

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 17 March 2026 14:43:35 UTC+00:00
To: "Stefan Galyas" <Stefan.Galyas@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/2567 Oaklands North

Hi Stefan

Further comments on the above application, following the receipt of a revised and expanded Heritage Statement.

This statement provides further detail as to the likely date of construction of Oaklands North, which it suggests dates from the mid-late 18th century. It suggests that the single storey wing to the northern side of the property which it is proposed to demolish is a slightly later addition, dating from the early 19th century. The side wing, as its appearance would perhaps suggest, seems likely not to have been originally constructed as part of the residential accommodation of the house, but for the first century or more of its existence served a number of other purposes, including possibly as a workshop or showroom for a boot and shoe maker, an insurance office, a school room, and a doctor's surgery. It came into purely residential use during the 1950s and has remained as such since then.

The further information within the Statement confirms that the structure is relatively early in date and has had a varied and interesting history of use which contributes to our understanding of the society and economy of Cuckfield during the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. It appears to illustrate several key aspects of the village during that period, including in particular its commercial life, including the presence of small businesses and artisan workshops along the High Street, and the development of educational and health provision during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Although the evidence for these uses is in some cases uncertain, as one might perhaps expect, in my opinion this history of changing function and what this tells us about Cuckfield during the lifetime of the building enhances the positive contribution made by Oaklands North to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

As previously noted, we also have before us a structural report which unfortunately concludes that the retention and repair of the side wing raise significant difficulties, and that its demolition and replacement may be justified in principle.

I have read and considered the arguments made within the revised Heritage Statement regarding the author's opinions on the level of harm arising from the loss of the side wing and the benefit (as he sees it) of the currently proposed replacement two storey addition. However, I am afraid that I remain of the opinion that the proposal is contentious, and that if the loss of the historic side wing is unavoidable, as would appear to be the case, it should be replaced on a like-for-like basis, re-using existing materials as far as this is possible, in order to minimise the harm caused to the

character and appearance of the building and of the Conservation Area. I also remain of the opinion that even when viewed in isolation of the loss of the historic wing, the replacement two storey side extension is unacceptable for the reasons set out in my previous comments of 15th January.

For these reasons, and those set out in my previous comments, it is my opinion that the proposal is contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP35 and to the Council's adopted Design Guide. In terms of the NPPF, I would place the harm caused at around the mid-level of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 of the Framework will apply. In carrying out that exercise, the Council should be mindful of the requirement under paragraph 212 of the Framework that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, and that under paragraph 213 any harm to a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification.

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.

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