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Sent: 13 March 2026 15:30:29 UTC+00:00
To: "Andrew Horrell" <Andrew.Horrell@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: DM/25/3070 Nether Walstead

Hi Andrew

Comments on the above planning application. My apologies for the delay in getting these to you, which has been caused by pressure of other work.

Nether Walstead is a substantial Grade II listed house, a former farmhouse, located in a rural position outside Lindfield. The house dates originally, according to the list description, from the 17th century or earlier, but was substantially extended in several phases during the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, with further additions during the later 20th century including a rear dining room extension.

Nether Walstead is considered to possess architectural interest based on its construction and craftsmanship over several different phases of development, historical illustrative interest as a good example of a Sussex farmhouse, later country residence, altered and extended in response to changing socio-economic circumstances and the needs and aspirations of successive occupiers, and aesthetic value based in part on the use of vernacular materials viewed within the landscape from which they were drawn.

To the northeast of the house is the former farmyard of the Nether Walstead farmstead, which includes a number of surviving 19th century or earlier former farm buildings. Nether Walstead is recorded in the West Sussex Historic Farmstead and Landscape Character assessment as a historic farmstead of the post medieval period. These farm buildings would be regarded as curtilage listed, and are likely to be considered to possess architectural interest based on their construction and craftsmanship, historical illustrative interest as examples of former farm buildings of their type and period, and aesthetic interest based partly on the use of vernacular materials. They also have group value with the former farmhouse, and contribute positively to its setting and special interest. Parallel listed building consent and planning applications have been received in respect of these buildings, which I have commented on separately.

The current proposal, which follows on from pre-application advice, is for extensive works to the exterior and interior of the house, and within its setting, comprising:

- Remodelling and extension of the early 20th century wing to the western end of the house including a part two, part one storey extension;
- A porch extension to the front (northern) elevation;
- Removal of the existing kitchen extension to the rear of the building and adjacent single storey lean-to, and reinstatement of a catslide roof, with additional overhang;

- Construction of a new billiard room addition to the eastern elevation of the house in the form of a linked pavilion;
- Removal of the first floor of the existing 20th century porch to the northern elevation;
- Other internal and external works to the house including alterations to the plan form at ground and first floor;
- A new swimming pool pavilion to the rear garden;
- Associated hard and soft landscaping works around the house, including to the north of the building extension of the existing driveway/parking area and a new paved area enclosed with hedging with bin and log stores, and to the south amendments to the patio area with introduction of a covered pergola, new steps and an outdoor kitchen;
- Alterations to the existing garage/store building to the north of the house adjacent to the entrance drive, including new and altered openings and changes to the internal plan form in association with partial conversion to use as studio and gym;
- Construction of a glasshouse against the southern side of an existing outbuilding to the east of the house with demolition of an existing greenhouse;
- A new five bay car barn located to the north east of the house; and
- A replacement gate between the existing garage courtyard and green to the north of the Coach House.

To consider these works in turn:

- The existing extensions to the western end of the house represent several phases of development, dating from the 18th and the late 19th- early 20th century. The current proposals relate the Edwardian phase, and are for a further extension to the western elevation over two stories, with a further single storey lean- to element beyond this.

At pre-application stage concerns were raised regarding the principle of the proposed part two, part one storey extensions to the western end of the house, and I remain of the opinion that this aspect of the proposal is contentious. The existing additions to the western end of the historic core are very substantial, and the proposed further extension would only add to their bulk, and further unbalance the relationship of scale between the original or early house and the more modern additions to it.

The submitted pre-app statement downplays the significance of the Edwardian 'Arts and Crafts' style additions to the house, and describes them as resembling an Edwardian or interwar suburban house. I would agree that they contribute less to the special interest of the building than the 18th century and earlier fabric; however in my opinion they do not in their style (as opposed to their scale) particularly detract from the appearance of the building- I would say rather that they are typical of their period, and are intended to reflect the vernacular architecture of the area. I do not consider that Arts and Crafts is a particularly

suburban style- in my experience it is also found in rural contexts. I can think of other country houses in Mid Sussex constructed, or extended, in this manner. Standen would be an outstanding example. In my opinion, these parts of Nether Walstead make some contribution to the narrative of the house's development over time, as it evolved from a Sussex farmhouse to a country residence of some pretension. The extension and remodelling of this part of the building will detract from or remove any appreciation of that important aspect of the house's history, and as noted at pre-application stage I do not see the benefits in rationalising the appearance of this part of the building that the applicant suggests.

I therefore unfortunately do not see that the extension and remodelling of the western end of the house attracts the benefits which are assigned to it within the Design, Access and Heritage Statement; in my opinion, the loss of character to the early 20th century wing of the building detracts from its narrative as a farmhouse converted to a substantial country house during this period. There are not, in my opinion, heritage benefits which outweigh the harm caused by the increase in scale and bulk of the additions to the historic core of the house, in particular when viewed in conjunction with the proposed billiard room extension to its western end.

