



LONDON OFFICE

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Direct Dial: 0207 973 3627

Our ref: P01606335; L01606338

21st April 2026

Dear Ms Grist

**Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications Direction 2015
& T&CP (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015
& Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990**

**WYKEHURST HOUSE, WYKEHURST PARK, COLWOOD LANE, BOLNEY,
HAYWARDS HEATH, WEST SUSSEX RH17 5QQ
Application Nos DM/26/0694; DM/26/0695**

Thank you for your letters of 23rd March 2026 regarding the above applications for planning permission and listed building consent. On the basis of the information available to date, we offer the following advice to assist your authority in determining the applications.

Summary

Wykehurst House is a grade II* listed High Victorian country house of exceptional architectural and historic interest, designed by Edward Middleton Barry and closely integrated with its designed landscape.

The current proposals relate to the area historically occupied by a formal terraced garden to the west of the house. The reinstatement of this historic garden layout would result in a clear enhancement of the significance of the listed building. The introduction of a centrally positioned swimming pool is also considered acceptable in principle, provided it is conceived and detailed as a traditional water feature, consistent with those traditionally associated with French château formal gardens.

However, concern remains regarding the proposed Italianate planting surrounding the central pool on the lower terrace, together with the introduction of a pool house to its north. These elements would disrupt the historic design logic of the garden,



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restrict key designed views and introduce visually intrusive built and planted forms that are not characteristic of the original layout.

As currently proposed, these aspects of the scheme are considered to result in *less than substantial harm*, in NPPF terms, to the significance of the listed building. This harm could be mitigated through appropriate design revisions that more closely reflect the original garden's geometry, openness and formal French château character.

Historic England Advice

Significance of Wykehurst House

Wykehurst House is a dramatically composed example of High Victorian revivalist architecture, drawing strong stylistic inspiration from the French châteaux of the Loire Valley. The surrounding designed landscape, including formal gardens, terraces, and carefully composed approach routes framed by entrance lodges, forms an essential component of the original conception. This interplay between building and landscape reinforces the intended effect of a continental château translated into an English context.

Designed by Edward Middleton Barry, a member of the distinguished Barry architectural family, and commissioned by Henry Huth, the prominent bibliophile and art collector, the house embodies the cultural ambition and material prosperity of the Victorian elite. Its exuberant architectural language, comprising turrets, pointed arches, conical roofs, ashlar masonry, and rich ornamentation, creates a striking, almost storybook silhouette, characteristic of the high Victorian taste for flamboyant eclecticism and taste for theatrical revivalist grandeur.

The architectural and historic interest of Wykehurst House is further enriched by its incorporation of advanced and forward-looking Victorian building technologies. These include cavity wall construction, iron-and-concrete fireproof floors, a warm-air heating system, and principal bedrooms equipped with en-suite bathrooms: features that were highly innovative at the time of construction. Their presence illustrates the scale of investment in the property and the progressive, technologically informed design thinking characteristic of Huth's era.

During the Second World War, Wykehurst House served as accommodation for Canadian soldiers, placing the property within the wider national wartime narrative. Its subsequent history includes significant mid-20th-century alterations which, while instrumental in preventing demolition, compromised aspects of the original design.



More recently, Wykehurst House was home to the Iranian filmmaker and writer Ebrahim Golestan from 1984 until his death in 2023, adding a further layer of associational significance to the property.

The building's grade II* designation formally acknowledges its architectural and historic importance, exceptional design quality, and rich cultural associations.

Impact of the Proposals on the Significance of Wykehurst House

The current proposal forms part of a wider programme of repair, reconfiguration, and reinstatement works intended to return Wykehurst House to its original use as a single-family residence.

This submission follows an earlier application for external works, including repairs to the garden wall, the installation of a secondary entrance gate, new plant equipment, and associated works (refs. DM/25/2644 and DM/25/2645).

The scheme relates to the area historically occupied by the formal terraced garden to the west of the house. The proposals respond to the existing topography, including reinstatement and addition of a new flight of steps linking two existing levels, reflecting the contextual style and materiality. Historic gravelled paths and symmetrical lawned parterres would be reinstated based on historic mapping of the site.

The proposal includes the introduction of a swimming pool centrally located on the lower terrace, with an associated pool house, accommodating plant and services, positioned to its north. The pool house is designed in a neo-classical style, drawing reference from the listed building. The surrounding Italian-style garden, including cypresses, broadleaf and hedging, is intended to provide visual screening to the pool and pool house, channelling views towards the wider landscape beyond.

