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Sent: 11 July 2025 15:50:33 UTC+01:00
To: "Anna Tidey" <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1168 and 1169 Annexe, Keysford, Treemans Rd, HK

Hi Anna

Comments on the above planning and listed building consent applications. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you which has been caused by volume of other work.

Keysford, is with its attached neighbour Old Keysford Hall, a Grade II listed building dating originally from c.1701 according to the list description, and enlarged in 1923, and set in a rural position outside Horsted Keynes. The submitted Archaeological Interpretive Study (AIS) however suggests an earlier date of construction of the late 16th/early 17th century, and that the 1701 dating relates instead to a period of alterations to the house. I see no reason to dispute this. The house was originally the farmhouse to a historic farmstead previously known as Allen's Farm and before this as Caseford or Caresford- former farm buildings to the farmstead survive around a courtyard to the north western side of the L shaped listed building. The western side of the yard is enclosed by a substantial timber framed weatherboarded barn. This barn, which is regarded as curtilage listed, is the subject of the current planning and listed building consent applications.

The current proposal is for the conversion of the barn into two bedroom ancillary accommodation. The applications, which follow on from pre-application advice and from refusal of a previous similar proposal, are accompanied by the above mentioned AIS, and a separate Heritage Statement (HS).

The AIS notes in summary that the three bay threshing barn was constructed in the late 16th-early 17th century, with significant alterations carried out in the 19th and 20th centuries. It has an L shaped footprint, with a rear outshot, which dates according to AIS from the 19th century, but is likely to have replaced an earlier, similar structure. A brick built outbuilding to constructed against its northern end dates from the late 19th century; a further attached outbuilding to the south from the early 20th century. The AIS gives a detailed description of the evolution of the building over time, and notes a number of features of interest, including evidence that the building, which has been reroofed on more than one occasion, may have been originally thatched, further evidence of a former part width floor within the southern bay (now removed), an unusual form of inset framing to the midstre doors (the opening to the eastern side now infilled), and survival of slides to the base of the western midstre doors, which would have been used to support threshold boards.

The proposed works have been amended since the proposal seen as part of the previous refusal, and in many respects respond positively to the comments offered, and to the further information which has become available following the preparation of the AIS. The principle of the conversion is not considered contentious, and many of the works are considered sympathetic to the building, retaining key aspects of its plan form and fabric. The retention of features such as the floor surfaces and feeding troughs is noted and is welcomed. However, a number of issues, including some fairly fundamental points, do remain which require further consideration/revision or further information:

- Firstly, I would note that the submitted DAS and drawings are not consistent, in that the DAS proposed retaining 'mullions' above the west facing barn door with a fixed glazed casement over, but this new window does not appear on the proposed west elevation. Unless I have missed something, the AIS does not mention a window in this position, and I think it likely that the 'mullions' referred to may in fact be studs supporting the external cladding when the doorway was partly infilled. This requires clarification.
- The proposal includes partly enclosing the space above the existing partitions to the northern bay to create an enclosed mezzanine level bedroom and bathroom. As was noted during the course of the previous, refused application, an enclosed mezzanine floor is considered contentious due to the adverse impact on the characteristic openness and internal volume of the barn, and on the manner in which its original proportions and the structure of its timber framing can be perceived. Although it is noted that the enclosure to this bay at ground floor dates from the 20th century, this does not justify enclosing the space above. This element of the proposal should therefore be omitted in favour of an open mezzanine, as per previous comments
- Sections/sectional elevations should be provided to show the proposed mezzanine to the southern bay, including new staircase, new or altered partitions (see below w.r.t. the existing ground floor level partition) and any associated impact on historic fabric, including the fixings of the base of the staircase to the threshing floor, which should be kept to a minimum.
- The proposed internal alterations include the creation of a doorway cut through the 19th century part-height partition adjacent to the threshing floor, to its southern side. This is a feature of a high level of interest, notwithstanding its relatively late date, as alongside the threshing floor and slides it speaks strongly of the previous use of the building. That it has potentially been heightened at some point as the use of the building evolved adds to this interest. The partial loss of this feature is therefore in my opinion contentious. I can however understand that it is desirable to have some connection between the southern and central (midstrey) bays in order to make the internal space of the barn more easily usable. I would imagine (subject to confirmation by the applicant) that to introduce steps over the partition would involve to great a loss of adjacent floor space? However, would a possible solution be to cut a limited door opening into the partition and re-use the affected boarding to create a part-height door, allowing the line of the partition (when this is closed) to remain uninterrupted, and the fabric largely retained in situ? If so, revised drawings should be prepared to show this. I would also like confirmation from the applicant that the position of the opening does not affect the particular features of interest of this partition which are noted in the AIS, namely the taper burns and inscribed alphabet (p. 36 of the AIS).
- The proposal is to install a fixed window within the opening to the western midstrey doors, which is not contentious, subject to detail. However the associated proposal to replace the existing side hung wagon doors with a barn door on sliders is not considered appropriate, as this style of door is not sympathetic to the building, and does not reflect the original form of the doors in this position. The existing doors should be retained and fixed open.
- The proposed new rooflights are over-scaled and should be reduced in size. I would also like confirmation that the size and position of the rooflights is such that only modern fabric will be affected, with no surviving historic rafters cut (ref. p12 of the HS).
- It is proposed to enlarge an existing opening to the eastern elevation- however as this opening is not shown on the existing elevations (understandably as it is currently overclad), the scale of this enlargement and the associated impact on historic fabric is not clear. Further information, such as existing and proposed partial internal elevations

