

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 23 January 2026 12:06:45 UTC+00:00
To: "Katherine Williams" <Katherine.Williams@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2998 and 2999 West House Farm

Hi Katherine

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 pressure of other work and leave over the Christmas period.

West House Farm is a historic farmstead located in a rural position outside Albourne. The farmstead includes a Grade II listed farmhouse, which dates originally from the late 17th- early 18th century, with a second parallel range and rear wing added in the late 17th/early 19th century, a Grade II listed weatherboarded barn of the mid-late 17th century, and a number of other ancillary buildings which are predominantly ranged around a series of yards to the south-west of the house. These include a late 18th century stable which would be regarded as curtilage listed. The farmstead is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character Assessment as a historic farmstead of the post-Medieval period.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for internal and external alterations to the farmhouse including a single storey extension, demolition of an existing garage building and construction of a double car port, and widening of the entrance track.

Further parallel applications for listed building consent and planning permission have been received relating to the conversion of the barn and stables, with associated works to the former farmstead. Whilst not the subject of the applications currently under consideration, the cumulative impact of all of the proposed works on the historic farmstead and the setting of the farmhouse may be relevant.

The proposed extension, which has been amended since pre-application, is a single storey flat roofed structure located in the angle between the rear elevation of the house and the existing single storey rear wing, which is considered to date from the late 18th/early 19th century and to have been originally a bakehouse and laundry range. Diagnostic features relating to this use include the low eaves, robust brick floor, and utilitarian windows, including the long narrow windows for ventilation which survive to the southern elevation. The understanding of the original purpose of this part of the building, and the significance of these features, has moved on since pre-application stage as reflected in the revised and expended Heritage Statement now in front of us.

At pre-application, it was noted that the principle of a modest extension in this position may not be contentious, however the scale and footprint of the addition and its

relationship with the existing chimney stack should be reconsidered. The current proposal is reduced in scale, so that the chimney stack remains exposed. The width of the extension as now shown is in my opinion acceptable, and the largely glazed elevations are appropriately lightweight.

However, based on the revised information contained within the Heritage Statement accompanying the application I now have concerns regarding the loss of historic fabric from the south elevation of the late 18th/early 19th century rear wing, in particular the potential impact on the elongated ventilation windows, which are an important evidentiary feature relating to the wing's original use. The Heritage Statement suggests that nibs and a downstand would be retained, but it was not clear if the downstand would include the windows- this seems unlikely given the levels involved. I would like to see a sectional detail at this stage to demonstrate the relationship of the addition with the existing building, so that the impact on the fabric of the structure including these windows is fully understood.

Also externally it is proposed to replace a window to the north elevation of the house with a door and sidelight. Although some loss of late 18th/early 19th century fabric will be involved, it is suggested that this part of the elevation has been previously altered, and the window itself is uPVC. In the context of the more sympathetic design and materials of the door and side window now proposed the aspect of the proposal is considered on balance acceptable.

Additional external works include removal of cementitious pointing with lime-based mortar, with replacement of damaged bricks on a like-for-like basis, replacement of the roof covering, and repairs and repointing of chimney stacks. Subject to detail which could be reserved by condition these works constitute beneficial repair of the listed building.

It is also proposed to replace modern uPVC windows to the house with painted timber casements incorporating slimline double glazing. Surviving historic casements are to be retained and repaired, and the detailing matched in the replacement windows. This aspect of the proposal is also considered beneficial to the special interest of the building, subject to detail which could be reserved by condition.

Internally, works are proposed at both levels of the farmhouse, and within the rear wing. To the house itself, at ground floor it is proposed to create a WC within the main room to the late 18th/early 19th century range, by insertion of partitioning and opening up of a doorway into the hall. Although this will have some impact on plan form and fabric it is a relatively minor intervention and is on balance considered acceptable.

At first floor, concerns were raised at pre-application stage regarding the level of intervention proposed arising from provision of ensuite bathrooms. As submitted, within bedroom two to the rear range an ensuite is retained, and although the size of this has been reduced it is now combined with adjacent built-in storage, so that the impact on the floor plan and fabric of the room concerned is if anything greater than previously

shown. Within the earlier front range, the proposal has been amended to remove one new opening previously proposed between bedroom 3 and its ensuite. However, the subdivision of the central room remains as previously shown. The impact on the floor plan and fabric of the front range remains in my opinion unacceptable. Built in storage is also shown to the two bedrooms within the 17th century range of the house- this would represent a further unjustified impact on the room plan and fabric and should be omitted in favour of free-standing wardrobes (this also applies to bedroom 4). This aspect of the proposal requires further reconsideration- I would reiterate that the provision of this number of ensuite bathrooms within a listed building of this relatively modest scale is likely to prove over ambitious.

Also internally to the house it is proposed to remove modern gypsum and cement-based finishes to walls and ceilings, retaining and repairing historic fabric where it is found, and introducing breathable lime finishes where modern work is removed. Subject to detail this work is considered beneficial to the special interest of the building.

Within the rear wing it is proposed to remove modern partitioning, opening the space up into what is assumed to be its original volume. This is not considered contentious. In light of our better understanding of the original use of the wing and the key surviving features which contribute to an understanding of this I would however like to receive further detail of the proposal in respect of both the roof/roof timbers internally, and of the flooring, to ensure that these significant elements are appropriately treated. This further detail should include any works considered necessary for the introduction or upgrading of insulation to the walls, floor and roof.

Within the setting of the house, it is proposed to demolish an existing modern outbuilding and construct a double car port. The existing building is not of special architectural or historical interest and makes at best a neutral contribution to the settings of the farmhouse and historic farmstead. Its loss is not considered contentious. The proposed replacement car port is larger than the building to be removed and set slightly forward of it, so that it will be more visually prominent in views of the farmhouse from the adjacent entrance driveway. It is however of an appropriate form and design, and subject to detail which could be reserved by condition is not considered to detract from the settings or significances of the adjacent heritage assets.

The proposal also includes a slight widening of the entrance track adjacent to the house and creation of a further car parking space adjacent to the car port. Subject to detail, this aspect of the proposal is not considered contentious. New hard surfacing should be sympathetic to the rural nature of the context- this also applies to any work which may be envisaged to the length of the entrance driveway to the northeast of the house, which is not currently in good condition in some areas. Upgrading of the drive does not appear to be part of the application, but the nature of any work including materials should be carefully considered in terms of the impact on the setting of the farmstead. It would be helpful if the applicant could confirm their intentions in this respect.

In summary, although the proposal has been revised following pre-application and is in some respects acceptable, even beneficial in terms of the impact on the special interest of the listed building, other aspects raise concerns in terms of the impact on the plan form or fabric of the building. Further information and/or revision of the proposal is required to address these concerns, to ensure that the special interest of the building is preserved, in order to meet the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34 and the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

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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