

From: Emily Wade <Emily.Wade@midsussex.gov.uk>
Sent: 11 August 2025 14:55:27 UTC+01:00
To: "Anna Tidey" <anna.tidey@midsussex.gov.uk>
Subject: Lydhurst Estate DM/25/1446

Hi Anna

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 and a period of leave.

Lydhurst is an unlisted country house set in extensive gardens and parkland, within a wider estate of woods and farmland, in a rural setting to the west of Warninglid village. The historic core of the village, which is centred on The Street, is covered by a Conservation Area designation. The boundary of the Conservation Area generally abuts the eastern edge of the estate, although the entrance from The Street and its flanking ponds lie within the Area.

The existing house at Lydhurst dates from the 1930s, replacing a Victorian mansion dating from the 1850s, which in turn replaced an earlier house dating from c.1800, which had an associated farmstead. Currently, there are surviving estate buildings to the north west of the house, including cottages, stables and a greenhouse. The original walled kitchen gardens also survive. These buildings date from the 19th or early 20th centuries. Part of the Victorian mansion itself was also retained when the house was redeveloped – the 'Games Room Building'. The house and estate buildings are set in extensive grounds- there are formal gardens to the south, west and north west of the house, with parkland beyond, with beyond this the farmland and woodlands of the wider estate.

Based on the information in front of us, I think it is unlikely that the existing house at Lydhurst would in itself be considered to possess sufficient architectural or historical interest to be regarded as a non-designated heritage asset. I would however consider that the older buildings within the wider estate would be of sufficient interest within the local context to be regarded in this manner- they are likely to be of interest both in their own right, and as part of a surviving grouping illustrating the functioning of a Victorian Sussex country estate. I would also include the walled garden and its greenhouses, and the surviving Victorian Games Room building in this category.

NDHAs can also include historic gardens and parklands which are of interest in the local context, and it is my opinion that the surviving formal gardens and wider parkland at Lydhurst merit this status, based on their scale and the survival of significant planting and features such as rockeries, steps, pathways and so forth. The submitted Heritage Statement contains a detailed analysis of the development of the gardens over time, which indicates that successive owners have grown and added to the planting and the layout of the estate, which has been developed to take advantage of the previously existing shaw agricultural landscape, as well as quarries or pits created by the excavation of stone for the construction of the earliest house on the site. The resulting gardens perhaps reached particular peaks of interest during the late 19th century, under the Noel's, who established a fine plantsman's garden, and after this, c.1900, under the Steinkopffs who, with assistance from noted garden designer Harold Peto, created an Arts and Crafts garden of some renown, which stands up to comparison with other High Weald gardens of this period including Borde Hill, Nymans, and Sheffield Park. There is a good

survival of features and planting from these periods, and although some of the later 20th century alterations are perhaps not sympathetic, the gardens and parkland as a whole certainly remain of sufficient interest to be regarded as an NDHA.

The current proposal is for the demolition and replacement of the existing 1930s house with a new dwelling in a contemporary style, over an enlarged footprint, together with further work within the wider parkland comprising a change to the existing vehicle access from the east, as it approaches the house.

Given the lack of interest of the house itself, its demolition and replacement is not considered contentious in principle in heritage terms. The proposed replacement dwelling sits over the footprint of the existing, but with an extension to the east. It has the same orientation and aspect as the existing.

Although the proposed replacement house sits on a larger footprint than the existing, it is lower. The footprint of the house will extend somewhat closer to the boundary with the Conservation Area, but would remain at a significant distance from it, such that the increased bulk in this respect is unlikely to be appreciable from within the Area. The impact on the setting of the Conservation Area is therefore considered to be limited and acceptable.

With respect to the impact on the gardens and parkland as an NDHA, the extension to the east is into the parkland to this side of the building, rather than into the formal gardens. There would be the loss of a small amount of grassland, but this is not considered to materially affect the character of the parkland. With respect to the formal gardens, as is noted in the submitted Heritage Statement, the existing house is not contemporary with the creation of the most significant aspects of the gardens, but even the previous dwellings on the site do not seem to have a strong designed relationship with their garden setting. Arguably, the most important aspect of the relationship between the existing house and its context is the views from its southern frontage across the formal lawns and ha ha towards the landscape to the south- these views would continue to be celebrated by the proposed replacement dwelling. The scale, form and detailed design of the proposed replacement house are such that there would be no direct impact on the gardens themselves - the house's footprint extends no further into the formal gardens than the existing, and the replacement building is lower in height so that key views within the gardens would not be adversely affected. Further, as noted above, there is a lack of any significant designed relationship between the house and gardens which would be harmed by the proposal. As such, the proposed replacement dwelling is not considered to adversely affect the significance of the formal gardens and parkland as an NDHA.

With respect to the garden and estate buildings to the north-west of the house, including the walled gardens, although these do have a historical functional relationship with the house, the existing house post dates the buildings in question and has no relationship of age or architectural style with them. The proposed replacement dwelling would also be very different in its architectural character, but in the context of the existing situation this is not considered in itself harmful. The position, massing and height of the proposed new building are not considered to adversely affect the settings of these structures, and the proposal is considered acceptable in terms of its impact on these NDHAs.

The proposed work to the driveway involves creation of a route running off the existing drive near its western end, towards the entrance frontage of the house. The existing driveway, including the flanking avenue of trees, the gateway and bridge from The Street were introduced

in the 1970s- historically, the main approach to the house was from the north. The current proposal will have a relatively minor impact on the parkland to the east of the house, and is not considered to affect the formal gardens or the garden and estate buildings to the north-west. This aspect of the proposal is therefore not considered to adversely affect the significances of the NDHAs at Lydhurst.

The proposal is therefore considered to meet the requirements of District Plan Policies DP34 (Listed Buildings and Other Heritage Assets) and DP35 (Conservation Areas), as well as the relevant paragraphs of the NPPF.

I would recommend conditions relating to roofing and facing materials, window, door and eaves details, and hard and soft landscaping (I note we have some details of the latter, but I can't see specifics of landscaping materials- hopefully these will be respectful of the vernacular). Rainwater and other external pipework to be of metal.

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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