- At ground floor it is proposed to create an alternative entrance with a new porch towards the western end of the house. It would appear that part of the originally intended Edwardian works to the house was to create an entrance in this position, but this work was not completed. At pre-application stage it was considered that subject to detail this aspect of the proposal would not be regarded as contentious, if it were balanced against a more sympathetic proposal for the existing modern porch discussed below.

As submitted, the existing porch is only partly removed, rather than sympathetically replaced, and the heritage benefit arising from this aspect of the scheme is therefore reduced. On balance, I would remain of the opinion that a new porch to the western end of the elevation could be acceptable, however the scale and design of the feature as shown are in my opinion inappropriate. The footprint and height of the addition are such that it appears inappropriately prominent within the elevation, drawing attention away from the historic core of the building. In addition, although I appreciate that the intention is to create a suite of alterations and additions to the property which read as clearly contemporary and as of a single phase, in my opinion the design of the structure, which has a low pitched hipped lead roof and supporting tapered timber columns, has a pared down contemporary classicism which does not relate appropriately to its context, in terms either of the materiality and key phases of development of the building, or of its 'vernacular' nature. I would recommend that this aspect of the proposal is reconsidered to reduce the scale of the addition and introduce a form and materials which sit more comfortably with the existing building.

- The existing rear kitchen extension is a late 20th century addition to the building, which is not of any merit, and detracts from its special interest in interrupting the historic form of the catslide roof to this part of the building. The adjacent single storey lean-to is also modern addition which is not of special interest. The removal of these is considered beneficial in heritage terms, as is the reinstatement of the catslide roof.

However, the inclusion of an overhang to this roof detracts from the accuracy and hence the heritage benefits of this aspect of the proposal. In addition, the supporting tapered timber columns to this overhang, as noted above in relation to the porch extension to the front of the property, exhibit a pared-down classicism which is not considered appropriate to the context. I would recommend that this aspect of the proposal is omitted.

- The proposed new billiard room is shown as a linked pavilion to the eastern side of the house. The east elevation of the building is part of the historic core of the building and is dominated by a massive brick and stone chimney stack, surmounted by triple brick flues, which is one of the principal features of the house's exterior. There is an existing single storey lean to addition wrapping around the rear (southeast) corner of the house, which appears to date predominantly from the late 19th-early 20th century, extended to the rear as part of the above mentioned 1987 addition – the removal of the rear part of this extension is discussed above.

The existing lean-to addition encroaches slightly on the base of the chimney stack, and although it may be of some interest in terms of the narrative of the development of the house during the 19th/early 20th century, when it underwent significant change, I would consider that its removal may not be considered contentious, and has the potential to better reveal the much more significant chimney.

At pre-application stage, concerns regarding the new billiard room in position were raised. The formal submission is revised to show the billiard room set off the side elevation of the house as a linked pavilion. However, I remain of the opinion that this aspect of the proposal is contentious, for a number of reasons.

The historic core of the building has, as noted above, already been very substantially extended over several phases of development. There are extensions to all sides of the core, and there is a danger that any further substantial addition to the house will result in a situation where the core of the building is completely overwhelmed by additions to it. Although I am mindful that the billiard room addition would be balanced against the removal of the existing 19th and 20th century extensions to this corner of the building, the proposed addition is located in a more visually prominent position to the side of the building than the existing extensions, and would effectively bookend the core of the

building with substantial additions. Also, although it looks like the footprint of the proposed new extension may not be dissimilar to the existing additions it is proposed to remove, the existing additions are more compactly positioned against the rear corner of the house.

Furthermore, although set off the elevation by a linking structure, the proposed addition extends part way across the base of the chimney stack, which as above is one of the most significant features of the exterior of the building. It would partially conceal the stack in views from the west side of the building, and would detract from its visual prominence within the elevation.

In addition, the design and materials of the pavilion raise similar concerns to those noted above in respect of the proposed porch extension.

The proposed screening by existing and new vegetation is noted, but may prove ephemeral, and as such can attract little weight in considering the impact of the extension.

For these reasons, notwithstanding the benefits arising from the removal of the rear kitchen extension, I do not consider that this is an appropriate position or form for a replacement addition.

- The northern wing of the building appears to date from the 18th century. A 20th century porch extension which consists of an enclosed porch under a roofed but open sided balcony at first floor sits between this and the main east-west range of the historic core. This structure detracts from the appearance of the façade of the building. At pre-application stage, it was noted that the removal and more sympathetic replacement of this structure would not be considered contentious and has the potential to enhance the appreciation of the special interest of the listed building.

The current proposal is however only for the removal of the open sided first floor element of the structure. Whilst this is not considered contentious, and is to an extent beneficial, it does not enhance the special interest of the listed building to the same extent as its entire removal could potentially have done.

