

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 February 2026 12:55:25 UTC+00:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <Stefan.Galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/26/0111 Old Mill House, Cowfold Road, Bolney

Hi Stefan

Comments on the above planning application.

The application site consists of a small group of timber stables located in a field to the north of Old Mill House, a Grade II listed building located in a rural position to the north of Cowfold Road, west of Bolney. The listed building dates, from the list description, from the late 16th century. Historical map regression suggests that it was formerly the farmhouse to Oldmill Farm, also known as Colwood Farm or Colwood Park Farm. A weatherboarded barn with attached lower brick range (possibly a former smithy) survives to the north of the house. This is likely to be regarded as curtilage listed (not as a non-designated heritage asset, as the application documents suggest). There are also a number of other historic farm buildings surviving to the south, including what would appear to be former farmworkers' cottages. These are likely to be regarded as curtilage listed or otherwise as non-designated heritage assets (NDHAs); further information would be required to establish which would apply in each case (ref. Historic England Advice Note 10: Listed Buildings and Curtilage). Old Mill Farm/Colwood Park Farm is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the post-medieval period.

A quartet of public rights of way meet immediately to the north west of Old Mill House; the northern and eastern of these paths run along the boundary of the site. The path to the east in particular gives open views of both the listed building and barn, and of the site.

Old Mill House will 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 type and period, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn. It also has group value with the other historic buildings within the farmstead.

The curtilage listed barn will be considered to possess similar values as a former agricultural building of its type and period, as will any other buildings within the farmstead which would be considered to be curtilage listed or NDHAs. As noted above, more information would be required to comment on exactly how these buildings would be regarded.

As such, the surviving rural setting which is all around the listed building and historic farmstead, which includes the application site, will be considered to make a strong positive contribution to the special interest or significance of the designated and non-

designated heritage assets, and the manner in which these are appreciated, in particular with respect to the assets' historical illustrative and aesthetic values. The likely historical relationship of function between the closer rural setting (including the site) and the farmstead enhances this positive contribution.

The current proposal is for the demolition of the stables and construction of a new dwelling using the existing access, and including associated hard and soft landscaping.

The existing stable buildings on the site are modern, and not of any particular historical or architectural merit. Their removal is therefore not considered to be contentious. The proposed new dwelling on the site is however considered unacceptable in principle in terms of the impact on the adjacent heritage assets within the Old Mill Farm farmstead. The domestication of this part of the close rural setting of the listed building and other heritage assets, with the loss of its current agricultural character in favour of a visually prominent new dwelling, would have an adverse impact, through setting, on the special interests of these assets and how these are appreciated. The house will be particularly prominent in views from the northern side of the farmhouse and adjacent barn, and in views or vistas including the heritage assets from the footpath to the southern boundary of the site, although it will also have an adverse impact on the context within which the farmhouse and farmstead are appreciated in views from the paths running north-south to the east of the site, and onwards to the south, and west-east from the western side of Old Mill House. This will include harm to kinetic views experienced by those passing through the countryside along these paths and then past the farmstead. The adverse impact will arise not only from the house itself but also from the associated domestication of the surrounding site to create a garden, and from the creation of a hard surfaced driveway and parking area. The increase in noise, activity and light levels associated with residential use of the site will also detract from the rural character of the setting to the north of the farmstead.

This will be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF, the proposal will be considered to result in less than substantial harm, through impact on setting, to Old Mill House and to the curtilage listed barn. I would place this harm at around the mid point of that scale due to the proximity and visual prominence of the development. In terms of the remaining historic buildings within the farmstead, there will also be a degree of less than substantial harm to their special interests (if regarded as curtilage listed) or harm to their significance as NDHAs. Again, a further, more detailed heritage statement would be required to establish how these assets would be regarded.

The submitted Heritage Statement places emphasis on the previous existence, as evidenced by historical map regression, of a courtyard of outbuildings to the north of the listed building and the west of the surviving barn and smithy. This is considered by the author to provide a precedent and justification for the current proposal. However, I disagree with this position for a number of reasons:

- The buildings appear on maps from the 19th century, but had been demolished by the early 20th century. There has therefore been no development to the north

of the house with the exception of the barn and smithy for the last century or so, and therefore the weight that can be attached to this historical arrangement as a precedent for a new building in this approximate location must be limited at best;

- These previous buildings will have been of an ancillary, agricultural character, and constituent functional parts of the 19th century farmstead. The current proposal is for a separate dwelling which is purely residential in character and has no relationship of function with the farmhouse or farmstead. In its location, footprint, architectural character and use it therefore does not in any meaningful way reinstate the former farm courtyard which appears on the historical maps.

For these reasons I do not consider that this argument holds any weight in mitigating the harm caused by the proposal.

I have also noted some limited new tree planting is shown on the proposed site plan. However, as shown this is likely to have only a very limited impact in screening the new house from view, particularly if appropriate native tree species (which are likely to be deciduous) are used. Even if highly effective screening were in place, this may in itself be regarded as harmful in severing the current visual relationship between the farmhouse and farmstead and this northern part of its rural setting. Again therefore this is not regarded as an adequate mitigation for the harm arising from the proposed development.

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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