The scheme also includes amendments to the previously submitted garden wall proposals, specifically the formation of a new opening and the reinstatement of a gate in its original historic location.

Historical maps, together with a rare historic photograph that offers a partial view, indicate that the garden was originally laid out as a formal arrangement of lawns and planted parterres defined by paths set out in a geometric pattern across the two levels. The garden was enclosed by a low stone wall with balustrading, terminating in a semicircular feature on the western side that incorporated a small fountain.

This layout is consistent with the French château character of the mansion house and appears to have been conceived as a transitional element between the house and the wider English landscaped park beyond. This relationship could be



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appreciated through long, uninterrupted views from the western openings of the house, as well as along the western approach to the principal façade.

On this basis, the proposed reinstatement of the stone wall, steps, parterres, and gravelled paths would result in an enhancement of the listed building's significance. The introduction of a swimming pool, while not consistent with the original arrangement, may nevertheless be considered acceptable in principle, if designed to reflect a traditional garden water feature. Provided it responds to the established geometric alignment and overall design logic of the historic garden, it could be read as a sympathetic intervention rather than a competing element.

However, the introduction of an Italianate garden would disrupt the rationale of the original design, also eroding important open views towards the parkland that were integral to the historic conception of the surrounding context.

A similar concern arises in relation to the proposed pool house, which, by virtue of its location and built form, would read as a visually intrusive element within the garden setting, particularly in views from the western approach to the house.

Relevant Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024) sets out the Government's policies for planning decisions. Section 16 specifies how the historic environment should be conserved and enhanced and paragraph 208 emphasises that conflicts between the conservation of the heritage asset and any aspects of a proposal should be avoided or minimised.

Paragraph 212 states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on a heritage asset, local planning authorities should give great weight to preserving the asset's significance, with greater weight for more important assets.

Paragraph 213 requires clear and convincing justification for any harm or loss to a designated heritage asset's significance, whether from alteration, destruction, or development within its setting. Decision-makers must determine whether harm is substantial or less than substantial. Where harm is less than substantial, paragraph 215 requires it to be weighed against the proposal's public benefits.

Historic England's Position on the Proposals

We support the reinstatement of the formal parterre garden to the west of the listed building and consider that the principle of a swimming pool on the lower terrace, designed as a water feature to reflect features typically associated with formal French château gardens, may be acceptable. However, the acceptability of the proposal

would be dependent on the final design, detailing, and materials, which should clearly respond to and reinforce the character and geometry of the reinstated garden.

However, we have concerns regarding the landscape treatment of the lower terrace and the introduction of a pool house within important sightlines towards the wider landscaped setting of the house.

In this regard, the introduction of an Italianate garden, including tree planting, as a means of screening both the pool and pool house would be inconsistent with the historic character of the site. Furthermore, such an approach would obstruct important open views towards the wider English landscaped grounds, contrary to the original design intent. In a similar manner, the proposed pool house would read as an intrusive and visually obtrusive element within the setting of the listed building.

On this basis, these elements of the scheme, as currently proposed, would result in harm to the significance of the listed building. In NPPF terms, this harm would be categorised as *less than substantial*, falling towards the lower half of that spectrum.

We would therefore recommend omitting new tree planting around the pool and instead adopting the design rationale of the original garden, incorporating geometric parterres and structured hedging around the water feature, so as to celebrate, rather than conceal, the central pond as a focal element.

Regarding the pool house, its location should be reconsidered to reduce visual harm. One potential option would be to integrate the new structure within the reinstated northern perimeter wall, drawing inspiration from the circular bastions that survive elsewhere on the site. This approach would remove a visually intrusive element from key views, while enabling it to be more successfully incorporated into its historic context.

Recommendation

Historic England considers that the reinstatement of the western formal garden and the introduction of a centrally positioned swimming pool, designed as a traditional water feature, are supportable. However, we consider that the landscape design of the lower terrace and the proposed pool house should be reviewed in order to reduce harm and ensure compliance with the requirements of paragraphs 208, 212, and 213 of the NPPF.

In determining these applications, you should bear in mind the statutory duty of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings or their setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.



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Your authority should take these representations into account and seek amendments and safeguards as set out in our advice. If there are any material changes to the proposals, or you would like further advice, please contact us.

Yours sincerely

Luciana Gallo

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