- Further, more minor external alterations to the building include replacement of the barge boards to the projecting northern wing, lowering of the cill level of the ground floor window to the bay window to this wing, removal of a soil vent pipe from the rear elevation.
- Internally, works are proposed at ground, first and attic floors. For the most part, these affect modern fabric or are confined to the early 20th century western wing and associated with the remodelling and extension discussed above. As previously noted, the extent and nature of works to the 20th century wing are not considered acceptable, but otherwise the internal works to the property are not

considered contentious in terms of their impact on the special interest of the building, subject to detail.

- The new swimming pool pavilion is set within the gardens to the south of the house, adjacent to the existing swimming pool. It is not considered contentious in principle, however I note the inclusion of the same painted timber columns as discussed above. This is perhaps less of an issue on a stand alone building, however the applicant may consider that a holistic revisiting of the design of the proposed new additions/works is required, including this detailing, if the intention for these to read as a consistent suite of works is pursued.
- Hard and soft landscaping works are proposed to the area around the house. Whilst some aspects of this part of the proposal are not considered contentious, and may be beneficial to the quality of the garden setting within which the listed building is appreciated, other aspects do raise some concerns.

Firstly, the location of the proposed bin and log store in close proximity to the eastern end of the house, and forward of the façade, is not considered appropriate, notwithstanding the inclusion of a screening yew hedge around the area in question. In the context of a property of this scale with extensive gardens and numerous outbuildings this relatively prominent location is not considered necessary or justified. The position of the bin and log store should be revisited to set these away from the frontage of the house.

At the rear of the house the general works to reconfigure the patio area in terms of its footprint and levels are not considered contentious subject to detail, however the inclusion of what appears to be fairly substantial covered pergola or seating area next to the western part of this elevation may be less favourably viewed in terms of the introduction of a new, albeit presumably open sided, structure in close proximity to the house- no detail of this appears to have been provided, can the applicant please clarify their intentions in this respect and provide relevant drawings?

- The proposed works to the existing garage/store building are not generally considered contentious, subject to detail, but I would suggest that the proposed new window to the south elevation is reduced in size to match the existing adjacent opening.
- The existing outbuilding to the east of the house appears, from historical map regression, to date from the late 19th or early 20th century. The same map regression exercise shows that originally a glass house was built against its southern wall, presumably in a lean-to arrangement. This building would appear to be broadly contemporaneous with the period of enlargement of the house which converted it from a farmhouse to a comfortable country residence, and as such is of some interest in terms of the narrative of the site.

The adjacent greenhouse which is just to the south of this is more modern, and is not of any particular interest. Its removal is therefore not considered contentious.

Subject to detail, the construction of a replacement glass house against the southern wall of the retained outbuilding is also not considered contentious, and has the potential to reinstate (although it is presumed not with any great accuracy) a former feature of the estate.

- At pre-application stage a car port was proposed to the frontage of the house. This was considered contentious in terms in particular of its location; it was however noted that *'a new building may be possible within the gardens to the house, but it should be of the minimum necessary scale and more sensitively located.'*

The revised position for the five bay car port and storage building included in the current proposal is to the northeast of the house, to the south of the former farm courtyard. This location is considered more appropriate in terms of the visual prominence of the building in key views, and in the manner in which it is clustered with the other historical ancillary buildings. However, the scale of the building is in my opinion potentially overbearing and remains a concern. I would recommend that this is revisited, and the scale reduced. For example, the proposed storage use could be split from the triple garage and accommodated in a new building elsewhere within the grounds, away from the frontage of the house. This could potentially be revisited alongside the location of the wood and bin stores, discussed above.

- The proposed replacement gate is not considered contentious in principle, however the use of painted metal is not considered acceptable in this context, due to its inappropriate character- please also refer to my comments on the applications referring to the former farmyard buildings and the gate which has been installed to the south of the Coach House, and upcoming pre-application response in relation to the gates and posts which have been installed along the driveway, which are not in accordance with the existing planning permission granted in this respect. If a solid timber gate of a single leaf is impractical for reasons of weight, a more open design could be used, or a pair of side hung gates. This aspect of the proposal therefore requires revision.

In summary, although the proposal has moved on following the pre-application submission, and it is acknowledged that some aspects of the scheme would result in potential enhancement of the building's special interest, there are unfortunately significant areas which remain of concern in terms of the adverse effect on that special interest, either directly or through impact on setting. As it stands, I would consider the proposal to be contrary to the requirements of District Plan Policy DP34. In terms of the NPPF, I would consider that the proposal results in less than substantial harm at the mid-high range of that scale, such that the balancing exercise set out in paragraph 215 will apply. In carrying out this exercise, the Council must be mindful of the great weight

which must be given under the Framework to the conservation of heritage assets, and the requirement that any harm must have a 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.

Submit your planning application online.
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk>

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