

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 10 May 2024 13:23:40 UTC+01:00
To: "Andy Watt" <Andy.Watt@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/24/0553 The Croft, Holtye Road EG

Hi Andy

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site, The Croft, is a modern detached house located in a rural position outside East Grinstead. The current proposal relates to a detached garage to the north of the house, and is for its demolition and replacement with a new dwelling.

The Croft is located a short distance to the north east of Fairlight Farm, which is a Grade II listed late 16th century former farmhouse, and is within its setting. The farmstead associated with the farmhouse appears, from historical map regression, to have been located to the north of the house, arranged in a linear form along the track leading to the house from Holtye Road to the north. Map regression suggests that some of the former farm buildings dating from the 19th or early 20th century may survive. Fairlight Farm is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment.

A public right of way runs north to south from Holtye Road following the line of the entrance track, before splitting to two pathways running on southwards to either side of the farmhouse.

Although the application is not accompanied by a detailed heritage statement, I would consider it likely, based on the limited information in front of us, that Fairlight Farmhouse would be considered to possess architectural value based on its construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative value as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse of its period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. It is also likely to have group value with the surviving historical farm buildings to the north.

As such the surviving rural setting of the listed building makes a strong positive contribution to its special interest and how this is appreciated, in particular those parts of that interest which are drawn from historical illustrative and aesthetic values. Although there are a small number of dwellings within the area of the former farmstead to the north of Fairlight Farm- some conversions and some new buildings in place of the previously existing farm buildings, as well as dwellings associated with Upper Fairlight Farm, which seems to have replaced Fairlight Farm as the functioning farmholding during the 20th century- the setting remains predominantly rural.

The application site is in close proximity to the listed building, and is a prominent part of the approach to it along the adjacent entrance track and PROW. Although direct intervisibility between the site and the listed building is limited by the planted screening around the farmhouse, the relatively open and verdant nature of the northern part of the site makes a limited positive contribution to the character of the setting of Fairlight Farm, and in particular the character of the approach to it from the north.

As above, the current proposal is for demolition of the existing garage to the north of The Croft and construction of a new dwelling.

Firstly I would note that the proposed site plan shows an attenuation tank, soak away and treatment plant to serve the new dwelling, to the east of the Croft. We do not appear to have any details of these features, which makes it impossible to assess their potential impact on the character of this part of the listed building's setting. I would suggest that detailed information including as appropriate plans, elevations and sections, to show these aspects of the proposal should be provided.

The existing garage building is not of any particular age or interest and makes at best a neutral contribution to the setting of the listed building. Its demolition is not considered contentious in principle.

The principle of a new dwelling on the site is however in my opinion contentious. Although, as above, the setting of Fairlight Farm contains, within the area of the former farmstead, a small number of dwellings, the area retains a predominantly rural character which contributes positively to the manner in which the special interest of the listed building is appreciated. The proposed new dwelling, which is substantial in scale (both height and footprint), would be positioned close to The Croft and to Fairlight Bungalow opposite, resulting in an intensification of development close to the front entrance to Fairlight Farm, and creating an almost suburban character, which would be intensified by the unsympathetic design of the new house. Notwithstanding the comments in the submitted Planning Statement, the house does not appear to respond in any noticeable way to the context, in form, detailed design or facing and roofing materials. Areas of particular concern would include:

- The scale of the building- its footprint within the limited plot, and its height in relation to the Croft;
- The proportions and scale of the fenestration;
- The inclusion of an integral garage, which is a suburban feature; and
- The use of materials including grey brick and slate which do not reflect the vernacular palette.

For these reasons the proposal is considered to be harmful to the setting and special interest of Fairlight Farm. This will be contrary to District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF the proposal will result in less than substantial harm at the mid range of that scale, such that paragraph 208 will apply.

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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