showing the framing around the window, should be provided to clarify. See p.12 of the HS.

- Further details should be provided at this stage of the method of insulation to the roof, walls and floor of the building. This will be required now, rather than by condition, as this aspect of the proposal is key both to the both to the proposed new use of the barn, and to the manner in which its special interest, in particular the internal character of the spaces involved, is preserved. The DAS suggests that example the insulation to the walls and roof will be set externally to the members of the timber frame, rather than covering them, which is acceptable in principle, however no detail is provided of the associated impact on ridge height or wall build out- this needs to be made clear on the proposed elevations, and with appropriate typical details of any associated alterations to the eaves and to the juxtaposition of timber cladding with the masonry plinth to the building. Floor surfaces of interest (in particular the threshing floor) should be retained and exposed wherever possible – this is noted on plan, which is welcomed, and we have section for the threshing floor, but further detail will be required. In all cases, a method statement and appropriate detailed drawings (such as typical elevations and sections) should be provided. This should include details of materials, which should be appropriate for use in the context of a historic timber framed building. It would also be useful to have a statement from the contractor who it is anticipated will undertake the work to confirm that they are confident that the threshing floor, which appears relatively fragile, and brick floors to the northern bay and outshot, can practically and without loss of significant fabric be lifted and relaid. Also of concern w.r.t. the threshing floor is the point made at 4.4 of the HS regarding the fixings. Further information on the extent of loss of fabric that would be involved in this respect should be provided. See 5.4 of the HS.

The building contains a number of features of interest which contribute strongly to its narrative, but might be at risk from works incidental to the conversion. In addition to the above further information/amendments, I would like to be assured that these features will be conserved and exposed if appropriate. Can the applicant therefore please provide further detail regarding the treatment of/impact of the works on the following, as part of a revised DAS and by additional annotations as appropriate to the proposed plans.

- The pegholes to the corner of each post within the barn (page 18 of the AIS)
- The taper burn to the intermediate post in truss D (p. 24 of the AIS)
- The mortices for missing wall studs, shadow line of a missing window head, and exposed notches for a mullion window to the western girt (p.30. of the AIS)
- The timber 'slides' to the western midstre doors (p. 26 of the AIS). Further detail should be provided to show how these will be retained in the context of the new fixed window to the opening.
- The existing door to the southern side of the rear outshot is to be replaced (as noted above) and the door re-used internally to bedroom 1. While this is acceptable in principle, it should be shown on the proposed plans.
- The peg rack above the window adjacent to the pedestrian doorway to the western elevation (the window is to be re-opened with a new glazed casement over the retained mullions). (p. 37 AIS)
- The empty sockets which evidence the previously present stall partitions which are within the brick flooring of the northern bay of the barn. I would imagine these would want to be infilled in some manner to remove a trip hazard- how can this be achieved so that their form is still apparent? (p.38 AIS)
- What appears to pigeon housing at the apex of the south gable.

- The brick and plank and muntin partition wall in Truss C (p. 47 of AIS)- this is relatively late in date but of some character, and typical of the make do and mend approach to alterations to the building- this should be retained beneath the proposed new mezzanine if possible. See above w.r.t upper mezzanine treatment.

In summary, as it stands although the principle of conversion remains acceptable, the scope of the application in including a second bedroom and bathroom at mezzanine level remains problematic, and there are number of other areas where amendments are required and/or further information or clarification is needed.

I would hope that amendments and so forth can be submitted to address the above and achieve a positive outcome, however if the applicant is unwilling to move forward in this manner please let me know and I can provide a further commentary on level of harm caused etc.

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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