

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 13 August 2025 15:17:02 UTC+01:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/1422 Red House, Cuckfield Road, Staplefield

Hi Katherine

Comments on the above planning application.

Firstly I note that we do not have an existing site plan with the application drawings. The comments below with respect to the impact of the landscaping works proposed are based on observations on site and on the aerial photograph included with the ecological report, however a scaled site plan should be provided, and these comments may be subject to revision on receipt of this.

Red House is an unlisted building located in a semi-rural position on the southern edge of Staplefield Village. It is not within the Conservation Area, but part of the boundary runs along the western edge of the site, and the Area also includes properties on Rose Cottage Lane which are a short distance to the north east, separated from the site by an open field. Red House is therefore considered to be within the settings of these two distinct parts of the Conservation Area, and is also relatively prominent in views from Cuckfield Road at this key entry into the village and the Conservation Area from the south east.

The house appears to date from the early 20th century, and is of a broadly traditional design with a hipped tiled roof, and render and hung tile elevations, with sash windows. There is an existing garage building to the rear of the house, which is similar in its aesthetic. The house and garage are not of any particular architectural quality, but are sympathetic to their context, and make a neutral contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area. The gardens within which the buildings are located contribute positively to the verdant setting of the Area.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for alterations and extensions to both the house and garage including:

- A part two and part one storey rear extension to the house;
- Loft conversion works including a dormer to the front roofslope and a cabrio rooflight to the side;
- Removal of the existing front porch;
- A single storey extension to the eastern side of the garage; and
- Associated hard and soft landscaping including a new swimming pool and patio, and alterations to the driveway and parking arrangements.

To consider these works in turn:

- Whilst I would not consider the principle of a rear extension to the property to be contentious, and I also note that the size of the proposed addition has been

reduced somewhat in comparison with the pre-application scheme, in my opinion the extension as shown remains overscaled and overbearing in its relationship with the host dwelling. This is particularly the case with respect to the addition at first floor level, which will be relatively prominent in views of the house from Cuckfield Road to the south east, and also looking across the field to the east of the house from Rose Cottage Lane, from within this part of the Conservation Area and its immediate setting. The footprint of the extension at ground floor is also arguably excessive, and wraps around the north east corner of the building in a manner which would not be supported by the adopted Design Guide (Design Principle SG49), however given the level of screening of the ground floor of the house by the surrounding hedgerows this is not considered as harmful as the bulk of the extension at first floor. This aspect of the proposal requires reconsideration with a significant reduction in scale of the proposed addition, particularly at first floor. The detailed design of the extension, including the projecting bay window with Juliet balcony, and the form and proportions of the fenestration, should also be revisited so that it relates better to the host building.

- The conversion of the loft is not considered contentious in principle, but the scale of the dormer to the front roof slope as shown is excessive. This will be contrary to the requirements of Design Principle DG52 of the Design Guide, as well as 6.3.5 – 6.3.7 of that document. Furthermore, the scale of the rooflight to the side roofslope is excessive, and the cabrio 'balcony rooflight' design is inappropriate for a building of a traditional style in this location. Both these aspects of the scheme require reconsideration.
- Whilst I appreciate that in functional terms the eastern side of the building is now the main entrance front, the existing porch and original entrance door to the southern elevation reflect the historical relationship of the building with the adjacent road, and are key features at the centre of this principal public façade of the building. The removal of both in favour of a window in my opinion detracts from the appearance of this elevation of the house and how its historical relationship with Cuckfield Road is read. If it can be demonstrated that the porch is not original, its removal may be acceptable, but the door (or an appropriate replacement door) should at the least be retained.
- The extension to the garage is substantial. However, it is of a single storey and the building is set to the rear of the site. On balance, this aspect of the proposal is considered acceptable subject to detail, including of the solar installation to the front roof slope which is described as tiles but in side view appears more similar to PV panels, and of the rear rooflights, which appear unduly boxy in side elevation- we would expect flush-fitting, metal framed conservation style rooflights.
- The proposed landscaping works including the patio to the rear of the house, the pool and surrounding hard landscaping, and the extended parking area proposed to the western side of the house, viewed in combination with the proposed extensions to the rear of the house and to the garage, will result in the loss of a significant proportion of the existing soft landscaped garden space around the building. This will have some negative impact on the verdant character of the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area, and I would recommend that this

aspect of the proposal is rethought in order to retain more planting and to reduce the area of hard surfacing.

In summary, whilst the principle of the works is not necessarily contentious, aspects of the scale, form and detailed design of the proposals require reconsideration. As it stands I would consider that the rear extension, front dormer and side rooflight, works to the façade of the building, and the associated landscaping will result in a degree of less than substantial harm through impact on setting to the character and appearance of the Staplefield Conservation Area. This would include not only views from within the Area (the two parts identified above) but also views and vistas looking towards or including the Area from its immediate setting on Rose Cottage Lane and Cuckfield Road, including the key approach to the Area along Cuckfield Road from the south east.

The proposal is therefore contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35, as well as the Council's adopted Design Guide. In terms of the NPPF, I would place the harm caused as less than substantial at the lower end of that scale, such that paragraph 215 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.
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