the plaster;
- salt damage caused by the plaster;
- structural deterioration caused by the plaster; or
- any other physical defect demonstrated to result from its retention.

The plaster was applied specifically as a breathable treatment following specialist advice, and there is no evidence presented that its continued presence is causing harm to the listed building.

I therefore respectfully submit that the Council should distinguish between a preference for having the historic masonry visually exposed and evidence that the existing treatment is causing harm to the building.

Historic England's objection appears principally to concern the visibility of the masonry rather than the preservation of the historic fabric itself.

The proposal does not seek to hide or diminish the history of Marlow House. The exposed east wall continues to provide direct visual evidence of the earlier construction, while the west wall retains a modern, compatible lime finish over the later masonry.

In my view, this represents a proportionate balance between revealing historic fabric and retaining an appropriate conservation treatment.

I therefore respectfully ask the Council to take into account the following points when determining application DM/26/1979:

1. The lime plaster on the west wall is **modern, not historic**.
2. It was applied several years ago following **specialist advice** as a compatible and breathable treatment for the traditional masonry.
3. Retaining the plaster does **not involve the loss or removal of historic fabric**.
4. The underlying historic masonry remains intact.
5. The principal issue identified by Historic England is therefore the **visibility of the masonry**, rather than its physical preservation.

6. Significant earlier historic masonry remains exposed elsewhere in the basement, particularly on the east wall.
7. No evidence has been identified demonstrating that the existing lime plaster is causing physical harm to the historic masonry.
8. No evidence has been demonstrated that removing the plaster would provide a corresponding conservation benefit.
9. The existing lime plaster forms part of a broader approach to managing moisture within the traditional building fabric, alongside the French drain and ventilation measures.

For these reasons, I respectfully disagree with Historic England's recommendation for refusal and ask that the Council approve application **DM/26/1979**, allowing the modern lime plaster on the west basement wall to remain.

I would be grateful if this response could be taken into account and added to the portal as part of the Council's consideration of the application.